



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia has announced that there will be no pig displays at the 2009 Smoke Free Perth Royal Show.

According to the President of The RAS, Tony Devitt, the decision came after consultation with industry representatives including the WA Pork Producers Association, the Australian Pig Breeders Association, the Pig Biosecurity Consultative Group and the Department of Agriculture and Food.

“We have taken this step as a precaution to limit any potential exposure – however minimal - of pigs to the Influenza A H1N1 virus,” he said.

“The Society has always implemented the strictest biosecurity measures at the event and this decision follows that policy.”

The RAS decision is in line with the approach taken by agricultural societies in Adelaide and Brisbane.

Mr Devitt said that although it was disappointing not to have the pig displays at this year’s event, the Society’s first priority was to ensure the best interests of the pig industry.

Department of Agriculture and Food animal biosecurity director Brad McCormick welcomed the precautionary measure.

“There is currently no evidence of influenza being present in any WA pig herd and strict biosecurity procedures are in place to minimise the chance of pigs contracting the virus,” he said.

The Executive Officer of the WA Pork Producers Association Russell Cox said the decision by the RAS not to display pigs was an appropriate risk management strategy.

Mr Devitt said that although there would be no pigs at this year’s event, close to 10,000 animals would be in competition and on display.

“Showgoers will have plenty of opportunity to interact with animals with two petting zoos and a pat a baby goat display.

“This year we will have a cow milking display which will feature the six breeds of dairy cows in WA. The Brownes Milking Station will be operating everyday outside the Dairy Pavilion with displays every hour from 10am to 3pm.”

Mr Devitt said the Society was delighted that entry numbers in many competitions including cookery, photography, trade cattle and creative crafts had increased this year.

Media contact:

RAS Spokesperson Maryanne Shaddick: 0438 945 506 / mshaddick@raswa.org.au
Executive Officer of the WA Pork Producers Association Russell Cox: 0428 293095.