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WITH COMPLIMENTS OF THE WEST AUSTRALIAN PORK PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION • March 2004  
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# Wasteland Warning

According to CSIRO, WA has a 95% chance of an outbreak of post-weaning multisystemic wasting syndrome (PMWS) within 10 years, creating a production 'wasteland'.

WAPPA Executive Officer, David McFerran said a PMWS incursion would add 15% to local production costs, effectively closing down a \$112 million a year production industry that is already battling tight margins.

"Major PMWS epidemics have ravaged Europe since 2000, killing eight million pigs and costing the industry \$AUS1.5 billion."

## Circling Closer

The disease is already circling closer to Australia, with fifteen cases recently discovered in New Zealand (NZ), and yet the Australian government has released new quarantine standards, through Biosecurity Australia (BA), which effectively ignore the threat.

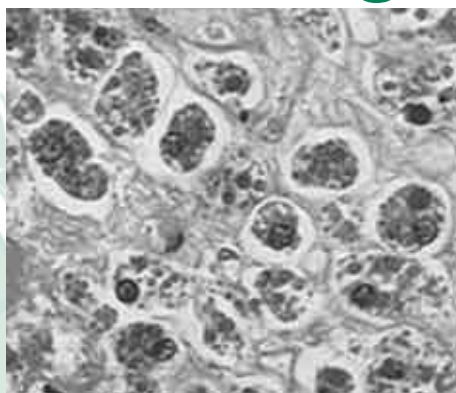
President, Stuart Coole, of Boyup Brook, said the ill-considered Australian government decision was difficult to understand.

"WAPPA demands to know why our federal government is willing to put at risk what is regarded as the world's cleanest pig herd.

"Aside from our freedom from many diseases affecting pigs in other countries, we're one of only three countries free of PMWS and we must stay that way."

## Meat Ban

Mr Coole called on Federal Agriculture Minister, Warren Truss to immediately ban the



PMWS has caused almost 10 million fatalities in Europe

importation of uncooked pig meat from countries affected by PMWS until the condition is understood in greater detail.

"Further, he should closely review the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee's public hearing into the draft import risk analysis (IRA) for pig meat."

According to ABC Radio, that hearing included comments from Professor Roger Morris of Massey University (NZ) suggesting that the IRA did not adequately reflect the current state of uncertainty surrounding the disease. He noted that the cause of PMWS was unknown (see 'Explosion Follows IRA', inside).

WAPPA believes the mystery surrounding the pathogenicity of PMWS is grounds to support a more cautious approach than what BA recommends.

# WAPPA Takes its Chances

WAPPA is seeking State Government support to appeal against new quarantine laws proposed under a recent Biosecurity Australia (BA) import risk analysis (IRA) for the importation of pig meat.

During a March 15 meeting with the WA Minister for Agriculture, Kim Chance, WAPPA's Executive presented a compelling case against IRA recommendations which threaten to expose WA to exotic disease incursions.

Using BA modeling, CSIRO has predicted that Australia will probably not see out the decade without experiencing an exotic disease outbreak.

## Threats Assessed

WAPPA noted that Australia was already swamped by pig meat imports, which were 45% higher during the recent October-January period than during the corresponding period in 2002/03. They concluded that imports must be more rigorously regulated or stopped while disease threats such as post-weaning multisystemic wasting syndrome were properly and fully assessed.

Mr Chance was asked to consider a moratorium on pig meat imports into WA and to support a productivity commission review into the dangers of importing pig meat from Canada and Denmark.

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## Pork Yarns Cleans UP

WAPPA *Pork Yarns* welcomes WA-based Environmental Products Australia (EPA) as a new advertiser (see back page).

EPA specialises in products for food and hygiene, water treatment and agriculture.

A recent deal with Linley Valley Pork (also a *WAPPA Pork Yarns* advertiser, see front page) will see EPA supply a range of products to reduce the waste in holding pens and clean up effluent ponds during the next year.

### Faster Processing

EPA products process pig waste the way nature does, only faster.

Linley Valley, for example, will use Ultrazyme, which combines bacterial enzymes and a special food for beneficial bacteria. It breaks down the solid and liquid waste to clean and freshen the most polluted evaporation pond.

Holding pen staff have commented that Ultrazyme significantly reduced odours.

### Faster Pigs

Dalwallinu farmer, Hilton Sprigg has used Ultrazyme for some time and said it reduced the smell and reduced the amount of manure in pens and in the pit. He added that when testing the product, pigs in trial pens grew faster and heavier.

Besides the domestic market, Ultrazyme's impact and popularity is surging in South East Asia.

Why? "Because it works," said EPA General Manager, Steve Palframen.

Environmental Products Australia are based at 4/47 Tate Street, Bentley. Tel 08 9458 9600, email [info@ecogreen.com.au](mailto:info@ecogreen.com.au) or visit [www.ecogreen.com.au](http://www.ecogreen.com.au)

## EU Must Play By The Rules

European Union (EU) pig meat export subsidies introduced in January stand to amplify price inequities between Australian and EU products on the domestic market.

EU pig meat prices have dropped in Australia since the local dollar began to climb and with the price of home-grown produce pushed up by drought and the consequent feed grain famine, EU export subsidies are ill-timed.

The subsidies are intended to stretch to April 30, 2004 to help EU producers, whose key export market shrunk with Russia's recent adoption of import quotas.

### Lower Price

The new EU subsidy structure is (in AUD):

- \$46.79 per 100kg for half-carcases and cuts.
- \$29.25/100kg for bellies exported to all countries outside the EU.
- The refund rate for fried hams (including Parma ham) has been reduced to \$66.10/100kg.

"If Australia receives the same level of import volumes from the EU as 2003, this would equate to a per annum subsidy of between \$8.5 and \$9 million (using the current exchange rate), which would enable EU exporters to lower their price to Australia by 40 cents/kg and still achieve the same margins," Australian Pork Ltd Chairman, Paul Higgins explained.

He said EU exporters might elect to pocket the subsidy rather than lower the price they received from Australian importers, which made it difficult to gauge what effect it would have on import volumes.

### Trading Environment

With the Australian dollar appreciating by 13% against the Euro during the past 12 months, many have argued that a subsidy is not necessary to improve the Australian trading environment for the EU.

"Free trade is a wonderful idea, but everyone has to play by the rules," Dr Higgins said.

## Explosion Follows IRA

Biosecurity Australia's (BA) Import Risk Analysis (IRA) for the importation of pig meat has provoked an explosive reaction, with WAPPA and Australian Pork Ltd (APL) leading producer protests, claiming that it signifies an untenable slip in quarantine standards.

So what is all the fuss about?

The IRA report claims to address diseases of quarantine concern, including foot and mouth disease (FMD), African swine fever (ASF), classical swine fever (CSF), Aujeszky's disease, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) and post-weaning multisystemic wasting syndrome (PMWS).

### Risk Status

It recommends that pig meat may enter Australia under quarantine requirements, depending on the source country's disease status. Quarantine risk management measures may include:

- Country, zone or herd freedom.
- Testing of the carcass.
- Cooking, freezing, curing, canning.
- Removal of certain tissues or parts of the carcass.

The final IRA report is available on the BA website at [www.daff.gov.au/BiosecurityAustralia](http://www.daff.gov.au/BiosecurityAustralia).

The IRA suggests that PMWS derives from porcine circovirus 2, which cooking or curing have not yet been proven to contain.

More alarmingly, an alternative theory suggests that PMWS is caused by a separate and unidentified virus. BA's policies do not accommodate this contingency, potentially exposing the industry to unknown risks.

### Flowing Infection

Using the models with which BA analyse infection risk, CSIRO projected that there was a 95% chance of a PMWS incursion within 10 years of imports flowing from PMWS infected countries.

WAPPA and APL also believes that guards against Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome, including the removal of bone and lymphatic tissue, followed by 11 minutes cooking at 70°C, should be conducted in the exporting country, not in Australia as BA recommends.

## Safety Set

WAPPA and private consultant, Ben Olsen will conduct follow-up regional meetings for producers who attended Occupational Safety and Health (OS&H) workshops in November.

The meetings will begin in April, to provide producers with job safety analysis sheets, induction documents and job descriptions as requested after the initial workshops. There will also be more OS&H information for outdoor production units.

For copies of the induction document, contact WAPPA, Tel 9479 7315.

Meanwhile, WorkSafe WA is completing inspections of a cross-section of piggeries and will report the results to WAPPA so the Association can inform producers what common incidents arose during those initial inspections. More WorkSafe WA inspections will follow.

# PIC PORK

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## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Stuart Coole, WAPPA President

**WAPPA was extremely disappointed with the Biosecurity Australia (BA) import risk analysis (IRA) for pig meat, which represents a move away from Australia's conservative quarantine policy and may be a disturbing omen for other agricultural industries.**

WAPPA can't understand why BA and the Government did not wait until the Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs Committee had released its inquiry into the draft IRA. Why would any government endorse a quarantine system that, according to CSIRO research, poses a 95% risk of a disease incursion within 10 years?

### Lobby Locals

WAPPA will work with Australian Pork Ltd (APL) to ensure that industry mounts an appeal. All WA federal politicians must be alerted to ensure pointed questions are asked of Agriculture Minister, Warren Truss.

Appealing the IRA should only be the first step. Industry must establish the economic and social impacts of this decision and the dumping of imported pig meat that will likely result to press for countervailing duties, such

as tariffs, on imported pork.

With an election approaching, WAPPA will motivate members of parliament representing electorates containing pigs to lobby the government. Opposition members in marginal seats could gain considerable mileage from this issue.

### FTA IRA?

WAPPA has asked Minister Truss to have BA review its IRA in relation to CSIRO's research and industry concerns. We also asked for current protocols to be maintained until after the Senate has released its report on the public hearings into the draft IRA.

We need your help, so please ensure your local members are aware of the effects the new quarantine measures will have on your business.

It's interesting that the IRA was released so soon after the United States free trade agreement (FTA) announcement. While the FTA



offers no direct benefit for our pork producers, nor direct US access to the Australian market, the fine print may reveal general quarantine implications.

### EU Export

The European Union (EU) reintroduced export subsidies on pork from January under a temporary scheme that is set to end on April 30, 2004.

The EU claims its pork sector has been in trouble for some time due to rising production, a strengthening Euro and the move by Russia (one of the EU's main export markets) to impose import quotas.

But Australia's dollar has climbed against the Euro, resulting in cheaper prices for imported EU pork. Subsidies would compound this trend and so WAPPA and APL requested that the Federal Government pressure the EU in international forums. Australia is now considering introducing tariffs on EU produce unless their policy changes.

### Legislate Levy

A voluntary R&D and marketing levy on imported pig meat will not work. WAPPA believes that the Federal Government should legislate, in a similar way as it does on local pig production, to insist that importers contribute to R&D and marketing levies in the same way as domestic producers.

## Go Halves Or Go The Whole Hog?

**Pork labelling has been reviewed by the Department of Industry and Resources (DOIR) to assess the validity of a local labelling campaign.**

WA producers have considered adopting the 'Buy WA First' logo to drive sales of premium cuts. If results warranted the expense of implementing the labelling strategy, WAPPA would recommend local processors adopt it.

With lower value cuts becoming more difficult to sell, WAPPA believes future marketing should ensure that premium cuts receive the highest price.

### Content Minimum

DOIR's Leonie Moore explained that the Buy WA First campaign does not have Trade Practices Act legislative backing and so there would be only a 50% WA minimum content on labelled produce.

Although this seems a low threshold, Ms Moore said the campaign would probably not have achieved momentum with a higher content requirement, adding it was very difficult to police compliance.

### Pilot Program

The Buy WA First grocery and consumer item pilot program was launched with independent supermarkets in May 2003, resulting in a 10% jump in sales of labelled products.

DOIR plans to support the project until June 30, with a government-funded feature ad in *The West Australian* each month and bonus advertisements run when new supermarkets join.

Action, Dewsons, Supa-Valu, Foodland and Coles participate, although Coles limits use of the logo to advertising only and does not fix it to products.

### Market Monitors

Surveys will begin soon to monitor processor, retailer and consumer response to the

label. Consumers will be asked if they recognise the logo, if they have altered their buying decision because of it and if they would pay more for a WA product?

It is free to use the Buy WA First material. DOIR provides the templates to the printers, with participating companies simply required to meet printing costs.

### Producers Decide

WAPPA is yet to decide on the benefits of the campaign and believes the 50% content threshold would make most pork products available in WA eligible. A more discerning criteria may be required.

However, WAPPA wants producers to make the decision after presenting the costing of a go-it-alone, 100% pork labelling option and the Buy WA First option at its March general meeting.

## Supermarket Survey

**WAPPA launched a compact weekly survey of the respective retail price that Coles, Woolworths and Action charge for pork, beef, lamb and chicken.**

While the survey only began in January, it is already identifying trends in retail price movement.

The survey is yet to show any reduction in prices to correspond with those producers are experiencing at the farm gate. Despite a 10% fall in farm gate prices since Christmas, the prices paid by consumers remain steady.



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by Daph Kavanagh, Sales Supervisor,  
Australian Pork Ltd

**You don't need to gather many pork connoisseurs together before debate breaks out over which is the best cut.**

Let me stick my neck out and say that pork scotch is one of the best.

While it can simply be cut fine and barbecued for delicious results, adventurous chefs can turn out a more extravagant dish.

With the WA citrus season to begin in May, this roast scotch recipe could incorporate local fruit to accompany fresh WA pork.

**Serves : 4**

**Preparation: 15 minutes**

**Cooking Time: 1 hour 10 minutes**

- 1.5kg pork scotch (neck)
- 1/4 cup seeded mustard
- 1/4 cup orange marmalade
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 2-3 bunches baby beetroot
- 3 red onions
- 2 tsp red wine vinegar sea salt

**Dressing**

- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp finely grated orange rind
- 2 oranges
- 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil salt freshly cracked pepper



**ROAST PORK SCOTCH WITH WARM CITRUS DRESSING**

Pre-heat oven to 180°C. Combine seeded mustard and marmalade and rub over the pork, but keep 2 tbsp for dressing. Cut leaves from beets, wash well and dry to keep for serving. Peel and cut onions into segments and place with beets in baking dish, drizzle with 1 tbsp of olive oil, red wine vinegar and sprinkle lightly with salt.

Heat remaining oil in a large non-stick fry pan over a medium-high heat and sear pork on all sides. Place pork on a rack in baking dish and cook for 50-60 minutes/kg or until the internal temp reaches 70-75°C. After about 20 minutes, place vegetables on lower shelf. Turn occasionally during cooking, for approximately one hour or until beets are tender.

To make dressing, combine remaining mustard, marmalade, vinegar and orange rind in a pan and allow to heat through. Remove from pan, add olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove rind and pith from oranges and segment into pieces.

When cooked, remove pork from the oven and allow to rest for 15 minutes before serving. To serve, place a few beetroot leaves on each plate and top with orange segments, roasted beetroot and onion and 2-3 slices of pork. Drizzle with warm dressing. **Bon Appetit!**

**APIQ Picking Up On QA Questions**

**A revised Australian Pork Industry Quality program (APIQ), designed to build consumer confidence in pork production and reinforce piggery biosecurity, is proving simple to implement.**

Many WA producers attending recent APIQ workshops to learn about the modifications have found their operations already incorporated the new standards.

The new procedures took effect from January 1, with most changes due to be finalised by January 1, 2005. They introduce higher biosecurity standards, while adhering more closely to the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs.

**Satisfy Conscious**

According to WAPPA Executive Officer, David McFerran, high animal welfare standards are needed to satisfy an escalating sensitivity among consumers, who are increasingly conscious of the impact of food production.

HACCP procedures within the manual were also streamlined, opening the way for facilitators to tailor programs to suit specific producers.

Many of the producers who attended the Perth, Kojonup, Cuballing and Merredin workshops had their manuals updated on-site.



Margaret and Lloyd Mullins with Heleen Koster.



Facilitator of the WA APIQ workshops Dr Kim Nairn with Wongan Hills producer Andrea Bear.



Wannamal producers Marty and Karen Van Beek attended the APIQ workshop at Pastoral House.



Coomberdale producer David Topham listens intently as APIQ Manager Heleen Koster of Australian Pork Ltd outlines why on-farm QA remains relevant.

**PUBLISHER'S DETAILS**

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