

A newsletter for pork producers



PigBytes

Issue 39 December 2018

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Looking forward to a better year

Jayce Morgan

Finding articles for PigBytes is sometimes challenging. Times like now, when large areas of country are in drought, and the pork industry is suffering low pork prices and high grain prices, can be especially difficult.

Industry problems can seem overwhelming particularly for those faced with the day-to-day farm management; but believe me when I say we are all affected.

Anxiety, stress and worry seem to be the major emotions at times like these. So what can you do?

Accept that you are feeling these emotions and talk to someone – let them know you are struggling. Sometimes the feelings can come early and sometimes they build up over time – we all deal with life differently and from different perspectives.

There is no shame in admitting that things are getting on top of you. There is a simple [mental health assessment guide](#) that may be useful if you or family or workers appear out of sorts.

Another useful resource is the [Resilience Project](#) which has apps for your phone. Talking about your feelings is one of the most positive things you can do.

Remember that there are some things about which there is nothing that you can change – lack of rain for example. Look for the things you can influence.

Record your experiences. This may seem like a silly suggestion but writing or videoing what is happening and how you are coping can act as a release and may be extremely useful in the future when you look back to assess what was useful and what was a waste of time.

If you notice yourself thinking “I wish....” record those wishes – they may be new technology ideas that haven’t yet been invented or existing ideas that can be modified and incorporated into your farming system post crisis.

Encourage your staff to bring new ideas to weekly meetings. Create an environment for inquisitive thinking around new ideas – ask the owners of the new ideas to describe how they might see the idea working. The industry will not be in the doldrums for ever.

Recognise that people outside the business will have a different view and may say “why don’t you.....”? Hear them out and get them to explain their perspective. This includes children – sometimes their comments contain so much clarity it is astounding.

Be kind to yourself and your family, be kind to your staff, and love your pigs. As they say “This too shall pass.”

NSW DPI Rural Resilience program

On behalf of everyone who contributes to this newsletter:

Best wishes for your Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Become an APYL member

Sara Willis

Twenty six young people from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory representing a range of interests in the pork industry met in Toowoomba in August 2018. The purpose of the meeting was to progress the Australian Pork Young Leaders (APYL) networking group for young people across the pork production

and servicing sectors. Aaron Scheid, a member of the Steering Group and Director of Merivale Farms was host for the day.

The topic for the meeting was people management. Ben Reeve, Human Resources Advisor with Meridian Agriculture focussed on leadership versus management, personality types, understanding people and conflict resolution.

He used a series of activities (role plays, small group discussions and games) to get the group actively involved alongside some theory and lessons gained from his experiences with the agriculture industry. He also drew on the experience in the room to demonstrate how they may help each other.

Four members of the group gave presentations explaining their roles in their specific businesses or organisations, their reasons for entering the industry, their current roles and their ambitions.

Speakers were:

- Tom Harrison (Veterinarian, Chris Richards and Associates QLD)
- Tristan Donaldson (Operations Manager, Donaldson Farming NSW)
- Rob Bayley (Manager, Blackwood Piggery VIC)
- Nathan Lister (Technical Sales Manager – Northern Australia Biomin QLD)

Les Zeller, Research Scientist with DAF gave a presentation on the 'Development of a Novel Sensor Technology to Improve Effluent Management'. He demonstrated a prototype sensor, named 'Susbot', which can tap into the effluent stream on farms and relay information back to producers on a range of characteristics. 'Susbot' has been tested at a commercial piggery where it successfully automatically collected and analysed a sample from the farm's sump. Monitoring pig farm effluent offers a valuable window into day-to-day production issues. For example, approaches that can measure feed waste in the effluent stream could alert producers to mechanical feeder or animal behaviour problems and consequently assist them to reduce production costs.

Before wrapping up, feedback was sought on topics for the next meeting, to ensure future meeting content continues to be relevant, and provides the next generation of Australian pork industry leaders with the skills to develop and succeed.

The next meeting will focus on nutrition and performance monitoring and be held in Toowoomba on Thursday 7 February 2019. Membership is open to all young people engaged

in any sector of the pig industry at any level of responsibility. Please contact one of the Steering Group Committee for more information:

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Tom Harrison 0428 668 266

Clark Forbes 0427 909 361

Sara Willis 0423 027 053

Figure 1: Australian Pork Young Leaders Group



Source: Sara Willis

Straying pigs

Jayce Morgan

Recently there have been an increasing number of enquiries from people reporting their neighbour's pigs which are straying onto their properties and causing damage.

Owners of livestock are responsible for the welfare, biosecurity and safety of their stock. It is your responsibility to keep your stock on your property.

There are several pieces of NSW legislation which give direction on the rights and responsibilities of land and stock owners. This legislation includes:

- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- *Dividing Fences Act 1991*
- *Impounding Act 1993*
- *Local Government Act 1991*

Under the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015* everyone has a general biosecurity duty.

The [general biosecurity duty](#) means that if you own pigs (even pet pigs) you are expected to know the biosecurity risks and manage your pigs to prevent, eliminate or minimise the risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

Pigs that stray pose a biosecurity risk, as well as a potential damage and nuisance factor.

Owners of livestock are required to have a [biosecurity plan](#). Under this plan they may have a policy to destroy stray animals for biosecurity

reasons particularly in areas where there are certain endemic disease risks.

However if you know your neighbour has pigs talk to them before taking action.

The NSW [Dividing Fences Act 1991](#) provides direction on:

- What is a dividing fence
- Determination as to a 'sufficient' dividing fence
- Cost sharing arrangements for fence construction and repair
- Procedures for disagreements
- Jurisdiction of Local court and Administrative Tribunals

Boundary fence maintenance is an important aspect of farm management in an effective biosecurity plan.

Fences can be upgraded through use of electric fencing (see figures 2 and 3). This is relatively cheap and usually quite effective. However it is the stock owner's responsibility to keep their livestock on their property.

The NSW [Impounding Act 1993](#) provides for the impounding of certain animals, motor vehicles and other things. The impounding of dogs under this Act is limited to certain areas. The impounding of dogs is covered under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

There are 19 impounding authorities and the impounding officer appointed by the different authorities each have a defined area of operations under this Act. These are identified in the Dictionary for the *Impounding Act 1993*.

The *Impounding Act 1993* prescribes when and where animals may be impounded by impounding officers of the different impounding authorities; and how the animals must be treated.

Division 3 of this Act provides for the impounding of animals that trespass on private land, actions to be taken by the occupier of private land when the owner of the animals is known, or unknown.

When animals are impounded there are requirements for notification of the owner, provision of food, water and veterinary care and provision of secure well maintained accommodation with adequate shade and shelter for the prevailing climatic conditions.

The maximum period for impounding animals on private property is 4 days, after which the animals should be moved to a public pound if not collected by their owner.

Where an animal has caused loss or damage due to trespass, or has been provided with feed and shelter the owner of the animal may be required to pay an 'appropriate charge' to cover the expenses.

Injured, diseased or distressed animals may be destroyed by the impounding authority. Wandering pigs could be viewed as feral animals and destroyed as such by the landowner.

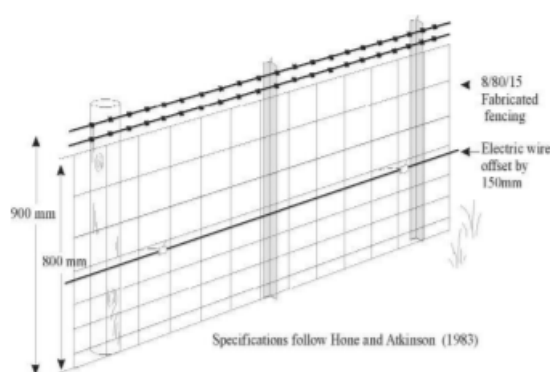
The [Local Government Act 1991](#) provides for the council to issue an order to fence to keep animals from public places or roadways.

Wandering pigs can be the cause of neighbour disputes when the wandering pigs are not kept on their home range. Mediation through Community Justice Centres can help with resolution of the dispute and they can provide interpreters in cases where there are language difficulties.

When faced with wandering pigs farmers are advised to:

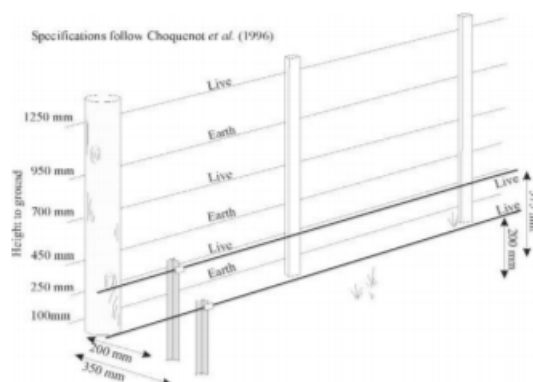
- Follow your biosecurity plan for feral animal control – contact LLS if you need assistance with control measures
- If you know the owner of the pigs talk to them and organise boundary fence improvements
- Contact your local council if pigs are getting on the road

Figure 2: Pig proof fencing example 1 showing the use of fabricated square mesh with electric offset wire to deter pigs from worrying the fence.



Source: [Primefact 1001 Brucella suis in pigs](#)

Figure 3: Pig proof fencing example 2. Alternate wires are electrified and there are low electric offset wires to discourage pigs from pushing under the fence.



Source: *Primefact 1001 Brucella suis in pigs*

Right to Farm

Jayce Morgan

Since 2016 the University of Technology, Sydney and NSW Department of Primary Industries have established a series of Agricultural Land Use Surveys completed in three stages to investigate:

- The type and extent of agricultural land use conflict across NSW
- How councils manage this conflict and
- How councils can be supported in conflict management

The [Right to Farm Agricultural Land Use Survey Final Report 2018](#) is the final report in the series.

In each year of the survey 30-50% of respondents reported that at least half of their agricultural land use complaints are about compliant agricultural activities.

Noise, odour, dust, spray drift and escaping livestock are the most common triggers for complaints and summer (November to February) remains the most common time for complaints.

The survey revealed that most local councils continue to manage conflict at the development approval (approximately 85%) and strategic planning levels (approximately 70%) with community education and engagement the least employed strategy (approximately 30%).

The biggest factors driving land use conflict across the 2016 to 2018 survey period were:

- A lack of understanding amongst new residents of the realities of living in an

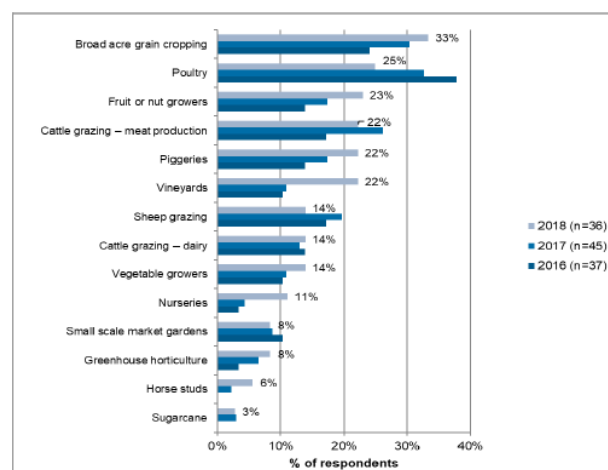
agricultural area and of agricultural industry operation;

- Lack of communication within the community and between neighbours;
- Encroachment of non-agricultural uses into existing agricultural areas;
- Close proximity of agricultural uses to non-agricultural properties and
- The subdivision of agricultural properties.

The report makes for interesting reading.

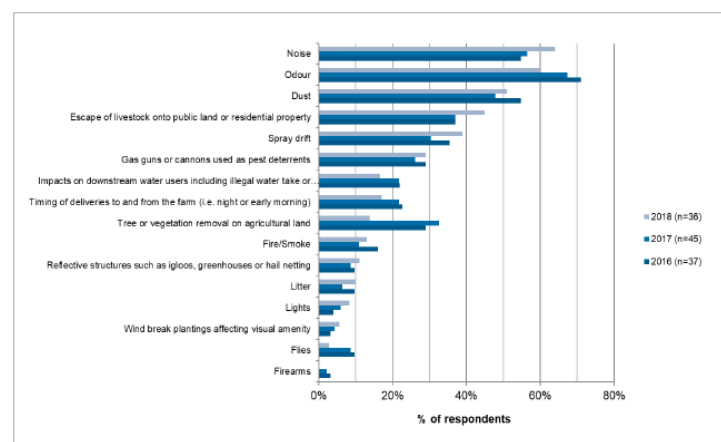
Respondents most commonly seek guidance or support to manage land use conflict from NSW DPI (approximately 80%). Support is also commonly requested from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (approximately 60%), NSW EPA (approximately 60%) and Local Land Services (approximately 50%).

Figure 4: Farming activities which attract complaints.



Source: *Right to farm Agricultural Land Use Survey Final Report October 2018.*

Figure 5: What complaints about agricultural practices are about.



Source: *Right to farm Agricultural Land Use Survey Final Report October 2018.*

National Landcare program – Smart farms Small grants

From the Grants Hub website

The principal component of the National Landcare Program administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is Smart Farms. The Smart Farms program will run to 2022-23. It is made up of 3 elements:

- Smart Farming Partnerships – will invest \$55 million through two rounds of competitive grants into medium to large scale projects to encourage the development, trial and roll-out of innovative tools and farm practices.
- Smart Farms Small Grants is a \$55 million competitive small grants program over several rounds to support the adoption of best practices that improves the management and quality of our natural resources and increases on-farm productivity.
- Building Landcare Community and Capacity – will invest \$24 million to support the sharing of knowledge and achievements, and promote community leadership.

Currently the selection process for the Smart Farms Small Grants program is open until 11th January 2019. Details of application forms and other information can be found on the [Community Grants Hub](#).

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