

Evaluation of the implementation of the PigPass movement notices and the PigPass quality assurance program in NSW

Eva Tang

I spent some of my holiday time this summer traveling to peri-urban and country NSW so that I could look at pigs and do some paper work. “Not very exciting”, you probably thinking; “I’d rather go to the beach”, another one of you may be saying. But participating in the AB-CRC summer scholarship has been one of the best thing that I did during this holiday.

I was evaluating the implementation of PigPass, which is a movement notice that pig farmers must complete when selling their pigs. I examined PigPass from saleyards at Camden and Forbes and abattoirs in Wollondilly and Young. I found that although the PigPass system has been made compulsory for over 6 months, the quality of the information supplied varies significantly between sites (which in turn relates to the farm system type), and this would affect the effectiveness and successfulness in tracking the origin of the problem in case of disease or food safety hazard.

We also compared the health status of animals coming from different farm system according to the quality assurance program the farms had implemented. It was found that most pigs sent to the export abattoir for slaughter are of better health status than those sold at saleyards. Pig abnormality incidence is very low at abattoirs, while it is relatively higher at saleyards with prolapses, lameness and skin problems being most common. It is likely that the difference in farm system and quality assurance program contributes to the variation in the health status.

I decided to apply for the scholarship because I wanted to get more insight into research as I have become increasingly interested in pursuing a career in the field of research. And certainly this experience has allowed me to gain realistic idea of what is involved in doing research. This experience has also demonstrated me the importance of research and its relevance to our daily life.

Apart from gaining invaluable research experience, the other parts of participating in the project have made it unforgettable and interesting. The traveling, meeting different people and talking to them, getting up early to see our beautiful landscape and capturing it, as well as having nice food, have make the scholarship enjoyable while educational. I certainly would encourage anyone that is interested in research to take this opportunity to find out more about this exciting field.