

Industry Day to focus on export initiatives

THE 2015 SA Pig Industry Day in February will focus on the theme *Future Prospects – Markets, Technologies, Competitors*.

Starting at 11am on Friday, February 27, at the Barossa Weintal, Tanunda, it will examine how the industry is placed to capture opportunities, particularly in building demand and looking at initiatives to open-up exports.

Building on the strongly attended 2014 event, the organisers have moved the day to a convenient conference venue.

United States and European Union trends and performance will be reviewed along with benchmarking data. These presentations will show where the industry is competitive and where opportunities lie.

Australian Pork Limited and

CRC research in these areas will be featured.

The event is an opportunity to introduce new SA researchers and demonstrate how their work aims to realise market opportunities.

Also in the main program will be a presentation on Pork SA's activities and outcomes.

A free seminar from 11am to 4pm will fully explore these topics and will be followed by the annual meeting.

Morning tea and a light lunch will be provided. Dinner is \$40 a head.

Accommodation packages are available from Barossa Weintal.

Book early on 08 8563 2303 and mention the Pork SA group booking.

• Details: enquiries@porksa.com.au or 0418 848 845.

Students hands-on with ecoshelters

SUPPORT from pig industry leaders, producers and agribusiness is teaching SA students about rearing pigs and the industry's role in supplying a quality product to the food chain.

There are close to 20 schools running pigs, from weaning through to slaughter weight, as part of their agricultural studies.

It all started about 12 years ago when pig industry consultant Graeme Pope received calls from schools looking to incorporate pigs into their agricultural program.

He rallied some industry sponsors and developed a small ecoshelter for Clare High School. In the next few years, more shelters were built at Waikerie, Balaklava and Kadina schools.

"That was enough to get teachers talking," Mr Pope said. "Then I attended the SA agricultural teachers annual conference in the Riverland and there was plenty of interest about how they could be involved."

Mr Pope said the shelters were starting to gain momentum and he could see the next step was to have them professionally built and engineer-certified, to make it easy for teachers requiring building approvals from their school board or council.

He approached the Pig Industry Advisory Group for financial support through the Pig Industry Fund to enable Jacksons Australia's Aaron

Key points

- Nearly 20 SA schools running pigs
- Advisory Group supports new ecoshelters
- Resources linked to curriculum

Hines, Murray Bridge, to design a small shelter suitable for construction at schools.

These shelters have been erected at six schools while several teachers are waiting on the results of grant applications to potentially start construction in 2015.

Ridley AgriProducts' Vaughan Chenoweth arranged sponsorship to supply feed for school pigs until 10 weeks of age, and Stockyard Industries' Shayne Daykin provides a feeder and drinker bowl.

Teachers have been connected with local producers to supply healthy pigs. Schools have different arrangements in sourcing pigs – some are grown on contract while others are bought outright and the pork is sold back through the school community after pigs have been processed at the end of the school term.

"We are competing against so many resource needs in schools, so making it easy for the teachers was important," Mr Pope said. "We've got the feed, feeder, drinker and the pigs lined up. All the school has to do is buy the straw and look after them."

"Now there are pigs at 20 schools



SCHOOL SUPPORT: Faith Lutheran College students Connor Chidgey, Dougal Grieve and Alison Roennfeldt are part of the Pigs in School education program.

in SA including Riverton and Port Pirie in the Mid North and down at Allendale East and Millicent in the South East."

Australian Pork Limited recently developed curriculum-aligned classroom teaching resources using video links, lesson plans and student activities, all focused on pig production and pork. Mr Pope has produced a 20-page pig management handbook for best-practice pig husbandry in a school environment.

"With this level of industry support now available to all SA agriculture teachers, their choice to include pigs in their teaching curriculum has never been easier," he said.



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Year 9s learn to raise pigs

STUDENTS at Faith Lutheran College, Tanunda, say that raising pigs has taught them about their fast growth rates and feed conversion, their inquisitive nature, and how to care for and weigh them.

The school is finishing its second year with pigs for its Year 9 class, who have been charged with the tasks of feeding the pigs, cleaning their pens, and weighing them weekly.

Agriculture teacher Bob Mitchell says that while it is too early to say what impact the experience has had on future career choices, he is surprised at how well the students have

taken to pigs.

"Last year, I thought the kids would be lukewarm but the students have really enjoyed working with them," he said.

"We will start to consider some purpose-built facilities because we do a lot of work with ruminant animals so it's good to have that monogastric livestock example for students to see."

Only one of 17 in the class has prior experience with pigs. The pigs are donated by the Schuster family at Freeling and pork will be sold in the school community.

"It's been great for the

students to observe them – they eat, sleep and manure in different areas and the pig that was smallest when we got them is now the biggest and getting to market weight more quickly," Mr Mitchell said.

"There may be potential links to preschool and primary school for the pig curriculum as well. It's about food production, showing the whole chain."

The Year 9 students are the only class to study pigs as part of the agriculture curriculum and in Mr Mitchell's 23 years of teaching agriculture, this is only the second year with pigs.



AG TASK: Faith Lutheran College students Cooper Behn, Laura Fairlie and Karen Kalleske with Faith agriculture teacher Bob Mitchell and their pigs, which are part of the Pigs in School education program.