

Australian Pork Limited

AUSTRALIAN
Pork®

Request for proposals
January 2022



Request for proposals

Increasing the number of pigs weaned per sow

In recent years the Australian pig industry has seen an increase in the number of piglets born per sow. However, the number of pigs weaned per sow has not increased to the same extent. Reducing pre-weaning mortality in Australian pig herds is considered an area in which real change can be made in order to ensure that a greater percentage of piglets survive, and thrive, during the pre-weaning period (and beyond) leading to an overall reduction in cost of production.

Therefore, APL is calling for research proposals relevant to its Horizon Program to lead to an increase in the number of quality pigs weaned per sow as a means to reduce Cost of Production to the herd.

Outcomes from recent 'Concept testing' with Australian pork producers and other industry stakeholders identified the following as areas in which improvements and innovations could be made to reduce pre-weaning mortalities:

- individualised sow care during gestation
- non-hormonal intervention to induce sows to farrow during staffed hours (i.e. during the day, as up to 2/3 of sows currently farrow overnight when staff are not present)
- improving colostrum - quality and quantity
- maximising birth weights
- specialised staff training in farrowing management for recruitment and enhanced skill level
- labour augmentation through technology (i.e smart alert systems)

If you have an idea for an innovative research proposal that fits one (or more) of the above areas, or even one that may not specifically address one of these areas but will result in a reduction in pre-weaning mortality we highly encourage you to contact APL's Manager for Production Innovation, Dr Rebecca Athorn (rebecca.athorn@australianpork.com.au) in the first instance prior to preparing a proposal to discuss your idea.

Research proposal requirements

As part of APL's 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 by producers. Demonstrated engagement with the commercial pig industry as part of the proposal research framework is essential.

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 Industry Placement). 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 are able to 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 and experimental design 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 spreadsheet within the application process, and identify any special budget considerations such as additional cash not covered by base funding activities, or additional risk considerations.

Relationship to APL Strategic Themes

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

Specific Terms of Reference

Research providers successfully tendering for projects to meet the objectives described above 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
21 January 2022	Application submission opens
4 March 2022	Deadline for research proposals to be received by APL
1 July 2022	Project commencement

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/>). Please make sure you read the '[Guidelines for preparing Research Proposals](#)' document before preparing your proposal. 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