

# ALM Tech News

No. 3



## Meat for thought

Welcome to 2017. It will be an exciting year for the Project with some interesting outcomes on the horizon.

Taking a step back to 2016, the following achievements were made:

- We received a positive response from DAWR regarding our first milestone report that was submitted in December 2016;
- The Executive Committee has been working effectively as a team and achieved the majority of outcomes as specified in the Operational Plan;
- The Progress Review, and Intellectual Property and Commercialisation Committee (PRIPCC) and the Steering Committee (SC) were formed and an overview of the first meetings, held in December 2016 for each, is presented under Program E below. It was reported in the last newsletter that Brad Mathers would sit on the PRIPCC but he will now be part of the SC. AMPC will decide who will be their representative on the PRIPCC in due course. It was also ratified at the SC meeting that the Michael Craig, Jim Cudmore and David Hill would represent producers on this committee. They will be invited to the next meeting.

This Project involves many stakeholders so due care is required at all levels. It was therefore agreed at the last SC meeting that the following clause is to be included in all relevant Project documents:

*The Advanced Measurement Technologies for Globally Competitive Australian Meat Steering Committee will not enter into any discussion, activity or conduct that may infringe, on its part or on the part of its participants, any applicable competition laws. By way of example, members and participants shall not discuss, communicate or exchange any commercially sensitive information, including non-public information relating to prices, marketing and advertisement strategy, costs and revenues, trading terms and conditions and conditions with third parties, including purchasing strategy, terms of supply, trade programmes or distribution strategy. This applies not only to discussion in formal meetings but also to informal discussions before, during or after meetings.*

The Annual Review for 2017/18 will take place at Q Station in Manly from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April. In summary: each Program Leader will present the Program proposal and meeting participants can then provide feedback. The Leaders then incorporate changes and present their revised proposal back to the meeting. The Operational Plan is written to summarise the ratified project proposal. The SC then signs off on it. Invitations will be sent out in February.

Please note our *Positions Vacant* box and don't hesitate to contact me with any Project queries.

*Graham Gardner*

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### Positions Vacant

\* Operations Manager for the ALM Tech Project  
\* Post-Doctoral Positions in ALM Tech P1 and P4

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## Program E: Program Executive

### Program leader: Graham Gardner

The PRIPCC agreed at its meeting that its purpose is to oversee progress and generate value to the Project, but not in a managerial capacity. It noted that all projects are on track and that there was widespread support and interest from industry stakeholders. It was also understood that the Project team is well aware of, and making appropriate efforts to align, the work under this Project with related projects currently underway or planned by MLA and other research providers.

At the first meeting of the SC, members agreed that their purpose was to make sure the research process is working and the outcomes are being met. The scope of any discussion had by this committee was ratified in the clause presented on Page 1 of this Newsletter. It was emphasised that the Project is now in the public arena and there has not been any negativity in general. Further, this research is of high priority for the Commonwealth and seen in a very positive light.

## P1: Development of Lean Meat Yield technology

### Program leader: Graham Gardner

A project is underway to bring online the DEXA scanner at Bordertown. This will enable it to capture DEXA images in real-time during production, and process these images, integrating them into the existing XRAY PC. The algorithm, relating DEXA scan results to carcass lean, fat and bone % will be used in the analyses.

Further, this project will develop a calibration mechanism that will be placed in every scan to provide a tool to standardise measurements taken across all future DEXA LMY machines. A verification step will be undertaken to ensure that measured data is being attributed to the correct animal ID numbers and that the Automated primal and middle cutting system are not adversely effected by the use of DEXA hardware.

In beef, the first large scale data generation experiment for DEXA is currently being analysed. The early results suggest good precision for determining carcass lean, fat, and bone %.

## P2: Development of eating quality (EQ) measurement technology

### Program leaders: Dave Pethick & Pete McGilchrist

Peter McGilchrist has accepted a position at the University of New England. In this position, he will continue his research in meat science and his contribution to this Project will continue.

A key element of research in this Program is making sure that data is being methodically collected and

stored. With new IMF cameras to be introduced into research programs in the near future, there will be a changeover process to ensure that data obtained from images in current and previous research remain valid.

## P3: Development of robotic technology

### Program leader: Christian Ruberg

A major objective of this program is to explore sensing synergies with automation. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) techniques can be used to generate images of the inside of the body and do not involve x-rays. Scott Automation and Robotics will work with equipment set up in Victoria to analyse soft tissue, such as offal inspection opportunities.

## P4: Industry Databases

### Program leader: Daniel Brown

A person to fill a postdoctoral position is being sought to work in the program. The person is expected to conduct research and data analysis of carcass data to assist with the development of new breeding values for carcass traits in beef/sheep/pigs. In addition, the person would contribute to the development of effective and interpretable feedback to livestock producers, and work closely with project collaborators, supply chains and researchers to ensure quality data collection and flow from abattoirs into existing industry databases.

A summary document detailing animal resource availability over the next four years is being compiled and near completion.

## P5: Data Decision Systems

### Program leader: Wayne Pitchford

The Lamb Supply Chain Group is a national consortium consisting of 20-25 members from the Sheep CRC, MLA, Australian Meat Processor Corporation, State DPI's and Murdoch University. This group now has considerable experience working with supply chains and this knowledge will be utilised in this Project to create positions for Supply Chain Officers (SCO). A SCO should have expertise in meat science, carcass measurement, large scale data management, statistics and producer engagement.

A SCO will be dedicated to developing strategies to utilise information on Lean Meat Yield (LMY) and Eating Quality (EQ). For these people to be effective, they must be dedicated to the Project and have direct access to a supportive senior management team within a business. This is important because experience has shown that when general company employees are put into SCO positions, they have become overwhelmed with company priorities like procurement, marketing and the like. As a consequence they are not able to fulfil their role and hence generate maximum benefits for the business and the Project.