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## PORK CRC MEETING THE 'MEAT' CHALLENGE

Computerised feeding systems, early weaning diets, swine dysentery, housing and farrowing systems, mineral nutrition and moisture infused pork were among the many topics discussed by Board members of the Pork Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) during two days of meetings and presentations in WA this week.

At the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) Medina Pig Research Centre, the Board assessed a \$55,000 CRC investment in Feedlogic, an integrated feed dispensing and management system, which automatically delivers multiple diets to specific pens and groups of pigs.

Pork CRC Board Chairman, Dr John Keniry said that with feed costs comprising up to 70 percent of a pork producers' cost of production, it was essential new technologies be analysed and introduced if they helped deliver accurate, measured rations so that pigs received exactly what they needed at any given time in their growth cycle.

"It's really all about meeting the meat challenge by offering producers the technology and capacity to produce a premium quality meat product at minimum cost and maximum profit.

"Effectively, all the research and extension the Pork CRC supports through our partners, such as DAFWA, focuses on enhancing the competitiveness of the Australian pork industry by providing and adopting new and novel technologies.

"Reducing feed costs, improving feed conversion and increasing the range and functionality of pork products is how we intend making the industry more sustainable and profitable," he said.

At Murdoch University, The Chairman, along with fellow Board members Rod Hamman, Peter Hayes, Enzo Allara, Andrew Maughan, Dr Robert van Barneveld, Professor Simon Maddocks and Professor Jim Reynoldson, joined with program leaders, plus CEO Dr Roger Campbell and CFO Michael Crowley, to discuss Pork CRC funded research into Werribee farrowing crates and swine dysentery.

Fourth year UWA Agricultural Science Honours student, Jo Elliott, explained how her preliminary research into piglets in Werribee farrowing crates (versus traditional sow farrowing crates) revealed their feed intake lifted and they displayed more natural exploratory behaviour.

"In what is a more complex environment, the piglets seem to be more inquisitive, they look more for their creep feed and are generally more active," Ms Elliott explained.

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Murdoch Professor David Hampson is supervising a Pork CRC funded honours project by molecular biology student Belinda Harland who is studying the many different strains of organisms causing swine dysentery.

“These strains can be very difficult to identify, so we want to catalogue as many as we can,” Professor Hampson said.

Addressing industry partners at the conclusion of the WA visit, Pork CRC Board Chairman, Dr John Keniry said 2006/07 had been an exciting year, with 42 new projects commissioned and projects across all three programs delivering results that exceeded expectations and immediately benefited participants and end users.

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