



Media Statement

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Improving the value of tasty pork

Consumers of pork can look forward to an enhanced 'taste experience' as a result of research by the Department of Agriculture and Food that will also improve the production value to producers.

For several years many pig producers have used an immuno-castration vaccine to reduce the risk of boar taint – the unpleasant taste or odour experienced by some consumers when eating meat from entire male pigs.

While the vaccine is effective, these pigs often have a higher level of back fat – for which producers are penalised.

Department research officer Karen Moore's work, as part of her PhD, is examining a suitable on-farm feeding strategy to address this constraint.

An integral part of the research has been to determine the right amount of lysine, the first limiting amino acid essential for growth, in pig diets.

"Immunised male pigs which consume feed that contains insufficient lysine gain too much back fat and have unsatisfactory growth, while too much lysine in feed is wasted," Ms Moore said.

"We have established that immunised male pigs should be fed the same level of lysine as entire boars for two weeks following the second immunisation and following this the lysine level can be decreased. This ensures that growth is maximised while feed costs are minimised."

The research has also shown that immunised male pigs deposit about 50 per cent more fat in the second two weeks after the second dose of the vaccine.

"Producers are paid on the depth of back fat so the profit penalty can be considerable," Ms Moore said.

"The next step of the research is to develop a suitable feeding strategy to help producers maximise the potential of immunised male pigs without compromising the back fat level – boosting production and profitability and guaranteeing the consumer a better eating experience."

The research, which commenced in 2010, is funded by the Pork Cooperative Research Centre and Australian Pork Limited.

More detailed results and feeding recommendations are expected by the end of the year.

Photo caption: *DAFWA research officer Karen Moore hopes to make important gains in improving the value of pork products from immunised male pigs.*

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