



FINAL REPORT — MEAT PROCESSING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PROJECT CODE: 2017-1008

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The meat industry professional development program funded by AMPC provides accredited courses and general purpose workshops to meat industry personnel and industry trainers. The aim of these workshops is to extend the latest Research and Development (R&D) to these groups so they can gain the skills and knowledge required to implement practice change.

The professional development timetable was developed on a six-monthly basis and submitted to AMPC for approval before commencing. The list was reviewed and revised over the course of the project to accommodate any emerging or urgent needs identified as a result of audit outcomes, regulations changes or changing company requirements

Ten programs were proposed for the 2016-17 year based on the results of a survey that was distributed to meat processors and training organisations in January. Nine programs were scheduled with six going ahead as advertised. An average of nine people attended each workshop. Two workshops were cancelled due to low number of registrations and one due to the facilitator cancelling because of personal reasons. An online program for RFP training was also developed but is waiting for final checks before being made available for training purposes.

Eight webinars for QA managers were also run as part of this program. The webinars aimed to contribute to the consistency and continuity of knowledge and expertise of QA managers by addressing recent advancements in meat science and quality assurance. The topics for the webinars were chosen in consultation with QA managers and regulators. Each webinar was delivered via the Cisco Webex platform, recorded and made available on the AMPC website.

Feedback across both the general professional development program and the webinars has been positive. Most participants strongly agree or agree that the workshops/webinars have been very useful to them and will benefit them when they go back to work. The facilitators also rated highly with the majority of attendees agreeing they had the right skills, knowledge and presentation style for the workshop.

As this program will not be continuing in the next financial year, there are no recommendations for future roll-outs of this program.

MINTRAC intends to continue offering a range of short courses on a commercial basis. However, the stated role of the AMPC professional development programs in building industry capability and providing pilot trials of new training before it is incorporated in accredited training offered by Registered Training Organisations will no longer be supported under a dedicated program. It is therefore recommended that AMPC ensure that this aspect of R&D roll-out is now incorporated into the R&D project extension activities for each individual project, as appropriate.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The meat industry professional development program funded by AMPC provides accredited courses and general purpose workshops to meat industry personnel and industry trainers.

The aim of these workshops is to extend the latest Research and Development (R&D) to these groups so they can gain the skills and knowledge required to implement practice change.

Ten programs were proposed for the 2016-17 year, as well as eight webinars for QA managers. The webinars aimed to contribute to the consistency and continuity of knowledge and expertise of QA managers by addressing recent advancements in meat science and quality assurance. The topics for the webinars were chosen in consultation with QA managers and regulators. Each webinar was delivered via the Cisco Webex platform, recorded and made available on the AMPC and MINTRAC websites.

General Professional Development Program

The role of professional development programs is to build industry capability and provide pilot trials of new training before it is incorporated in accredited training offered by Registered training Organisations or MINTRAC (through the standard fee for service model). The meat industry has acknowledged in recent years that new research, technology, regulatory requirements and improved practices must be effectively implemented in a structured, consistent and sustainable way which involves training personnel to provide them with the necessary technical skills.

For each type of training, pilot program or introductory professional development course, the meat industry professional development program enables AMPC and MINTRAC to establish suitable models of delivery and assessment, a body of competent trainers, appropriate support materials and a viable market into which this training can be sold. This enables training capacity to be built across Australia.

The professional development program also plays a role in improving the technical skills of existing trainers. Through specific professional development programs MINTRAC is able to use specific technical experts to deliver training all over Australia giving regional operators and trainers exposure to leader in their fields. This ensures that messages are consistent and the training is of high quality.

The outcomes for the general Professional Development Program are to provide a means to extend research outcomes, new innovations and technologies to the meat industry through a range of accredited and non-accredited courses and workshops. Also included is the development of training materials to support the professional development programs which will be trialed and disseminated to processors and RTOS.

Webinars for QA managers

The Australian meat processing industry is keen to ensure QA staff in processing plants are aware of recent advancements in meat science and quality assurance in order to maintain consistency and continuity of knowledge and expertise. The industry recognises the workforce is changing – those who have been around longer have more knowledge of meat science than the growing numbers of newcomers. AMPC considers this may be a concern when the industry is moving from commodity based products to branded products.

QA managers can currently obtain training and professional development through various workshops, network meetings, conferences and formal qualifications. However, many QA managers are time poor and, although they recognise their knowledge of meat science may not be current or comprehensive, they are unable to commit to extensive periods off plant to undertake additional formal qualifications.

They are also aware there are multitude of scientific resources and materials available to them but sorting through them to find the information they require time consuming and can also be overwhelming.

The project seeks to address those needs by observing the following principles:

- QA managers should not be required to leave the plant for professional development programs/training
- Topics selected should reflect the needs identified by QA managers themselves
- Webinars should be no longer than two hours and be scheduled on a regular basis to enable forward planning
- Presenters should be familiar with the role of a QA manager and be able to pitch presentations at an appropriate level
- A opportunity to interact with the presenters and ask questions should be provided
- Reading lists should be short, meaningful, relevant and easy to understand
- Webinars should be available to view after the presentation date.

The project has produced seven live webinars which have been recorded and are available on the AMPC website. The eighth and final webinar is scheduled for 30 May 2017.

3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objects of this project are to:

- extend research and development outcomes into daily practice and ongoing industry training programs
- develop pilot delivery extension forums and test these with industry and RTOs
- foster consistent, high quality technical expertise of industry practitioners
- facilitate early identification and addressing of critical training requirements
- build industry capability to incorporate new knowledge and innovations in the industry training system
- to improve the knowledge of QA personnel in the areas of recent advancements in meat science and quality assurance
- to encourage engagement of QA managers with innovation and new developments.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

General Professional Development program

The professional development timetable was developed on a six-monthly basis and submitted to AMPC for approval before commencing. The list was reviewed and revised over the course of the project to accommodate any emerging or urgent needs identified as a result of audit outcomes, regulations changes or changing company requirements.

Additional professional development opportunities activities included:

- a survey distributed to meat processing companies, industry networks and training organization at the beginning of 2107 to find out their professional development requirements
- consultation with stakeholders to identify completed R&D programs which may requires extension through accredited training or workshops
- identifying and contracting suitable facilitators and trainers
- developing suitable training materials
- advertising the programs to meat processors
- accepting registrations, booking venues and facilitator travel and accommodation, copying and shipping training materials, collating evaluations and feedback.

Webinars for QA managers

MINTRAC circulated a list of suggested topics to QA managers asking them to prioritise it and add their own suggestions. At the same time MINTRAC asked QA managers to identify a regular two-hour period when they were most likely to be able to attend a live webinar.

The results of the survey were analysed, eight topics were selected and a schedule of one webinar per month was developed and agreed with AMPC. Invitations were sent out to industry (included with the invitation was a full schedule so QA managers could plan and book ahead), and facilitators for each webinar were identified.

Each webinar was recorded and all are now available for viewing on the AMPC and MINTRAC websites.

5.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES

5.1 Professional Development programs

Below is a summary of the scheduled v actual Professional Development programs held in 2016-17.

Workshop	Dates	Location	Held
Emergency Disease identification	18 August 2016	Darwin	Yes – 18 attendees
Emergency disease identification	13 October 2016	Queensland	Cancelled due to facilitator unavailability
Emergency disease identification	2 November 2016	South Australia	Cancelled due to low registrations
Effective stunning	8 November	Western Australia	Yes – 14 attendees
Low-stress stock handling – sheep	22 and 23 November	Victoria	Yes – 9 attendees
TACCP and VACCP training	3 April 2017	Victoria	Yes – 7 attendees
Meat micro	26-27 April 2017	Queensland	Yes – 7 attendees
Low-stress stock handling (beef)	19 and 20 April 2017	New South Wales	Cancelled due to low registrations
Animal Welfare Auditing	1-2 May 2017	New South Wales	Yes – 6 attendees
Euthanising stock in lairage	17 May	New South Wales	Yes – 12 attendees
RFP online training	This course has been developed but is still waiting on final checks before being made available for training purposes. It can be viewed here http://www.mintrac.net.au/online/t_rfp/home.asp		

5.2 Summary of evaluations conducted for each program

The summary of evaluations for each program was provided with individual Milestone reports. Below is a shortened summary of the feedback for each program.

Effective stunning – 8 and 9 November 2016, WA

All agreed that they found the workshop useful and relevant to their work. They found Dr Leisha Hewitt to be an excellent trainer and considered the information gained relevant to assist with regulatory compliance. The DBC location was welcomed because of the access to three species. The only request for change was to make the course notes available at the time of the workshop.

Low-stress stock handling (sheep) – 23 and 24 November 2016, VIC

All agreed that workshop achieved its purpose and was relevant to their work. They appreciated learning new stock handling techniques and the theory/practical mix of the workshop. Boyd Holden was considered an excellent trainer. No recommendations for improvement were made.

Meat Micro – 26 and 27 April 2017, QLD

All agreed that the workshop achieved its purpose and was relevant to their work. They appreciated the holistic understanding of meat micro gained from the workshop and felt the trainer providing the right mix of information. We were unable to arrange a location for the practical sampling of this workshop, and this was missed by some responders.

Animal Welfare Auditing – 1 and 2 May 2017, NSW

All strongly agreed that the workshop achieved its purpose and was relevant to their work. The commented on the better knowledge of auditing and animal behaviour. Most commented on the excellent resources and facilitator (Dr Leisha Hewitt). No changes or improvements were recommended.

Euthanising stock in lairage – 17 May NSW

All agreed that the workshop achieved its purpose and was relevant to their work. All stated they had gained a greater understanding of euthenasing, liked the format of the workshop, the opportunity to interact with other processors, and information about electric euthenasing. The only change recommended was the inclusion of practical tasks. Again, Leisha Hewitt was considered an excellent trainer with strong knowledge of the subject.

5.3 Webinars for QA Managers

Webinar title	Number of registrations	Number of attendees
HACCP – how much has it changed	20	11
Understanding pH	18	3
The science of muscle structure	15	4
How are retailers overseas impacting on processors and producers through QA requirements?	20	2
Impact of pre- and post-slaughter factors which affect meat quality	22	11
What have we learned from systems audits?	17	13

Succession training for QA managers	18	4
Impact of heat stress on carcass quality	25	Not yet available

A survey is available for attendees to complete once the webinar is finished, however most people do not complete it. Comments from the completed surveys show that people find the webinars useful, even if it is just as a refresher of their current knowledge. A selection of comments is listed below:

- At desk, not a great deal of time out of my day. Very knowledgeable presenter
- Informative and some stats were helpful
- Maybe have participants type in questions and have them answered at the end. People are obviously reluctant to have a chat over a webinar
- More understanding about PH
- Refreshed my memory
- Giving me a good understanding of how an unacceptable process can affect meat quality
- Helped reinforce some of the points that are important to my business.

Each of the webinar recordings has been provided to AMPC and are currently available for viewing at <http://www.ampc.com.au/resources/webinars>.

There were no reading lists for these webinars as the facilitators did not provide any.

5.4 Formal review of the webinar program

Feedback from the webinar attendees has indicated that they found the topics useful and relevant to their work. The fact that there has been regular and ongoing access to the recorded versions supports this.

Attendance at live webinars dropped off considerably over the course of the program. Although the time slot chosen (10-12am) was the one which received the highest preference in the original survey, it is suspected that most QA Managers are well into the demands of a normal working day at this time and taking time out to attend a webinar is an interruption.

The webinar format has been a success. Most attendees found it easy to access, and after some initial difficulty in locating the recordings on the AMPC website, are now able to access the recorded versions easily on both the AMPC and MINTRAC websites. One company used the webinar program as a monthly PD activity for all its QA staff and they attended as a group.

A key aspect of this success was the pre-webinar practice sessions with the presenters. The MINTRAC Project Officer worked with each presenter to ensure they could manage the technology and utilise all aspects, and was also present during the live webinar to assist with any technology or access difficulties.

The time frame of two hours was appropriate. Most presenters finished ahead of time and were available for questions and comments.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

As this program will not be continuing in the next financial year, there are no recommendations for future roll-outs of this program.

MINTRAC intends to continue offering a range of short courses on a commercial basis. However, the stated role of the AMPC professional development programs in building industry capability and providing pilot trials of new training before it is incorporated in accredited training offered by Registered Training Organisations will no longer be supported under a dedicated program. It is therefore recommended that AMPC ensure that this aspect of R&D roll-out is now incorporated into the R&D project extension activities for each project, as appropriate.

7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1

A Snapshot is attached as Appendix 1.