

# Down under renaissance man

One might say that Marcus Jones is a renaissance man in the pig industry. Webster's dictionary describes such a man as one with wide and varied interests, and an expert in several areas. Certainly, he qualifies, hands down.

What makes Marcus special is not just his involvement in a number of business ventures specifically related to the pork industry, but his interest in the overall health and well being of the industry is well documented. Pig producers, and others in the business, around the world, know of Marcus Jones.

Why this kind of reputation from a man who calls home, Clifton, Queensland, Australia? To understand, one must go back to the year 1940, when Marcus's grandparents started in the pig business.

Later, the business was passed on to Marcus's father, then to Marcus and his brother. So, after three generations in the business, it is no wonder the Jones boys know what they are doing.

"My brother and I operate three businesses," Marcus told International Pig Topics. "Our production farm, CEFN Pty Ltd, accommodates 4,000 sows. While this may not seem like a large operation by international standards, there are only about 200,000 sows being raised in the entire country of Australia.

"The same year our family started the farm, we got into the genetics business, providing Hybrid line sows and boars, which is now the second largest company of its kind in Australia.

"In 1994, we formed Stockyard Industries, which provides crates, stalls, flooring, feeding, and ventilation equipment to hog producers."

In addition to operating the three businesses, Marcus is very active in Australia's Australian Pork Ltd and serves as a delegate.

But his ongoing attendance at worldwide industry trade shows has garnered him the reputation as one who knows the pig business, is interested in its development, and offers his knowledge and expertise to promote its continued success.

To understand the reality of how some hog farmers operated in Australia, Marcus recalls their plight. "Traditionally, many farmers built, or had built 'hoop barns,' to house pigs, which were made of canvas and contained straw bedding for the pigs.



**Strathane Piggery, Queensland, Australia.**

That was the situation and can create many production headaches. Of course, our situation was decidedly different, but since there were no specialised pig housing manufacturers in Australia, we were looking for a dependable supplier outside the country, who could satisfy our needs."

## The Betco connection

It turned out that Marcus Jones and Betco had a mutual connection in Darren Rose, a sales agent in Asia for many of the world's leading hog production equipment manufacturers. He put both parties in touch with each other.

"Betco quoted out the buildings we needed," said Marcus, "and as it turned out, they provided everything we needed – a better building and a single supplier that could provide the whole package.

"The fact that they were in America posed no logistical problems because they delivered pre-engineered buildings in pre-packaged containers directly to the site, ready to erect.

"Plus, we did not have to settle for local technology. We were impressed with Betco's tunnel ventilation technology, which

allowed us to control the temperature and the quality and flow of air through our houses."

## Evaporative cooling

Betco perfected the concept of the 'tight' or 'sealed' building, which employs the most effective use of a negative pressure ventilation system, which pulls outside air through a 'cooling pad' into the building interior.

This dual process is known as evaporative cooling and tunnel ventilation. It creates a 'zone of thermal neutrality', which means regardless of the outside climate, the system can be adjusted to 'neutralise' the interior environment to the desired effect.

This kind of control means air is distributed where the ventilation engineers want it to go.

## Proper insulation

Insulation was another key factor in deciding on Betco because its energy saving features allowed the cost of the insulation to basically pay for itself."

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Once again, the better Betco buildings prevailed. The buildings have lower 'U' value insulation, which is four times more insulation than locally built houses. This means using less energy, less fan power, more evaporative cooling potential, all of which translates to more savings to the bottom line.

## Improved FCR

Another advantage that results from the improved environment of a Betco building is an improved FCR (food conversion rate).

FCRs on the traditional straw based Australian houses, as compared to Betco buildings changed from 2.68:1 to 2.25:1.

Producers like Marcus Jones are also concerned with keeping building interiors clean and disinfected. They want protection from the long term effects of natural corrosion from pig excrement.

Betco houses use an 11 step process on their pre-painted metal panels, which carry a 30 year guarantee against corrosion. Swine houses are the most task intensive structures that Betco builds and they realise that

the combination of their durable metal panels and concrete, offers a long term safe, and healthy environment.

From Betco's perspective, the match with Marcus Jones was mutually beneficial. Mark Doyle, general manager of Betco's international division, was looking for a reputable customer in Australia and Marcus Jones's fine reputation preceded him.

"We were looking for a sales challenge in that part of the world and we spent a good deal of time with Marcus demonstrating the advantages our agri-houses. Fortunately, he agreed and we have been doing business with him since 2005."

While Marcus Jones has been purchasing only finishing houses thus far from Betco, that will be changing. Nursery houses and more finishing houses are in the works, as well as the first farrowing shed that is soon to be shipped. It is proof positive that Marcus Jones recognises that Betco designed houses are a good way to maximise his return on investment.

As it turns out, the renaissance man from Australia and the agri-housing man from America make a pretty good team. ■

