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WITH COMPLIMENTS OF THE WEST AUSTRALIAN PORK PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION • JULY 2003  
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# Processing Pork's Priorities

About to finalise an industry strategic plan, WAPPA is striving for a balance between offering a forum for the state's 360 pork producers and maintaining a broader, industry-wide focus.

Chairing his final WAPPA general meeting on Friday, June 20, outgoing President, Ken Boughton, acknowledged the Association's proposed strategy to encompass more diverse elements of the pork supply chain, such as retailers, must be managed carefully to avoid alienating its primary constituents - pork producers. However, as he handed over to interim President and former Vice President, Stuart Coole of Boyup Brook, Mr Boughton stood firm on WAPPA's vision of uniting the whole supply chain.

## Obvious Importance

"Regular attendance at WAPPA meetings of processors and feed manufacturers has helped create a more conciliatory and constructive forum in recent years," he said.

"This has built an understanding and we must now communicate similarly with other suppliers and probably the retail sector. The importance of such dialogue is obvious when you consider that in WA the two major supermarket chains sell half our pork."

WAPPA trialed the expanded format, with Watsonia's Derek Smith, D'Orsogna's Massimo Valentini and Wesfeeds' Ian Spencer speaking about their willingness to rep-



Stuart Coole (left) of Boyup Brook assumes the WAPPA Presidency from the retiring Ken Boughton, who recently chaired his last general meeting, which was minuted by new Executive Officer, David McFerran.

resent their respective processing and feed interests to WAPPA in its revised role.

## Producer Plan

David McFerran, attending his first general meeting as WAPPA Executive Officer, will refine a strategic plan based on the meeting's outcomes.

Although the plan will incorporate feedback on WAPPA's proposed inclusion of the wider supply chain, its basic structure focuses on issues such as continuity of feed grain supply, water availability, environmental protection and animal welfare.

This focus was determined by WAPPA's 2002 producer survey.



Peter McKenzie, General Manager, Great Southern Pig Company, Albany, caught up with WAPPA Executive member, Errol Howard of Wannamal and Dr Bruce Mullan of the Department of Agriculture at WAPPA's recent general meeting.



Watsonia General Manager, Derek Smith discussed WAPPA's expanding involvement with the supply chain with Executive member, Errol Howard.

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## Grains Brains

More than 20 million public dollars were spent on grains research in WA during the 2002/03 financial year.

While much of that funding was directed toward sustainable farming, crop protection and meeting human market needs, some research targeted livestock feeds. Below are two highlight stories on feed grains research supported by the Grain Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) at the Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA).

### Grasspea Drought-Breaker

Pork producers could get some relief from drought-inflated grain prices, which have doubled in the past year, with the impending WA release of a durable new variety of the legume lathyrus sativus, commonly known as 'grasspea'.

Although boasting drought and waterlogging tolerance and 25 per cent protein, it contains the neurological toxin, ODAP, which had limited its use as animal feed according to CLIMA researcher, Colin Hanbury.

#### Breeding Years

When ingested in high concentrations, ODAP can paralyse animals and humans.

After years of breeding and selection at the University of WA based CLIMA, a new benign, safe-to-eat grass pea variety has been developed by Dr Hanbury and his team by crossing low ODAP Bangladesh land races with Turkish germplasm. While ODAP concentrations of 0.2 per cent are considered safe, the new CLIMA variety, being bulked up for WA release next year, expresses just one quarter of that.

#### Drought Tolerance

This important finding resulted from collaborative research by CSIRO Livestock Industries and CLIMA, with funding from both the Grains and Rural Industries Research and Development Corporations. Grasspea's drought tolerance could help avoid a similar feed grains shortage as this year, by sustaining higher production despite dry conditions.



Murdoch University based CLIMA researcher, Dr Steve Wylie, has been at the centre of a current feed grains research project.

### Thought For Food

Australian lupin growers deliver most of their 800,000 tonne annual production into stockfeed markets, where its performance has been tempered by the grain's low methionine levels.

Methionine is an essential protein building block, which animals need in greater supply than lupins can provide. When feeding lupins, intensive livestock producers must generally add methionine supplements.

#### New Lupin

In a bid to eliminate the need for supplementary methionine, GRDC supported research has developed new, high-methionine lupin cultivars. They are scheduled for WA field trials next year, pending approval from the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator. CLIMA researcher, Dr Steve Wylie, who will help co-ordinate WA trials, said adding methionine to lupins would allow livestock producers to access significant growth advantages. GRDC supported trials by Drs Colin White, TJ Higgins and Linda Tabe of CSIRO found wool growth and live weight increased eight per cent in sheep fed the newly developed lupin.

#### Valuable Pigs

The new variety would be a valuable ruminant feed, increasing its export potential for cattle and its worth as an on-farm sheep

feed, according to Dr Tabe, of CSIRO Plant Industry.

"It would also be a valuable feed for monogastric animals such as pigs, where producers could scale back methionine supplements to take fuller advantage of the generally cost-effective lupin feed option," she said.

The new grain was developed by inserting the gene for a high methionine sunflower albumin into lupins. This could not have been achieved by conventional breeding because of the lack of a suitable gene in species closely related to lupin.

## Residue Absorbed

**Australian Pork Ltd (APL) will meet the escalating costs of maintaining the Pig Monitoring Program (PMG) to guard domestic and export markets.**

The decision to meet the costs followed a recent revelation that the residue levy would need to rise by 10.1 cents per carcass to maintain the program. All countries that Australia trades with have non-negotiable general access criteria and one of these requires that Australia has a residue monitoring program.

#### Testing Fees

The PMG is managed by the National Residue Survey, an operational unit within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia (AFFA). Rising analytical testing fees and AFFA's move to cost recovery have eroded pig industry residue reserves, requiring a levy increase. The program has an annual budget of about \$430,000 and has been fully funded by pig producers through an 8.5 cents per carcass levy at slaughter.

#### Drought Stress

When a recent APL review discovered that the PMG budget was not being met, it decided to make up the cost shortfall itself rather than recommend a producer levy increase, which would have compounded financial stresses caused by the drought. According to APL Policy General Manager, Kathleen Plowman, APL reviewed a number of options when considering the management and funding of the PMG and all required extra funding.

"The most viable option which met market access requirements still resulted in a funding shortfall of \$430,000 per year," she said.

"Since APL does not receive or manage the residue levy, this cost will impact on the funds available for some key activities in its strategic plan. APL is therefore reviewing its annual operating budgets for the 2003-06 strategic plan."

# PIC

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## New Post

WAPPA has formalised its move to Pastoral House and is now receiving mail at its new street address.

All mail should now be addressed to:

Suite 1, Pastoral House  
277 Great Eastern Hwy  
Belmont WA 6104

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Ken Boughton WAPPA President

**This is my final WAPPA President's address, as I hand over at the end of June to Stuart Coole, who will preside with remaining members of the Executive, until WAPPA's September AGM.**

The Executive has recently raised numerous initiatives for members to consider, including revising the Association's voting system, changing our name to the WA Pork Association to encompass more of the supply chain and a common member shared between the Growers' Committee and WAPPA Executive.

### Limiting Factors

It is essential that the Skills Centre piggery continues to operate after having its lease relinquished by the Education Department. Pork training is very important to the industry, with producers nominating it as one of the major limiting factors to their expansion in last year's survey. More than 65 per cent regarded quality staffing as an obstacle to business expansion and 74 per cent of those said staffing was a 'major obstacle'.

### Executive Evolution

The evolution of WAPPA's executive team continues with the arrival of new Executive Officer, David McFerran. His family has a dairy farm in Cowaramup and he was an

## Hemp for Unkempt?

**Cannabis could be the latest tool for piggery management? Pigs might fly - or somehow get high?**

Reports have emerged that hemp could manage pig effluent, with an Australian trial about to test one million hemp plants as a 'mop crop' to soak up irrigated effluent. Hemp is a sober relation to marijuana, containing negligible levels of the psychoactive ingredient THC, which means if ham was smoked with it, one would more likely become intoxicated from the ham.

### Investigate Hemp

After a three month experiment near Lismore, Australian Pork Ltd funded a PhD project to further investigate hemp and other potential mop crops for effluent management. Dr Keith Bolton of Southern Cross University, Lismore, told ABC Radio that hemp was more effective at processing effluent than pasture, due to its vigorous growth.

"Hemp grows like the clappers. It puts on biomass, sucks up nutrients and pumps water, so it's an exceptionally good mop crop in terms of getting rid of the waste produce," he said.

### Bed Stem

With a pig producing three times the waste of a human, larger piggeries often confront substantial effluent containment issues. Harvested hemp stems can be incorporated into on-farm bedding, making a useful resource of farm waste. Pork's association with hemp may not end there, with hemp retailers claiming that hemp cloth can double the refrigerated lifespan of meat when used as an alternative to plastic packages.



Executive Officer with the WA Farmers' Federation and a PhD student, researcher and lecturer in animal sciences at the University of WA.

His appointment completes the retirement of outgoing Executive Officer, Lea Newing, who will finally enjoy some time to herself. WAPPA gratefully acknowledges her support during the five months since her 'official' retirement.

Lea assures me she will retain an interest in WAPPA's progress. Thank you Lea.

### Any Input

WAPPA's strategic plan, which was formulated from results of our recent producer survey, is being reviewed by our new Executive Officer before its release.

The plan is funded by your fees for your organisation, so have your say by contacting Mr McFerran (Tel 9479 7315) or a member of the Executive with any input.

## Looking At Lobbying

**An appreciating Australian dollar and climbing input costs could further erode producer margins built through their recent export focus, according to new WAPPA Executive Officer, David McFerran.**

"Pork exports, which have increased 40-fold in recent years, are threatened by escalating input costs, led by intermittent feed grain shortages. Wavering grain production will be addressed through research," he said.

"Just as our export markets in Singapore and Japan expect consistent supply from pork producers, so we require consistent grain supply.

"WAPPA should therefore consider lobbying the grains industry to prioritise specialist feed grains production.

"With higher yielding feed varieties at their disposal, graingrowers would be encouraged to target feed grain markets."

### Immediate Goals

As a former Australian Dairy Industry Council member responsible for reviewing rural research and development (R&D) corporations, Mr McFerran's familiarity with R&D underpins some of his immediate goals for WAPPA.

## WAPPA Mourns Great Contributors

**Since the first issue of WAPPA Pork Yarns for 2003, two great contributors to Australia's pork industry have, sadly, passed away - John Newing of Tambellup, former husband of recently retired WAPPA Executive Officer, Lea Newing and also Ron Collins of Queensland, publisher of 'Australian Pork Newspaper'.**

John's journey included: a six year term on the Board of the Australian Pork Corporation; instigating the King Pork Group, which 25 years ago was ahead of its time as a pro-

ducer marketing alliance with a branded product; negotiating payment to producers based on P2.

Ron's journey included many visits to WA, over many years, speaking with WA pork producers and generally helping promote the interests of Australian pork producers via his national publication.

John and Ron are sadly missed by WA pork producers, WAPPA and the publisher of **WAPPA Pork Yarns**, Brendon Cant and both are thanked for their selfless and inspirational contributions.

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by Daph Kavanagh, Sales Supervisor,  
Australian Pork Ltd

**Whipping up a stirfry is a good way to save time in the kitchen, with most able to be prepared in a short time.**

And then, when the meal has been served and eaten, it takes no time to clean the single saucepan used to prepare it, leaving plenty of time to accept all the compliments on your cooking!! Parents of fussy eaters can also hide suspiciously healthy looking vegetables in a stirfry. With the last issue of **WAPPA Pork Yarns** suggesting that the association might drop a 'P' to become the WA Pork Association, this recipe could also find a use for the left over 'pea'.



**Stirfry Pork with Peas**

Preparation Time: 10 minutes Serves: 4  
Cooking Time: 15 minutes

- 2 1/2 cups frozen peas
- 250g diced pork
- 1 tbsp spring onion (white part only) finely chopped
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp white wine
- 1 tsp cornstarch dissolved in 2 tsp water Fresh chillies (optional)
- Cooking oil:
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt to taste
- 1 tbsp peanut or vegetable oil

Pour boiling water over peas and drain. Sauté spring onion and ginger in 1 tbsp hot oil. Mix in diced pork, brown lightly, add white wine and reduce. If desired, add finely chopped chillies at this point. Add peas, light soy sauce, sugar, salt and 1 tbsp oil. Add dissolved cornstarch and return to boil until thickened. Serve with noodles or rice. Bon appetite.

**Growing Plan**

WAPPA is close to finalising its strategic plan for the industry and it is now being reviewed by new Executive Officer, David McFerran.

The plan will focus WAPPA's lobbying efforts to generate an environment which encourages expansion among producers to sustain WA's prodigious export growth of the past five years.

**Double Production**

WAPPA would like the half of WA's producer population operating 50 - 400 sow businesses to double production to meet escalating export demand. When WAPPA conducted a producer survey, it found that respondents held a similar view, with half interested in expanding. The hurdles obstructing the realisation of an expansive vision will underpin WAPPA's strategic plan. Below is a summary of WA producers' perceived obstacles to expansion.

The plan should be released at WAPPA's September AGM.

	Manageable Obstacle	Minimal Obstacle	Unsure Obstacle	Manageable Obstacle	Major Obstacle
Corporate Risk	18%	11%	4%	36%	32%
Raising Finance	17%	30%	7%	30%	17%
Business Partner Opposition	39%	18%	7%	21%	14%
Environmental Constraints	37%	30%	3%	30%	0%
Staffing	14%	17%	3%	17%	48%
Marketing Extra Produce	45%	17%	14%	21%	3%
Water Resources	33%	17%	10%	20%	20%

Please Note:  
The number of respondents varied by one or two for some questions.



New WAPPA President, Stuart Coole (rear) of Boyup Brook and Executive Officer, David McFerran, will refine the industry strategic plan for release at WAPPA's September AGM.

**Explore Intense Findings**

Copies of the findings from WAPPA's February 19 Intensive Industries Forum are now available.

WAPPA convened the forum to explore right-to-farm issues believed to have inhibited expansion among many producers. Discussions highlighted inconsistencies between local shires in their interpretation of Acts.

Copies of the forum's findings are available from WAPPA Executive Officer, David McFerran, Tel 9479 7315.

Consultant, Colin Mann, is attempting to organise a meeting between local government planning representatives and members of intensive industries.

**PUBLISHER'S DETAILS**

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