



The Planet Pillar

WHAT

'Planet' is one of the four pillars of the Pork Sustainability Framework and identifies the key areas where the pork industry will be focusing efforts to improve its environmental footprint.

The pork industry has a strong record of good environmental management through a focus on planning, effluent management, reduced water usage and adoption of technologies such as biogas and solar energy. The sustainability framework aims to acknowledge this strong foundation while responding to the rising

community concern around pollution of the environment through excess nutrients, emissions and overuse of the land.

'Planet' is divided into three focus areas to represent all concerns and opportunities for development. These are:

Carbon cycling and nutrient accounting.

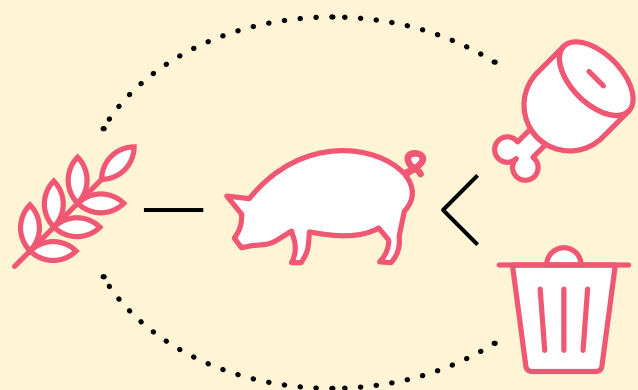
This acknowledges the potential benefits and risks of managing greenhouse gas emissions from piggeries, as well as nitrogen and phosphorus which can occur in high levels in piggery run-off, causing problems like algal blooms in waterways. There are also several areas of opportunity here that need further exploration by the industry regarding the potential of soil carbon and participating in these markets.

Farm biodiversity and natural resource stewardship.

Biodiversity is becoming of greater interest and represents another potential opportunity for the pork industry. Farms already consider impacts on threatened species and communities through planning approvals but there may be opportunities in developing native species vegetation buffers that provide multiple benefits around water run-off and odour while improving habitat for native birds and insects. It also covers managing natural resources like water. Pork already has a low water footprint, with most of the water associated with growing feed crops. This means there is potential to collaborate with these industries to further improve water efficiency.

Closing the loop to reduce waste.

This reflects the community interest in the circular economy and moving from a **take>make>waste** material flow to a **fully closed system** where inputs are constantly reused and repurposed. The pork industry is well on the way to closing the loop on waste in production with opportunities around changing diets to take in alternative feeds, using manure as fertiliser or energy and using most of the carcase. Further opportunities may be in nutrient recovery, improved engagement in waste recycling programs and investigating options for those items that cannot currently be done without or recycled.



On farm innovation is critical in this space. Australian pork industry will benefit from producers sharing their solutions.

WHEN

‘Planet’ has two short term targets to focus on over the next three years (to 2025):

	Target	Measure
Carbon cycling and nutrient accounting	Pork is a low emissions protein	Life cycle assessment (once every 2 years) Community belief in pork as a low emissions protein
Closing the loop to reduce waste	60% of production using waste recycling and renewable energy technology	Producer data, food manufacturing engagement

The closing the loop target is largely achievable in the next year, if more producers are willing to undertake renewable energy projects or a waste and recycling review to identify any waste streams that have potential to be recycled that are currently overlooked.

The biggest effort required will be the establishment of pork as a low emissions protein as we drive towards carbon neutral. This target has two focuses: the first is improving community understanding of the low emissions that pork is already achieving and how we are striving to do better. The second is objectively lowering our emissions as an industry. While we are starting from an enviable position, especially compared to other red meats and even pork in other countries, it is not enough to just maintain our position - we have to demonstrate that we are willing to do all we can to reduce emissions further.

There are many actions producers can take, several of which also have benefits in reducing waste. These are explored more in-depth in APL’s carbon and waste roadmaps but can include improving herd feed conversion, reducing feed wastage, changing feed sources, covering effluent ponds, composting mortalities, and planting trees. More research and extension activity will be undertaken by APL in the coming year and we are keen to understand what practical restrictions there may be to undertaking these activities to help remove them or seek alternative options.

WHY

The community is becoming more vocal in their demands to see action taken in issues like climate change, water quality, biodiversity and species loss. Pork must step up to this challenge. There are associations with intensive pork production and poor environmental outcomes such as increased odour, destruction of habitat (mainly due to feral pigs) and destruction of soil health that circulate in the community.

We are already seeing that brands with strong sustainability stories are seeing increased growth compared to competitors and there is a strong push from the alternative plant-based sector to move away from meat. While it is highly unlikely this will become mainstream, we are seeing an increase in those who consider themselves flexitarians. By having a strong environmental story, which our research has shown to be our strongest advantage, we can reassure those who are questioning their choices that pork is still an excellent protein and that we are leading the way in becoming even greater environmental stewards.





HOW

The first information regarding actions to take in reducing waste and carbon emissions can be found in APL's two roadmaps. Other tools available to assist in determining if solutions are right for you and further research into soil, natural capital assessment, life cycle analysis benchmarking and biogas optimisation are currently being explored. Further resources will be developed as these projects roll out but if you would like to see something in particular please let us know. Specialist technical and policy/regulatory advice is available through APL if you are interested in any of these areas.

WHO

Decision-makers on farms need to be a strong voice in this action. We can help to generate ideas, remove roadblocks and provide support, but it is ultimately producers that will need to take action in order for all of industry to benefit from these commitments.

Review the sustainability framework as soon as practical, and highlight target areas that can be improved in your business and on-farm.

MORE INFORMATION

For a copy of the Sustainability Framework have a look on [APL's website](#) or contact Rowena Davis at rowena.davis@australianpork.com.au

For technical information, contact Gemma Wyburn at gemma.wyburn@australianpork.com.au