



Get the Facts

on your pork industry



AUSTRALIAN
Pork



www.australianpork.com.au
www.pork.com.au



Australian Pork Limited is Caring for the Future of Australian Pork

Australian Pork Limited (APL) is a unique producer-owned organisation supporting and promoting the Australian pork industry. APL delivers integrated services that enhance the viability of our nation's pig producers at a domestic and international level. This is achieved through the delivery of marketing, export development, research and innovation and policy development, to help secure a profitable and sustainable future for Australian pork.

APL is funded primarily through statutory pig slaughter levies collected under the Primary Industries (Excise) Levies Act 1999, with additional research specific funds provided by the Australian Government.

Pigs and the Environment

The Australian pork industry is serious about environmental stewardship. The industry believes it has a duty to ensure that Australian pork is produced responsibly, while also remaining competitive and sustainable. The Australian pork industry has taken proactive steps to help ensure its producers carefully manage the nation's precious environment and resources. In efforts to continually reduce the industry's environmental footprint, ongoing industry research and development is focused on the continuous improvement of overall productivity, waste minimisation, pollution prevention and beneficial reuse of effluent.

Environmental issues pose both a challenge and opportunity for the Australian pork industry. The industry has tackled this challenge head-on and is making important progress in addressing these issues – especially in acknowledging and addressing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. The industry was the first in Australia to have developed and approved a methodology for the government's Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI).

GHG emissions produced by the pork industry are significantly lower than other agricultural sectors, such as beef cattle, dairy cattle and sheep. Currently, the industry's emissions and potential mitigation options puts us in the position to have a low, if not one of the lowest, global warming potential for pork production worldwide. As an industry, we are striving to reduce this even further by setting an on-farm industry goal of *1kg CO2 (equivalent) per kg of pork produced*. Most of the industry's GHG relate to emissions from effluent ponds. This provides us with a fantastic opportunity for emissions capture, destruction or use. Progressive industry research is developing innovative new technologies and management systems to mitigate and utilise these GHG emissions. Current research shows that a 500-sow piggery has the potential to produce enough energy to power 3.1 million 100 watt globes for one hour, or produce electricity to run 62 average houses for one year. And if combusted and destroyed, it would eliminate the equivalent of the fossil fuel GHG emissions from 458 small cars travelling 20,000km/per year; burning 7L/100km.

As well as GHG emissions, the industry is also proactively addressing many other environmental issues, such as nutrient management, by-product reuse, alternative waste management and soil health.



Pigs and Food Safety

The Australian pig herd is free from many serious viral and bacterial diseases afflicting other pork producing countries. This is why on-farm biosecurity and product integrity continues to be one of the most important aspects of Australian pork production. The pork industry has responded quickly to growing consumer demand for top quality produce that is safe to eat. The Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program (APIQ[®]) is an on-farm quality assurance program that allows producers to demonstrate good farming practice using the principles of Hazard Analysis and managing Critical Control Points for management, food safety, animal welfare, biosecurity and traceability. Uptake of APIQ[®] by producers throughout Australia has reached 90 per cent of the national herd, and is increasing.

Australia's pork industry is also leading the world to ensure its pork products are fully traced from paddock to plate. This has been realised through traceability systems (PigPass National Vendor Declaration – NVD). The PigPass NVD provides key information that can be used to trace pigs or pork back to the property of origin in the event of an emergency, such as an animal disease outbreak or a food safety incident. New traceability systems like the pork industry's Physi-Trace[™] are also being developed, that will enable industry to rapidly trace back pork sold in supermarkets and butchers to farm of origin.



Looking After our Pigs – We're Leading the World

Australian pig producers have the same concerns you do when it comes to taking care of their pigs. To demonstrate that they are listening to consumer sentiment, in November 2010 the industry announced the voluntary phase-out of sow stalls by 2017. Australia's pork farmers are the first in the world to make such a voluntary commitment.

Producers understand more than anyone that providing excellent pig care results in a contented and healthy pig that provides a high quality product – pig producers' livelihoods depend on it. The industry invests millions of dollars each year to research new technologies and practices to improve pig welfare, and provide valuable education and training to stock people throughout Australia.

The *Model Code of Practice for Welfare of Animals (2007) Pigs* – (the Model Code) – is a guide that has been developed in consultation with all levels of industry, regulators, RSCPA and scientists to detail the acceptable practice for the management of pigs. It outlines all responsibilities involved in caring for pigs – including their housing, food, water and special needs. Standards in the Model Code have been incorporated into APIQ[®] and are independently audited each year to ensure producers comply.

How Pigs are Farmed

Pigs grown for pork are housed in different sized groups depending on their age and weight.

A sow raised for breeding will have her first litter when she's about one year old. The gestation period (the time from conception to birth) for a sow is about 116 days give or take a few days either way. She can have just over two litters each year and usually weans between 9–12 piglets per litter. The piglets suckle from their mother for three to four weeks before being weaned and grouped with other pigs the same age. They are then housed in weaner facilities on the same farm or taken to a weaner to finish farm on a separate designated site.

Pigs are fed on mostly grain-based diets and continue to grow until they reach between 24–55 kg and are sold as 'porkers'. Pigs that grow larger than 55 kg are sold as 'baconers'/'finishers'.

There are a number of pig farming methods in Australia – indoor housing, deep litter, free range and outdoor bred systems.

Indoor housing systems are for pigs from birth through to finisher (for sale or slaughter) as well as lactating and weaned sows. This type of housing protects the animals from climate variations, predators and sunburn and can accommodate pigs of similar age and size to be housed together in small, medium and large groups.

Deep litter housing systems are usually large open-sided sheds or hoop-like structures with deep litter flooring (rice hulls, straw, sawdust). These systems are used extensively for growing pigs and for group housing of dry sows.

APIQ free range means that pigs are kept permanently outdoors for their entire lives with shelter from the elements provided, furnished with suitable bedding. All paddocks should include areas for rooting and or foraging as well as areas for wallows. All free range pigs should have access to paddocks at all times of their lives.

APIQ outdoor bred means that adult breeding sows live in open spaces with free access to paddocks for their entire adult life, with rooting and foraging areas, wallows where conditions and local regulations allow. Bedded shelter, adequate feed and water are provided. The piglets from these sows are born and raised under these conditions until weaning. At weaning the piglets can be moved to indoor grow-out housing until sale or slaughter, usually these are deep litter.

Mating stalls are individual enclosures in which a sow is kept for the purpose of mating. Sows, after weaning of their litter will typically come back into heat within a few days. A sow that is "on heat" can be successfully mated by artificial insemination or by access to a boar (an entire male pig). The role of the mating stall is to protect the sow during the early stages of fertilisation and embryo development. Once pregnancy is established she is then moved in with a group of sows for the duration of her pregnancy.

Gestation stalls: In November 2010, the industry overwhelmingly agreed that Australia would be the first nation in the world to voluntarily phase-out the use of sow stalls by 2017. This means sows and gilts must be kept in loose housing from five days after mating until one week before farrowing. The reason producers have used sow stalls in the past is because pigs can be extremely aggressive animals, especially during the early stage of pregnancy. The best and safest way to ensure sows get enough food and aren't bullied, bitten and injured has been to protect them in individual stalls. However, research and development into sow housing has allowed Australian pork farmers to minimise the confinement in individual stalls for the duration of a sows pregnancy, thereby complying with the voluntary phase out.

Farrowing crates (also known as piglet protection pens): The average sow weighs between 170–260 kg (equivalent to three standard fridges), and after farrowing, her new piglets are at serious risk of being crushed to death. A farrowing crate allows a sow to stand up, lie down and stretch out, while keeping her piglets safe in a separate section. The temporary use of a farrowing crate during the piglets' most vulnerable weeks plays a vital role in their protection. It's estimated that the use of farrowing crates saves over a million piglets each year.



How to Make Sure You're Buying Australian Pork

All fresh pork sold in Australia is 100 per cent Australian grown. However, approximately two thirds of processed pork (ham, bacon and smallgoods products) is made from frozen boneless pork imported from places like Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States.

When buying Australian pork, look for one of three things:

- The bright pink Australian PorkMark logo 
- The packet label states 'Product of Australia' 
- The packet label states 'Australian Grown' 

Or visit the Australian pork consumer website: www.pork.com.au and look for a butcher near you that sells Australian grown pork to make ham, bacon and smallgoods products.



Bringing Home the Bacon

Did you know that pork is the most widely consumed meat in the world?

- Australia produces around 360,000 tonnes of pig meat every year. A little over 8 per cent is exported to countries like Singapore, New Zealand and Hong Kong, and 25 per cent is sold through restaurants and other food service outlets in Australia. (Figures current as at early 2015)
- Each year Australians consume around 24.2 kg of pork per person – this is made up of 9.2 kg of fresh pork and 15 kg of processed products such as ham, bacon and smallgoods. (Figures based on information supplied September 2014)
- During 2013–14, pork products accounted for around 10 per cent of Australia's total fresh meat retail consumption and had a forecast gross value of production (GVP) for 2013–2014 of more than \$1 billion. (Source: Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics, ABARE 2014)
- Australian farmers produce around 4.85 million pigs (forecast number of pigs produced to the end of June 2015) from an estimated sow herd of around 267,000 in June 2015.
- The APL PigPass NVD Traceability database in November 2014 had over 2,100 pig producer registrants. However, just over 1,500 producers could claim they derive an income from growing pigs.
- The main source of food for Australian pigs is cereal grains such as wheat, barley and sorghum, resulting in a white fat around the outside of the meat.

Crackling Facts!

- The Australian pork industry has taken a world-leading position by voluntarily committing to phase out the use of sow stalls, meaning that sows will not be confined in sow stalls from five days after they are last mated until one week before farrowing when they are moved into farrowing (birthing) accommodation. At the beginning of 2015, 69 per cent of Australia's sow herd is now housed in this manner.
- Pork accounts for approximately 0.4 per cent of the national greenhouse gas emissions – significantly lower than other agricultural sectors, including beef at 11.2 per cent and sheep at 3.4 per cent. (Source: Garnaut, R 2008, The Garnaut climate change review – final report, available at: <http://www.garnautreview.org.au/index.htm>)
- Whether housed indoors or outdoors, a pig will spend most of the time resting.
- Pig producers use the manure and effluent on their farms as a fertiliser to improve crops and pasture, or to capture methane gases to convert to energy.
- Numerous pig producers are now using their manure to generate electricity to power their whole farm.
- Australia's pig herd health is one of the best in the world, free from many diseases found in most other pig producing countries.
- The feed component (mainly grains such as wheat, barley and sorghum) makes up about 60 per cent of the total cost of producing pork.
- On average, a sow will produce 10–12 piglets per litter.
- The average growth rate of Australian pigs is around 600–650 g a day from birth to sale.
- Grower pigs eat the equivalent of about 3 per cent of their body weight and drink about 10 per cent of their body weight, daily.
- Pigs are considered to be smarter than dogs and are easy to train. This characteristic helps producers develop safe handling routines.
- Pigs are unable to perspire and they lose heat through their mouths. Their ideal growing temperature for older pigs is 20–22°C.
- Pigs have colour vision but they can't focus both eyes on the same spot. Pigs have a very wide angle of vision (310 degrees).



Pigionary

Baconer/Finisher:

Market pigs that weigh more than 55 kg liveweight.

Porker:

Market pigs that weigh between 24–55 kg liveweight.

Grower:

Commonly used name for pigs between the weaner and finisher phases.

Sow:

Any breeding female that has farrowed/ given birth to a litter of piglets and lactated.

Gilt:

A female pig. Female pigs kept for breeding are known as gilts up until the time of their first farrowing.

Farrowing:

The birth of piglets (after 110–120 days of pregnancy).

Boar:

A mature male pig.

Weaner:

A piglet recently weaned from its mother at around three to four weeks-of-age. The weaner is then generally transferred from the farrowing shed to the weaner or grower facility.

Breeds:

White pig breeds include: Large White; Yorkshire; and Landrace. Coloured breeds include: Large Black; Berkshire; Duroc; and Hampshire.

Runt:

The smallest pig in the litter.

Sus:

The genus that pigs belong to.

Truths or Porky Pies?

PORKY PIE! Pork needs to be cooked all the way through

- ✓ **TRUTH:** The idea that Australian pork needs to be cooked all the way through is a myth. Captain Arthur Phillip obviously showed some of his farming background (Lyndhurst, Hampshire) in selecting only healthy pigs to be transported to Australia. As a result, Australian pigs do not have the *Trichinella spiralis* parasite that causes trichinosis (the round worms our mothers all told us about when we were kids). (Reference: <http://nahis.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Factsheet.80-2?skin=factsheet>). So whilst it might feel unfamiliar, fresh Australian pork can be eaten medium (with a hint of pink).

PORKY PIE! Pork is difficult to cook

- ✓ **TRUTH:** Pork can be quick and easy to cook. Take a 2 cm boneless pork steak for example: preheat a pan, griddle pan or BBQ plate just like you would for any other steak. Cook on one side without turning for 6 minutes. Turn it over once and allow it to cook for 2 more minutes. Take the steak out of the pan and rest of a plate for 2 minutes – this allows the juices to settle so it will be tender and juicy.

PORKY PIE! Pork is a fatty meat

- ✓ **TRUTH:** There are a number of pork cuts that when trimmed of external fat can be very lean. A 200 g uncooked serving of lean, trimmed pork fillet for example contains 2.2 g of fat which means pork fillets have less than half the fat of beef fillets, less fat than snapper fillets and are leaner than skinless chicken breast fillets. They're also a valuable source of iron.

Pork fillets are also a good source of B12, Niacin, B5, B6, Thiamine, Selenium and Zinc.

Other lean options include trimmed loin steak, leg steaks (rump, round topside and silverside steaks), round mini roasts and strips.

Pig diets are formulated to ensure healthy pigs and healthy pork. (Source: NUTTAB 2010.)

PORKY PIE! Pigs are dirty animals

- ✓ **TRUTH:** In fact, pigs are very clean animals. They're known for keeping separate areas for sleeping, eating and dunging. This myth is probably linked to their liking for mud. Because pigs don't sweat, when it's hot they cover themselves in mud to help keep cool and it also doubles as a sun block.



Industry Contacts Australian Pork Limited (APL)

PO Box 4746, Kingston ACT 2604

Level 2, 2 Brisbane Avenue
Barton ACT 2600

Telephone: 02 6285 2200

Email: apl@australianpork.com.au

Website: www.australianpork.com.au
www.pork.com.au

Pork Co-operative Research Centre
(CRC)
www.porkcrc.com.au

Department of Agriculture
www.agriculture.gov.au

• Queensland
www.daff.qld.gov.au

• South Australia
www.pir.sa.gov.au

• Western Australia
www.agric.wa.gov.au

• New South Wales
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

• Victoria
www.depi.vic.gov.au

• Tasmania
www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au

National Farmers Federation (NFF)
www.nff.org.au

NSW Farmers
www.nswfarmers.org.au

Pork SA
www.ppsa.org.au

WA Pork Producers' Association
(WAPPA)
www.wappa.com.au

Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF)
www.vff.org.au

Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers
Association (TFGA)
www.tfga.com.au

Pork Queensland Incorporated (PQI)
07 5492 3003

All facts in this brochure were current at the time of printing – April 2015.