

Request for proposal

Updating composting and sludge management guidance for the pork industry



February 2024 - Australian Pork Limited



Request for proposals

Project objective – to provide producers updated information on best practice composting and sludge management

Australian Pork Limited (APL) is the peak national representative body for Australian pig producers. APL is a producer-owned not-for-profit company combining marketing, export development, research, innovation and strategic policy development to assist in securing a profitable and sustainable future for the Australian pork industry. It is one of 15 rural research and development corporations (RDCs) providing research to Australian agriculture.

Funded by pig farmers, APL is paid to do what farmers can't do for themselves. This includes:

- a. Building demand for pork meat products
- b. R&D to reduce costs, improve product quality and value chain efficiency
- c. Interaction with government on behalf of pig producers and the broader pork industry
- d. Being the industry's signatory to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA).

Background

There is an increasing interest from state Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) and Environmental departments on the management and disposal of piggery effluent, manure and sludges. There are a number of emissions reduction, odour prevention and regulatory reviews underway which are leading to regulators developing guidance notes and guidelines for management.

The regulators are looking to use the most-recent up to date materials to determine their guidance to industry. While there is good Australian guidance available, it is considered 'out of date' by many regulators. An update would provide confidence to regulators to utilise the Australian research and ensure producers have the best available Australian information to reduce the risk of regulators using unapplicable overseas information. Two key areas have been identified where there is an opportunity to provide up to date guidance: composting and sludge management.

Composting is increasingly becoming preferred by the EPAs as a way for producers to manage both mortalities, spent bedding and sludges.

Concerningly some of this guidance and the move towards making this method a requirement is based on incorrect assumptions taken from overseas literature, as was recently seen in Victoria. Other states like WA have implemented requirements for industrial-level composting facilities that make managing waste on farm in this manner difficult. Recently work from a Smart Farms project was able to deliver up to date composting information to the Eastern States (Vic, NSW, Qld) through their work but not all producers were able to take advantage of this knowledge sharing opportunity. APL has older guidance on composting in several publications including the National Environmental Guidelines for Piggeries (Indoor and Rotational Outdoor, currently under review) as well as manure management and reuse guides (2015) but there is a need to update and provide clear guidance on current best practice for Australian conditions taking into account local impacts like weather and soil types.

Sludge management has also been a focus of regulators. APL has recognised a need to help producers through clearer management advice on the best management for clearing ponds and managing this by-product efficiently and safely and within each States regulatory requirements. While there is a good amount of research on options for sludge management, it needs to be translated into an easy to understand manual or glove box guide for farm managers.

Current project

APL is seeking proposals for a project to provide case studies and simplified guidance materials on manure management which must include at least composting and sludge management.

Other potential topics could include effluent pond management, deep litter management, best practice for applying piggery waste to land and free-range nutrient management.

The project is envisaged to include:

1. Case studies of different options for composting and sludge management, including their effectiveness, best practices for Australian soils and rainfall zones
2. At least one factsheet and/or short guide (glovebox guide) per case study
3. Updated photos and/or video of operating systems to support case study understanding
4. The sludge case study should include best practice desludging timeframes and methods as well as options for use of the sludge.
5. The composting case study should include current on farm applicable methods for Australia, general principles and consider both manure/litter composting and mortalities. In particular it must include the required timeframes and processes to decrease pathogens to safe levels for re-use
6. Evaluation of success of options for environmental outcomes AND costs of implementation for a producer at different scales and types of production eg 100 sow, 500 sow, 1000+ sow for each case study presented.

Project should aim to be completed and delivered by 31 May 2024 to a budget of \$60,000.

Extension

This project is focused on providing extendable outcomes direct to producers so clear and concise information is key.

There is no need for fully designed and produced documents, high quality editable draft documents are preferred.

Any images or video developed for the project are to be provided as a separate library with all rights assigned to APL for use.

Research Purpose

Project objective

- Provide clear guidance to producers on best practice sludge and composting
- Provide an up to date resource for regulators that highlights Australian best practice management

- Ensure visual assets are available to support extension and communication around manure management

Timeline

Date	Activity
23 February 2024	Applications open
8 March 2024	Applications close 5pm
12 March 2024	Notification of proposal review outcome
14 March 2024	Issue of Provider Agreement for successful applications and commencement of project
31 May 2024	Project completed and delivered to APL

How to make a submission

Register or log in via PigConnect - <https://pigconnect.australianpork.com.au/>

- Submit and manage Project Applications
- View and manage your in-progress Projects
- Review Project Applications referred to you

Contact

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

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