



## Media Release

9 June 2011

### Consumers share biosecurity concerns

Four in five Kiwi consumers say biosecurity controls on imported pork should not be relaxed. The findings from a survey of consumer attitudes and concerns commissioned by New Zealand Pork comes just a few months after the relaxation of border restrictions on imported pork by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

According to the research, only 36 percent of consumers know where the pork they buy comes from. Each **week** more than 700,000 kilograms of imported pork products hit Kiwi supermarket shelves, and currently there is no way for consumers to distinguish between imported or locally-raised pork.

New Zealand Pork, Federated Farmers, industry vets and other groups have voiced concern about the change to border restrictions as the exotic disease Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) could enter New Zealand and infect local pigs.

“MAF went to great lengths last year to impose world-beating animal welfare changes on heartland pig farms which have had a significant impact on the competitiveness of our national pork industry,” said Sam McIvor, CEO of New Zealand Pork.

“It simply makes no sense that they should do that with one hand, while with the other they are opening the door to perhaps the nastiest swine disease on the planet.”

“New Zealand Pork has committed to leading the way in pig welfare standards around the world,” McIvor said. “Exposing our national herd to this devastating disease is a serious issue, and our research indicates Kiwi consumers feel the same way.”

PRRS does not affect humans but devastates pig herds, making it the most economically significant and commercially devastating disease threat to the pork industry worldwide. It causes severe immune suppression (similar to HIV in humans) making the animal

susceptible to other diseases, including pneumonia, and results in piglets slowly wasting away until one or more diseases kills it.

The nationally representative survey commissioned by New Zealand Pork was conducted by Perceptive in April 2011. The survey investigated consumer perceptions about a range of pork-related issues including biosecurity controls, aspects of animal welfare, and local versus imported pork.

The survey of 1,007 New Zealanders is representative of the population, weighted by Statistics New Zealand Census data and has a margin of error  $\pm 3.1$  percent.

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