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**COURT DECISION BACKS WA PORK PRODUCERS' POSITION**

WA's 360 pork producers have applauded a landmark Federal Court finding which recommends greater caution concerning the importation of pigmeat which may carry an unacceptable risk of exotic disease.

Justice Murray Wilcox vindicated the consistent position of the WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA), that current importation protocols should not be weakened.

Last year WAPPA first voiced concern to the Federal Government about inadequate quarantine practices.

WAPPA has maintained that without a clear understanding of the factors associated with causative elements and the spread of Post Weaning Multisystemic Wasting Syndrome (PMWS), control measures would be difficult to implement.

The Biosecurity Australia (BA) decision, based on its Import Risk Analysis (IRA) for imported pigmeat, was found by Justice Wilcox to be "so unreasonable that no reasonable person could have made it".

Boyup Brook producer and WAPPA President, Stuart Coole said the landmark decision vindicated pork producers in their relentless fight to keep their industry free of exotic diseases such as PMWS.

"This decision supports WAPPA's determination to maintain Australia's global reputation for a conservative, science-based approach to quarantine risk management," Mr Coole said.

"WAPPA's primary concern is to maintain the unique health status that gives our industry, which has an annual farm-gate value in WA of more than \$100 million, a clear competitive advantage over most pork producing countries.

"WA pork producers and their peers Australia-wide have taken this fight all the way to the Federal Court to preserve this clean and green image.

“A PMWS outbreak in WA would immediately increase cost of production by 15 per cent and ultimately decimate the productivity of our pig herds.

“Justice Wilcox recognises WAPPA’s view that BA’s Import Risk Analysis conclusion was flawed and posed a grave danger to our local pork industry, Mr Coole said.

Last year WAPPA sent letters to Minister for Agriculture, Warren Truss, asking for the Federal Government to support its recommendation that the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine withdraw the determination relating to quarantine regimes for the importation of pigmeat.

WAPPA has always believed BA would be justified in not allowing the importation of pigmeat from PMWS affected countries, while it conducted additional research into the aetiology of PMWS.

“A precedent has now been set that the Federal Court can overturn a decision by BA where that decision is found to be flawed and unreasonable,” Mr Coole said.

“WAPPA’s concerns with the May 10, 2004 decision by the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine to accept BA’s Import Risk Analysis for imported pigmeat, was ratified by this Federal Court decision.

“We are all about maintaining our industry’s viability by a process of continual improvement, unimpeded by the intrusion of unnecessary, unwanted and unacceptable imported health risks,” Mr Coole said.

[www.wappa.com.au](http://www.wappa.com.au)

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