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PORK CRC OFFERS HOPE FOR STRUGGLING PORK PRODUCERS

Despite 2006/07 being well documented as a very challenging year for Australian pork producers, the latest Annual Report of the Pork Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) offers hope, with the promise of returns on industry and government investments made to create a more competitive pork industry.

The Pork CRC commissioned 42 projects in the reporting period and published and commercialised the most comprehensive ever evaluation of Australian canola seed meal.

According to Pork CRC CEO, Dr Roger Campbell, this resulted in annual feed cost savings of \$2.08 million for one of the industry's biggest end users.

“Further savings were demonstrated from a project to develop closed loop supply chain arrangements between grain growers and pork producers.”

It showed that by using appropriate agronomy and price risk management strategies for unique and high yielding grains, pork producers could achieve substantial feed cost savings in normal years through contract arrangements with growers in the system.

In drought years, using price risk management strategies resulted in even greater savings without detriment to grain growers.

According to Dr Campbell, a final report on the system will be released in 2007 and two large end users have already adopted the strategy for procuring grain.

Pork CRC Program 2 demonstrated how higher energy diets in the final stages of production could increase carcass weight and revenue, while reducing overall feed usage.

“The strategy has been tested by several pork producers and results of the commercial studies and simulation exercises show it can improve profitability by between \$4 and \$10 per pig, depending on pig prices and the grading matrix pigs are sold into,” Dr Campbell said.

Pork CRC Chairman, Dr John Keniry, remained optimistic about the industry's future, despite the current tough period, due mainly to high grain prices, high Aussie dollar, the drought and record levels of imports.

“Helping shape the future is where the Pork CRC can really come into its own,” he said.

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“We believe that by educating and training tomorrow’s scientists and encouraging better and more focused R&D in the existing pig science sector, we can make a real difference to producers’ bottom lines,” Dr Keniry said.

The Pork CRC’s Education Program outcomes continue to meet agreed milestones, according to the 2006/07 Annual Report.

To June 30, the Pork CRC had recruited nine post-graduate students to work within Pork CRC projects, awarded one post-doctoral award in the area of reproduction and funded another three post-doctoral positions.

According to Dr Campbell, two are involved in a project associated with determining and enhancing nutrient availability from grains and the other is investigating the effects of fatty acids on the performance of growing pigs.

The Pork CRC 2006/07 annual report, which includes research highlights, can be viewed and/or downloaded from the website at www.porkcrc.com.au

Meanwhile, the Pork CRC Annual Conference and Research Update will be held in Brisbane on Saturday, November 24.

Speakers include Dr David Meisinger, CEO of the US Pork Centre of Excellence and Paul Pattison, CEO QAF Meat Industries.

www.porkcrc.com.au

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