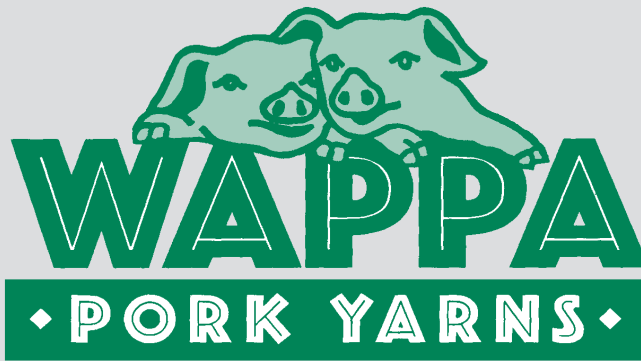


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WITH COMPLIMENTS OF THE WEST AUSTRALIAN PORK PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION • AUGUST 2002

## Call to Action for Producers

WA pork producers must empower themselves if they are to sustain the growth which has seen pork exports rise by \$13 million since 1998/99 and domestic consumption grow to form a buoyant \$80 million industry.

Pork eating quality was on the agenda at WAPPA's fourth general meeting at Muresk Hall, Northam, where President Ken Boughton recommended producer led brands, marketing produce raised to agreed specifications, were the way forward.

### Exclusive Niches

"As long as we satisfy a high minimum standard, which we want to be the Australian Pork Industry Quality program, our producers have the right to produce pork for whichever market segments they prefer without being forced to pitch to exclusive niches.

"WAPPA, therefore, will not pursue a collective move towards formulated production systems, but will support producers that seek to move ahead of the pack through their own initiatives."

Pork represents just 18 per cent of Australia's total meat consumption and inconsistent flavour has been cited as one of the major impediments to its continuing market expansion.

### Slash Costs

To overcome this reputation for variable quality, Mr Boughton said the industry needed to establish branded alliances, un-



WAPPA's Executive listens to producers at their recent general meeting where alliancing and branding issues were raised.

derpinned by high production standards so discerning customers could identify and purchase guaranteed good eating quality pork.

Besides accessing marketing premiums, these alliances would allow participants to share infrastructure and so slash production costs such as transport.

Mr Boughton said producers needed to reflect on how an alliance would work for them before all the advantages would become clear. If there is sufficient interest, WAPPA will hold a workshop to help producers identify those advantages and understand the alliancing process.

### Address Queries

Producers wanting the workshop to address any specific queries they have about producer alliances should contact the WAPPA office, Tel 9479 7315.

The general meeting also revisited the contentious issue of WAPPA voting rights which are currently determined on a one sow, one vote basis. Producers were asked to propose a fairer voting system for consideration as part of a voting rights review.

"WAPPA generally 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 our bigger members, so we hope to find the middle ground."

The matter will be discussed further at WAPPA's Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Esplanade, Fremantle, on September 20 and followed by the Annual Industry Dinner.



Narrogin producer, Thomas O'Reilly, and WA Hyfarm agent, Brian Branch share their thoughts at WAPPA's recent general meeting.

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## Food For Thought

**Under the exacting demands of market specifications and price, every component of the pork production system has been refined to optimise economic efficiency.**

While genetics and shelter design have advanced incredibly over the past 20 years the search goes on for profitable new production strategies to deliver a competitive edge. One management option which has grown popular in recent years, but remains under intense investigation, is the addition of enzymes to pig feed to reduce what Mr Hugh Payne of the WA Department of Agriculture calls 'nutritional inefficiency'.

### Pork Growth

Nutritional inefficiency results from nutrient inputs which pass, largely undigested and unabsorbed, through the pig and do not supply the nutrients required for pork growth. Producers pay for these nutrients when they buy feed, so failure to direct them towards pig body growth is tantamount to feed wastage.

"Up to a half of the dietary fibre and phosphorus in wheat is indigestible to pigs. While indigestible fibre represents wasted energy, undigested phosphorus emerges

in effluent, placing pressure on odour and environmental management" John Pluske of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, Murdoch University, said. at the Department of Agriculture 'Feeder Workshop' which followed the WAPPA general meeting in Northam.

### Catalyst Act

However, targeted enzymes can be incorporated into feed where they act as catalysts in the digestive process, ensuring pigs digest more of the feed they eat and absorb more of the available nutrients. More productive feeding could cut feed costs or reduce time to slaughter, improve the quality of manure, reduce effluent odour and, in the case of phosphorus, improve availability of plant protein ingredients if dietary components such as meat and bone meal were ever withdrawn from supply. Producers have a catalogue of enzymes to choose from depending on what nutrients they need to extract from different feeds.

### Break Down

"Some enzymes break down protein, others break down fibre and others minerals, like Phytase. Within those groups, some work better on different feeds. For instance,  $\beta$ -glucanase breaks down dietary fibre better in barley but Xylanase is best for wheat," Dr Pluske said.

### Worm Turns

That was 10 years ago. Today their attitude has changed, with the Waste Reduction and Recycling Fund recently granting \$90,000 to a worm project - how the worm turns. Efforts to convert pig effluent into a non-smelling and safe soil conditioner and plant growth stimulant has varied over 10 years of investigation.

"Initially we were approached by a piggery in Serpentine, who was carting about 200 tonnes of pig manure per year to a farm north of Perth," explained Mr Smith. "When we agreed to take the effluent we cut their cartage costs by half. After the manure was processed by the worms, the castings (end product) were sold to orchardists, vineyards, vegetable growers and the general public. Demand soon out-stripped supply."



*Rob Loxton of Kukerin, Jan Testerink of York and Colin Goldsmith of Pingelly stayed after WAPPA's recent general meeting to hear Dr John Pluske speak about enzyme use.*

To further complicate the equation, Dr Pluske's research shows enzymes react differently with different wheat varieties or with the same varieties grown in different regions.

"Enzyme use in feed is not new, but it accounts for only one per cent of commercial enzyme use around the world, so the science is only now starting to grow in step with the adoption of this technology," Dr Pluske said.

### Feed Enzymes

Enzymes can be used on weaners or finishers and are generally added at 0.5-1.0 kg per tonne of feed, at a cost ranging between \$2 and \$10 per tonne, depending on the enzymes in question.

## Affluence from Effluent?

**Want to worm your way out of an effluent problem? Try employing a creature that hates to see waste go to waste and loves effluent as much as your neighbours despise it.**

Kevin Smith, WA's eminent vermiculturalist, has trialed worms with assorted wastes, from horse and cow manure to restaurant and pastry waste, and has achieved excellent results with pig waste.

"When I first mentioned using worms in waste management to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) they laughed and told me to go and look for a niche market such as food for marron," Mr Smith recalled.



*A new effluent delivery is gathered for deposit into the work farm.*

### Enriched Stimulant

In another project, 600 cubic metres of manure and straw from a Westpork facility was used as a weed suppressant under vines while the rest was processed by Mr Smith's worms at the vineyard. The worm treatment produced high quality castings and a constant supply of microbe enriched liquid plant stimulant (which is sold as WormWiz) which was applied to the vines via vertigation and foliar sprays.

"The results were beyond expectation, with exceptional grape quality and a virtually disease-free vineyard, while neighbouring vineyards suffered from downy mildew and other diseases," Mr Smith said. "We recently completed our second year of trials with similar results."

### Best Mother

Currently, an associate of Mr Smith is converting a large proportion of the waste from several eco-shelters in the York area. According to Mr Smith these projects have been embraced by the local councils and the EPA.

"What better form of waste management could there be? The process produces no offensive smells and all leachate is contained, collected and either re-used or sold as the ultimate microbial enriched plant growth stimulant (WormWiz). It's mother nature at her best," he said.

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## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Ken Boughton WAPPA President

### August finds our industry looking at a steady price after the severe tumble over the first half of the year.

Some believe there is a significant rise due at Christmas, which would help offset the grain price outlook from this drought-affected harvest. Pig numbers have been increasing but this is likely to slow as the effects of summer infertility are felt.

### Branded Future

Pork eating quality has been heavily debated recently. I believe branded pork is the way of the future, with strict parameters met to ensure product consistency. Generic pork promotion does little to convince consumers who are then faced with the varying quality in the market.

The branding path is not an easy one. It will require work, financial commitment and attitude changes that may not sit comfortably with all. It is a commercial area, not one for organisations like WAPPA or Australian Pork Ltd, although WAPPA may have a role in helping attitude change and promoting ideas.

### Mean Alliances

The branding process will require producers to set long term goals and perhaps to accept less than market prices for a period. It will almost certainly mean alliances—maybe with a processor or a retailer and probably with other producers to ensure

supply. Alliances will only happen if you want them and are prepared to work at them. Sandy Gardiner investigated alliances on all our behalves and has come to the conclusion that you are not very interested. Do not get left behind on this. Your future in the industry could well depend on how you approach these issues of alliances and pork eating quality.

### Welcome Awaits

Now that WAPPA's office is set up at Suite 1, Pastoral House, 277 Great Eastern Hwy, Belmont, a welcome awaits all members. There is a board room with seating for 10, so members can meet there. Telephone, fax, email and photocopying are available, as are tea and coffee facilities. WAPPA Executive Officer, Lea Newing, and Industry Training Officer, Emalyn Loudon, are stationed at the offices, so you can discuss industry matters with them when visiting. The WAPPA Executive encourages you to use the office and facilities when in the city. Finally, WAPPA's 2002 Annual General Meeting will be held at the Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, on September 20, followed by a general meeting and then the Annual Industry Dinner.

*See you there.*



## Keeping Clean

**Two contentious issues threatening the right to farm are environmental and compost management.**

The Department of Agriculture will run two workshops consecutively from October 30 to November 1 to better equip local producers to negotiate and manage these challenging areas. Starting on October 30 and running for two days, the 'Environmental Principles for Piggeries' workshop will deal with obtaining planning permits and environmental issues involved with establishing and managing a piggery.

### Explore Options

The related issue of how to manage the abundant compost from straw-based shelters will be covered in a separate workshop/field trip, which will explore some of the available options, on November 1. Producers interested in attending either or both of these workshops should contact Hugh Payne, Department of Agriculture, Tel 9368 3576.

## WAPPA Moves



**WAPPA's offices have relocated to Pastoral House (pictured).**

Besides Executive Officer, Lea Newing, WAPPA's new home will also now host Industry Training Officer, Emalyn Loudon.

The new head quarters bring with them new contact details:

Tel 9479 7315, Fax 9479 7317, email [lea@wappa.com.au](mailto:lea@wappa.com.au) and [info@wappa.com.au](mailto:info@wappa.com.au)

Ms Loudon shares WAPPA's fax number, but has separate telephone and email contacts: Tel 9479 7311, email [emalyn@wappa.com.au](mailto:emalyn@wappa.com.au)

## WA Tops QA Class

**Quality Assurance (QA) continues to gather momentum, with 50 more WA producers due to be accredited by the end of October.**

"It's been a good uptake of QA by pork producers and the industry should get a pat on the back," remarked WAPPA President, Ken Boughton, when QA was reviewed at the recent WAPPA general meeting.

"It's our goal to have every pig through the abattoirs QA accredited and it's up to individual producers to help meet that goal. Support is there for interested producers, with financial assistance available, and the incentive is certainly there."

### Driving Higher

Any producer wishing to access WA's hard fought markets in Singapore must supply QA accredited pigs, but an increasing focus on food safety around the world, punctuated by livestock health scares such as bovine spongiform encephalitis ('mad cow') and foot and mouth disease are consistently driving market specifications higher elsewhere. WA Australian Pork Industry Quality Program (APIQ) Co-ordinator, John Bodycoat, said 46% of Australia's new applicants for APIQ accreditation, from May to July, were from WA.

"In that period, we had 21 new QA applicants from WA. Most of which were small producers," he said. "With Australian Pork Ltd paying \$400 towards auditing and a

75% rebate available from Farmbis, APIQ is only costing average producers around \$200."

With QA systems reportedly costing up to \$3000 to implement in other industries, accreditation in the pork industry is relatively cheap and accessible. Producers wishing to begin the QA process should contact Mr Bodycoat, Tel 9243 7927 or mobile 0411 984 271.



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## DAPH'S APL KITCHEN

by Daph Kavanagh Sales Supervisor,  
Australian Pork Ltd

### Chefs rush outdoors in September to stoke up the BBQ and enjoy the first days of spring.

People are getting adventurous with their barbecuing as chops and sausages are pushed to the corners of the hotplate to make way for more exotic creations.

Skewers are quick to cook and can be a meal in themselves with the right combination of meat, fruit and vegetables. New-fashioned pork, with less fat than beef, lamb and even chicken and some fish, is the perfect ingredient for BBQ skewers. To



be sure your pork kebab is juicy, tender and tasty, it is important not to over-cook it. Pork kebabs should be cooked over medium-high heat for five to six minutes and should be turned two to three times during cooking. Remember to soak your skewers in water for one to two hours before threading them.

### PORK AND MUSHROOM KEBABS

Serves 4

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 6 minutes

500g lean diced pork pieces (2cm x 2cm cubes)

1 clove garlic, chopped  
1tbsp finely chopped fresh Italian parsley  
1tbsp finely chopped pitted olives  
1 fresh lime  
60ml olive oil  
Cracked black pepper  
100g Swiss brown mushrooms (cut)  
8 skewers (soaked in water for 1-2 hours)

Combine garlic, parsley, olives and grated rind with juice from lime and oil. Season to taste with pepper. Thread about three pieces of pork and mushrooms onto skewers.

Cook on a lightly oiled BBQ at medium-high heat (turning 2-3 times) for 5-6 minutes. Brush kebabs twice during cooking with black olive and garlic mixture. Spoon remaining mixture over kebabs and allow to rest for a few minutes before serving. Try serving with potato wedges and salad.

## Knowing Your APC

### Meetings in April and May have set the ball rolling for the new Agricultural Produce Commission Pork Producers' Committee.

The fee for service, which will resource the committee, was set at 0.8 cents per kg carcass weight, to be paid at slaughter by the owner of the pig at that time. At the May meeting, the committee considered six funding applications, five of which were supported to the collective value of \$275,000. The committee will hold two funding rounds per year. Major applications will be considered in May followed by a second round, for smaller projects, in November.

## APL Building

WAPPA will be supporting an Australian Pork Ltd (APL) membership drive as WA hopes to snare a third delegate for stronger representation with the body.

APL delegate voting rights are awarded to members with the equivalent of 7000 sows in federal statutory levies. No one in WA has sufficient sows to support these rights independently, so WA APL members are encouraged to nominate WAPPA representatives, Ken Boughton and Stuart Coole, on their membership form to ensure WA retains a voice at this level. Recently, the state's APL membership has been mounting and so WA is on the verge of earning a third delegate.

### Successful Drive

If the APL's current membership drive is successful, it is possible WA could have an extra delegate voting by the APL AGM in November. Any producer paying the federal statutory levy is eligible for APL membership and can help put an extra WA voter in APL. WAPPA President and APL delegate, Mr Boughton, urged producers to take an interest in APL.

"APL has been dealing recently with big picture issues like marketing, bio-security, environmental strategies and animal welfare. It's essential to address these in a systematic way before moving into more specific fields," he said. "Get involved with what they are trying to do. Next time you register for APL, tick the WAPPA box to help WA gain more representation,"

Mr Boughton and Mr Coole had both taken a more positive view of APL's direction as the company had built momentum. Those wishing to join APL should call 1800 789 099.



WA APL delegate,  
Stuart Coole.

### PUBLISHER'S DETAILS

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## Safe Crisis

Australian Pork Ltd (APL) has released a draft of the Porksafes industry crisis management plan to enable widespread consultation on the document prior to its adoption by the Porksafes committee and APL board.

"While intended to guide the industry's response on a wide range of potential risks or crises, the plan would be of considerable relevance in the event of an exotic disease outbreak," said APL and Porksafes committee chairman, Paul Higgins.

"Through Porksafes, we have a much clearer and agreed understanding of industry roles."

Producers can review the Porksafes plan by going to the APL website at [www.apl.au.com](http://www.apl.au.com) and clicking on the Porksafes link. Feedback should be lodged by the end of September.

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