



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture



Future Leaders Program – WA Pilot

Final Report APL Project 2011/2318

June 2013

**Department of Agriculture and Food WA
Livestock Industries Innovation**
Hugh Payne, Matthew Langridge & Joshua Sweeny
Locked Bag No 4
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Disclaimer: The opinions, advice and information contained in this publication have not been provided at the request of any person but are offered by Australian Pork Limited (APL) solely for informational purposes. While APL has no reason to believe that the information contained in this publication is inaccurate, APL is unable to guarantee the accuracy of the information and, subject to any terms implied by law which cannot be excluded, accepts no responsibility for loss suffered as a result of any party's reliance on the accuracy or currency of the content of this publication. The information contained in this publication should not be relied upon for any purpose, including as a substitute for professional advice. Nothing within the publication constitutes an express or implied warranty, or representation, with respect to the accuracy or currency of the publication, any future matter or as to the value of or demand for any good.

Acknowledgements

This project is supported by funding from Australian Pork Limited and the Department of Agriculture.

Project Summary and Recommendations

The project objectives were achieved on schedule and within budget. A group of 16 industry personnel were recruited into the pilot program. They were surveyed at the first meeting to ascertain their areas of interest and to develop objectives for the group. The group met four times throughout the year. In our assessment, the group should continue in 2013-14 with membership increased to 20. It is recommended that funding be sought from the Agricultural Produce Commission (APC) for the group to continue operating with a facilitator from within the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA). The use of social media to formally link the group should also be considered. It is also recommended that the West Australian Pork Producers Association (WAPPA) be asked to invite one or two group members to participate in their executive meetings as observers or non-voting participants on a rotational basis.

Objective 1

Establish a group of young pork industry personnel in WA to pilot a Future Leaders Program.

Thirty producers and industry personnel were contacted by email and telephone to recruit a group of 16 participants. The participants included two small farrow-to-finish producers, one 500 outdoor breeder farm manager, four large corporate piggery unit managers, four contract grow-out operators, three pork industry service personnel and two PhD students working on pig projects.

Objective 2

Survey the group to ascertain particular areas of interest and determine what they wish to gain from participating in the program.

It was not feasible to survey the group before the start of the program. Consequently this process was delayed until the first meeting which was held prior to the APL/Pork CRC Road Show on 31 August 2012.

The group expressed interest in visiting piggeries; visiting an abattoir; information on record keeping, benchmarking and interpreting data; informal discussions on different production systems, case studies, and attending interstate events such as the Victorian Pig Fair and the PPPE.

Objective 3

Bring the group together on four occasions throughout the year to learn about aspects of the pork industry and interact socially to share thoughts and ideas.

The group met four times throughout the year as follows:

Meeting 1

The first meeting of the group was scheduled to coincide with the AGM of the West Australian Pork Producers Association (WAPPA) and the APL/Pork CRC Road Show on 31 August 2012. Holding the first meeting in association with these events enabled the group to be introduced to the WAPPA

committee and some of their membership, and to join them for lunch and dinner. The group was exposed to some of the many roles performed by WAPPA.

The meeting also provided the group with the opportunity to meet APL staff and to gain understanding of some of APL's activities. Emalyn Loudon and Pat Mitchell described their roles within APL and their experiences in the pork industry. Emalyn also talked about the SA Future Leaders pilot project.

Informal feedback from the group about the Road Show and the first meeting was very positive and there was strong support for the next meeting.

Meeting 2

The second meeting was held on 12 November 2012, comprising of a farm visit to GD Pork and seminar lead by Dr Barb Frey on why having adequate data is important to farm profitability and productivity, which data are the most valuable towards that end, and the best available ways of collecting the required data.

Torben Soerensen, General Manager, hosted the group and began by describing GD Pork WA operations, vision, goals and targets. Some of the industry's latest technology was evident during the tour of the facilities, notable in the farrowing sheds. It was an excellent opportunity for group members, particularly those from free range and grower-out units, to see all aspects of a modern intensive breeder unit.

Following the farm visit, the group made its way to a nearby town for lunch, followed by a seminar session by Dr Barb Frey on Pig Production – Profitability or Productivity? The group enjoyed Barb's seminar, which described the importance of differentiating between fixed and variable costs in pig production, along with identifying key performance indicators to enhance profitability. There was strong interest from the group in benchmarking data that Barb used to identify performance indicators critical to ranking different enterprises. Non-productive days and piglets born alive per sow were two key performance indicators identified by the group as being particularly importance.

Meeting 3

The third meeting was held on 22 March 2013 at the Perth Pork Centre, Linley Valley, where the group was hosted by Dean Romaniello. Before inspecting the boning rooms and killing floor, Dean gave an overview of the involvement of the Craig Mostyn Group in the WA pork industry, and the operation of the abattoir and its meat wholesaling business. Dean also stressed the importance of quality assurance (QA) and strict adherence of the fit-to-load guide from a processor's perspective, and the devastating consequences to their export business if a serious food safety issue arose following a breach of on-farm QA.

Russell Cox, Executive Officer WAPPA, then talked to the group about the WA pork industry in general, WAPPA's role in representing the interests of the WA pork industry, and the need for young people within the industry to participate in WAPPA's activities.

Meeting 4

The last meeting of the pilot program took place on 31 May 2013 in the boardroom of the Craig Mostyn Group in Fremantle. David Locke, Chief Executive Office, spoke on the WA Pork Industry in 2020, including pork's position in the Australian and global protein markets and the constant need to increase efficiency and decrease the cost of production to remain competitive in a global market. Dr

Jae Kim, Research Officer DAFWA, then gave a presentation on disease, immune response and piglet management. After lunch, Russell Cox gave a very lively and interactive talk on “Simple Steps to Leadership” which was very well received by the group. This was followed by Caroline Robinson, 2011 Australian Rural Woman of the Year, who spoke about her path to leadership in the Australian farming industry. Her talk was very stimulating and her positive approach to issues facing the agricultural industries was well received by the group, and provided a timely reminder that it is not all gloom and doom in the bush and that good things are happening. Finally the group, led by Caroline, discussed the future of the group.

Objective 4

Assess whether the group should continue beyond 12 months and consider future funding options.

Strong support for the group was apparent during the discussion led by Caroline Robinson. The group identified its core values and objectives. These were:

- Professional development and diverse learning.
- Networking:
 - Sharing the passion for the pork industry,
 - Breaking down barriers both within and outside the industry,
 - Knowledge and technology transfer,
 - Changing negative perceptions of the industry.

The group also identified challenges that it would need to overcome to continue functioning:

1. Maintaining the critical mass of the group was seen as essential to its viability. It was pointed out that minimum of ten people was required to make it worthwhile arranging speakers and other events. This was achieved for three of the four meetings. It was recognised that it was difficult for members to attend every meeting and that last minute withdrawals were inevitable. It was thought that if the group could be expanded to 20 for example, 50% attendance would still provide sufficient numbers to make a meeting worthwhile. Personal recruitment of new members by existing members was seen as the best approach to increasing the size of the group.
2. The tyranny of distance was an obstacle to the group functioning. The concept of regional groups was rejected. Instead, it was thought that scheduling group meetings to coincide with other industry events (e.g. APL Road Shows, WAPPA Meetings, DAFWA meetings, field days, and the Royal Show) would increase attendances. Consideration should also be given to the number of meeting per year as four might be too many.
3. WAPPA be approached to invite one or two group members to participate in their executive meetings as observers or non-voting participants.
4. Leadership of the group was important. The group preferred to have a dedicated facilitator, and was happy for this position to reside within DAFWA, although someone from WAPPA or Portec was also a possibility.
5. Finance – if finance wasn’t forthcoming from APL, the Agricultural Produce Commission should be approached.
6. The use of social media such as Facebook, Linked-In or Group Map should be investigated as a means of keeping the group in touch and for sharing information.