



MEDIA RELEASE – June 24, 2004

PORK PRODUCERS HOPE APPLE APPROACH BEARS FRUIT

WA's 360 pork producers continue to pressure Federal and State governments in a bid to stop any relaxing of import protocols for pigmeat, which they claim will bring unwanted diseases and devastate their \$112 million per annum production industry.

The WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA) recently met with representatives of WA Agriculture Minister, Kim Chance and the Department of Agriculture (DAWA), seeking support for a rigorous, independent review of Biosecurity Australia (BA) and the CSIRO analysis and import risk assessment (IRA) process.

Boyup Brook producer and President, Stuart Coole said the second such meeting with the Minister's office in three months showed pork producers were "deadly serious".

"We know our fate on this very serious issue is largely in Federal Government hands, but that won't stop us soliciting support from whoever we believe can aid our cause.

"As yet, we've not seen any clear, decisive action on our behalf from the WA Minister's office, but we're hopeful that will change very soon."

Mr Coole said he was aware that Minister Chance had recently advised WA's 400 apple and pear producers, who are also questioning the validity of an IRA, that if risks were not adequately addressed, his Government and DAWA would vigorously pursue all means available to ensure biosecurity risks to WA were adequately addressed.

DAWA had a team of scientists and policy officers critically reviewing the apple IRA and the State had received a personal assurance from the Federal Agriculture Minister, Warren Truss that it would be fully and properly consulted on the issue.

Mr Chance told apple producers his Government supported a science-based approach to quarantine established internationally under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement and this continued the commitment made in 1995 when WA signed the national memorandum of understanding on animal and plant quarantine measures.

At the recent National Apple Day, WAPPA joined with the WA Fruit Growers' Association to protest against pigmeat and apple IRAs with a barbeque lunch, apple giveaway and information session at Solidarity Park opposite Parliament House.

Mr Chance attended, plus other state parliamentarians Adele Farrino, Mick Murray, Tony Dean, Martin Whitely, Carol Martin, Paul Omedei, Robin McSweeny, Peter Foss, John Day, Murray Criddle, Dr Christine Sharp, Frank Hough and John Fisher.

Australia is currently free of many of the exotic diseases affecting pigs overseas and is one of only three countries free of Post Weaning Multisystemic Wasting Syndrome (PMWS), which costs the pig industry in the United States \$AUD 859 million a year.

The US was likely to be one of the new exporters under the revised import regime, which previously only allowed pigmeat from Canada, Denmark and New Zealand.

“A significant PMWS outbreak in WA would affect the viability of the industry, driving producers to close their piggeries, while retail pork prices would increase beyond the reach of most consumers,” Mr Coole said.

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