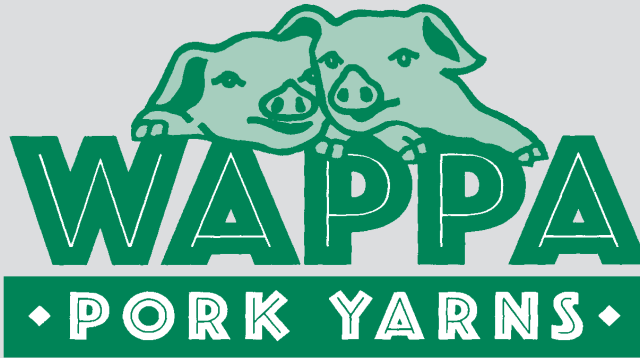


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Prices to 'Dry Up'

Anxiety in WA's pork industry is growing about as quickly as WA's 2002 grain harvest estimates are plummeting.

While many pork producers manage mixed enterprise businesses and have therefore watched their own crops perish under stubborn skies, which have refused to shed a rescuing drop of moisture, all are feed grains customers nervously watching prices climb. Grain harvest forecasts have now dipped below six million tonnes, to almost half last year's production.

Dry Shared

WA's struggle with the dry has been shared across most of Australia's grain production regions.

"Production of wheat, barley, canola and lupins is now forecast to be 14.8 million tonnes for 2002-03, compared with the forecast of 20 million tonnes made in September," Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics Executive Director, Dr Brian Fisher said. "Last season, production of these four major winter crops totalled a near record 34.1 million tonnes. Now we will be lucky to reach 15 million tonnes. This will be the lowest production of these crops since 1994-95."

Facing Pressure

WAPPA will meet with local processors to promote understanding of the escalating



Drought conditions across Australia will push feed prices higher and inflate production costs.

costs producers are facing.

"As with all commodities, pork producers operate with a very fine margin and so can not afford to absorb skyrocketing grain costs themselves," said WAPPA Executive Officer, Lea Newing. "We will work with processors to ensure they set prices with an eye on the climbing input costs. We expect that message to be well-received because of the close relationship WAPPA has fostered between producers and processors."

Compound Costs

WAPPA will also meet with consumer groups to inform them of the likely impact of drought on shelf prices.

"Urban consumers may not expect increases because they don't understand just how crippling the drought has been and how that will compound pork production costs," Ms Newing said.

"It's important that we guard against the misconception that our production and processing industry are driving prices for personal gain."

New 'Blood' on WAPPA Executive



Keith Ashton

Keith Ashton, 'Kadina', Kojonup has replaced Liam Flanagan, Great Southern Pig Company, Albany, on the WAPPA Executive.

He joins Ken Boughton, Westpork, Stuart Coole, 'Quanta', Boyup Brook and Anne Graham, 'Pindari', Pinjarra. Mr Flanagan has retired after several years on the Executive, including a term as President. WAPPA's annual general meeting, at The Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, was attended by 35 producers, processors and industry stakeholders.

Animal Welfare

A general meeting, held immediately after the AGM, was addressed by Australian Pork Limited (APL) senior managers Kathleen
continued next page

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New 'Blood' on WAPPA Executive

continued from front

Plowman and Terry Brown. Ms Plowman said APL had identified security of feedstuff supply and animal welfare as two of the most important issues facing the pork industry. For this reason, strategies were being developed to improve feed efficiency, risk management and market information and also to promote pork production as animal welfare friendly.

Exports Climb

Mr Brown, who manages APL's domestic and export marketing, said he expected pork exports to Singapore would climb from 28,000 tonnes per annum to 40,000t by June 2005. He also forecast an increase in exports to Japan – from 10,000t to 35,000t. Consumers, the food service sector and the medical profession were three key targets to help increase domestic pork consumption, which had been fairly static recently. Efforts by APL's 'Cook It Right' campaign, which, among other things, advised consumers that there was no need to over cook pork, had been undermined by some members of the medical profession who continued to propagate myths about pork.

New Record

A new record for exports of farmed Australian pigmeat was set in July (6000t, valued at \$25.5 million), with the Japanese market up 32% on the previous month. WA Department of Agriculture has co-ordinated a visit to WA by Taiwan's largest sausage maker, Black Bridge Foods Corporation and an investment mission by Japanese farmers and food processors.

WAPPA's annual industry dinner, also held at The Esplanade, was attended by 120 people. Guest speaker was Murdoch University veterinarian Dr Ross Buddle.

Dinner sponsors were D'Orsogna, PIC, Portec, PPC, Watsonia, Wesfeeds, CSL, Intervet, Alltech, Milne Feeds, Alpharma and Kings Choice.

At the 2002 WAPPA Annual Industry Dinner



Enjoying WAPPA's hospitality were Norma Thomason, Janette and Rodney Wells of 'Hexham Grange', Quairading and Loretta Valentini-D'Orsogna.



Sharing a laugh were new WAPPA Executive Committee member, Keith Ashton of Kojonup, APL Policy General Manager, Kathleen Plowman and Stuart and Helen Coole of Boyup Brook.



Pictured at the dinner were PIC Administration Officer, Lucinda Brown, Shaun McCullough and partner Stacey McCullough of the Department of Agriculture.



Dawn and Owen Scarfe of Wandalup Farms, Mandurah, were among those who enjoyed a relaxing evening at The Esplanade.



WAPPA President, Ken Boughton, APL Marketing General Manager, Terry Brown and guest speaker, Dr Ross Buddle of Murdoch University, shared a table at the dinner.

WAPPA Wired on Web

Welcoming news that Australia's farmed pigmeat exports for the year ended July had jumped 40% to \$260 million, WAPPA launched its website www.wappa.com.au

Announcing the user-friendly site, WAPPA President, Ken Boughton, said a worldwide web presence was an essential tool for any producer organisation.

"On top of our responsibility to inform, educate and lobby, we have a clear mandate to initiate marketing activities which will help tap new markets worldwide."

Recent Initiatives

Mr Boughton added that the website, designed and constructed by Daniel Hutchinson of Agri Professional Services, complemented other recent WAPPA marketing initiatives, including proposed workshops on alliancing and branding to assist producers interested in establishing branded alliances to value add their product. Regular postings to www.wappa.com.au include WAPPA media releases, WAPPA Pork Yarns, fabulous pork recipes from Daph Kavanagh of Australian Pork Limited, details of courses run by Pork Training WA (formerly WAPITEC) and links to other useful sites.

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Ken Boughton WAPPA President

Has our pork industry overrun itself? After enjoying incredible growth in the past half decade, the industry seems to have been gripped by a reluctance to keep step with market growth.

WAPPA is anxious not to forego the opportunity that is courting our industry and is driven to help better meet escalating international demand for fresh WA pork. Writing about the WA pork industry recently, Department of Agriculture Meat & Dairy Program Manager, Renata Paliskis-Bessell said – *“Although our product integrity will ensure this demand continues, WA’s tightening production potential could limit our ability to meet ballooning international demand and sustain recent prodigious growth.”*

Mark Industry

If WA does not capitalise now on the momentum that is building behind our product, that momentum will dissipate and the opportunity to mark our industry as one of the world’s most robust could be lost. To ensure WA’s production potential grows in line with climbing demand, WAPPA and the Department went prospecting early this year in Holland, the United Kingdom (UK) and Denmark to encourage producers to come to WA and supplement existing expertise and capital. More than 250 attended seminars in those countries, leading to WA visits from UK and Danish delegations, which have put the international push into action.

Exporting Opportunities

However, while our pork industry remains export focused, it is not only our opportunities we should be exporting. WAPPA sees the expansion of local medium sized businesses as a key to bolstering the state’s production and putting profits in the hands of WA producers, as well as new international producers. What we need is a more aggressive local approach to expansion

and growth. More than half of WA’s 361 producers forfeit any hope of gaining economies of scale by running an average of just eight sows. If those 190 producers stepped up production, we could tap some wonderful production opportunities.

Double Production

But WAPPA’s main hope for meaningful local expansion is with medium-sized producers (50 - 400 sows), which equate to 44% of the state’s producers. If we can double pork production among that segment, to create a healthy population of medium to large scale producers, we can look towards fulfilling new market demands with renewed confidence. So why is that growth not occurring now? With all the opportunities that exist, what has grounded our industry at a time when it should be scrambling to meet unprecedented international interest?

Tackle Inertia

To help identify those obstacles, WAPPA will survey known producers. Once we’ve established what these hurdles are, WAPPA will work to effect change and facilitate more progressive growth among industry members. Please take this opportunity to work as an industry to tackle common issues by completing this diagnostic survey to develop an industry strategic plan. And remember, while caution can save business losses, it can also lose business savings if the inertia it spawns lets opportunities pass by unrealised.

On a festive note, from all at WAPPA, enjoy a safe and happy Christmas and an expansive and prosperous New Year



Liberationists to Play the Christmas Card

Australian Pork Ltd (APL) is preparing a media and communications strategy to address negative perceptions of the pig industry that may result from media activity undertaken by Animal Liberation NSW.

Animal Liberation NSW recently launched a national anti-pork industry campaign. APL believes the campaign may become more active as Christmas approaches and continue to build toward next year’s review of the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals. Animal Liberation NSW said preparations were underway for a series of advertisements during Christmas and the New Year.

APL intends responding to Animal Liberation NSW with an accurate and scientific rationale, according to APL Public Affairs Manager, Kylie McKinley.

“APL will work co-operatively with the RSPCA if a farm inspection is required after an animal liberation complaint,” she said. “Please note that APL cannot support any cruel practices which contravene the animal welfare code of practice.”

To manage potential issues arising from Animal Liberation’s expected campaign, APL requests that producers:

- Ensure farms follow standard welfare practices.
- Inform APL of trespass on farms by animal liberation groups.
- Warn their vet if they feel their farm may be broken onto.
- Ask APL for advice before dealing with the media, Tel 02 6285 2200 (office hours) or 1800 789 099.
- Carefully manage who they allow onto their farm.

Producers should consider erecting bio-security warnings and padlocking their farm sheds and gates, as this would upgrade the charge against any assailants from trespassing to breaking and entering.

Heating and Eating

Research into the impact of hot weather on pigs has found that the ambient temperature they experience in the pen affects carcasses.

Department of Agriculture Senior Research Officer, Dr Bruce Mullan, said the research aimed to stabilise pork quality throughout the year.

“Heat stress may not always significantly reduce total food intake, but it can affect meal patterns, which can impact on energy metabolism and the distribution of body fat,” he said.

Singapore’s focus on the fat content of the belly region, more than just depth of subcutaneous fat, makes this an important finding. Research is continuing.

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DAPH'S APL KITCHEN

by Daph Kavanagh Sales Supervisor,
Australian Pork Ltd

As hard as it is to believe, we are already set to celebrate our third Christmas of the decade.

Of course, it does not alleviate the panic surrounding this busy season when the Christmas issue of *Pork Yarns* is already out while all our Christmas shopping lists remain so full!

Perhaps we can offer some help with a tasty, festive and simple pork recipe to at least take the heat out of Yule tide kitchen duties.

PORK ROAST WITH SWEET POTATO AND SAGE STUFFING

Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 2hrs 10 minutes

2 kg boneless pork loin, scored rind
1 tbsp olive oil
1 small onion, halved and thinly sliced
3/4 cup grated sweet potato
2 tbsp finely chopped fresh sage
2 tbsp honey 1 cup stale white breadcrumbs (firmly packed)



for approximately three minutes. Add sage, honey, breadcrumbs and nuts, season to taste. Allow to cool slightly.

Lay roast rind-side flat on a board and cut a small pocket into the thick flesh. Put the stuffing in the pocket and spread the filling over the flesh. Roll up pork and secure with kitchen string. Rub pork rind with the extra oil and salt, making sure to rub well into the scores. Elevate pork on a rack in a baking dish and cook for 20-30 minutes in the oven, after which the rind will begin to crackle.

Reduce heat to 180° C and cook a further 50-60 minutes per kg, or until the internal temperature reaches 70-75° C.

2 tbsp chopped pecan nuts salt and cracked black pepper
1 extra tbsp olive oil and salt

Preheat oven to 220° C. Heat oil in a large frypan over a medium-high heat and lightly brown the onion and sweet potato

Allow pork to rest for 15 minutes before serving with steamed sugar snap and snow peas, roast potato and pumpkin.

Storing Ham

You know it's Christmas when you interrupt the boxing day cricket test with sojourns to the fridge to slice yet another meal from the inexhaustible Christmas ham.

But just which is the best way of keeping it fresh and moist for the best breakfast toast, lunchtime sandwich or evening platter?

Cover it with a clean tea towel or light cheesecloth bag which has been immersed in a solution of two cups of water with one tablespoon of vinegar and then wrung dry. Replace the tea towel about every three days to keep the ham moist and fresh tasting.

Ham can be stored in the coolest part of the fridge for up to three weeks, but boneless ham should be used within two weeks.

Left-over leg ham can be kept in airtight wrap in the freezer for up to one month. Besides cold meals, left-over ham can be used in cooked recipes such as quiche, fried rice, pancake fillings, mince for hamburgers, meatloaf, pizzas or pies.

Bon appetit!

Personal Notes from WAPPA

Denis Roberts: Our deepest sympathy to the Roberts family after Denis, of Venturetech Pty Ltd and, previously, Murdoch University, died suddenly on November 3. Denis was a meat researcher and consulted to the beef, pork and sheepmeat industries.

Producers will remember Denis from his involvement with the 'WA Pig Industry Taskforce' report and the 'Export & Investment Opportunities in the WA Pig Industry' report.

The Boughtons: Happy Birthday to Ken Boughton, who is enjoying a deserved break with wife, Cecily, in New Zealand.

Liam Flanagan: Liam Flanagan retired as General Manager of the Great Southern Pig Company at the end of November. Liam will be sadly missed by the industry, but he and Tracy go with our best wishes for their life, post pigs. Thanks for a job well done in pork politics.

The Grahams: Welcome back to Anne and Jim Graham of Pinjarra, who visited the Amazon river and Iguassu falls during a recent visit to Brazil.

Dawson Bradford: Congratulations to Dawson Bradford on the successful Poll Dorset sheep production sale at Hillcroft Farms and for WAMMCO's ongoing progress under his Chairmanship. WAPPA also wishes Dawson a quick recovery from his recent illness.

John Watkins: John Watkins will retire from Elders in early January with WAPPA's best wishes for happiness and good health in the years ahead. We look forward to welcoming Fred Bainbridge to WAPPA meetings as a new Elders representative.

The Leigh-Firbanks: Roger Leigh-Firbank and family's 'Ella Plains' will be auctioned on December 4. WAPPA thanks Roger for his many years of involvement in pork politics, including a term as WAPPA President.

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.

All correspondence, including Letters to the Editor, should be addressed to:
WAPPA, PO Box 146, Burswood, WA 6100 Tel: 08-9479 7315 Fax: 08-9479 7317
Email: lea@wappa.com.au Web: www.wappa.com.au

Researchers Make Pigs of Themselves

Italian researchers have made a strain of pigs carrying human genes in their hearts, livers and kidneys to help provide transplant organs for humans.

Researchers at the University of Milan mixed pig sperm with human DNA to transfer a gene called decay accelerating factor. The modified sperm was used to fertilise pig eggs which then produced litters in which 20% to 50% of piglets carried human genes.

Tests showed the human genes would pass onto later generations. However, unless other pig genes were also replaced by human genes, transplants from pigs would still be rejected. The researchers believed those genes could be added in two years.

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