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WA PORK PRODUCERS' LEADER CONDEMNS ANIMAL NEGLECT

Cuballing producer and President of the WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA), Graeme Dent said today that any producer not properly caring for their pigs should immediately improve their animal health and welfare practices or get out of the industry.

“WAPPA represents 250 or so producers at the front end of an industry which has a farm-gate value of \$100 million a year and directly and indirectly employs 3000 people in more than 60 shires across 300,000 square kilometres of WA's agricultural zone.

“We don't tolerate cruelty or irresponsible animal welfare practices which may lead to unnecessary suffering by pigs and we condemn the actions of anyone neglecting their responsibilities to the animals in their care,” he said.

Mr Dent was commenting following a report in today's West Australian newspaper that a WA piggery was being investigated by authorities, including the police, regarding allegations of animal cruelty.

“The great majority of the 580,000 pigs processed in WA each year have been raised in animal friendly indoor and outdoor environments, with access to abundant feed and water and appropriate veterinary care when needed.

“Unhappy, unhealthy, uncomfortable pigs do not breed effectively or produce quality meat, so the well-being, safety and health of our pigs is always of utmost concern to piggery owners, operators and staff,” Mr Dent said.

“More than 80 per cent of WA's pork is produced under APIQ, the national pig industry quality assurance scheme, which is based on World's Best Practice in animal husbandry and includes annual random independent on-farm audits.

“APIQ covers animal welfare, food safety and biosecurity aspects of production and is supported by a traceability system known as PigPass National Vendor Declaration.

“Despite these industry initiated checks and balances, it's an unfortunate fact of life that there will be some mismanagement of production units, which we deeply regret, but, as all farmers know, managing and caring for animals is an art and a science.

“WA producers are getting much of the science right, with good genetics, quality housing and feeding grain-based diets developed by world leading WA animal nutritionists and using clean, quality assured WA grain.

“The real art is training all piggery owners, managers and staff in the highest possible animal handling and husbandry systems. We’ve invested a lot of time and money in such training and have a full-time training officer based out of WAPPA’s office.

“A critical part of training stock persons is giving them the skills to prevent, rapidly diagnose and treat to ensure pigs in their care are free from pain, injury or disease.

“WA producers are determined to be part of the solution, not part of the problem,” Mr Dent concluded.

www.wappa.com.au

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