

Christmas countdown and campaign begin

PigPass NVD Review: help APL to improve the current form



David Lock (APL Chairman), Tim Allman (Don KRC), and Peter Spackman (Linley Valley Pork) with Australian pork at the China International Import Expo in Shanghai. Read more about this on page 6.

Understanding seasonal infertility in female pigs

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Share your pig farming stories with us by contacting APL's Membership and Communication Services Executive, Elzet Vermeulen at elzet.vermeulen@australianpork.com.au or on 02 6270 8814.

For information about APL Membership, contact Rachel Blake at rachel.blake@australianpork.com.au or on 02 6270 8807, or visit the APL website at www.australianpork.com.au/members.



ABOUT US

Australian Pork Limited (APL) is a unique rural industry service body for the Australian pork industry. It is a producer-owned company delivering integrated services that enhance the viability of Australia's pig producers. The organisation aims to enhance opportunities for the sustainable growth of the Australian pork industry by delivering integrated marketing, innovation and policy services along the pork industry supply chain. APL pursues opportunities for the industry at both the domestic and international level.

Know your APL Staff

Denise Woods, R&I's Manager Environment

I'm Denise Woods, Manager Environment, based in the Canberra office at APL. I commenced in this role at the beginning of 2018 after moving back to Australia from East Timor. My family and I spent two years living and working there and I was fortunate enough to gain experience leading an environmental impact assessment for a development in the agriculture sector. I've worked in the public transport sector for major infrastructure projects in VIC, in construction and development in NSW, for Commonwealth Government in ACT, and on major road projects in QLD. This all sounds quite different, but the environmental aspects are similar across all industries – surface and groundwater, soils, air quality, flora and fauna, cultural heritage, contaminated land, hazardous materials, climate change, energy and so forth. I love the challenge and diversity that this area brings with it.

I really enjoy being at the forefront of new and emerging research around all the aspects of sustainability and the environment for the pork industry. For the first part of this year I have been in catch up mode; this has



involved making sure all recently completed research work was published and accessible, meeting researchers to touch base on continuing projects, and discussions with the specialist group panel about new and emerging themes for the pork industry.

PPPE this year was the first opportunity that I had to meet producers all in one place. I am looking forward to getting out and about more in the year ahead to hear more from producers.

If you'd like to discuss anything concerning environment and sustainability or just have a general chat, please get in touch on (02) 6270 8826 or at denisewoods@australianpork.com.au.

Seasonal infertility in female pigs: what it is and how to manage it

What is seasonal infertility?

Summer can be a challenging time of the year for the care of pigs. The combination of heat and increased day-length can create environmental conditions that can be difficult for pigs to cope with and for people to manage. The negative production effects can be experienced by the entire herd as pigs struggle to cope with the higher temperatures – and are exacerbated in the breeding herd.

Summer infertility is commonly experienced by sows and gilts. It presents as a depression in fertility during summer and early autumn, which may also be accompanied by a reduction in litter size. This fer-

tility drop can result in a reduction in the proportion of gilts reaching puberty. It can also cause delays in the time taken for gilts to reach puberty, poor heat expression, extended weaning-to-mating intervals in sows, and high anoestrus rates

in both gilts and sows. Importantly, incidences of pregnancy failure and late pregnancy loss are also considerably higher during summer and early autumn, with a higher proportion of sows exhibiting an irregular return to heat post-mating.

Typical pattern of pregnancy losses or failures during summer/autumn (seasonal infertility period) compared to spring

	Season	
	Spring	Summer/autumn
Number of sows	135	175
Regular (21 day) returns	3.7%	8.0%
Negative pregnancy tests	3.7%	12.6%
Abortions	0.7%	2.3%
Adjusted farrowing rate	91.9%	77.1%

What causes seasonal infertility?

A number of factors are known to contribute to seasonal infertility in female pigs. These include:

- day length
- prolonged periods of high ambient temperature
- changes in melatonin production which negatively affect reproductive hormone secretions, affecting ovary function and embryo development
- genetics
- management practices.

The multi-factorial nature of the contributors to seasonal infertility is further exaggerated by the variation in its severity, or even its occurrence, between farms in the same region or country.

What are the major risk factors for sows?

Sows are at greatest risk of displaying seasonal infertility if they:

- are at parity six or more
- take longer than five days to return to heat after weaning
- are early weaned
- wean less than eight piglets.

Seasonal infertility is most likely to be shown by:

- sows that are of questionable fertility or
- sows that have been subjected to sub-optimal management, regardless of season.

Steps that can be taken towards alleviating seasonal infertility:

1. Boar exposure and mating

- increase the frequency of boar contact to twice daily
- one boar per 8–10 gilts/sows

- only use boars with a high sexual motivation
- maintain boar interest and pheromone production by ensuring boars receive regular matings
- match the size of the boar used to the size of the female
- prior to bringing gilts/sows to the mating pen, allow the boar 5 minutes to get used to his surroundings
- conduct heat detection and AI in the cooler parts of the day.

2. Insemination practices and semen storage

There is now some evidence that sows appear to ovulate earlier during oestrus in the summer/autumn period. Thus it is recommended that sows are inseminated when they are first detected on heat, regardless of when they return after weaning.

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Seasonal infertility in female pigs

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Once the first insemination has occurred, further inseminations can be provided at twenty-four hour intervals as normal.

During the summer, semen storage (just not in the semen fridge, but also in the esky in the mating shed) becomes even more critical as poor semen quality will only add to other factors that are compromised during this season, aggravating the risk of poor reproductive performance.

3. Early detection of returns to oestrus and early pregnancy losses

- conduct more frequent and accurate checks of oestrus detection and pregnancy diagnosis during the seasonal infertility
- between days 18 and 23 post-insemination, use boars daily to detect returns to oestrus
- pregnancy detection using ultrasound should occur twice, between days 28 and 30 of gestation and again between days 40 and 50.

4. Ensure high feed intake during lactation

- feed frequently, particularly at "high intake" times of the day (morning and the late afternoon)
- increase energy density of the diet
- increase protein density, particularly for young sows
- control pregnancy intake (the more the sow eats in the last 6–8 weeks of gestation, the less she will consume in lactation).

5. Other management practices that can help

- provide clean and high quality drinking water (cooled to at least 20°C) throughout gestation, lactation and the post-weaning period
 - gestating sows require at least 12–15 litres per day, lactating sows 17–40 litres per day
 - flow rates should be 1L/minute for dry sows and 2L/minute for lactating sows (lactating sows are only prepared to spend a limited amount of time drinking, so

a low flow rate will result in them consuming less water than they require)

- provide some sort of cooling for sows whether they are gestating, lactating or in the mating shed. These could include:
 - fans, spray cooling systems, drip cooling systems, wallows and shades on the sides of sheds or farrowing huts to keep the sun out but that let the breeze flow through
 - insulating farrowing huts and painting them with a heat reflective paint.

This information has been sourced from the APL/Pork CRC publication "Preparing for the summer months – seasonal infertility and beyond".

If you would like a copy, or any further information in regards to seasonal infertility please contact APL's Manager Production Innovation, Dr Rebecca Athorn via email at rebecca.athorn@australianpork.com.au or on (02) 6270 8827.

Environment and planning workshops help to understand producer needs

In recent years, there has been a large focus on planning and development opportunities in the intensive livestock industries.

As a result, there are currently a lot of consultations and educational initiatives underway to ensure a more efficient and sustainable way forward for both agriculture, rural communities and local government.

APL staff Grantley Butterfield and Michelle Randall joined a number of local producers at the Rural and Regional Land Use Planning workshops in Young and Boorowa recently, to ensure the industry's interests and concerns were represented.

Hilltops workshops

Councils across NSW are undertaking review of their rural and residential lands in the Local Government Area, to provide a new planning framework that supports

the growth and development of their region.

APL attended two workshops in the Hilltops Council area to understand the review process and provide information on the opportunities and challenges in the region for the pork industry, and to meet with Hilltops Council representatives and the economic and planning consultants involved.

The council has engaged consultants to review issues around land use, economic development, transport and freight and opportunities and constraints to growth. Draft reports are expected in early 2019. These workshops were positive about the potential for intensive agriculture to make an even greater economic contribution to the Hilltops community.

Mapping Important Agricultural Land in NSW

APL, community members and

other industry representatives attended the workshop to discuss the NSW Department of Primary Industries Mapping Important Agricultural Land in NSW project.

Several local pork producers attended and, along with APL staff, provided information about why pork production occurs in the area, what opportunities and challenges exist for local pork production and to identify areas of land on the map that are potentially suitable for pork production.

We encourage producers to contact APL about any other events that that are happening at state and local level which may help us progress Planning and Environment issues on behalf of the industry.

For more information on the workshops, contact Grantley Butterfield, Policy Manager – Planning and Environment on (02) 6270 8820 or at grantley.butterfield@australianpork.com.au.

APL learnings from the Rural and

In November, APL Policy staff attended the Planning Institute of Australia's (PIA) Rural and Regional Planning Conference held in Bendigo to gain information and contacts to help address the planning and environment issues facing the industry.

The conference program covered issues including small town revival, farmland protection, the digital economy, the challenges of tree change communities, water and climate change, and managing rural environments.

This provided valuable insights into issues and opportunities that can benefit our producers.

Local council planners, industry representatives, state and federal government, as well as legal, environmental and planning consultants attended the conference, providing a great opportunity to connect with them about issues impacting our Aussie pig producers.

The conference included a study tour of innovative agriculture in the greater Bendigo region that was tar-

geted at helping local planners better understand the different types of agriculture and the planning challenges unique to each situation. The tour acknowledged intensive pork and chicken production facilities in the area, as well as a farm using spent chicken bedding to produce mushrooms, a premium herb farm, a producer and exporter of premium hay to China, and the electronic sheep tag scanning equipment at the Bendigo Livestock Exchange.

For more information on the conference, contact Grantley

Regional Planning Conference

Butterfield, Policy Manager – Planning and Environment on (02) 6270 8820 or at grantley.butterfield@australianpork.com.au.



HOT TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1 Make the effort to contact the stakeholders involved

Contact your local indigenous association and to ask the questions. In many cases indigenous people just want to be respected and included in rural and regional planning decisions that are being made. – Janine Coombs, Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, on the Recognition of indigenous peoples' rights in planning.

2 Don't discount the value of better technology

Since winning a gigabit competition in 2014 to receive superfast internet capabilities, the small, declining town of Dunedin, New Zealand has transformed into a thriving techno-hub attracting businesses and young people. – Christine Garey, City Councillor from Dunedin on the impact of poor internet access, an issue that APL often hears about.

Opportunities for premium

By Andrew Robertson, Policy Manager – Trade and Workforce

Australia's efforts to secure market access into the mainland China market received a boost earlier this month as industry made a splash during the inaugural China International Import Expo (CIIE). Representatives of four pork exporting companies, along with David Lock, APL Chairman, and Deb Kerr, General Manager of Policy, visited Shanghai to send a strong message about Australian pork and our readiness to enter the market. Senior federal and state politicians, including the federal Trade and Investment Minister, trade and agricultural ministers from New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia, as well as the Queensland premier attended the event – and most were happy to visit APL's stand at the expo for a chat. It's safe to say we got their attention.

But while the process of opening mainland China to our pork exports is ongoing, and likely to take a number of years to conclude, there are export opportunities for pork producers right now in China's Hong Kong and Macau markets. These territories are administered separately to the rest of China, and while they are small relative to the mainland, the opportunities for Australian exporters – especially exporters of premium products with specific provenance claims – are big.

Hong Kong is a city of 7.4 million people. It has one of the highest per capita incomes and costs of living of anywhere on earth. Hong Kong locals love pork, but there is no domestic industry to speak of, and so imports flow in freely. Hong Kong imports more than 95 per cent of its total food consumption. The major suppliers of pork to the Hong Kong market are Brazil (around 21



Federal Trade, Investment and Tourism Minister, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham talks to APL General Manager, Deb Kerr and APL Chairman, David Lock.

per cent) mainland China (around 19 per cent), and the USA (around 15 per cent). Australia's share of Hong Kong's imported pork market is very small – we account for less than one per cent of its imports. Still, that volume is enough to put Hong Kong in our top five pork export markets, with around 4,500 tonnes shipped in the year to August 2018 (or around 10 per cent of total exports for that period).

The good news, despite our small contribution to Hong Kong's overall supply, is that Australian pork enjoys a high reputation and dominates shelves in some high end supermarkets. For example, APL visited the meat section of the Great Food Hall – a gourmet supermarket in central Hong Kong. We found that, out of 15 different pork products on display, eight were Australian. Japanese, UK, and USA products were also present.



Australian products dominate the chilled meat display at the Great Food Hall.

Australian pork in Hong Kong

In another outlet, Green Dot Dot (a small gourmet retailer found in subway stations), frozen Australian product was placed in the best position at eye-level, above a larger number of cheaper, lower quality products from other countries. You can see the types of claims being made: 'natural', 'no added hormones', and 'no antibiotics'. These are popular with the health-conscious Hong Kong consumer.

Another supermarket, although sadly bereft of Australian product, demonstrated the popularity of organic claims. Of the 12 pork products in this image, nine make claims to be organic, including products from the UK, USA, and Denmark. There is an opportunity for Australian products to enter this growing niche.

Australian pork was priced competitively against pork from other countries, and mostly cheaper



Australian product in prime position at Green Dot Dot.

than USA pork. Japanese pork was more expensive in general, and avoided claims around production method, instead trading heavily on breed – Kumamoto Berkshire commands a high premium.

Clearly there is demand for a higher level of product in Hong Kong, and Australian producers of these types

of pork should explore opportunities to enter the market, if they aren't already. APL is ready to provide more information to producers about how they can get involved in export markets like Hong Kong.

For more information contact Andrew on (02) 6270 8888 or at andrew.robertson@australianpork.com.au.

PigPass NVD review

People who use, or have previously used, the PigPass National Vendor Declaration (PigPass NVD) form are being asked how APL can improve the form, as the biennial review is underway.

APL reviews the PigPass NVD form every 2 years to make sure it continues to fulfil its purpose – to ensure traceability of pork in the event of a disease or food safety incident and identify risks throughout the pork supply chain.

The success of PigPass relies on regular reviews and updates based on feedback from PigPass users including producers, livestock agents, abattoirs, processors and

regulators. To help with this, APL would appreciate your constructive feedback on your experiences using the current PigPass (version 8) form, including the explanatory notes and the attachments, by Monday 17 December 2018.

For example:

- Is there anything in the PigPass form that you find unclear, unnecessary or out of date?
- Is anything new that you would like to see included in the PigPass form and why?

APL administers the PigPass System on behalf of the Australian pork industry. PigPass, which



became a mandatory requirement for all pig movements in February this year, has been the cornerstone of the National Livestock Identification System for Pork for over 10 years.

Please email your comments to Michelle Randall at michelle.randall@australianpork.com.au or on 0436 629 234 (business hours).

Christmas countdown and campaign begin

Decorations have appeared in store as the countdown to Christmas begins and APL is preparing for the occasion.

The Christmas season is a key opportunity for pork producers, with bone-in hams and crackling-crusted roasts essential ingredients of the festive feast.

General Manager of Marketing, Peter Haydon, said winners of the Australian PorkMark Ham Awards will be revealed at the end of November and Christmas roasts advertising has been locked in.

“The Marketing team has been working hard to ensure that both hams and roasts are front of mind as people make their Christmas plans and start their shopping.”

The Australian PorkMark Ham Awards were judged earlier than usual this year, to allow winners more time to prepare their promo-



tion, and results will be announced at a media launch on 26 November.

Christmas roasts advertising will commence on 11 December, running through until Christmas eve.

Activity is also lined up with butchers, and magazines have already be-

gun running their Christmas menu inspiration.

“It’s just not Christmas without a traditional bone-in ham and a pork roast with crispy crackling,” Pete said.

For recipe inspiration, visit www.pork.com.au.

Get inspired, share the joy online

There’s no doubt that food is a dominant theme on social media and now Australians are being given a steady stream of pork inspiration.

APL launched its marketing social media campaign in August, with accounts on both Facebook and Instagram. “The channels are used to complement the current advertising strategy and drive closer connections and inspiration for pork,” said Senior Brand Manager, Eunbi Lee.

“A detailed content plan was developed to ensure that we’ve got

a wide variety of content that fits within our existing communication topics. “This includes recipes, instructional tips, and ambassadorial posts, based on our three main messages of health, versatility and ease of cooking, plus seasonal or occasional content, like Christmas.”

Interest in the social media accounts continues to grow and producers are encouraged to like and share the content to further spread the word.

“Our Facebook page, Australian Pork [@getsomeporkonyourfork](https://www.facebook.com/getsomeporkonyourfork), has nearly 4000 page likes, while

the Instagram page, [@australianpork](https://www.instagram.com/australianpork), is sitting at more than 350,” Eunbi said.

“Recent posts have included how-to make pork schnitzels on Facebook, while one of the most loved posts on Instagram has been Jamaican-flavoured pulled pork.

“We look forward to continuing to develop these communication tools to encourage people to Get Some Pork On Your Fork.”

For more, check out the Facebook and Instagram posts or visit www.pork.com.au.