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PORK PRODUCERS NOW ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

As significant ratepayers and employers in more than 60 shires across 300,000 square kilometres of WA's agricultural zone, responsible pork producers are keen to minimise negative impacts on local environments and maximise positive impacts on the economies of their local communities.

While recognising their industry, with a farm-gate value of more than \$100 million and responsible for employing 3000 people, generates waste and odour, as do all intensive livestock production sectors, they are firmly committed to a new set of National Environmental Guidelines for Piggeries.

Developed by Australian Pork Limited (APL), after extensive consultation with industry and government, the guidelines have been embraced by the WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA), which represents WA's 360 producers.

WAPPA Executive Officer, Russell Cox, who recently convened a meeting in Perth with representatives of APL and the Departments of Agriculture and Environment, said existing and prospective producers were keen to work co-operatively with authorities to ensure they could enjoy security of tenure without unfair pressure.

“Modern piggeries are owned and run by professionals who understand their community responsibilities and who take environmental and natural resource management very seriously.

“Many, for example, are about to voluntarily implement environmental management systems (EMS) to agreed national standards.

“EMS identifies and rectifies inefficiencies and prioritises actions to improve resource use efficiency and minimise potential environmental impacts,” Mr Cox said.

According to APL Manager Environmental Sustainability, Dr Jeya Jeyasingham, who attended the Perth meeting, APL recognised the importance of environmental and natural resource management and worked hard to improve perceptions of piggeries.

“The majority of modern pig production facilities are vastly different and improved from those of days gone by, with many now featuring straw-based eco-shelters, superior effluent management systems and more animal friendly environments.”

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