

What the Association Is Seeking

There is a recognised need from within the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), for a Livestock Officer Business Analysis Pigs/Poultry for pig and egg producers and a Livestock Officer Pigs based on a forecasted major restructure in the egg industry, current restructure in the pig industry and DPI pig staff attrition. The Association supports the DPI request for these two positions.

Background

The importation of pig meat from overseas has caused oversupply of the domestic market and requires remaining growers to become highly competitive if they are to survive. Input cost minimisation, analysis of reinvestment in animal welfare compliant shedding and environmental management systems, appropriate economies of scale, feed utilisation, livestock identification, and animal health and welfare are issues on which growers need professional advice when deciding to remain or leave the industry. At present all this cannot be covered by the two pig DPI staff members.

The forecasted restructure in the egg industry resulting from enactment of animal welfare legislation in NSW on cage specifications will also necessitate advice for egg producers considering their medium term viability in the industry. They must be aware of the legislation, the cost of investment, the window of opportunity for investment, the expected return, constraints to redevelopment of farms from councils and the environment, as well as other costs of production such as water, feed and ensuring biosecurity and food safety. A survey of growers of 2003 and 2004¹ (respondent rate estimated at 50%) showed that 67% of NSW shed capacity was not compliant with the cage specifications which represented 85% of farms. On ground information from growers confirms that these figures are not known to have changed dramatically over the last 3 years. At present this cannot be covered by the single DPI staff member in poultry who has responsibility for poultry meat as well.

Benefits

Restructure of an industry is achieved with little disruption to the regional economy when managed through financial planning. Recognising predicted losses before they occur enables efficient allocation of resources and maximises the opportunity for retention of ownership of land.

Costings

The salaries and on costs for the combined positions may total \$220, 000

Responsible Agency

Department of Primary Industries

¹ GA Runge, 2005. Update of layer housing survey. A report for the Australian Egg Corporation Limited.