



APSA 2023 19TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Australasian Pig Science
Association (Inc)

Sofitel, Brisbane, Australia

13th - 16th November 2023



Dr Kate Plush



Towards truly stall free pork production

Dr Kate Plush is Manager - Science, Technology and Adoption at the SunPork Group, and holds an affiliate position with The University of Queensland. Upon completion of her BSc (Hons) and PhD at The University of Adelaide, she continued postdoctoral and early career research roles at The University of Adelaide and the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI). Dr Plush joined the SunPork Group in 2017 and leads her research team in programs and projects across the entire pork value chain, with a special interest in transition sow management and neonatal piglet survival. She is the Principal Investigator across numerous Category 1 and other R&D grants and a key researcher within multiple large collaborative ARC Linkage and CRC-P projects. Dr Plush is well published, primarily in the areas of sow welfare and reproduction, with over 85 publications and almost 900 citations, balancing this scientific output through adoption activities, such as staff training and mentoring, and is a sought-after presenter for industry and producer forums.

The individual housing of sows and boars within stalls is still frequent, especially when risk for impaired reproduction or welfare is high. Many countries have either removed or limited stall housing in gestation or are working towards this in response to legislative changes that are becoming more commonplace. With increased experience and confidence in group gestation systems, there may be an opportunity to examine whether there is indeed a requirement for stall use in any stage of pork production. In this review of the literature, Dr Plush will focus on the phases of the reproductive cycle in which the use of the stall is often still routine (breeding and farrowing) to critically examine whether there is an opportunity to completely remove use. This paper will determine whether stall free pork production is achievable, and if not so immediately, identify knowledge gaps that once addressed, should position the industry well to move away from stall use over time.