



Tuesday, 17 November 2009

### Case Study - To a High Health piggery

Enhanced Farm Biosecurity means much more than another catchy new phrase for Central West NSW pork producers, Peter and Kim Munro; as far as they are concerned, it's improved the bottom line and enabled them to become a 'high health piggery'.

Faced with animal health challenges amid the roller-coaster ride of high feed prices and subsidised pork imports, the Munro's decided to implement a major biosecurity program to re-cast the viability of their enterprise.

This hinged on eradicating key diseases, increasing productivity and improving competitiveness.

For Peter Munro, it's about staying in business. "An alternative was to close down, as many pig farmers have done in the last five years.

"While we became disheartened by the constant treatments and injections to keep the diseases under control, shutting down was not an option for us.

"Instead, we decided to use disease management as an impetus to deliver a number of long-term benefits."

Two relatively common diseases in the pork industry – pneumonia and mange – were present on 'Stirling Piggery'. Both reduce productivity through lowering feed conversion efficiency and growth rates, and require constant treatment. With advice that both diseases can be eradicated, the Munro's began planning.

#### The 'Swiss Depop'

"Our vet advised us that we could use a partial de-population method called a 'Swiss Depop'.

"Detailed planning was extremely important and commenced 6 months ahead, and it all took 40 weeks from the start of planning to the completion date – which was marked by the sale of the first 'high health' pigs.

"Each step in the timeline had to be strictly adhered to with no exceptions. The attention to detail is vital when it comes to eradicating diseases while managing a working farm."

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For more information on Farm Biosecurity visit [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)



The 'Swiss Depop' method is a recognised method to rid a property of certain diseases. It involves sending all growing pigs off farm to a contract grow-out site. Only sows and boars over 12 months old are kept on-farm, and these were vaccinated against pneumonia and treated for mange.

Strict quarantine at both sites was implemented to ensure no disease spread; this included:

- Protective 'PPE' clothing
- Showering before moving between farms
- Overnight breaks between home and grow-out farms
- Feed transport and vehicle movement protocols

**The biosecurity pay-offs** The Munro's are more than satisfied they've achieved their goals. "We used the opportunity of reduced herd numbers to get contractors in to replace the old roof with a new, insulated one to better control shed climate," Peter says.

"That's paid of, and together with no pneumonia and no mange, we're seeing more comfortable animals, reduced costs and improved productivity."

"Putting some figures on it, growth rates are up by over 0.5 kilograms/week and sale-age of pigs is 9 days less; therefore saving feed and housing costs and improving the bottom line.



"Moreover, our motivation to continue pig farming has improved markedly!"

Ongoing farm biosecurity measures are now a standard practise on 'Stirling Piggery'.

Visitors first see a highly visible sign displaying the farms quarantine status.

Behind that, are a number of practises that prevent the introduction of diseases to the now 'high health' operation:

- Pig movement trucks are clean
- No live pigs are brought to the farm
- All genetics introductions are via AI
- Only authorised visitors are allowed on-farm
- Visitors must be 24 hours 'free' of pigs, in street clothes and in a street car, and must report to the house before entry to the piggery

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- All visitors wear PPE and a mask if requested, and must not have any 'flu symptoms

All in all, the Munro's are now convinced of the value of farm biosecurity; they've spoken of their experiences and successes at a farm seminar, and have helped two other farms complete a 'Swiss Depop'.

"We'll continue to farm pigs, supply fresh pork for Australians, use and value-add local grain and employ staff. Without the changes to a high health herd, it's doubtful we'd be still be in the pork industry," Peter Munro said.

Whether you are a livestock producer, a plant producer or both, Farm Biosecurity is important.

It incorporates day to day practices that keep pests and diseases out. Good biosecurity will protect our animals and plants, and enterprises and industries.



Secure your farm: secure your future. Further information: [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)

If you see anything unusual on your property call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888, or the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881

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