

# Exposing the public to pigs



Graeme Pope delivering a Pigs and People session at the 2024 Royal Adelaide Show. Picture supplied

MUCH has been made by many Industries over the past 15 years or more of an 'agricultural knowledge gap' existing between urban and rural communities.

Marketers across many commodities often blame a lack of contact between city consumers and daily farm practices on the lack of confidence in purchasing certain food types.

The pork industry has gone some way in closing this gap through the website posting of a series of pig production case studies by Australian Pork Limited (APL).

A virtual piggery tour helps demonstrate routine pig production practices within industry, stepping around the biosecurity restrictions often placed on physical farm visits.

Pork SA is active in educating secondary school students with its support of the Pigs in Schools program, the Pig Club at Adelaide University and Pigs and People sessions delivered during the annual Royal Adelaide Show.

Amongst the myriad of other competing attractions on offer at the Show, a visit to

the pig pavilion by non-farming show-goers is probably their only opportunity to come close to seeing, hearing and smelling a live pig.

The Pigs and People program has been delivered within sow and litter pens during show week for over 20 years. More recently sponsored by Pork SA using levy payer funding, the program is only made possible by the exhibition of sows with their litters by SA pig breeders.

The program's lead Graeme Pope provides a verbal step-by-step description of pig biology starting from the weaning of each sow's last litter right up to presentation of their current one to three week old litters.

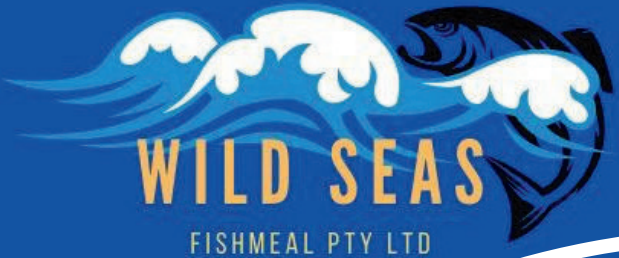
Describing the weaning process, heat checks and mating, establishment and confirmation of pregnancy, sow management and litter growth through gestation, the farrowing process, teat order, piglet fostering, lactation and piglet care all get coverage, often with comparisons made between pigs and other farm animals more commonly encountered by city dwellers.

So how effective is this program at attracting the non-farming public towards understanding more about pigs and the pork industry?

The Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of SA surveyed over 1,000 Show-goers following the 2024 Show to determine their visitations to some listed Agricultural Areas and Favourite Competitions.


Of the 20 different competitions identified, pig judging was ranked 9th overall, with 17 per cent of survey respondents confirming they had attended that competition, which was equal to dairy cattle judging but more popular than all other livestock competitions except horses-in-action.

Of the 12 identified agricultural area visited, Pigs and People was ranked overall sixth with 40pc of respondents attending, which was above beef cattle, sheep, exhibition dairy, horses in-stables and exhibition milking. These survey results confirm the popularity of pigs, and the attraction of the (mainly) non-farming public to understand more about them.




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