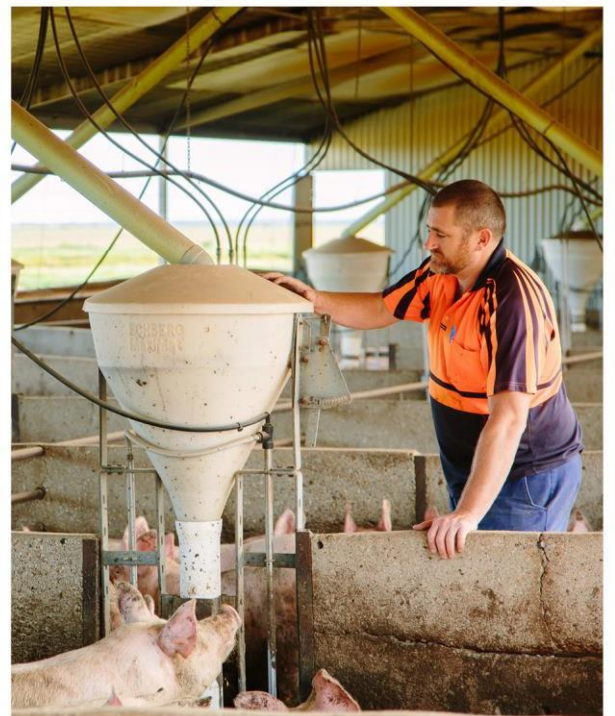


Australian Pork Limited

AUSTRALIAN
Pork®

Request for proposals
October 2021



Request for proposals:

Improving weaner performance to reduce overall herd feed conversion (HFC) and feed costs

Feed costs contribute up to 60% towards the overall cost of production (COP) and are subject to variability depending on raw material costs. Whilst the opportunity to reduce direct feed costs, and particularly grain costs, are somewhat limited and market dependant, improving on-farm production efficiencies is one way in which COP can be reduced.

Outcomes from recent concept testing with Australian pork producers and other industry stakeholders identified the area of the **'Transition period around weaning'** as an area which is still poorly understood and managed and where opportunity exists to address weaner performance and where significant positive effects on COP can be made if piglets could be 'set up' to thrive during this transition period, therefore resulting in improved lifetime FCR, reduced overall HFC and lower feed costs per kg of progeny carcass weight sold.

Therefore, APL is calling for research proposals relevant to its Horizon Program to lead to improved performance during the transition period around weaning. As an example, the catalyst for this idea was the provision of a 'Synthetic Sow' in the first 7 days after weaning – the idea behind this concept was a 'system' that delivered cues to piglets as to when to eat, and may have emitted heat and soothing sounds (i.e. sow grunts), making the weaning environment more of a transition from the farrowing house environment to the weaner environment, rather than being an abrupt change. Obviously, this is just an example, and the scope of proposals is in no way limited in regards to innovation.

Research proposal requirements

As part of APLs Innovation Plan, we wish to invite proposals into research and innovative strategies using new technology applied to the pig industry. Proposals need to be broad and collaborative and are expected to have deliverable outcomes over a 2-3 year time frame. It is expected that proposals will have a series of experiments in a milestone driven project that identifies achievable objectives and timeframes. Programs will be reviewed on a number of criteria including scientific justification and methodology; commercial application and adoption; and return on research and commercial investment necessary for implementation. Demonstrated engagement with the commercial pig industry as part of the proposal research framework is essential.

This proposal requires applicants to address the outcomes of delivering a lower herd feed cost budget to pig producers through improving weaner performance. This needs to be part of the project objectives and key deliverables.

APL is committed to expanding the technical capability of the industry and opportunities exist for Honours and Post-graduate student funding (Masters, PhD, Post Doc). This can be as Top-up Scholarships or Full Industry Scholarships for highly distinguished candidates. Scholarships should not be included in the research proposal budget but should be identified in the 'Special budget considerations' section so that the research project can refer to a separate scholarship application.

Basefunding

APL, together with the Australasian Pork Research Institute Limited (APRIL), significantly invest to provide access to research facilities through basefunding to provide Flexible Production Research Capacity within the pig industry. The base funded facilities suitable for this intended Horizon Program include Rivalea, SunPork and Roseworthy. This Flexible Production Research Capacity provides commercial facilities suitable for most commercial pig research studies and technical staff that can assist researchers and post-graduate students conduct their experimental plans.

If your proposed project would benefit from the use of base funded facilities, it is essential that you discuss and confirm availability with the contact person at the proposed facility before submitting your proposal. If you are not certain if your proposal should include basefunding, please contact Rebecca Athorn to discuss.

Details on the base funded facilities including, location, availability, and costs that will be incurred above what is offered by the basefunding facility, can be obtained from:

- Rivalea: Dr Rebecca Morrison (RMorrison@rivalea.com.au)
- SunPork: Dr Kate Plush (kate.plush@sunporkfarms.com.au)
- Roseworthy: Prof. Paul Verma (Paul.Verma@sa.gov.au)

When submitting a research and innovation proposal using a base funded facility, you must complete the basefunding section within the application process.

Relationship to APL Strategic Themes

The research initiative for this RFP target APL Strategic Theme 2 'Manage volatility for viable farms' (Reducing the Cost of Production and Processing) and the proposal should address how the research will address this. More information can be found in the [APL 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#).

Specific Terms of Reference

Research applications must address the specific area of this RFP and the Strategic Theme. Research providers successfully tendering for projects are to meet the objectives described above, and will be responsible for:

1. Assembling expertise from within or between organisations to deliver one or more of the research outcomes identified earlier;
2. Designing scientific studies, in consultation with APL, to provide new information and know-how;
3. Securing access to research facilities (laboratories, equipment, on-farm demonstration sites) and the necessary approvals for the conduct of the research;
4. Developing a comprehensive project plan which includes detailed methodologies and budgets and describes the cash and in-kind contributions to the project, and subsequently delivering the research within budget;
5. Analysing and reporting all data generated in formal reports to APL; and
6. Disseminating key findings from the research to the wider scientific community in a variety of formats subject to approval by APL.

Specific Outputs Required

Specific outputs required by APL will include:

1. Progress reports against milestones/decision points agreed with APL that detail project findings from individual experiments;
2. A comprehensive final report (following approval of a draft by APL) detailing all

- aspects of the research conducted (methodology, data, analysis and conclusions), submitted on the APL Final report template; and
3. Scientific papers, conference presentations, producer talks and trade articles as appropriate and approved by APL.

Timetable

Date	Action
14 October 2021	Application submission opens
11 November 2021	Deadline for research proposals to be received by APL
March 2021	Expected execution of contract/issue of Provider Agreement

General Conditions of Contracts

Research contracts entered into with APL will require:

1. Confidentiality to be maintained with disclosure only with approval of APL;
2. Copyright of all documentation and intellectual property to be vested pro-rata to the agreement parties on the basis of cash contributed, or as agreed by the parties;
3. The project to be undertaken in an impartial, objective and professional manner consistent with good scientific principles and practice;
4. Applicants to provide their own insurance cover for the risks pertaining to the project;
5. Applicants to identify any areas of potential conflict of interest during the application process, or during the course of any supported project;
6. Opportunities for variation to the project objectives and work schedules subject to mutual agreement; and
7. Any material provided by APL to be used only for work specific to the project, unless expressly approved by APL.

Lodgement of Response

All submissions are to be lodged as full proposals using the Research & Development Application in PigConnect (<https://pigconnect.australianpork.com.au/>). Finalised proposals for research will be developed and assessed using APL's research & development assessment processes. For proposals that require the use of base funded facilities, applicants must ensure that this detail is included in their PigConnect lodged proposal.

Contact

If you are interested in submitting an application, please contact:

Dr Rebecca Athorn

Manager, Production Innovation

0436655015

rebecca.athorn@australianpork.com.au