

Australian Pork Limited

AUSTRALIAN
Pork®

Request for proposals

November 2022



Request for proposals:

Optimal space allowances for indoor housed progeny pigs in Australia

Australian pork producers understand that the provision of good animal welfare results in a contented animal able to adapt to its environment. The industry invests considerably each year into the research of new technologies and practices to improve pig welfare and provide valuable education and training to stock people throughout Australia.

Currently within Australia space allowance for group housing of pigs is regulated under the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs (2007) which outlines minimum science-based animal welfare requirements.

Recommendations from the 2018 review of scientific literature and the international pig welfare codes and standards

In 2018, in preparation for and as a mandated requirement of the review process of the Standard & Guidelines for Pigs (Pig S&Gs - currently the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs) APL commissioned a review of the scientific literature and the international pig welfare codes and standards to underpin the future Pig S&Gs. The review provided a comprehensive documentation of findings on pig welfare at all stages of the production cycle and compared the current Australian Model Code of Practice – Pigs to the equivalent standards in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada, and the European Union. The review identified gaps and recommended areas where improvements could be made, as priorities for review during the Pig S&Gs process and where further research is required. One of the areas recommended for future research to safeguard the welfare of growing-finishing pigs included examining the effect of space allowance (and pen design and features) on the aggressive behaviour of growing pigs in the period immediately following mixing. Furthermore, over the past 2 years, there has been a shift internationally in welfare policy where countries such as New Zealand and those in the European Union are reviewing their welfare legislation and proposing changes to space allowance and stocking density for all pigs in group housing. Some of the space allowances being recommended in these countries for legislation have little to no scientific basis behind them. Furthermore, the majority of research that has been undertaken is questionable with poor experimental design and/or little replication resulting in confounded outcomes.

Therefore, APL are seeking research proposals that will successfully achieve the objective:

Determine optimal space allowances for progeny pigs housed indoors under Australian commercial conditions that are based on robust scientific outcomes.

Proposals should look to investigate alternative space allowances for progeny pigs (weaner, grower and finisher) compared to the current Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Pigs recommendations. Alternative space allowances investigated need to take into consideration multiple factors that can impact on the quality of the space and be representative of current commercial group sizes and management practices. The desired outcome from the research will be the determination of optimal space allowances for all classes of progeny pigs that result in the best welfare possible validated through accepted welfare indicators and animal productivity.

APL invites interested persons or parties that would like to submit a proposal addressing the current request for proposals to contact Dr Rebecca Athorn, Manager Production Innovation, prior to commencing an application in PigConnect to discuss your proposal.

Relationship to APL Strategic Themes

The research initiative for this RFP target APL Strategic Theme 4 'Leading community social licence' (Leaders in animal care) 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 providers or industry consultants successfully tendering for projects are to meet the objective 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 of the experiment/s to be undertaken, in consultation with APL, to provide new information and know-how;
3. Developing a comprehensive project plan which includes detailed methodologies and associated budgets and describes the cash and in-kind contributions to the project, and subsequently delivering the research within budget;
4. Analysing and reporting all data generated in formal reports to APL.

Specific Outputs Required

Specific outputs required by APL will include:

1. Progress reports against milestones/decision points agreed with APL, demonstrating progressive conclusions/recommendations on optimal space allowance for progeny pigs at defined ages/weights;
2. A comprehensive final report (following approval of a draft by APL) recommending space allowances for all classes of progeny pigs based on the results of the experiments and detailing all aspects of the research, 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
31/10/2022	Application submission opens
14/11/2022	Deadline for research proposals to be received by APL
Jan 2023	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.
8. All proposal applications are externally reviewed and the ruling of proposal success is the right of 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

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