



MEDIA RELEASE – August 17, 2016

Buoyant Mood at 2016 WAPPA AGM & Industry Day

West Australian Pork Producers' Association President, Dawson Bradford, has highlighted the buoyant state of the industry in his report to WAPPA's 2016 AGM.

However, he sounded a note of caution about how possible changes to the 'Standards and Guidelines' (Model Code), once its review is finalised, might affect promising growth opportunities for the WA pig industry.

Mr Bradford, of Popanyinning, was re-elected to WAPPA's Executive Committee, along with fellow producer Graeme Dent of Cuballing, whose terms had expired due to the effluxion of time. Fellow Committee members are Emalyn Loudon of Perth, Torben Soerensen of GD Pork and Dean Romaniello of Craig Mostyn Group.

WAPPA's AGM was part of a very successful 2016 industry day at the International On The Water Hotel at Ascot, which was attended by about 50 producers, industry stakeholders and WAPPA sponsors.

Speakers included Roger Campbell, Pork CRC, Andrew Spencer and Deb Kerr, APL, Andrew Daff, DAFWA, Kate Savage, Portec, Amanda Vardanega, MSD Animal Health, Meg Donahoo, Boehringer Ingelheim, Tony Heelan of Tony Heelan & Co., Industrial Relations and Management and Rob Wilson, Pork Innovation WA.

Addressing the industry day and in his report to the AGM, Mr Bradford noted that WA's pig industry had been identified by the State Government and DAFWA as having the potential to grow 10-fold, which could change the shape of the industry.

"However, for growth to happen, we must be globally competitive and with the changes touted for the standards and guidelines, this isn't going to happen," he said.

"While I am all for good welfare standards and those who don't comply should be shunned from the industry, I can't understand why anyone would want to go above their competitor's level.

"We don't want to make the minimum acceptable standards greater than that of our competitors, as this will not help us compete in Asian markets," Mr Bradford said.

WA's pork industry saw good growth in pig numbers in 2015/16, which was the third successive year in which pig numbers increased by more than 10%, the highest increase of any state and pushing annual numbers processed in WA to 660,000.

According to WAPPA Executive Committee member Dean Romaniello, with increased sow numbers, good growth should occur again this financial year.

“The demand behind this increase was mainly driven by the free range and sow stall free market, however export continues to remain sound and local demand positive on the back of high meat prices from competing proteins,” he said.

“WA producers have seen good pig prices, hopefully putting them in a good financial position, so the aim now should be to reinvest back into the farms and continue to look into lowering cost of production, which will help ensure a viable and bright future for WA producers in the years ahead,” Mr Romaniello said.

WAPPA Executive Officer, Jan Cooper, in her report, suggested access to labour in the WA pork industry continued to be a risk to growth, however WAPPA had successfully applied for labour agreements on behalf of GD Pork and Westpork.

“With runs on the board, WAPPA is now in a good position to help other producers interested in pursuing labour agreements, while we also continue to investigate other avenues for producers while ensuring the integrity of labour agreements,” she said.

Other matters Ms Cooper addressed were: biosecurity; environment and planning; APL delegate forum; animal welfare; APIQ standards; R&D; Productivity Commission; governance and communication and networking.

Roger Campbell focussed his Pork CRC update on its progress with commercialising technologies and products, including appetite enhancers for weaners and enrichment blocks for gestating sows and weaners.

Dr Campbell listed the following as being on his ‘Pork CRC Watching Brief’ and R&D outcomes producers should eagerly anticipate: APP vaccine; lauric acid and the effects of fatty acid levels in lactation on subsequent reproduction; post cervical AI; oestrus synchronisation; Porcinet for growers; magnesium effects before farrowing.

Veterinarian Kate Savage of Portec reminded producers of the effects of heat stress in summer, in particular how it affects sows.

She said heat stress suffered by sows could lead to earlier ovulation, reduced hormonal support of pregnancy, poor quality eggs and boars were affected by compromised semen production.

Dr Savage noted that as production systems in WA moved from intensive to eco-shelters and to free range, producers had less control over temperature and day length.

She recommended producers study ‘*Preparing for the summer months: seasonal infertility and beyond*’, a manual co-produced by Pork CRC and APL.

Pork Innovation WA Chairman, Rob Wilson, in his report, advised that PIWA was now an incorporated body with inaugural members WAPPA, Craig Mostyn Group, Portec Veterinary Service, Milne Agrigroup, Westpork and Dawson Bradford.

“PIWA will seek funding for research through industry organisations such as Pork CRC, APL and the Agricultural Produce Commission, plus non-traditional channels which seek to support productivity and competitiveness,” Dr Wilson said.

“We hope the combination of external funding and transition funding from DAFWA will establish PIWA as a viable model for future pork industry research, development and extension in WA.”

About 130 people attended WAPPA’s industry dinner in the evening, at which the 2016 Ron Pollard Memorial Award was presented by Deb Kerr of APL to former Pork CRC supported student Yvonne Lau, who graduated from Murdoch University with 2nd Class Honours in Animal Science. She hopes to continue her career in the pork industry.

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