Animal Welfare R,D&E: Pig industry update

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Breeding herd size: 262,000 sows
Annual slaughter: 4.8 M

Pig producers: 1,400
- 400 producers ~90% of production
- 1,000 producers ~10% of production

Production systems:
- Conventional housed ~90%
- Outdoor housed ~10%

Pork consumption: ~25kg
- Fresh ~9.2kg
- Processed ~15.3kg
- Imported processed ~70%
Welfare R,D&E strategy

Major objective is to look after our animals, support our producers and inform our stakeholders

- Lead by example…….proactive agenda

- Shaping Our Future
Shaping Our Future: Sow gestation stalls

- Significant amount of data to date (early 1990's)
- Mixing sows immediately after mating increased stress and injuries
- Keeping pigs in stalls for the entire gestation period was detrimental

- Industry absolutely vilified in 2009
- Limited defence of industry position but science position was solid

- Significant industry consultations (18months)
- 83% of delegates voted in favour of the voluntary ban on sow gestation stalls
So where are we at?

Producers have walked the talk……~65% of industry compliance
Welfare program priorities

• Minimal confinement housing for sows
• Provide practical and humane pig euthanasia protocols customised for individual farms
• Protocols to maximise welfare of pigs reared in ecoshelters
• A systematic literature search, which may include studies in humans and or/animals, for novel markers of pain and a prioritised list of potential pain-reducing strategies in animals
• Determination of the level of community understanding of industry definitions i.e. understanding of the consumers’ knowledge base as regards the pig industry
• Effect of enrichment substrates for growing pigs.
Extension priorities

• To incorporate production welfare research outcomes on-farm and cement them into pig culture
  – Tailored to address production requirements (not just Final Reports)
• Provide data to producers, industry leaders, spokespeople and advocates
  – In a manner that is most suitable for each stakeholder group
• Revamp the ProHand program and delivery platform
• Pigs in Schools educational units
## Key projects

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<tr>
<th>Welfare methodology</th>
<th>Management strategies</th>
<th>Community attitudes</th>
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<td>Identify and integrate measures of animal welfare that meet the needs of animals and society</td>
<td>Commercially-viable strategies to reduce the acute pain of tail docking in piglets</td>
<td>Monitoring public attitudes</td>
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<td>Usefulness of preferences for resources &amp; biological functioning to assess animal welfare</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; amelioration of pain for improved welfare during routine husbandry procedures in piglets</td>
<td>Pigs in Schools educational units</td>
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<td>Qualitative behavioural assessment as an objective measure of pig welfare</td>
<td>Assessment and alleviation of adverse stimuli in pigs</td>
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<td>Welfare measurement on farm</td>
<td>Assessment of pain induced by tail docking in piglets &amp; strategies to reduce this pain</td>
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<td>Validation of on-farm pig welfare indices</td>
<td>Updating the Fit-to-Load Guide</td>
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<td>Metrics to benchmark stock handling (including validation)</td>
<td>Redevelopment of ProHand</td>
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<td>CO₂ stunning welfare standards</td>
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**Pork CRC**
- Minimal confinement of sows
- Group housing for gestating sow
- Farrowing housing systems to enhance sow and piglet welfare
- Genetic selection to enhance ‘liveability or robustness’ of pigs
Questions