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Industry Responds to Piggery Health Concerns

Recent media reports on the case of two piggery workers contracting the pig-borne disease *Streptococcus suis* (*S.suis*) pose little need for concern according to the pork peak industry body, Australian Pork Limited (APL).

The case, reported in several media outlets over the past few days, details two piggery workers treated in the Canberra Hospital. The consulting physician, Dr Karina Kennedy, has published her findings in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, October 6, 2008. Both treated individuals have since recovered.

APL Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Spencer, said that while this case is an important reminder for all piggeries to continue practicing safe and hygienic practices, there is no cause for alarm.

"Cases of *S.suis* in humans are extremely rare, Dr Kennedy notes in her article that only two cases have been reported in Australia. The health and hygiene standards of Australian piggeries are among the best in the world," Mr Spencer said.

"We trust that the pork industry, while remaining mindful of the importance of hygienic practice, will appreciate the rarity of these cases and understand that there is no need to worry as long as appropriate health and hygiene procedures are continued."

"The minimisation of risks around health issues involved in piggery work is a focal point for producers. All piggery employees should be regularly reminded of the importance of maintaining high levels of hygiene, especially when handling sick or dead pigs."

"Simple acts such as thorough washing of hands, the use of gloves, wearing of appropriate safety equipment and covering of any cuts or lacerations are all preventative measures which should be adhered to as part of occupational health and safety procedures in any piggery," Mr Spencer concluded.

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