

Pig Industry Advisory Group

27th Meeting Summary

Friday 19 October 2005

NOTE: At the time of distribution, the Minister has not approved the outcomes listed in this document. Any misuse of information by individuals or associations will cause this service to be withdrawn.

The meeting commenced at 10:00am.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all PIAG members and guests and introduced Wendy Dewis as the acting Executive Officer.

2. Attendance

<i>Christine Sapwell (Chair)</i>	<i>SAFF Commercial Pig Section Representative</i>
<i>Robert Berlin</i>	<i>Commercial Pig Producer Representative</i>
<i>Peter Brechin</i>	<i>SA PPPI Representative</i>
<i>Alan Fyfe</i>	<i>SABOR Ltd Representative</i>
<i>Jenny McMahon</i>	<i>Commercial Pig Producer Representative</i>
<i>Robert McLean</i>	<i>Commercial Pig Producer Representative</i>
<i>Bill Giles</i>	<i>Proxy Ministerial Representative (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Jack Reddin</i>	<i>Veterinary Officer (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Wendy Dewis</i>	<i>Acting Executive Officer, Livestock Advisory Groups</i>

Guests:

<i>Elena Petrenas</i>	<i>Manager, Livestock Advisory Groups (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Graeme Pope</i>	<i>Principal Industry Consultant, Pigs</i>
<i>David Hamilton</i>	<i>Research Veterinarian, SARDI Livestock Systems</i>
<i>Paul Hughes</i>	<i>Program Leader, PPPI (Pig Research)</i>
<i>Tim Murphy</i>	<i>Research Officer, SARDI Pig Research</i>
<i>W. Van Wettere</i>	<i>PHD Student, Roseworthy</i>

3. Apologies

<i>Brian Bartsch</i>	<i>Ministerial Representative (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Barry Lloyd</i>	<i>SAFF Commercial Pig Section Representative</i>
<i>Rod Hamann</i>	<i>Commercial Pig Producer Representative</i>

4. Confirmation of 26th Meeting Minutes – 19th August 2005

The minutes from the PIAG meeting held on 19th August 2005 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters Arising from 26th Meeting Minutes/Actions - 19th August 2005

The issue of PIAG funds for the "Communication and Networking" project was raised. The intent of the previous resolution was to flag to PIRSA industry's priority areas (ie training and industry liaison). It was argued that the use of industry funds for TAFE courses (whether for corporate or private courses) was inappropriate as these activities should be self-supporting. Industry workshops were seen as a better alternative as they could be readily tailored to address industry issues of the day.

Members supported developing a PIAG subcommittee to identify future industry "communication and training" needs for delivery by PIRSA. The meeting is scheduled for Friday 18 November 2005 at the Roseworthy campus.

6. Correspondence

The correspondence was accepted as read.

7. Business

7.1 Project Updates

7.1.1 Carcase Trim Variance and Dressing Percentage Program

Concern has been raised about the variation in trim, and consequently dressing percentages, between the two major South Australia pig abattoirs. The cause of this variation is different between the two operations.

Members were advised that AQIS will shortly be undertaking an audit of four interstate export plants – three of the four audits have already been completed. At the conclusion of this activity, AQIS will focus on undertaking an audit across all pig abattoirs (both tier 1 and 2 plants) for the purpose of standardising trim requirements. This audit is likely to be completed by February/March 2006 and may involve SARDI. Whether there is a decrease in the trim removed from different sites will be based on scientific data (including risk assessments). PIAG will maintain a watching brief over this activity and reconsider their approach (ie about conducting an independent audit) in early 2006.

AUSMEAT recently undertook an audit of plants processing pigs and identified that only five are actually accredited to use the AUSMEAT pig payment calculation. Because of the variables that underpin this calculation, PIAG did not support AUSMEAT revising their calculation as it was felt that this was not cost effective (ie would become outdated as pig weights etc changed over time).

7.1.2 Water Intake on Sow Lactation and Piglet Performance

The aim of this project is to quantify the effects of water intake on litter size, litter birth and weaning rates, conception and farrowing rates, as it is hypothesised that consumption of less than 10 litres of water per day by gestating sows will reduce these variables.

Previous studies by the PPPI have demonstrated that water intake is variable due to drinker type, water temperature, the salt and fibre content of the diet and the frequency of feeding. Variability of water consumption between sows is approximately 8%.

In summary, the experiment intends to use 120 sows (involving a minimum of two parities but preferably between 3 – 6 parities) from at least two different herds. Sows will be identified as high (> 20 litres/day), medium (10 – 20 litres/day) or low (< 10 litres/day) water consumers. The sows will be housed in stalls and provided with water from either a nipple drinker or water trough. Water intake will be measured daily for five days in the dry sow shed and daily for three weeks in the farrowing shed.

It was argued that this project is novel as it attempts to identify whether low water consuming dry sows maintain this same characteristic through to farrowing and whether this population would usually be culled earlier.

Funding of \$15,040 has been requested for a 12-month period and necessary additional funding may be sought at the end of the 12 months.

OUTCOME

PIAG supports the use of up to \$16,000 from the Pig Industry Fund for the “Water Intake on Sow Lactation and Piglet Performance” project for 12 months.

7.1.3 Reproductive Maturity of Eco Shelter Reared Gilts

The proposed project aims to investigate the effect of rearing gilts in straw-based ecoshelters on:

- Gilt growth rate, liveweight and P2 backfat;
- Reproductive maturity (ie ovarian morphology coincident with gilt entry into the mating shed); and
- Gilt responsiveness to boar stimulation and potential litter size following mating at pubertal oestrus.

Currently upto 15% of gilts (approximately 1,200 in South Australia) are culled prior to herd entry. Culling tends to be attributable to reproductive failure including failure to reach puberty, failure to maintain subsequent cyclicity and unpredictable timing of first oestrus.

Previous work has demonstrated that in conventional housing systems, differences in gilt live weight and average daily gain prior to 26 weeks of age can impact on ovarian maturity and oocyte quality, response to boar stimulation and potential litter size. Further, gilts reared in ecoshelters are heavier and fatter at a given age than conventionally reared gilts.

The project intends to use 72 LW/LR crossbred gilts selected at 10 weeks of age which will be allocated to one of three housing treatments (ie conventional housing for 16 weeks; conventional housing for eight weeks followed by eight weeks in an ecoshelter, and 16 weeks in an ecoshelter). At 26 weeks of age, eight gilts per housing treatment will be slaughtered and their ovarian follicle diameters measured and oocytes matured on vitro to measure quality. The remaining 16 gilts per treatment will commence boar exposure and will be artificially inseminated twice during their pubertal oestrus. On the 22 day of pregnancy the gilts will be slaughtered and their ovulation rate and number of embryos recorded.

It is intended that this project will occur over twenty-four months at an estimated annual cost of \$7,305 per annum.

Concern was raised about why the housing treatments chosen did not reflect commercial industry practices (ie growing gilts out in straw based ecoshelters and then moving them onto conventional housing for mating). W. van Wettere advised that the housing treatments selected reflect practices of producers who buy in gilts. Additionally, reducing the number of treatments measured decreased overall project costs. The cost of expanding the methodology to compare straw based ecoshelter housed gilts which are subsequently moved into conventional housing for mating would increase the project cost by around 30% to \$9,500 per annum.

It is intended that the project will commence in March 2006 to avoid the infertility period.

OUTCOME

PIAG supports the use of up to \$9,500 per annum for two years from the Pig Industry Fund for the “Reproductive Maturity of Eco Shelter Reared Gilts” project on the condition that the housing treatment is expanded to measure the effects on gilts housed in straw based ecoshelters which are then moved to conventional housing for mating.

7.1.4 Effect of Mixing Gilts in Early Pregnancy on Litter Size (W van Wettere)

The objective of this project is to investigate, and develop recommendations, when gilts/sows can be safely remixed after mating/insemination for the purpose of group housing without adversely affecting litter size.

The project will involve 96 LW/LR crossbred gilts selected at 18 weeks of age. The gilts will be allocated to one of four treatment groups (ie pre-mating group for 30 days post mating; pre-mating groups for the first seven days after which they're mixed to form new groups, mixed on day one post-mating and individually stalled for the first 30 days post-mating) with 24 gilts per treatment. Boar exposure will commence at 26 weeks of age. Following puberty, regumate will be used to synchronise the timing of their second oestrous at which time the gilts will be artificially inseminated twice. After the second insemination, the gilts will be housed according to their assigned treatment. All gilts will be slaughtered on the 30th day of gestation. At slaughter, the gilts reproductive tracts will be removed and ovulation rate, embryo number, embryo length and weight and embryo survival will be measured.

It is intended that this project will occur over twenty-four months at an estimated annual cost of \$10,956 per annum.

OUTCOME

PIAG supports the use of up to \$11,000 per annum for two years from the Pig Industry Fund for the “Effect of Mixing Gilts in Early Pregnancy on Litter Size” project.

PIAG is intending to review the Pig Industry Strategic Plan at their next meeting in order to identify priority project funding areas. This information will be included in funding advertisements.

7.2 Communication and Network Strategies for the SA Pig Industry

As a result of concern about the future funding of the “Communication and Networking” project, he was invited to discuss his concerns with PIAG members.

On the issue of the Pig Industry News (PINS) contact has been made with Rural Press about establishing a template for PIN - apparently Rural Press is prepared to financially contribute to the production of PIN (around \$7,000) if it can offer advertising space at the bottom of the front page. PIN production requires 30 days from PIRSA and 6 –7 days from Rural Press. PIAG members felt that the cost of PIN could be reduced if the number of “free” copies of PIN distributed were reduced. Other savings could be achieved by reducing paper quality and the number of cartoons.

Members were advised that the withdrawal of PIAG funds would compromise existing TAFE and Roseworthy initiatives. Currently TAFE pays \$52/hour – this is meant to cover preparation and delivery time. However the fee charged by Rural Solutions SA (RSSA) for this service is greater than this – the difference is currently covered by PIAG funds. If courses were offered on a fee for service basis, the pig course would not exist for private individuals, as the current attendance rate is poor. Corporate courses on the other hand are much better attended and may be able to survive with the withdrawal of PIF monies. As to Roseworthy’s pig industry training initiatives, concern was raised about the poor attendance rate that is due to the course being offered as a summer elective. The University does not pay for PIRSA staff lecturing time. The withdrawal of PIF funds would mean that this support to the program would have to be withdrawn. Other examples of how PIF monies were used to support indirect industry training were also provided.

The pig industry strategic plan has identified training as a priority area. In 2005/2006, the State funded 45 days and industry, through PIF, 25 days to training initiatives. Advice received was that industry workshops would assist with immediate production issues, but the formal TAFE course was still required.

A proposal has been forwarded to the pork CRC offering the use of PIN as their communication tool - support for the proposal won't be known for about a month.

OUTCOME

A PIAG subcommittee has been developed to identify and prioritise industry training requirements, funding and delivery. The subcommittee is scheduled to meet on the 18 November 2005.

7.3 Denmark Pig Industry

A report entitled 'Report on Denmark Pig Industry', Salmonella and the 8th International Conference on Johnes – 2005 was tabled, outlining activities and observations about the Danish pig industry. Of keynote was the degree of vertical integration along the process chain and how sentinel herds are used to measure salmonella levels.

7.4 PIAG Chair

C. Sapwell advised members that her 12 month term as chair was due to expire and that as result of increasing work commitments she was unable to continue in this capacity. The new chair, as of the next meeting, will be R. Berlin.

8. Other Business

8.1 Risk Management of Feed Grain Purchasing Project Update

The key objective of this project is to improve the availability of suitable feed grains for the State's pig industry.

A similar initiative has been under investigation in the red meat industry over the last 10 years. Industry funds to the value of \$25 million have been provided by the Grain Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), MLA, APC and Dairy Australia. Currently the project is trialling a NIR machine (worth \$20,000) which has the ability to evaluate the properties of grain, thereby allowing it to be segregated based on which livestock species will gain maximum benefit from it. The Australian Barley Board is trialling the technology this season to assess receivals. It is believed that the technology will soon be available to be incorporated in harvesters.

OUTCOME

PIAG has requested that the "Risk Management of Feed Grain Purchasing Project" application be finalised for future consideration.

W. Giles

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Friday 3rd February 2006** in the JS Davies Building, Roseworthy Campus, Roseworthy.

The meeting closed at 3:40 pm