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WITH COMPLIMENTS OF THE WEST AUSTRALIAN PORK PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION • MARCH 2003
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WAPPA Seeks Middle Ground

Pork producers should attend WAPPA's March 7 general meeting and debate voting rights.

The current system, one vote per sow, sometimes divides large and small producers. WAPPA is therefore keen to equally embrace large and small producers so that a collective lobbying voice can consistently be put on behalf of the \$100 million a year industry.

However, large producers, some of whom contribute up to \$40,000 a year via the compulsory fee for service (about 50 cents a pig at slaughter), claim they earn the right to have greater influence over WAPPA activities because of their larger contributions to the fund which supports it.

WAPPA President, Ken Boughton, warned that the worst outcome of a voting rights review would be the Association splitting and this was a distinct possibility if a system of one vote/one producer was introduced.

Pig Worthy

"Is someone with one pig worthy of being defined as a producer with equal voting rights to someone with 1000 sows and a million dollar investment in the industry?"

Australian Pork Ltd. (APL) delegates have one vote per 7000 sows (approximately). One proposal which will be put to WAPPA's March 7 general meeting, to be held at Pastoral House, commencing 9am, is for a staggered voting system where an enterprise with up to 50 sows has one vote, 51-100 sows has two votes and progressing up to enterprises of more than 2000 sows with 12 votes.

"WAPPA usually makes decisions by consensus, without needing to vote, because our members share a responsible 'industry-first' approach to issues, but we need a workable constitution," Mr Boughton explained.

"Smaller producers must have their voice, but the one vote per producer system fails to recognise the contribution of larger members, so we must seek the middle ground."

Name Change

The meeting will also continue dialogue on a possible name change from WA Pork Producers' Association (WAPPA) to WA Pork Association (WAPA). Other highlights will include the launch of Stock Guard and industry reports from APL board member, Dr Chris Brennan.

Drought Bites

Drought induced deterioration of Australia's trade position is likely to continue if new feed grain import projections, released by agricultural consultants, Farm Horizons, are realised.

CEO, Lloyd George, believes grain imports, which began in early January, will exceed 750,000 tonnes.

"Despite evidence that the feed grains industry has already instituted rationing, Farm Horizons research shows that a substantial and ongoing import program for the remainder of this year will be required to meet escalating feed requirements."

Mr George said the effect of the drought at the macroeconomic level, already evident in record trade deficits, would continue. Meanwhile, at the micro level, in rural communities, poor profit margins caused by rising feed prices and water and fodder shortages, combined with low meat prices, would leave some producers with negative returns and could force them out of business.

The Farm Horizons Feed Grains Report is distributed to subscribers via the Farm Horizons website at www.farmhorizons.com

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Regulation Wrangle is Raging

Inconsistent regulation threatening expansion among WA's intensive agricultural industries, including the \$100 million pork industry, is being investigated.

A second Intensive Industries Forum, opened by Minister for Agriculture, Kim Chance on February 19 continued a unified push from intensive industries, such as pork and poultry, to keep commercial growth viable.

WAPPA organised the forum and President, Ken Boughton said 'right to farm' issues must be addressed now so producers could confidently expand to capture growing markets.

"WA's annual pork exports are 40 times their value of five years ago and that sort of growth should be embraced by WA, not met with regulatory resistance," he cautioned.

"We believe in responsible regulation of industry growth, but WAPPA's Executive has seen how expansion and the right to farm is threatened by ambiguous legislation."

Growth Hurdles

Many of the hurdles to growth identified at a similar 2002 forum, such as agricultural development planning, water use rights and WorkSafe, are being addressed by the appropriate industries and Government agencies.

However, complicated planning legislation requires further immediate attention.

The forum included discussions on:

- Findings from the 2002 Intensive Industries Forum.
- Local Government interpretation of legislation.
- Nuisance problems with urban sprawl.
- Relocation: where to and who pays?

A report of outcomes from the forum will be compiled and sent to all intensive industries and agencies.



At the Intensive Industries Forum were (L to R) WAPPA Executive Officer Lea Newing, WAPPA Executive member Anne Graham of Pinjarra and Lucy Beckwith of WAFarmers.



Discussing regulations covering intensive industries were (L to R) WAPPA Executive Officer Lea Newing, Ian Kininmonth and Charlie Thorn, both of the WA Department of Agriculture and forum facilitator Colin Mann.



WAPPA Executive member Anne Graham of Pinjarra, Australian Pork Ltd. Manager, Environmental Sustainability, Jeya Jeyasingham and WAPPA President Ken Boughton during a break in the forum.



Pooling ideas were (L to R) Dr Rob Wilson, General Manager, Wandalup Farms, Helena Whitman, Hort-Ag, Dave Peckitt, WA Health Department and forum facilitator Colin Mann.

'Weather' Feed Costs are High or Low

Weather forecasts for 2003 trend towards a wetter season and a hopeful restoration of WA's grain production capacity to ease the feed costs faced by local pork producers.

Ten of the 12 commonly used statistical and coupled atmosphere/ocean models predict a breakdown of the El Nino weather system that has limited showers in the past year, according to WA Department of Agriculture climatologist, David Stephens.

To predict El Nino and La Nina events, scientists refer to the southern oscillation index (SOI), which is a comparison of the air pressures in Darwin and Tahiti.

However Dr Stephens has developed extra predictive tools such as the 'El Nino Prediction Index' (EPI) and the 'MeanSOI', which measure air pressure anomalies between different regional east-west localities.

Running Mean

Both indices suggest the El Nino could soon end and perhaps be replaced by a La Nina event, bringing average or above average rainfall in 2003.

"The running three month MeanSOI bottomed out in September and has been rising since. Of the seven recorded transitions from El Nino to La Nina, the three month running mean reached its lowest value before December," Dr Stephens said.

"When we examine analogous years to 2002 from WA history, five emerge as very similar, with all but one followed by a year of average to above average rainfall.

"In 2003 we can expect average to above average rainfall, with an 80 percent confidence, although a 20 percent chance of below average rainfall remains."

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Ken Boughton WAPPA President

An Intensive Industries Forum in February focussed very much on the 'right to farm'.

Government agencies were represented and contributed well, but there remains a 'by the book' emphasis which is often at odds with farmer aspirations.

Minister for Agriculture, Kim Chance, capably addressed the forum and stayed for a long question session during which he fielded several enquiries about water.

During the session, it became clear that water, and many other matters, generate a great diversity of opinion.

Local Stem

The Local Government Association was represented, but one wonders how much information gets back to individual shire councils, which is unfortunate because most of our problems stem from local council interpretations of the codes of practice.

WAPPA Executive committee member, Anne Graham, outlined her nightmare experiences with greedy neighbours and local councils. To prevent this happening to others, WAPPA must make progress on this front.

The Pastoralists and Graziers Association has done a lot of work on the right to farm and will help us. They suggest that we get our thoughts together and define and limit the areas to target.

I tried to put a structure together at the forum, with funding from those present, to employ Colin Mann and Helena Whitman to further the cause, but with no immediate success. You will hear more about this in future months.

Events Overtaken

Recent developments have overtaken WAPPA's expansion survey results. Few people are likely to invest in the industry with feed prices as they are. (It would be a good time to do your planning, though, and ready yourself for the next pig scarcity).

It's worth noting that staff are seen as the major obstacle to expansion, with risk coming second. There must be some lessons here.



The 'PIC' Of Pork Yarns Sponsors

WAPPA Pork Yarns sponsor PIC Australia (PIC) hosted a seminar at Narrogin featuring United Kingdom pig production authority, John Goss, who told producers that improving piggery efficiency could substantially cut production costs.

Speaking at the forum, which was also supported by Bio-John Animal Health, Portec Australia and Australian Pork Ltd., he noted that Australian producers were better off than their UK counterparts.

"UK producers have run at or below the cost of production for the past three years, yet I understand most in Australia run at about 10 per cent above. In the UK, reducing stocking rates by 20 per cent had helped increase growth rates by 100 grams per day," he said.

Greater attention to water ('the forgotten food') also helped push weaning rates up.

"A sow with 10 piglets needs about 45 litres of water a day, so water nipples must deliver at the right rate, otherwise she won't take in enough water and won't produce adequate milk. Consistent water delivery was very important in hot climates, although Australian producers shouldn't blame heat for poor production, as Spain, with a similar climate, enjoyed daily weight gains well above Australia's," Mr Goss said.

The former owner of a 600 sow UK multiplier site, supplying PIC, he is now Commercial Genomics Program Manager with PIC UK.



At the PIC forum were (L to R) Pork Yarns Sponsor Colin Goundrey, Alpharma, Dr Bruce Welch, Portec and John Goss, PIC UK.



At PIC's John Goss WA pork production forum were Pork Yarns Sponsor Tony Mucciarone, Bio-John Animal Health and Cameron Christensen, Cuballing.



At the Narrogin forum were Pork Yarns Sponsors Lui Rinaldi, PPC Linley Valley and Phil Stanaitis, PIC Regional Manager, with Lyla Christensen, Cuballing.

GM On Your Fork

Researchers at the University of Guelph, Canada, are preparing to test the safety of meat produced from genetically modified pigs.

They will soon start safety testing 'enviropig', which is engineered to produce an enzyme that improves phosphorus utilization, by taking the animals through the Novel Foods Act of Health Canada.

They are also preparing to tackle the United States Food and Drug Administration testing system.

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by Daph Kavanagh, Sales Supervisor,
Australian Pork Ltd

Chinese New Year has come and gone once again, leaving in its wake an extravagant three day feast, from January 30 to February 1.

It should have given domestic pork consumption a good start to the year of the goat as the local Chinese community and their hungry Australian contemporaries turned to Chinese cuisine, with its lashings of tasty pork.

The Chinese regard pork as succulent, flavoursome and versatile, which makes it their most popular meat.

That's no surprise when you consider the profile of those born in the Chinese year of the pig — *Pigs are nice to a fault and possess impeccable manners and taste.*

When you see them at the trough, impeccable manners are hard to believe, but impeccable taste sounds right.



EGG FOO YUNG WITH PORK

Serves: 6
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 10 minutes

- 8 eggs
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 cups bean sprouts, brown tails removed
- 250g minced pork
- Half cup frozen peas
- 1 garlic finely minced clove
- 1.5 tsp finely minced fresh ginger
- Salt and white pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 0.25 cup finely sliced shallots
- 2 tbsp peanut or vegetable oil

Beat eggs with salt and pepper. Wash and drain bean sprouts. Mix pork with ginger and garlic. Lightly brown pork in 1 tbsp of oil, then turn into sieve over a bowl to drain excess and discard remaining oil from the pan.

Add pork, peas, bean sprouts and 1 tbsp soy sauce to the egg mixture. Heat a fresh tbsp oil in the frypan or wok and pour in 0.5 cup of egg mixture.

Cook until brown on underside and egg is almost cooked through, then turn onto a warm plate, fold in half with the brown side up, and loosely cover. Repeat with remaining mixture. For larger omelettes, try using a full cup of mixture.

Serve on individual plates and sprinkle with chopped shallots and soy sauce for dipping.

Pricing Process Hunting Industry

Explosive growth in WA's \$100 million pork industry is threatened by increasing feed costs and an unaccommodating processor price ceiling.

WAPPA President, Ken Boughton, has warned that after three years building WA's sow numbers to overcome 1998 supply shortages and meet escalating international demand, the herd again risks failing its markets.

"The drought has inflated grain feed prices and producers are not being compensated by processors who are maintaining untenably low prices," he explained.

"Some producers are responding by jumping ship, jeopardising hard won export markets and others are downsizing herds. We'll soon have too few pigs to fill orders. Producers have lost faith in the pricing system, which masquerades as being fair."

Australian Pork Ltd. (APL) figures show WA is the only state where pork and bacon prices did not rise in the past year. Mr Boughton said producers had been told in past years that lower WA prices were due to a stable pricing system that would provide security in tougher times, but that was now proving false.

For three years after pig numbers fell in 1998, producers scrambled to meet demand and build capacity. He did not want that repeated but hoped, instead, that processors would support the industry through the drought by keeping prices as high as possible.

"Producers have been under intense pressure to expand and supply growing international markets, but that expansion must be supported by the processors that have demanded it," Mr Boughton stressed.

APL expects pork exports to Singapore to climb from 28,000 tonnes per annum to 40,000t by June 2005 and exports to Japan to grow from 10,000t to 35,000t, reinforcing WA's need to maintain maximum production potential.

WAPPA recently commissioned a survey of local producers to identify the perceived obstacles to expansion and hopes to help the 44 per cent of WA producers who have 50 to 400 sows double production. Ballooning drought induced feed hikes were expected to lead the obstacles identified. However, that reaction was likely to grow with the price rigidity experienced in WA.

"Processors must recognise that their fortunes are intimately linked to producers and they must take some responsibility for our collective good," Mr Boughton concluded.

Frank Discussion On Carcasses

Frank Dunshea, researcher with the Victorian Institute of Animal Science, is the keynote speaker at a WA Department of Agriculture workshop, "Managing Carcass Quality To Meet Market Needs", to be held at the Ascot Inn on Friday, April 11.

Topics to be covered include fat and muscle deposition and their impact on carcass quality and management strategies producers can engage to improve carcasses.

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