

# New guidelines assist schools

BY GRAEME POPE

OVER half of the 70-plus SA high schools offering agriculture as a taught subject now include pigs at some stage in their curriculum during the school year.

The SA pig Industry has supported these schools over many years through aligning each with a commercial piggery able to supply the weaned pigs required at the start of each school term.

As further assistance to individual schools and the Department of Education SA, Pork SA through consultation with the suppliers of pigs into the Pigs in Schools program has developed a new set of guidelines aimed at harmonising these supply arrangements.

The purpose of the guidelines is to promote best practice management between when pigs leave their farm of origin to when they are finally disposed of by schools.

An initial assessment of the suitability of each school's pig-keeping facilities is made by the Department before pigs are allowed to be kept at any school,



Lucindale Area School teachers Carol Hille and Chelsea Dahlenburg with students Jack Walker and Emily Hann and two of the schools pigs. Picture supplied

with industry having some input into that process (if requested) through Pork SA's program lead, Graeme Pope.

The guidelines then provide recommendations on the sex and age of pigs to be

sourced by schools. Supplying piggeries provide general advice on feeding and daily pig care, with all schools required to nominate a vet able to investigate any specific health issues

that may arise. Underpinning the guidelines is a written agreement between Pork SA and the Department that mandates any pigs sourced by all schools must be from an APIQ-certified site.

This provision is to ensure minimum industry standards relating to pig welfare, health status, biosecurity, provision of feed and water, and carcase traceability at

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point of pig disposal are being adhered to while pigs are being kept at schools.

As well as identifying aspects of management associated with keeping pigs within a school environment, teachers are able to refer their students to the relevant APIQ standards during their classroom activities.

Over 15 APIQ-certified piggeries have been involved at various times in supplying pigs into the Pigs in Schools program.

The new industry guidelines will formalise their inputs while maximising the opportunity for teachers, their students and the pigs they source, to experience a productive and enjoyable learning experience.



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