

APL Animal Care – philosophies, priorities and programs



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Animal Welfare Science Centre – 2007 Seminar Series



APL Animal Care Strategy

VISION



*“To be acknowledged by its key stakeholders as providing:
a high standard of animal care through farm and supply chain management practices that deliver good animal welfare outcomes
combined with financial and environmental sustainability.”*

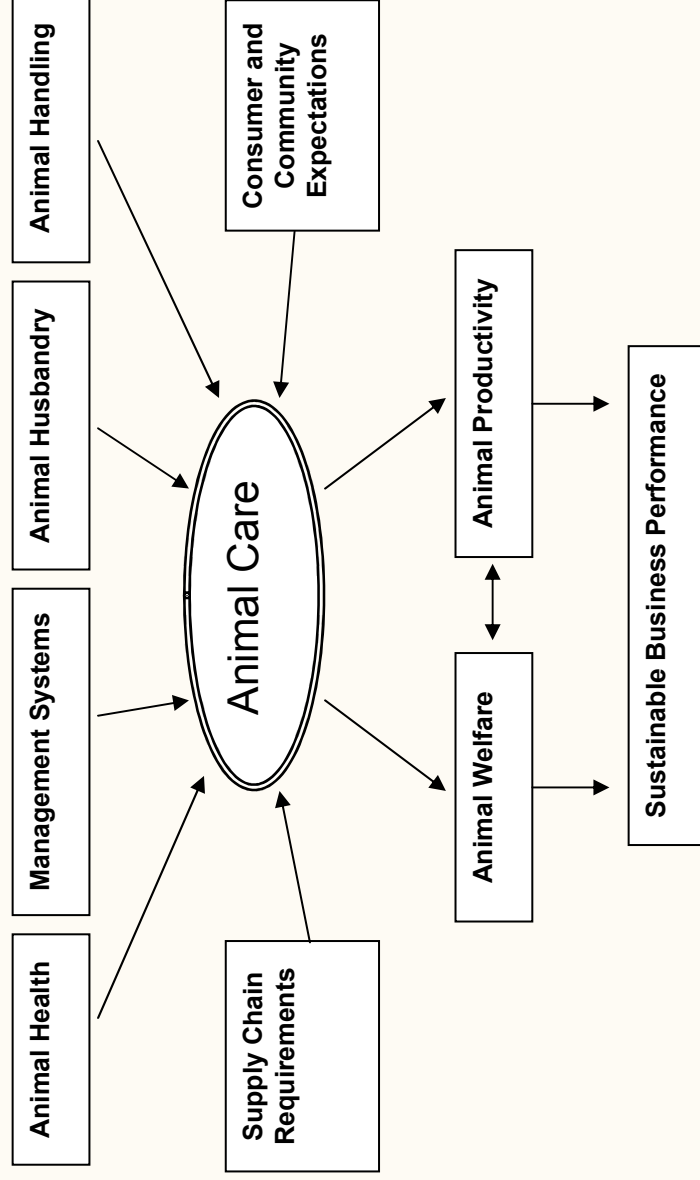


Benefits from achieving & maintaining good pig welfare



- Australian community & consumer approval
- Consistent good quality product output
- Improved animal health
- Food safety
- Environmental sustainability
- Good animal performance & production efficiency
- Increased job satisfaction

Animal Care Strategy – Setting the direction for industry



Animal Care Strategy: Proactive & Commitment to Improvement



- Technical Standards
- Regulatory & Legal
- Human Resources: stockmanship, training
- Communications & Education
- Supply chain alignment
- Research & Innovation
- Quality assurance
- Continuous Improvement: benchmarking



New Model Code for Pigs 2007:

How different is it?



- 25 key changes from previous Code
- Standards - directly enforceable in law and binding on all pig owners
- Changes to sow stall use & size
- Movement to group housing
- Increased space allowances for other stock
- Stockperson training & competency assessment & verification

Implementation of Code: Immediate priorities & programs



- Implementing Code on farm: making it workable
- Quality Assurance – auditing of standards, compliance, verification reporting to regulators and community
- Human resources, stockmanship training & verification
- Addressing environmental & OH&S issues arising from Code changes – footprints
- R&D – group housing, objective measures of pig welfare, environment, stockperson training, genetics/fear

Implementation of Code: Immediate pressures on welfare & health



- IMPORTS?
 - Welfare of a lower standard: Cost to community, consumer AND PIGS
 - Cost competitive issues
 - Free trade environment
 - Labeling: ACCC, FSANZ, WTO?
 - Food miles, footprints – environmental costs?
- DROUGHT?
 - Feed
 - Water
 - Bedding?
- And what about LABOUR?
 - Rural industries face shortage
 - Quality of labour?
 - Competition from mining boom - Sets high wage costs

Change drivers



- Increasing public opposition to close confinement systems for intensive animal production
- Community concern generally to the intensive farming of animals
- The emergence of the affluent society: the hierarchy of needs
- Mainstream groups such as retailers in the USA moving to take policy positions for restrictions on sow stalls
- The role of animal welfare and animal rights groups



The myths vs. the reality



International Sow Stall Bans or Phase Out: What animal rights groups don't tell you



- EU Directive RESTRICTS stall usage to the first 4 weeks of pregnancy from 2012 (existing farms), and from 2003 (new facilities) (13 YEAR TRANSITION!!)
 - Some individual EU member countries moved to implement more restrictive legislation
- US – NO federal legislation. State bans on stalls in Florida and Arizona, and a bill pending in Oregon
- Canada - NO legislation banning sow stalls
- NZ - LIMITS sow stalls to no more than first 4 weeks after mating from 2015 (10 YEAR TRANSITION)
- Australia – LIMITS sow stalls to no more than the first 6 weeks after mating from 2017 (10 YEAR TRANSITION)

North American Corporations: What's really driving their change?



- Smithfield Foods (USA) - 10 YEAR TRANSITION TO PHASE OUT SOW STALLS
 - NOT A STALL BAN!
 - Embracing group housing BUT will continue to house sows in “individual spaces” until they are confirmed pregnant
- Maple Leaf Foods – 10 YEAR TRANSITION TO phase out of stall use for company owned sows
 - Part of company restructure they will own few sows
- Quick Service Food Providers e.g. Burger King
 - By 2008, 20% of the pork will come from producers who phase out sow stalls

Animal Welfare and the Consumer: Attitude, behaviour, expectations & ability to pay



- Consumers perceive that restriction of animal space is “unnatural”
- But will consumers pay for “animal welfare friendly” products as animal rights groups claim?
 - Can all consumers afford to pay?
- Consumer behaviour does not match attitude
- Shoppers amnesia: “willingness to pay \neq preparedness to pay”
- Branding / labelling and Trust Labels:
 - What are they really worth?
 - Will consumers buy?
 - What will the market pay?
 - When does labeling stop being informative & become downright confusing?

Community Attitudes: Welfarists, Animal Rights and Vegans - What's the difference?



- Does industry hide behind a “veil of secrecy”?
- What really happens on farm?
- Education, Labelling & Litigation? Is this the way to go?
- Can animal welfare be reduced to a simplistic argument?
 - Is it a quick fix?
 - Does it advance the welfare of the animal?
 - Whose welfare are we protecting?

Putting animal welfare at risk



- Complex issue being reduced to a simplistic argument → HUGE RISKS
- Animal welfare cannot be seen or progressed in isolation from other critical factors:
 - culture
 - genetics
 - health
 - labour
 - imports
 - environment
 - food safety



Finding the Right Balance



- How do you produce pigs to meet community expectations and stay in business?



Where to from here?

Opportunities for the future



- Quality Assurance - proving compliance and good practice
- Technical challenges and knowledge gaps including R&D
 - Alternatives to elective husbandry procedures
 - Environmental enrichment: bedding etc
 - Group housing
 - Genetic improvement
 - Farrowing crates
 - Space allowances
 - Cross compliance impacts – environment & OH&S
 - Staff training & competency

Where to from here?

Opportunities for the future



- Consumer and public education programs
- Product differentiation & diversification:
 - production system authentication
 - providing a wide range of product to the market to meet consumer requirements i.e. different production systems
- Branding and/or labelling of welfare friendly products
- Regulatory environment:
 - farmers as custodians of animal welfare
 - ensuring appropriate and equitable treatment for farmers as well as consumers

The Future:

Just one of the many ways to farm pigs



BE PROACTIVE!

