



MEDIA RELEASE – 3.9.07

SKILLED STAFF THE SCARCE RESOURCE IN RESOURCE RICH STATE

How best to source skilled staff to work in WA piggeries and how best to tap into niche markets for pork are two of the challenges driving the WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA) in the next 12 months.

Addressing WAPPA's 2007 General Meeting at Pastoral House on Friday, August 31, President Graeme Dent, of Cuballing said innovative, creative thinking was needed.

“As we compete for staff against a buoyant WA resource sector, we need to consider supplementing our rural workforce through accessing appropriately trained staff internationally,” he said.

“This has to be done to meet the immediate employment demand, while we rationalise and vigorously pursue a full range of professional development and training opportunities to support those committed people already working in our industry.”

Mr Dent said exploring and developing innovative niche markets was vital for the future of WA's 300 pork producers.

One opportunity was the organic market, with Australia having about 2000 certified organic producers, processors and retailers of organic food and fibre products across grains, horticulture, viticulture, beef, dairy, honey and, to a limited extent, pork.

“Collectively these enterprises account for products valued at an estimated \$180 million annually at the farm gate and such an emerging market warrants exploring as research suggests consumer demand is rising,” Mr Dent said.

On a less optimistic note, Mr Dent reported that yet another year of drought across much of the state, had led to increased production costs and some issues of feed security, including poor quality and lack of availability.

At WAPPA's earlier 2007 Annual General Meeting, Mr Dent welcomed PPC Agribusiness Manager, Lui Rinaldi, elected to WAPPA's Executive Committee.

Mr Rinaldi, who replaced Darren Edwards of Popanyinning, who resigned in June, joins Mr Dent and Vice-President Richard Evison of Albany, Treasurer Errol Howard and Steve Martin, both of Wannamal.

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After the AGM and general meeting, which included addresses by Dr John Carr and Dr Robert van Barneveld, WAPPA held its annual industry dinner at Broadwater Pagoda Resort Hotel, Como.

Dr Carr, a Portec Australia veterinarian with global experience, was optimistic about the future of WA's pork production industry.

Dr van Barneveld, a nutrition consultant and Director of Australian Pork Ltd and the Pork Cooperative Research Centre, urged producers to take an active role in research.

"Producers must ensure they get value out of the \$5 a pig they effectively spend on research and development and make R&D and training an integral part of their operations," he said.

The WAPPA dinner, attended by 130 people, including WA Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food Gary Snook, featured a special presentation to Gaetano Armenti, an Italian immigrant who has worked for 50 years in the cooking department at D'Orsogna.

Mr Armenti was honoured with the 2007 WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA) Special Industry Award for services to the industry.

After dinner speaker, Professor Kadambot Siddique, Director of the Institute of Agriculture and Chair in Agriculture at the University of Western Australia, gave WA pork producers some cause for optimism with his projections for increased world protein demand, but cautioned them to the potential constraints to production of climate change.

Dinner sponsors included Wesfeeds, Milne AgriGroup, Australian Pork Limited, Bio John Animal Health, Computing Australia, D'Orsogna, Watsonia, Hyfarm Genetics, Intervet, Pfizer Animal Health, PIC Australia, Provimi Australia, Portec Australia and Poultry Farmers of WA Co-operative, with \$1000 worth of moisture infused pork for the dinner supplied by PPC Linley Valley Fresh.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Graeme Dent, President, Tel 08 9883 6060 or Mob 0427 836 061

Russell Cox, Executive Officer, Tel 08 9479 7315 or Mob 0428 293 095