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INDUSTRY PROFITS FROM PORK CRC RESEARCH

Australia's pork industry is finally enjoying better times with rising pig prices, falling grain prices and a very welcome return to profitability, a situation that's been enhanced by some vitally important research from the Pork Cooperative Research Centre (CRC).

Reflecting on its achievements throughout the 2008/09 year, Pork CRC CEO, Dr Roger Campbell, said its work had gone a long way to reducing the industry's costs, improving efficiency and making Australia's pork industry more internationally competitive.

"In marked contrast to the rest of the world, where prices have remained low because of the global economic downturn and possibly consumer concerns about the H1N1 virus, Australia's pork industry is looking forward to better times," Dr Campbell said.

"However, there's no room for complacency, and the Pork CRC will continue looking to the future, with a research program that focuses on reducing costs and improving pork's attributes and consumer appeal," he said.

From next year pork producers will profit from Pork CRC research on new cultivars of triticale (*Berkshire*), field peas (*Maki*) and barley (*Shepherd*), which will enter commercial production.

"All these new varieties offer higher yields and *Berkshire* offers higher digestible energy (DE) than other triticales," Dr Campbell said.

"The exciting news for pork producers is that even better varieties will be released from the triticale and pea breeding projects in 2010.

"New projects have been commissioned in both grains to ensure a pipeline of grains will be available to Australian growers and pork producers during the next three to five years," Dr Campbell said.

Technology developed by the Pork CRC as AusScan uses enhanced Near Infrared Spectrometry (NIRS) calibrations to rapidly determine the digestible energy and other nutrient contents of grains.

It promises to revolutionise the accuracy and cost effectiveness of diet formulation and allow grains to be more accurately valued for animal industries.

Pork producers will also benefit from the release of APP Alive, the intranasal vaccine against *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae* (APP).

This easily administered vaccine will be improving profitability for growers by \$8 to \$15 per pig.

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"While gratifying to be presented with a CRC Association Excellence in Innovation award for the development of APP-Alive, the real satisfaction comes from knowing this innovative vaccine will improve the profitability of Australian pork producers, and the health and welfare of their pigs for many years to come," Dr Campbell said.

Pork CRC researchers continue to demonstrate that strategic use of Paylean and Porcine Somatotropin (pST) markedly improves feed efficiency, increases carcass weight and reduces P2 in the last three to four weeks of growth.

The strategies tested have already delivered increases in profit ranging from \$5.10 to \$7.50 per pig to Australian pork producers.

More recent results suggest Paylean improves the efficiency of amino acid use, opening up the opportunity to further enhance the benefits of the technology and reducing nitrogen output.

But Pork CRC research isn't just benefiting pork producers, its work on enhancing the nutritional attributes of pork will benefit consumers as well.

Its research has demonstrated that Selenium enriched pork can reduce the incidence of colon cancer in a rodent model, a finding with promising implications for human health.

Other Pork CRC research has shown that Type Two diabetics on a pork based diet and exercise program had greater weight loss than those on a carbohydrate diet and the same exercise program.

"The findings demonstrate the health advantages of the low energy: protein ratio of pork and the high thiamine level of Australian pork.

"Results from projects investigating the effects of pork on satiety, the iron status and well being of young women and on cardio-vascular health will be available in 2009-2010.

"A number of new projects have also been commissioned to increase the iron content of Australian pork," Dr Campbell said.

While conducting world class research is one thing, making it readily available to pork producers throughout the country is no less important.

"We've been meeting that challenge through a pro-active program of seminars and refresher courses for industry practitioners," Dr Campbell said.

"Here, Pork CRC research results are delivered, along with presentations from international experts on various aspects of pig research and production.

"For example, some 73 papers will be presented by Pork CRC researchers at the forthcoming APSA conference this month in Cairns," Dr Campbell said.

Much of the Pork CRC's success is due to its strong track record of attracting outstanding graduate and post-graduate students.

"These exceptional researchers are vital to the ongoing success of our research work and become closely integrated into the pork industry through their association with us.

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"After completing their training they'll add to the pool of highly trained professional scientists who'll be continuing the Australian pork industry's strong forward momentum," Dr Campbell concluded.

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