



FINAL REPORT

Meat Inspection and Quality Assurance Network 2017-2019

PROJECT CODE: 2018-1003

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2.0 INTRODUCTION	3
3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES	4
4.0 METHODOLOGY	5
5.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES	6
Summary of meetings scheduled and held for 2017-2018 and 2018-19	6
Meeting attendances	8
Topics raised and discussed at network meetings, initiatives and meeting outcomes	9
6.0 DISCUSSION.....	12
Progress against MINTRAC final report recommendations from 2016-17.....	12
Recommendations for 2018-19 Network meetings and progress	14
7.0 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS	15
9.0 APPENDICES	15
9.1 Appendix 1 Summary of Network Attendances 2017-18	15
9.2 Appendix 2 Summary of Network Attendances 2018-19	15

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Meat Inspection and Quality Assurance (MI&QA) network is a well-established network providing extension services for AMPC research, development and extension activities and a forum for exploring implications of new research and gathering intelligence on future research and development priorities and trends.

Over the course of the project from mid-2017 through to mid-2019 35 meetings in total were scheduled and all of them successfully held.

A number of recommendations were made in the previous 2016-2017 rounds of network meetings which were incorporated and addressed into these current meetings.

The meetings were well attended when compared to past years and a significant number of issues and topics were raised and discussed.

The meetings also provided a source of professional development for meat inspection and quality assurance personnel, with workshops being provided on a refresher of HACCP principles, emergency animal disease preparedness and laboratory sampling processes and procedures. The many presentations on relevant industry research and developments also provided a valuable source of development for industry personnel.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The AMPC funded Meat Inspection and Quality Assurance (MI&QA) network is a state-based network of researchers, industry QA practitioners, trainers and regulators.

It is a well-established network that is a highly effective means of distributing new information and providing extension services for AMPC research, development and extension activities. The network meetings offer forums for the implications of new developments to be explained, explored and discussed.

This project includes sixteen or seventeen network meetings per year – most of which are face to face, but two are webinar based also. Close liaison with AMPC, MLA, Department of Agriculture, State Food Authorities and AMIC occurs when setting the meeting agendas and identifying professional development requirements for this network.

In addition the MINTRAC Project Officer is available to on-plant and regulatory personnel between meetings to answer incidental queries, investigate and respond to issues related by processing personnel, and visit plants when requested.

3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project are to:

- // provide an extension forum for AMPC and the meat processing industry;
- // facilitate the dissemination and application of information that impacts on quality or food safety from regulators, researchers and industry bodies;
- // ensure effective communication channels between regulators and industry;
- // ensure implementation of industry initiatives; and
- // ensure that industry projects and industry training programs reflect processor needs through the provision of updated training materials and professional development to trainers and lecturers.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This project is a two-year program.

MINTRAC management of the program for each year includes:

- organisation and running of two network meetings in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, and four meetings in New South Wales (two in the north, and two in the south);
- facilitating two additional domestic networks in NSW;
- giving presentations at the Queensland Country Meat Processor Association and Young Guns meetings, as required;
- facilitating one joint Training and MI&QA forum in each of Tasmania and the NT (funded through the Training Network);
- development of communication channels between the various parties involved including industry, regulators, research agencies and training institutions;
- the MINTRAC Project Officer being available to on-plant, industry organisations and regulatory personnel between meetings to answer incidental queries, investigate and respond to issues raised by processing personnel, and visit plants when requested – this amounts to several queries per day;
- inclusion at each meeting of, as determined by AMPC, up to two AMPC projects for delivery via presentation (extension) to industry;
- promoting the incorporation of AMPC R&D outcomes into QA and food safety arrangements;
- ensuring that new requirements and practices are incorporated into the nationally accredited qualifications;
- monitoring on-plant uptake of knowledge, practices and products featured through the network;
- advising on training materials that need modification due to changes in regulations, research outcomes, new technologies etc.;
- collection and analysis of data to determine the success of the networks in meeting their objectives; and
- identification of new and emerging issues.

Several current industry issues were identified during the project proposal preparation process. These issues are being addressed as presentations through the MI & QA Network as appropriate:

- Rollout/extension of current research including electronic NVDs and export documentation.
- Installation of dual x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA technology) – note that as this progresses it may lead to a separate application for future training.

The project will address the recommendations from the 2016-17 program funded by AMPC.

5.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES

Summary of meetings scheduled and held for 2017-2018 and 2018-19

In total over the two-year project there were 35 meetings held. All meetings that were scheduled went ahead, there were no cancellations for any reasons such as low attendance or clashing with other events. The meetings are carefully planned ahead of time to ensure that wherever possible there are no clashes with other significant meat industry events. The following tables show each meeting's date and location.

Each meeting was advertised several weeks out from each meeting, via email distribution lists, with follow up reminder emails and where necessary phone calls. Meetings were also advertised on the MINTRAC website and via social media. No meetings required any cancellation due to low or no attendance.

2017-2018 Meetings

	MI & QA Network	Status
Victoria	10 August 2017, Melbourne	Completed
	1 March 2018, Melbourne	Completed
Northern Territory	Combined meeting 16-17 August 2017, Darwin	Completed
	No meeting scheduled in second half of year	
Queensland	24 August 2017, Brisbane	Completed
	8 March 2018, Brisbane	Completed
Western Australia	7 September 2017, Perth	Completed
	17 March 2018, Perth	Completed
Wagga Wagga, NSW	14 September 2017, Wagga Wagga	Completed
	3 May 2018, Wagga Wagga	Completed
South Australia	21 September 2017, Adelaide	Completed
	10 May 2018, Adelaide	Completed
Tasmania	2 November 2017, Combined meeting Tasmania	Completed
	No meeting scheduled in second half of year	

NSW Domestics	9 November 2017, Campbelltown	Completed
	17 May 2018, Campbelltown	Completed
Tamworth, NSW	16 November 2017, Tamworth	Completed
	24 May 2018, Tamworth	Completed

20018-2019 Meetings

	MI & QA Network	Status
Queensland	9 August 2018, Brisbane	Completed
	28 February, Brisbane	Completed
Northern Territory	Wednesday/Thursday, 22-23 August, Combined meeting No meeting scheduled in second half of year	Completed (<i>Meeting held in Rockhampton, QLD due to closure of AACo plant in Darwin</i>)
South Australia	30 August 2018, Adelaide	Completed
	7 March 2019, Adelaide	Completed
Victoria	13 September 2018, Melbourne	Completed
	2 May 2019, Melbourne	Completed
Wagga Wagga, NSW	20 September 2018, Wagga Wagga	Completed
	9 May 2019, Wagga Wagga	Completed
Western Australia	27 September 2018, Perth	Completed
	16 May 2019, Perth	Completed
Tasmania	8 November 2018, Combined meeting No meeting scheduled in second half of year	Completed
NSW Domestics	15 November 2018, Campbelltown	Completed
	23 May 2019, Campbelltown	Completed
Tamworth, NSW	November 2018, Tamworth	Completed
	30 May 2019, Tamworth	

National Catch up webinars	29 November 2018	Completed
	6 June 2019	Completed

Minutes for all meetings have been developed and copies provided to AMPC at each relevant project Milestone. The minutes are valuable documents which outline actions required before the next meeting and identify issues and topics raised at the meetings as well as summaries of each presentation. Many attendees also use copies of the minutes as records of professional development activities.

Meeting attendances

Attendances for the meetings over the duration of the project was steady and comparable with previous years. A full summary for each year is included in this report as Appendices 1 and 2.

The table below shows the number of companies and people who have attended from 2010 until now. The levels of attendances for 2017-18 and 2018-19 (highlighted) are fairly comparable when compared to previous years, however have decreased slightly. Meat processing companies increased slightly in 2018-19 from 2017-18, however RTOs decreased. This could be explained by the reduction in RTOs numbers offering meat processing qualifications as well as the numerous NSW TAFE organisations consolidating into one organisation. Regulator attendance was slightly lower as well as service and research organisations, however there was still a good level of attendance from these bodies. The total numbers overall are not significantly different from previous years.

Category	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-2016		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Companies	People	Companies	People	Companies	People	Companies	People	Companies	People	Companies	People	Companies	People	Companies	People	Companies	People
Meat Processing Companies	66	131	64	139	58	156	60	161	57	152	56	109	70	133	44	97	52	121
Registered Training Organisations	13	43	22	52	15	45	18	51	16	52	14	38	18	32	15	38	8	29
Industry Organisations	7	66	10	85	8	86	8	76	9	94	5	82	9	91	5	78	4	87
Regulators	7	40	7	38	9	30	17	54	8	41	7	31	18	49	9	36	6	29

Service & Research Organisations	14	27	18	33	24	39	33	75	27	75	17	36	23	55	21	58	25	45
O/S visitors												5						
Totals	107	307	121	347	114	356	136	417	117	414	103	301	138	330	94	307	95	311

Topics raised and discussed at network meetings, initiatives and meeting outcomes

Meetings in all locations were well attended and facilitated some relevant and topical discussions. The issues raised at the meetings included:

The minutes for each meeting have captured quite a few of the issues raised throughout the meetings. These included:

- Whole Genomic Sequencing
- The 'Dominion' Film – it was discussed that AMPC is funding a project to produce positive publicity to counteract; there was some concern about individual plants being contacted for comment - project includes a media package.
- Many of the universities who had students undertaking an AMPC scholarship and who presented at many of the meetings, particularly in Melbourne and Brisbane, expressed a keen desire to partner more closely with industry. This is beneficial for the experience for the students as well as ensuring research priorities are closely aligned with industry needs.
- Refrigeration Index (RI) – there was a suggestion from one meeting to look at possibility of running RI refresher workshops in the next round of meetings. This was investigated at other meetings, however it was determined that this was not widely required.
- Simplification of the PHI project – suggested as a possible presentation at MI&QA conference
- RI - real time data feedback – this may be a topic for a possible R&D project
- Different country export requirements – there was a suggestion to perhaps get someone from the Department (DAWR) to talk about MICOR, which we then arranged for the next round of meetings. DAWR tailored their next presentation to address MICOR directly.
- Changes in animal welfare requirements in particular supermarket requirements
- Assessor training - of SOPs etc – company-based assessors. Train the Trainer approach needed. On-line course.
- Producer workshops – MINTRAC has funding to assist running these
- Shelf life
- eDECs – any movement? MLA also planned to follow this up

- Incomplete NVDs – an ongoing issue. LPA is audited through AUS-MEAT – could they be responsible for conveying issues to the auditors? Processors would need to raise the major concerns? Main issues are incomplete transfer information; Section A; The LPA Fact sheet could also be better detailed; there is a need to understand the importance of these being completed properly.
- RFP validation – in earlier meetings it was discussed that while the DAWR response to the US Audit in 2018, had not yet been completed, but the audit identified US concerns with the Australian RFP validation process, and the final outcome of this audit may impact current provision of RFP training. However discussions in later meetings indicate that the US are willing to accept current Australian RFP validation processes.
- GACC draft processing standard for processing of donkey meat and skins – development of this standard had been recommended by the authorities and there is an industry working group on this.
- Post mortem inspection and disposition review as well as the project to update the AS 4696:2007 Australian Standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption
- AEMIS Review
- Changes to the lamb definition
- Animal welfare standards review.
- Animal activism – this was on the agenda for discussion at each meeting and AMIC provided some guidance materials on how to deal with activists coming onto premises. Many companies had experience direct contact with activists – for some this was not a new occurrence.
- NVDs and animal welfare concerns in saleyards – from the NSW Domestic meeting.
- At the Melbourne meeting there was considerable discussion around the Meat Notice for the collection of cadmium samples, and some concern was expressed about the slowness of the NRS sampling process, and the volume of wasted product. This matter will be referred to AMIC for further action.

Initiatives included:

- One of the key initiatives of this project was the inclusion of a two-hour workshop on HACCP at the beginning of each meeting. Many attendees commented they were attending the meeting mainly to participate in this workshop, and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. Feedback forms were distributed at the meetings and the responses have been collated into a spreadsheet, which was included in an earlier Milestone Report. Each workshop was unique – Dr John Sumner presented six of the seven workshops, with Natasha Wing presenting the workshop in Tamworth. John made a concerted effort to gather intelligence from his many QA and meat safety contacts prior to delivering the workshop to ensure each workshop was tailored to participant needs. The workshops facilitated great discussions about everything from micro testing techniques to blockchain technology and augmented reality. It is worth noting that in

collecting feedback on the HACCP workshops some feedback about the network meetings themselves can be extrapolated – for instance, almost everyone surveyed was happy with locations, venues and catering. Several comments indicated that even when the meeting content is not necessarily directly related to their company they still learn something by attending the meeting, with one person commenting specifically that they always get something from a meeting. When contacted by phone prior to a meeting to see if the company will be attending, the most common reasons given for not attending are an audit taking place at the same time, staff shortages, or other production pressures that make it difficult for their staff to leave the plant.

- Trialling an earlier start and finish time for the 2019 Brisbane meeting. This had mixed results – there was some confusion and some regular attendees who were accustomed to a 10am start were later because they hadn't realised or had forgotten about the earlier start time. Other attendees found the earlier time beneficial as it meant they left the meeting before peak hour traffic became too heavy.
- From discussions at the previous Melbourne network meeting, investigation into whether or not accredited training was required for new known consignor legislation was undertaken by MINTRAC. This investigation showed that there was no training required at this time.

Outcomes of the network included:

- Raising industry awareness of key changes currently being implemented such as the new lamb definition; new grain-fed standards; and amendments to equivalence procedures for Schedules 2 and 3 of AS:4696:2007.
- Promotion and extension of a number of recently completed AMPC projects, including:
 - microbiological food safety and storage life of Australian Red Meat (John Sumner)
 - PHI Review – market access information sheets are currently being written up by Paul Vanderlinde; however, process of consideration by other countries can take a considerable amount of time
 - pilot study on design of lairage, handling and stunning facilities and potential impact on animal welfare and meat quality
 - process monitoring for the Australian Meat Industry – a comparative industry trial (undertaken by Jessica Jolley and John Sumner).
- Feedback opportunity for other possible projects in the future.
- Promoting the activities of the Meat Industry Reference Committee in terms of upcoming changes and additions to the AMP Training Package and raising awareness of avenues of providing feedback and industry intelligence.
- Promotion of new training resources relevant to quality assurance and meat inspection personnel.
- Provision of two professional development workshops at the NSW Domestic meeting on Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness, and lab sampling procedures.

- Direct engagement with state and federal regulatory bodies, and in NSW a noticeable shift in auditing and investigation processes of the Department of Primary Industries as a result of repeated network meeting discussions about animal welfare breaches and NVD non-compliances in saleyards.
- The opportunity for university researchers to connect with industry to potentially identify projects that have real benefits to the industry, and to present their findings on current research. Two researchers from Adelaide University have since been invited to present at the MI&QA Conference in October.
- A representative from AMPC has been available at almost all of the meetings for across the project, which has been an opportunity for companies to hear about the latest projects and current research and development being conducted and for AMPC to gather industry intelligence and feedback.
- AMIC were able to attend several meetings in the 2017-2018 round initially, but were unfortunately not available for later meetings, there were some issues raised that would have direct relevance to them, such as the NVD issue raised at the NSW Domestic meeting. In 2018-19 meetings AMIC participated at many of the meetings via teleconference, and while face-to-face participation is always preferred it was still very beneficial to have them there via telephone.

6.0 DISCUSSION

Progress against MINTRAC final report recommendations from 2016-17

Following are the recommendations from the 2016-17 Final Report and a progress reports on the implementation of each recommendation.

Professional development workshops

The success of the Emergency Animal Disease workshops (that were conducted as part of the last round of meetings in 2016-17) showed that there is a real appetite for some in-depth professional development sessions.

MINTRAC needs to work with the QA managers to identify the areas of professional development that could aid them in their work and can be incorporated into the network meetings.

Progress

The network meetings in the first half of 2018 featured a two-hour workshop on HACCP presented by John Sumner (except for Tamworth where it was presented by Natasha Wing). This was extremely well received with very positive feedback having been received.

Meat and Livestock Australia present at every meeting to update QA managers of the latest research in STEC testing, shelf-life prediction and new microbial interventions. Their research findings and current projects are great development opportunities for meeting attendees and Ian Jenson or Long Huynh typically stay for the entire meeting to talk to attendees during breaks.

In the second half of 2017 The Australian Rendering Association provided material to make processors more aware of the issues of contamination in raw materials destined for rendering establishments and how communication and collaboration can help to reduce the effects.

In 2019 two workshops were held at the NSW Domestic meeting on lab sampling processes and protocols, delivered by NSW DPI and emergency animal disease preparedness, delivered by MINTRAC.

Ongoing interaction with researchers and technical experts

There is much happening in the meat safety arena especially when it comes to meat quality, micro testing and interventions.

Ongoing interaction with researchers and technical experts. The Network will have relevant and informative speakers in the coming year.

Progress

AMPC have an allocated agenda item in which to present the current and completed R&D projects. These include:

- Industry challenges – strategic risks, changing consumption patterns, social license to operate
- Completed AMPC projects and ongoing projects – professional development program, automation developments, packaging research and development, waste treatment, optimising meat quality to name a few.

The network has a presentation from MLA scheduled for each meeting, presenting the latest research in STEC testing, shelf-life prediction and new microbial interventions, and how processors and other interested parties can access more information about these.

MLA are also presenting in most states on the Livestock Data Link throughout 2017 and 2018.

In the second half of 2019 Sealed Air presented at NSW meetings on how packaging research and developments can improve efficiencies, sustainability, shelf life, now and into the future.

Increased interaction with the AMPC Program Manager for food safety

In the coming year MINTRAC will encourage AMPC to plan out the research outcomes that need to be incorporated into the Network as part of an overall extension strategy.

Progress

Meeting agendas are forwarded to AMPC prior to each meeting. AMPC Program Managers have an allocated a presentation timeslot at each meeting and had so far been able to attend almost every meeting held, which enables processors to have an opportunity to engage with AMPC and find out about projects and ways in which they can benefit from their AMPC membership.

AMPC Project Snap Shots are sought and included in the meeting papers for each meeting, and AMPC reports and products are on display at each meeting.

MINTRAC project officers interacted regularly throughout the project, on at least a weekly basis, with AMPC managers about the meeting agendas and network.

Ongoing participation of the AMPC program manager at the network meetings

It is recommended that AMPC continue to attend the MI and QA Network meetings and to provide an overview of current projects from relevant programs. In addition, there needs to be a two way dialogue so AMPC can assess what are the issues at the “coal face” and when existing or proposed research does not address these issues.

Progress

During the first half of the project David Lean was been provided with a schedule for all the meetings as well as the proposed agendas and is allocated time to present at each meeting. Minutes from each of the meetings were made available, as well as any other feedback arising from the presentations.

Recommendations for 2018-19 Network meetings and progress

The continued presence of AMPC Program Managers at network meetings

AMPC to have a continued presence at the meetings where possible, and for MINTRAC to communicate regularly with AMPC about agenda items, presentations and speakers

Progress

AMPC participated in most of the network meetings over the course of the project. MINTRAC was in regular communication regarding meeting schedules, agendas and presentation topics. Where AMPC were unable to be present at a meeting MINTRAC project officers were well versed enough on the presentation topics to be able to provide the presentation on behalf of AMPC.

Agendas were collaboratively developed and AMPC provided suggestions for project presentations and provided MINTRAC with contact detail.

Continued AMPC Scholarship Presentations

The scholarship presentations to continue, and these would be best suited to two students per meeting

Progress

The scholarship presentations were quite successful and continued to be an ongoing agenda item throughout both rounds of the 2018-2019 network meetings. Limiting them to two students per meeting meant that participants were not overloaded with very scientific and theoretical concepts, however they were still able to get a sense of what was happening in university research and current and future applications the research may have for industry.

The presentations were beneficial for students, their supervisors and the universities as it connected them with industry and gave them feedback on which projects and research topics had real industry value and application.

Refrigeration Index refresher training

Investigation into offering Refrigeration Index training as a workshop during the meeting

Progress

The need for RI refresher training was raised in one network meeting as a possible professional development workshop to be held during network meetings, however in all other locations it was not identified as a development need. As such it was determined that this workshop would not go ahead

but could be arranged at the request of any companies or interested people referred to an appropriate provider.

Continue engagement with AMIC

Continued communication and engagement with AMIC and allocation of a speaker slot to an AMIC representative

Progress

All meetings featured a presentation slot for a representative of AMIC. Stacey McKenna attended a number of meetings, sometimes in person but mainly via teleconference in the last half of the project. MINTRAC communicates with AMIC on a regular basis, at least fortnightly, and was able to pass on any questions or issues raised at meeting where an AMIC presence was not possible.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

At this stage there are no recommendations for amendments/modifications to the schedule of the current project, recommendations for new research and development, or any managerial actions required of AMPC and project partners.

9.0 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1 Summary of Network Attendances 2017-18

9.2 Appendix 2 Summary of Network Attendances 2018-19