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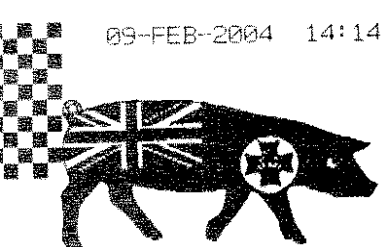
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9 February 2004

Mr Geoff Dawson
Acting Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committees
SG 62
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By Facsimile: (02) 6277 5811

Dear Mr Dawson

Queensland Pork Producers Inc (QPPI) is a member organisation which represents the interests of the Queensland Pork Industry through the delivery of effective services and leadership.

QPPI welcomes the Senate Rural Committee's inquiry into the draft Import Risk Assessment (IRA) for Pig Meat, particularly the concerns raised regarding Post Weaning Multisystemic Wasting Syndrome (PMWS).

QPPI believes that the draft IRA report and proposed import protocols do not adequately address the significant disease risks inherent in importing pig meat from Post-weaning Multisystemic Wasting Syndrome (PMWS) and Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) affected countries.

Late last year PMWS was discovered in New Zealand for the first time. There is no known cure for PMWS affected pigs and no vaccines available. The New Zealand authorities' do not know how PMWS got there and admit that it cannot be eradicated. Therefore New Zealand has moved to contain the disease in the hope of slowing its spread.

If PMWS entered Australia the disease would seriously damage Australian pork industry. Estimates undertaken by Australian Pork Limited are that a PMWS epidemic in Australia would add 15% to the cost of production resulting in a \$55.3 million loss in productivity alone.

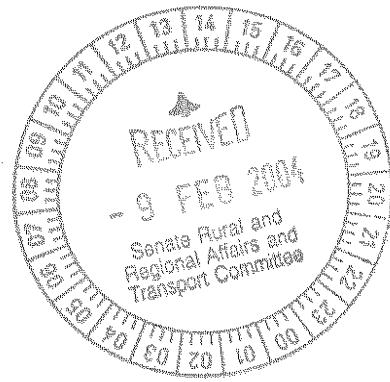
The causes of PMWS remain controversial. There is limited scientific knowledge as to its causes or how it is transmitted. This lack of knowledge makes eradication unfeasible nor is there a specific treatment for this disease. Equally without a clear understanding of the factors associated with this disease, control measures are also difficult to implement. Consequently there is little that can be done to reduce the cost of an outbreak. It is therefore extremely important that every precaution is taken to ensure PMWS does not enter Australia.

The Australian pork industry has just endured the worst drought in 100 years and it is currently struggling against the appreciating value of the dollar, rising costs and the impact of imports. An outbreak of PMWS would be devastating for the Australian Pork Industry.

QPPI is therefore deeply concerned that the protocols proposed by Biosecurity Australia in the draft IRA for Pig Meat do not adequately address the significant disease risks inherent in importing pig meat.

Yours sincerely

David Moffitt
Executive Officer



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Proudly supporting the Association that represents Queensland's pork producers