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WAPPA

Pork Yarns



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New Technology Makes The Grade

WAPPA supports an APL plan to adopt improved carcass grading systems which will employ advanced technology to accurately identify important carcass characteristics such as lean meat yield percentage.

It promises to benefit producers, processors and consumers by offering a better quality, more measurable and more easily identifiable product.

WAPPA President, Graeme Dent, explained that the improved grading systems will benefit all involved.

"A system that can be adapted to measure backfat and predict carcass lean meat yield will enhance the pork industry and result in a superior pig for local and export markets," he said.

"Developing an improved carcass grading system embraces a key component of WAPPA's strategic plan, which is to adopt new ideas and technologies."

Sound Technology

WA export pork abattoir and processor, PPC Linley Valley, is currently implementing new backfat ultrasound technology at Wooroloo.

According to PPC Livestock Coordinator, Dean Romaniello, PPC has been working closely with APL and should have ultra-sound grad-

ing for P2 backfat measurement operating this September.

By March PPC hopes to also ultra-sound for lean meat yield percentage, muscle depth and possibly belly fat percentage.

"Using ultra-sound scanning will take away the human error component that has, to an extent, always hindered the consistency and accuracy of measuring backfat by probe," Mr Romaniello explained.

It is understood that Hennessy will no longer sell its grading probe, only renting it at 15 to 20 cents per pig, depending on total kill numbers.

PPC, along with other processors and APL, considered this unviable, so to keep processing costs to a minimum, they reviewed other available options.

APL Funded

A consortium of key processors and APL was subsequently formed and it invested considerable money, with Australian Government support, to develop an ultra-sound grading system.

According to Mr Romaniello, the ultra-sound grading system will not only deliver the same options as the Hennessy grading system, but will much more accurately measure P2 and remove human error.



On a recent PPC grower trip to Singapore, WAPPA Executive member Richard Evison (left), along with Paul Cunningham of Tambellup, PPC General Manager Ron Penn and Mark Conley of Narrogin visited the wet markets to see how fresh WA pork was regarded by stall-holders and customers. With meat specification a concern, PPC's work with APL and WAPPA in developing and introducing ultra-sound technology will improve feedback to growers and bolster export markets.

"Also, growers will benefit from quicker, more accurate feedback and can be simply emailed an image of an individual pig's ultra-sound backfat if any issues arise.

"When and if we get belly fat ultra-sound measurement up and running, we'll take things to another level again with what could be a world first.

"Our growers and customers, particularly in Singapore where they

are very particular about belly fat, will enjoy very real benefits," Mr Romaniello said.

"PPC growers will receive feedback on how confirmation needs to be improved, for example and how to more precisely supply the type of pig the market wants.

"PPC customers will enjoy more consistent quality, with pigs supplied to their precise specifications," he said.

West MEATS East to celebrate Chinese New Year and Year of the Pig



PPC's Singaporean customers are positively motivated by face-to-face contact with the people who breed and feed the pigs they buy.



With more than half of the fresh pork from Australia into Singapore coming from PPC's Wooroloo plant number 518 (which 'stands for' ongoing continual prosperity in Chinese culture), the company has an obvious investment in maintaining close relationships with its Singapore agents and buyers.



PPC Linley Valley Fresh General Manager, Ron Penn (Mob 0418 906 278) and Agribusiness Manager, Lui Rinaldi (Mob 0417 172 153) hosted the latest tour of Singapore by seven of their key growers, Paul Cunningham, Richard Evison, Chris Brennan, Chris Keene, Roy Christmass, Jennie and Mark Conley and David Plant.

Pork's Popularity Soars

With beef consumption falling and pork consumption rising, pork may soon become the meat of choice for Australian consumers.

A recent Roy Morgan poll showed pork consumption had increased 35% in the last four years. Since 2002, when it was the third most consumed meat in Australia behind beef and lamb, pork has steadily increased in popularity.

Beef and lamb have lost market share to pork, with beef consumption decreasing almost 5% between April and December 2006.

'Easy Peasy'

Pork's low price and APL's new marketing campaigns are part of the reason for the increase in pork sales across Australia. APL Marketing Manager, David Mogford said it's important to be creative in marketing pork so it maintains its strong market share.

"The repositioning of the brand to fit consumers' modern lifestyles and its new 'Easy Peasy Pork' slogan are part of the new look APL marketing campaign," he said.

"We've made pork modern and sexy and cut out the fat, making it more appealing to consumers."

APL has a \$3 million budget this year, which will be invested in research and development and continued pork promotion via television, radio and print.

Exports Down

Despite the domestic increase in pork consumption, the pork export market decreased in the 2005/06 financial year. Nationally, exports of Australian pork have decreased by more than 13,000 tonnes since 2002, but exports from WA have remained stable in the last two years, averaging 9700 tonnes per year.

Australia's main pork export markets, Singapore, Japan and New Zealand, still remain strong, comprising 95% of total exports, with Singapore alone importing an average of 8600 tonnes per year in the last two years. Despite an unsteady export market, APL is still pleased with pork's performance in the domestic market and is concentrating on building its profile and popularity in Australia.



WAPPA President, Graeme Dent and WAPPA Executive Officer, Russell Cox share a laugh with University of Western Australia Institute of Agriculture Associate Professor, Julie Plummer and WA Fruit Growers' Association Executive Manager, Alan Hill, at the opening of the Institute at UWA on March 30. The Institute will provide education, training and research in agriculture and resource management. It will advance UWA's reputation in agriculture by enhancing links with industry, farmer groups, the community and national and international organisations.

Having recently joined with MasterFoods for the 'Pork Choices' campaign, APL believe pork's success will continue.

"We expect it will take at least five years to build the 'Pork Choices' brand, but our early sales figures have been positive," Mr Mogford said.

Changes to Pig Welfare Code

Last reviewed in 1998, the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals-Pigs (Pig Code) has been revised, with a number of amendments relevant to producers.

Consulting with State, Territory and Commonwealth Departments, CSIRO, veterinarians, industry, researchers, retailers/processors and animal welfare groups, the review incorporated a full, formal public consultation process to help ensure only the highest standards of livestock welfare are practiced.

Industry Benefits

Veterinarian Dr Barb Frey, of Consistent Pork, believes the changes will benefit the industry.

"Like it or not, how the community and consumers perceive our product and the way it's produced has a profound effect on our market," she said.

"The industry will benefit if we do the right thing and we're seen by the public to be doing the right thing."

The revised Pig Code outlines the general principles for good animal care, applying to all people responsible for on-farm welfare of pigs, up to the point of transport for slaughter. The Pig Code should encourage farmers to aim for a high level of welfare.

Code Changes

There are several key changes in the code that are relevant to all producers:

- The area of all new stalls will be increased.
- Confinement time of pregnant sows in stalls will be a maximum of six weeks (previously 16 weeks), after which they will be released into group housing situations with other sows.
- Persons managing and conducting procedures on pigs must be trained or supervised by a person who is trained.
- Trained persons will need to inspect their pigs regularly and more often in hot conditions.
- Sows placed in farrowing crates must not be left for longer than six weeks.
- Farrowing crate area is to be increased in all new installations.
- Stalls or crates for boars and sows must be an appropriate size for the animal and allow them to stand and lie down without obstruction or injury. Boars must be released for exercise.
- If there is evidence of serious behavioural problems due to confinement in stalls, the animals must be examined and treated by a qualified person.
- Development of recommendations for keeping and confining pigs at free range farms, including their shelter accommodation.
- Pig farmers join their industry Quality Assurance management programs to provide improved welfare, high skill levels and greater market opportunity.

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Anyone who has visited an Elizabethan house in England would know that the tallest of 'Willy' Shakespeare's mates didn't need to duck when walking through a five foot six inch high door.

Of course, 500 years on and our doors are now six foot six, meaning only the likes of Freo Docker Aaron Sandilands need bend at the knees.

Better food and improved health care have meant we've grown into our 'new homes'.

Well, the same with pigs. With better genetics, better feed and better herd health management, pigs are now bigger. And so they should be, because many of our markets are crying out for a bigger (and leaner) pig.

This brings me to the reviewed Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals-Pigs.

I hasten here to point out that the very great majority of WA pork producers have the welfare of their animals front and centre in everything they do.

Many of those same producers already provide housing systems and breeding facilities for their pigs which go well beyond what the Code sets out to impose.

As I said in my most recent President's Address: "While all producers may not agree with all of the proposed changes, most agree they go at least some way to improving the welfare of our valued animals and lifting our image in the public's eyes."

As producers, we simply must not only do the right thing, but must be seen to do the right thing.

Talk of this reminds me that at



WAPPA's first general meeting for 2007 we were addressed about the rights and otherwise surrounding the issue of inspectors entering our properties.

While some of the details were new to some of us, what wasn't new was the need to do the right thing by our animals and this is something I believe WAPPA and its members have always done and will continue to do.

Aside from giving our animals secure environments where they are well fed, well watered and able to multiply and grow at satisfactory rates, we must ensure we all have appropriate Quality Assurance systems in place to support our processors and, in turn, give consumers confidence.

I strongly recommend all pig farms be part of an appropriate industry approved QA program that includes animal welfare.

QA systems provide a record of welfare, health and productivity, plus documented evidence of critical management procedures, staff training and details of corrective actions for adverse events.

Although no Shakespearean scholar, I recall this from my school days: "To be or not to be that is the question."

Dent Wins Watsonia Award

WAPPA President and Cuballing producer, Graeme Dent and wife Belinda have won the 'Watsonia 2006 Grower of the Year Award' for baconers.

The Dents are Watsons' fourth larg-

est external bacon supplier, with 76% of their pigs in the premium range.

"We've tried to win this award for many years and we're extremely pleased and proud to finally have done so," they said.

Revisions to the Pig Code were endorsed by the Primary Industry Ministerial Council on April 20 and will now be implemented by the Pig Code Implementation Working Group.

The working group will include representatives from all levels of Government, Animal Health Australia, all States and Territories,

industry and environmental groups.

The revised Pig Code will include implementation deadlines of three years for skills training of staff and five years for pen size increases.

The Government aims for a consistent approach to its implementation and enforcement.

A new model code of practice for the transportation of pigs has been drafted by the Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG).

The AWWG comprises representatives from State Departments with responsibility for agriculture, CSIRO, Animal Health Australia and DAFF.

The transport code will be rewritten in a new format, incorporating national welfare standards and industry best practice guidelines.

APL has established an Industry Advisory Group comprising a variety of experts. Veterinarian Dr Kim Nairn of Portec Australia is a member.

Consulting Suppliers

According to Dr Nairn, the Advisory Group will address issues regarding welfare, meat quality and Biosecurity and wants to start by engaging transport suppliers.

"We need to manage quality sys-

tems by establishing transport companies as approved service suppliers to farms," he said.

"I suggest the companies involved provide vendor declarations that state they've read the APIQ standards and they understand how to apply them to transport services."

The Code is intended for all people responsible for the welfare of pigs during transport and will be designed to identify the basic obligations of owners or persons in charge of pigs during transport. It will also encourage continuous improvement.

Dr Nairn hopes the Advisory Group will make a difference to animal welfare during transport.

"It will try to establish dialogue with relevant livestock transport organisations and to implement meaningful quality systems covering the transport and handling of pigs," he said.

The Advisory Group's first phase concludes this September.

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Daph's APL Kitchen

by Daph Kavanagh,
State Manager,
Australian Pork Limited

With the weather cooling, it's time to start cooking those hearty winter dishes.

Showing the diversity of pork, this dish will please all pork lovers, as well as those with a taste for something a little more exotic.

The recipe is an 'Eastern' take on the traditional roast, using Asian flavours such as coriander, mint and bok choy to perfectly accentuate the flavour of the pork. Ideal for dinner parties, or just a varia-



tion on the good old Sunday night family roast, this delicious recipe will please all comers.

Bon Appetit!

Roasted pork neck with bok choy and sweet soy dressing

Serves Four

Preparation Time: 15 mins

Cooking Time: 1 hour

1 kg pork scotch (neck)
1/2 tsp finely grated lemon rind
1 1/2 tbs fresh lemon juice
1 tsp freshly grated ginger
1 1/2 tbs vegetable oil
2 tsp medium cracked black pepper
2 tsp oil extra
2 tbs soy sauce (salt reduced)
1 tbs fresh lemon juice
3 tsp brown sugar
1 tbs finely chopped Vietnamese mint, optional
6 baby bok choy
1 bunch broccolini
1 cup fresh coriander sprigs



Preheat oven to 180°C. Combine lemon rind, lemon juice, ginger, oil and pepper in a large container. Add pork and turn to coat in marinade, rub marinade well into the meat. Heat extra oil in a large non-stick frypan and seal pork on all sides over medium high heat. Place pork on an elevated rack in a baking tray and cook for 35 - 45 minutes per kilo or until cooked to your liking. Combine soy, lemon juice, sugar and mint in a covered container and shake well. Allow pork to rest for 10 minutes before cutting into slices. Meanwhile, cut bok choy in half lengthways and wash. Trim ends of broccolini and lightly steam both vegetables. Serve by placing three halves of bok choy and a couple of stems of broccolini onto each plate, top with coriander sprigs and drizzle with dressing. Lay 3 - 4 slices of pork on top and serve with noodles.

PPC/Linley Valley Expansion

Northam Shire Council has approved an application from PPC/Linley Valley to build a new sheep and cattle processing facility and skin and hide treatment plant at its Wooroloo site.

The existing site, where PPC Linley Valley pig abattoir operates, comprises approximately 40 hectares and was zoned as 'agriculture local', meaning Council had to approve the expansion.

Council gave the WAPPA and pork industry supported proposal the green light after a meeting and

subsequent submissions period. PPC Linley Valley Fresh General Manager, Ron Penn, was pleased with Council's decision.

"There's no doubt the Shire has done the right thing by all of its ratepayers," he said.

"This is just one step forward in the planning approval process, with the next to be decided by the Environmental Protection Authority."

PPC's Wooroloo processing facility currently processes 98% of WA's pigs and is the biggest employer in the Shire of Northam.

Bradley's Berkshire the Best

A Berkshire boar, bred by Kellerberrin producers and stud breeders Rob, Janet and Philip Bradley, has been awarded Supreme Junior and Senior All Breeds Champion at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Mr Bradley was pleased Gloriana Jacob R922 was awarded such a high honour against 32 other boars at a nationally recognised event.

"For a Berkshire boar, he has good bones and good carcass characteristics," Mr Bradley said.

"At Gloriana, we aim to produce pigs with good carcasses. The Berkshire is renowned for its meat flavour, so the breeding industry should look at them as terminal

sires in the same way as it does Durocs."

To keep the boar cool and calm, a dripping system was set up in the horse transporter that moved him from Kellerberrin to Sydney.

"It was 43 degrees when he left Kellerberrin, so I used a 20 litre container and a hose to make a drip to keep him cool for the two and a half day trip," he said.

Mr Bradley sold the boar before the Royal Easter Show, but has no regrets.

"I still have his brother and two sisters, which means we can produce another boar like Gloriana Jacob," he said.

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