

# Pigbytes

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## QA – How does it benefit the farmer?

Jayce Morgan

This is probably the question most often asked when there are discussions about Quality Assurance programs (QA). What's in it for the farmer?

Too often QA is viewed as a scary monster consuming time and money for little benefit. Many farmers can readily see the drawbacks but not the benefits.

So what are the benefits??

Farmers are in the business of food production and quality standards in the food industry are high. QA systems require record keeping which results in the documentation of your production system. QA programs that are backed by external audits give you proof that you are doing what you say you are doing and they validate your PigPass NVD.

Farmers are business managers. Good business managers keep records and review those records to monitor progress and performance. A good QA program requires many of those same records.

The costs associated with implementation, managing and auditing a QA program are legitimate business-related expenses and are an eligible tax offset.

Farmers are producing pork products for sale. Pork products backed by QA provide the seller with a point of difference that aids in marketing and therefore the product becomes eligible for a greater range of markets. Those markets may include export markets, specialty domestic markets such as restaurant and food service industries, specialty butcher shops and the supermarket chains. Farmers whose pork products are backed by QA can quickly take advantage of new market opportunities when they occur.

Farmers are required to meet federal and state legislation – a good QA program allows you to demonstrate your compliance with the legislative requirements for traceability, animal welfare, biosecurity and food safety.

**APIQ✓®** is the new pork industry QA program. It was developed from a revision of the old PigPass QA and APIQ systems. Workshops are currently being held around Australia to deliver this new program to pig producers.

There is no initial joining fee for **APIQ✓®** - but there is a cost for the annual external audit.

There are 2 levels in **APIQ✓®** for Small Holders and Large Holders. A Small Holder is defined as having 20 sows or less, or 400 pigs or less produced per annum.

I would urge farmers to attend **APIQ✓®** workshops to find out first hand what is involved. There is no obligation to join **APIQ✓®** but if you choose to ignore QA you are then making a decision based on fact not hearsay.

Farmers who have already received their QA manuals are also invited to attend, particularly if you are having difficulty with the new program. Attendance at these meetings also allows you to express your views. **APIQ✓®** Workshops are scheduled for:

**Lismore Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May** beginning with a tour of Booyong Abattoir at 9.30 am, travel to Lismore for free lunch 12.00-1.00pm and **APIQ✓®** workshop 1.00-3.00 pm at the Lismore Workers Club.

**Fredrickton Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May** – beginning with a 10 am workshop at the Frederickton Golf Club followed by a free lunch at 12 noon. A tour of the abattoir is possible in the afternoon from 1pm to 3pm.

**Gunnedah Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May** – beginning with workshop from 11am followed by a free lunch.

Please RSVP by 13<sup>th</sup> May to the **APIQ✓®** Management 1800 789 099 toll free.

There will be a further set of 3 workshops scheduled for Southern NSW in June from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> for Dubbo, Cowra or Forbes and Wagga. More details will be available when venues are finalised.

## CropMate

There is a new on-line decision making tool for crop farmers called CropMate. It is designed to assist farmers to make timely decisions through the crop cycle based on the weather and climate information. Many pig farmers are also grain farmers and this site may be of interest.

The site is very comprehensive and provides information for crop farmers in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia. Choose your state and the nearest locality from the drop down list and you are on your way.

The range of information provided covers pre-season through to harvest. It is difficult to describe in a couple of paragraphs so go have a look for your self - <http://cropmate.agriculture.nsw.gov.au/>

Note there is **no** www in the web address.

CropMate was reviewed in the April edition of Australian Farm Journal page 16.

## Lame sows? Check out the Feet First website by Zinpro

Lameness in sows tends to be one of the major reasons for culling sows. Zinpro have worked with the dairy industry for solutions to prevent lameness in dairy cows and have now turned their focus to the pig industry. They have a FeetFirst website with information on the foot structure and causes of lameness. There are also videos on the trimming of pig feet and a very smart hydraulic crate called the FeetFirst Chute for holding sows while you work on their feet. There is also information on their mineral supplements.

<http://feetfirst.zinpro.com/>

## Mouse plagues

Mice numbers are on the rise in various parts of the state. Advice about mice can be obtained from your local LHPA for control measures relevant to your situation <http://www.lhpa.org.au/pests/mice>

There is also a section on the NSW DPI website with information on baiting, and other mouse control measures

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/vertebrate-pests/#Mice>

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To subscribe to an email version of this newsletter email the editor.

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