

AUSTRALIAN PORK LIMITED CONGRATULATES AWARD WINNING YOUNG SCIENTIST

Australian Pork Limited (APL) would like to congratulate Dr Sasha Jenkins, for her Australian pork industry award, as part of the 2012 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 the gala dinner for the agriculture sector's key annual conference, Outlook, earlier this month, noting the government's investment in research and development (R&D).

Sasha is an active researcher in the environment field and is involved in APL's environment and climate change R&D program. The project she will undertake with her prize, titled "The effect of antimicrobials on the anaerobic digestion of piggery waste" will look into the effects of common antimicrobials used in piggeries on the microbial activity in ponds and the impact it has on anaerobic digestion and therefore biogas yield.

Sasha says "the pork industry uses antimicrobials to treat pig health problems and make feed conversion more efficient. These antimicrobials are not always fully digested by pigs and are excreted, preventing microbes from breaking the waste down."

Effluent from piggeries is pumped into anaerobic pond digesters, which are now covered to reduce CO₂ emissions and provide farmers with a fuel source for energy production.

Sasha is using innovative metagenomic sequencing to determine the effect antimicrobials have on microorganism's metabolic pathways. The sequencing will also determine the amount of methane or biogas produced during anaerobic digestion.

The project will result in best management practice guidelines and microbial diagnostic tools. It will make covered pond digesters more stable and improve biogas yields. Ultimately the project will lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and increase on-farm profits through renewable energy and carbon credits—all good news for the competitiveness of Australia's pork industry.

Sasha completed her Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Environmental Biology at the University of Manchester, UK and her PhD in Molecular Microbiology at Newcastle University, UK. Sasha now resides in Western Australia and is a Research Associate at the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Western Australia.

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 Award provides recipients with grants of up to \$22,000 each to pursue their research project. This year, approximately 100 applications were received over 12 categories.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) runs 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>.

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