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WITH COMPLIMENTS OF THE WEST AUSTRALIAN PORK PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION • November 2004
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Restructure Way of the Future

Consultation with pork producers across Australia regarding restructure of the industry kicked off at WAPPA's general meeting at Pastoral House on October 22.

According to WAPPA President Stuart Coole, the industry must commit to restructure along the supply chain to address the challenges of subsidised imports and other factors impacting negatively on pork production in Australia.

Imports to WA from Denmark (1,618 tonnes) more than doubled in 2003/04, but Canada (1,846 tonnes) was the major supplier with 53%.

WA's pork industry contributed \$105 million (gross value/farm gate) in 2003/04 to the WA economy and provided direct and indirect employment for 3000 people.

Informing Process

"The Australian Pork Limited consultation process will inform producers and processors of challenges the industry faces and solicit input from all links in the supply chain.

"The industry's Draft Seven Year Restructure Plan will focus on achieving a globally competitive industry, with profitable returns to all sectors of pork production.

"WAPPA expects the restructure to address initiatives such as improved animal health, increased carcase size, greater fresh meat consumption, reduced feed costs, longer term supply and pricing arrangements, Australian HomeGrown branding and fighting unfair trade," Mr Coole said.

The meeting also discussed the HomeGrown food labelling initiative, a joint effort, with

52 other agricultural industries, to promote Australian produce.

WAPPA Push

"WAPPA has been pushing for such a labelling or branding program to allow consumers to identify country of origin at point of sale, particularly as imported pork accounts for 41.5% of the processed pork market and processed product comprises more than 60% of total pork consumption," Mr Coole said.

"Building on the emotional bond Australian consumers have with farmers and their produce, HomeGrown will let consumers know, for the first time, whether the pork product they're buying is genuinely made with 100% Australian produce."



At WAPPA's general meeting were Dr Bruce Mullan of the Department of Agriculture, Wannamal producer Annette Howard and Dudinin producer Bernie Mullan.



Massimo Valentini of D'Orsogna, Wannamal producer Steve Martin, Pinjarra producer Roy Christmass and Darryl D'Souza of PPC Wholesale Foods caught up at the WAPPA general meeting.

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Watsonia Grower of the Year

Marty and Karen Van Beek of Moora are the 2004 Watsonia Contract Grower of the Year in the category of more than 4000 baconer pigs supplied per annum to Watsons.

Watsons Livestock Manager Joe Ascenso said 81.6% of the baconers the Van Beeks supplied met Watsons' peak weight and grade schedule.

The Van Beeks have been in pig production for many years and are contract growers for Wandalup Farms, which is owned by Watsons parent, George Weston Foods.

"As enthusiastic members of the Wandalup contract group, they enjoy the benefits of technical input and controls from Wandalup, along with routine herd health, production record monitoring and advice.

"Good husbandry, good records and attention to detail has been rewarded with excellent production efficiency," Mr Ascenso said.

The Van Beeks operate two sites – a 5000 pig place grower unit, taking pigs from Prime Piggeries breeder unit and an 8000 pig place grower unit, taking three week old weaners from Wandalup and growing them through to slaughter.

All are grown out in straw-based eco-shelters, with 33,000 annually turned off.

Fifth Victory

For the fifth successive year, CA & EM Benson & Sons of Mingenew were awarded the less than 4000 baconers category at Burswood during the gala dinner attended by about 100 producers and Watsons management.



Watsonia Grower of the Year 2004 winners (more than 4000 baconers category) Marty and Karen Van Beek of Moora with Nicci Smith and Watsons General Manager Derek Smith at the Watsonia gala dinner at Burswood.

Westpork won the porker category, based on the highest percentage of pork pigs meeting Watsons' peak weight and grade schedule of 35 - 45kg carcass weight and 11mm back fat.

WAPPA was officially represented at the gala dinner by Executive Officer Russell Cox.

Industry Restructure Consultations

Australian Pork Limited (APL) is consulting extensively with producers across the country on the industry's Draft Seven Year Restructure Plan.

APL Chairman Paul Higgins said the challenges posed to the industry by subsidised imports, plus the lingering effects of the drought meant the industry had to commit to restructure across the entire supply chain.

"The purpose of the consultation process is to inform producers of the exact nature of the challenges faced and to seek input from all parts of the supply chain. The plan's success rests on its whole of supply chain approach and encapsulates APL's key strategic initiatives: increasing fresh meat consumption; increasing carcass size; HomeGrown; longer term supply and pricing arrangements; improved animal health; reducing feed costs and fighting unfair trade.



Watsons Livestock Manager Joe Ascenso, Australian Pork Limited Chairman Dr Paul Higgins, APL WA Sales Supervisor Daph Kavanagh and Dardanup Butchering Company General Manager Brian Pittendreich at the industry restructure plan meeting at Pastoral House.

"The industry's strategic business plan and its associated programs focus on delivering key outcomes essential to achieving a globally competitive industry underpinned by profitable returns to all sectors, commensurate with risk."

APL envisages the future of Australia's pork industry will be characterised by:

- production and supply chains aligned with global trading systems in order to reduce costs and improve competitive efficiencies against imports;
- increased efficiency and utilisation of key feed sources;
- lower price volatility;
- greatly increased domestic market sales of fresh pork;
- reduced penetration of processed goods by imported product;
- steady expansion of niche export markets, capitalising on key competitive advantages of low diseases status and geographical access to Asian markets;
- building on the industry's existing commitment to meeting consumer and society standards of ethical food production;
- increased levels of regional employment.

"To successfully achieve greater efficiencies, improve international competitiveness and take advantage of new market opportunities, it is imperative the final Industry Restructure Plan is fully supported by the industry across the supply chain," Dr Higgins said.



HomeGrown

HomeGrown

Agriculture Minister Warren Truss has launched the Australian HomeGrown food labelling initiative, a project allowing consumers to identify Australian fresh produce.



HomeGrown

Described by the Minister as the most significant development in Australian agriculture since federation, the HomeGrown initiative had its genesis in the pork industry and now involves 52 agricultural sectors. According to WAPPA President Stuart Coole, food labelling has concerned the pigmeat industry for some time, especially as it battles imports, and the program will address the lack of country of origin food labelling in Australia.

"Consumer research conducted by Australian Pork Limited identified that Australians assume all produce, particularly fresh produce, is Australian grown. There was a strong emotional bond between Australian consumers and those Australian farmers who grow their food, and the HomeGrown concept builds on that bond. Consumers can identify, for the first time, if the produce they are buying is made with 100% Australian produce. All that remains is for consumers to get behind produce bearing the HomeGrown logo," Mr Coole said.

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Stuart Coole, WAPPA President

With the well publicised October 22 'invasion' of a piggery north of Perth and the associated animal welfare issues this raises, I thought it appropriate to explain to WAPPA members the position of Australian Pork Limited (APL).

The use of Dry Sow Stalls (DSS), according to APL, is consistent with sow welfare and any changes resulting from the current review of the Model Code of Practice in this area need to be supported by sound science and be practical and affordable for producers to implement.

APL has consulted extensively with producers, delegates, the wider industry and key stakeholders in the past 12 months, including regional producer meetings in each state, delegate surveys and a producer survey on a number of welfare issues.

APL also conducted a ballot of APL delegates for sow stall options in July 2004. Thirty delegates responded and Price Waterhouse Coopers acted as scrutineer for the voting process.

The voting process was preferential and was overwhelmingly supportive of the option for sow stalls to be used for up to 10 weeks of any one gestation period, after a defined lead-in time, as well as for occasional housing of individual animals for animal health reasons and/or restorative feeding, or for confining animals at feeding time.

Only four of the 30 delegates voted as their first preference for the status quo position (sow stalls permitted to be used for the sow's entire gestation indefinitely) to be adopted.

APL has also undertaken financial modelling and analysis of the impact on producers of different housing scenarios.

As a result of the consultation process, APL's policy position on DSS is:

That dry sow stalls should be permitted to be used for up to 10 weeks of any one gestation period, after sufficient lead time, as well as for occasional housing of indi-



vidual animals for animal health reasons and/or restorative feeding, or for confining animals at feeding time.

Long lead times for adjustment are a priority for industry. Indications at this stage, based upon financial analysis, suggest a lead time of at least 14 years.

This position recognises there is diversity of views inside and outside the industry regarding the use of dry sow housing and the science in this area is not definitive.

Public Pressure

APL also recognises mounting public pressure towards housing of animals that allows more freedom of movement and the industry's response to such pressures must focus on balancing animal welfare advantages associated with stall housing for sows with issues relating to the affordability and practicality of implementing the changes.

For further information about the background of APL's policy position, or the Australian pork industry's animal welfare strategic direction, contact Amanda Reagan, APL Senior Policy Analyst, Tel 1800 789 099.

You may also like to contact your APL delegate or state member of APL's Animal Welfare Consultative Group. Contact details can be obtained from Amanda Reagan.

Productivity Commission Submission

WAPPA made its submission to the Productivity Commission on October 15, with help from the Department of Agriculture and Australian Pork Limited.

The Productivity Commission inquiry will investigate the competitive situation and outlook for the Australian pigmeat industry, including production and processing. Presiding Commissioner, Dr Neil Byron visited Perth on September 21 and 22 and met processors and manufacturers, WAPPA Executive and APL delegates and directors.

WAPPA President, Stuart Coole said he hoped WAPPA's submission influenced the Commission to recommend the industry receive government support.

"The Commission's inquiry, to be completed within five months, will look at issues such as competitiveness, profitability and future prospects of the pigmeat industry. It will investigate the industry's current situation and outlook to determine if there's a need for additional government and industry measures to enhance the industry's competitiveness," Mr Coole said.

Executive Summary

- WA's pork industry contributed \$105 million (gross value/farm gate) in 2003/04 to the WA economy and provided direct and indirect employment for 3000 people.
- WA sow herd of about 35,700 at June 2001 represents 12% of Australian herd.
- WA average herd size has risen from 50 sows a decade ago, to 100 sows.
- Number of producers expected to decline from 360 to 200 in next five years.
- Impact on production costs of any proposed changes to current regulations on dry sow stalls should be examined and reported on as part of this inquiry.

- Production costs will rise unless cost competitive alternatives to antibiotics can be found and this should be a priority for research and development.
- Producers face increasing challenges to maintain high standards of individual farm biosecurity.
- Banning feeding of all animal products to pigs would decrease profitability by \$60 per sow or 10%.
- Attracting/keeping quality staff is an issue which must be addressed.
- Imports to WA from Denmark (1,618 tonnes) more than doubled in 2003/04, but Canada was still the major supplier with 53% (1,846 tonnes).
- WA producers question if pork imported into Australia has been pro-

duced under similar quality assurance standards as the local product.

- Increasing carcass weights will reduce costs right through the supply chain, making the industry more globally competitive, provided it competes on a level international playing field.
- If Australia's pigmeat industry is being injured by imported product, a safeguard investigation is warranted to improve competitiveness.

WAPPA has requested a public hearing of the Commission be held in Perth and producers will be notified if this is scheduled.

WAPPA's submission is available from WAPPA, Tel 9479 7315 or the Productivity Commission website, www.pc.gov.au



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DAPH'S APL KITCHEN

by Daph Kavanagh, Sales Supervisor,
Australian Pork Limited

Pork is a traditional festive season favourite and now is the time to order your Christmas hams!

APL has organised for 25,000 ham bags to be available for butchers to purchase for their Christmas hams.

The ham bags feature cutting and storage instructions, helping consumers keep their Australian hams fresh and delicious this holiday season.

Hello Hello

Demonstrations were conducted at 80 Woolworths stores across Australia to highlight the stir-fry and steak recipes featured in the current 'Hello' campaign. Consumers indicated they enjoyed the flavours and were interested in the new recipes, while store personnel appreciated the in-store activity creating customer interest.

APL will monitor the impact of the demonstrations on sales, consumer perceptions of pork as a daily meat alternative and customer appreciation of pork's versatility.

Climate Change

While we all appreciate a pork roast, sometimes our Christmas climate isn't too conducive for roasting. So, with a tasty ham in the fridge, why not try a fresh summer salad?



BBQ HAM SUMMER SALAD

Serves Four

Preparation Time: 10 mins

Cooking Time: 10 mins

4 nectarines or peaches, halved
300g leg ham, sliced thinly
1 red capsicum, cut thickly
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed
olive oil, for brushing
150g baby rocket leaves
16 grape tomatoes, halved
1/2 cup balsamic dressing to serve
1/2 cup fruit or mango chutney to serve

Pre-heat BBQ or large griddle pan over medium heat. Brush ham, nectarines, capsicum and asparagus with a little oil. BBQ ham, nectarines, capsicum and asparagus for three minutes on each side. Toss rocket leaves and tomatoes together in a bowl with balsamic dressing. Divide salad between four serving bowls. Arrange ham, nectarines, capsicum and asparagus over salad. Serve with crusty bread and a dollop of chutney. **Bon Appetit!**



Australian Pork Limited
General Manager, Policy,
Kathleen Plowman and
APL WA Sales Supervisor,
Daph Kavanagh were all
smiles at the conclusion
of the meeting on the draft
industry restructure plan.

A major aim of the re-
structure is to increase
domestic sales of fresh
pork in Australia and
meet consumer standards
of food production.

Better Managing Herd Health

Fourteen stockpeople and piggery managers attended a herd health management workshop, co-ordinated by Pork Industry Training (WA), on October 18.

Delivered by Portec's Barb Frey, it revolved around 'big picture' health management. Participants were encouraged to focus on disease and health management in the context of a pig's age, environment and housing system.

The group then headed to the Department of Agriculture's post mortem laboratory to put theory into practice. After a very enthusiastic demonstration from Dr Frey, participants put their newly acquired skills to the test.

The specimens provided some very interesting examination and discussion and, despite it being quite a warm day, everyone remained upright and healthy!

The workshop also included a session on emergency diseases to help participants comply with the new APIQ Biosecurity Standard relating to emergency disease recognition.

Although not enforceable until the end of 2005, this training has put these producers on the front foot, according to Emalyn Loudon of Pork Industry Training (WA).

"We're looking at incorporating a similar health management workshop into the Certificate IV Piggery Managers' Training Course, which should be up and running by early 2005."

The Piggery Managers' Course will be structured in a similar way to the Stockperson Training Course, however it will be aligned to a Certificate IV in Pig Production rather than Certificate III.

Certificate IV level training is aimed at those responsible for staff supervision, interpretation

and analysis of data, and management decision making.

Information regarding this course and other training activities is available from Emalyn Loudon, Tel 9479 7311.



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PUBLISHER'S DETAILS

WAPPA PORK YARNS is published quarterly by Brendon Cant & Associates
Tel: 08-9385 7779 Fax: 08-9385 7776 Email: brendon@iinet.net.au
on behalf of the WA Pork Producers' Association.

The publisher and the Association accept no responsibility for the views expressed and suggest producers seek independent advice before acting on any information contained herein.

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