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APRIL advises pork research approvals

A first call by Australasian Pork Research Institute Limited (APRIL) for research to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the Australasian pork industry has resulted in 14 proposals being funded to a value of almost one million dollars.

All successful proposals included a 20% to 25% cash contribution from applicants, giving a total cash budget for the first round of approximately \$1.2 million.

At its April 23 meeting the APRIL Board also approved \$100,000 for education in 2018/19, which will support an Industry Placement Program, similar to that successfully initiated in Pork CRC, plus top up postgraduate scholarships and honours projects. The first APRIL honours project has been approved at University of Melbourne.

According to APRIL Interim CEO, Roger Campbell, most R&D proposals were recommended with modification and all applicants have been advised.

“The research portfolio contains very innovative proposals and provides APRIL with an exciting and positive start, with the first results expected within 12 to 18 months,” Dr Campbell said.

The objective was to minimise any disruption to R&D and training activity in 2018-19 following completion of Pork CRCs investment in R&D in 2017-18.

Among the successful APRIL proposals were very innovative projects on reducing antimicrobial resistance and better understanding the gut microbiome in animal health and performance, plus a couple on novel diagnostics and remote monitoring pig health.

“There were also some potential system changing projects on improving reproduction and two on better understanding the capabilities of modern Australian genotypes and manipulating carcass fatness and improving feed efficiency,” Dr Campbell said.

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However, he noted APRIL was disappointed at the lack of proposals covering reducing feed costs, enhancing feed efficiency and manipulating carcass fatness.

The APRIL board and management would therefore attempt to address these in the shorter term via a call for innovation proposals and in the longer term through discussions with relevant researchers and research groups.

Dr Campbell thanked all who submitted proposals and said their contributions would help sharpen researcher focus on APRIL priorities and industry needs and likely lead to more directed proposals in future investment rounds.

“I also thank members of the APRIL R&D Committee and the 75 or so reviewers involved in the process. The time frame was tight but all went very smoothly,” he said.

APRIL’s inaugural Education Committee comprises: Professor Frank Dunshea (Chair), University of Melbourne, Professor John Pluske, Murdoch University, Dr Eugeni Roura, University of Queensland, Dr Darryl D’Souza SunPork, Dr Rob Smits, Rivalea, Ms Heather Channon, APL and Dr Charles Rikard-Bell, Pork CRC.

APRIL, which replaces the Cooperative Research Centre for High Integrity Australian Pork (Pork CRC), is fully member based with a budget in 2018-19 approaching \$3 million.

APRIL is actively seeking new science and creative new ideas for its three programs, which cover resilience, cost and return on assets.

www.APRI.com.au

Authorised by APRIL and issued on its behalf by

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APRIL proposals up.docx/RC010518