

AUSTRALIAN PORK INDUSTRY WINS TWO PRESTIGIOUS YOUNG SCIENTIST AWARDS

Australian Pork Limited (APL) would like to congratulate Dr Kate Plush for receiving the Australian Pork Award, as part of the 2013 Science and Innovation Awards for Young People in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig presented the awards at a gala dinner for the agriculture sector's key annual conference, Outlook, noting the government's investment in research and development (R&D).

A Postdoctoral Research Fellow through the Pork Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) at the University of Adelaide, Dr Kate Plush is currently conducting research into confinement-free sow and piglet management.

The grant she received will go towards her project titled *Interventions to reduce stillbirth rates and improve postnatal viability in the piglet*. The aim of the project is to determine whether maternal supplementation of magnesium sulphate reduces the incidence of stillbirth in piglets, hypoxic damage and increases piglet viability, and overall piglet peri-natal mortality.

Dr Plush said "Pre-weaning piglet mortality is a major constraint to the profitability of the pig industry. Still births contribute approximately 25-50 per cent of overall mortality. Additionally, non-fatal hypoxia results in neural damage to the piglet which may contribute to additional post-natal mortality from sow crushing and starvation/exposure to cold."

"This project will allow me to apply previous strengths to my current research, facilitating a somewhat comfortable transition from postgraduate studies in sheep to a research career in pigs. It will also allow me to commence a career in an area in which there is knowledge to be gained, and which will become of increased importance if alternate gestation and lactation housing is adopted by industry."

The evening's prestigious awards provided a dual win for the Australian pork industry. In addition to Dr Plush's success was the award presented to Dr Joshua Sweeny, Research Officer from the Department of Agriculture and Food WA. He was the recipient of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Award for his project on *Determining the optimum vitamin D requirement in modern pig genotypes*. This award is to help combat lameness and associated welfare issues in pigs.

The Science and Innovation Awards encourage participation in science, innovation and technology in rural industries and help advance the careers of young scientists through national recognition of their research. The Awards provide recipients with grants of up to \$22,000 each to pursue their research project exploring an emerging scientific issue or innovation over a 12 month period.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) facilitates the Science and Innovation Awards for Young People in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry with the financial support of 12 industry partners.

For more information visit <http://www.daff.gov.au/abares/conferences-events/scienceawards>

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