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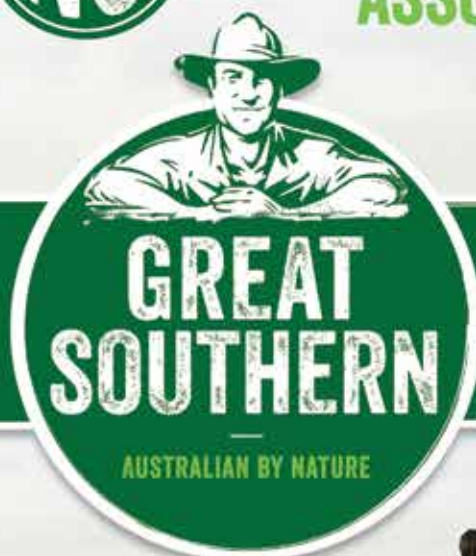
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Cover

Footscray Market is in the centre of Melbourne's most multicultural community. The diversity of the offering in the meat section challenges the senses and imagination. (See story page 8)

Giveaways

**Win copy of *BEEF and Other Bovine Matters*.
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Australian MeatNews

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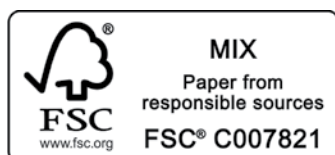
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The Australian Steelers team will be representing Australia in the World Butchers' Competition in September.

World Butchers' competition gets ready to heat up

The annual World Butchers' competition is set to bring the best butchers in the country to battle it out with teams from the UK and New Zealand and in a first, France.

The competition aims to promote the skills of butchery and presentation and selects the best possible team. Each team will be given a side of beef and pork and a whole lamb carcass to create a world class selection of value-add products in a theme of their choice in a three-hour time frame.

On the team this year are Tom Bouchier, Butchers of Distinction, Vic; Paul Brady, Tender Gourmet Butcher, NSW; Nick Dagg, The Heights Boutique Butchery, QLD; Colin Garrett, Colin's Butchery, NSW; Adam Stratton, Tender Gourmet Butchery, NSW and team captain, Michael James, Carina North Quality Meat, NSW.

Tom Bouchier, who was on the 2015 team, is keen to even the score with the Kiwi's after a narrow loss on points last year. Tom's role will be to provide the final presentation of the products ready for display.

"As a team, we present new ideas and top quality produce to both Australia and the world, opening eyes to different techniques and products," said Bouchier. "It's all about team work, if it's not perfect, I'll send it back for re-adjustments. I know our team has what it takes, we just have to all come together on the day and present the panel of judges with our best work."

The competition will take place on the Gold Coast on 10 September 2016. ■

Winners of the July 2016 Find a Word Competition

Congratulation to the winners and thanks to BUNZL our sponsor.

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Keenan Smith, Mudgeeraba Butchery, Merrimac Qld

Boning Knives

Jason Piper, AMIEU, Carlton South Vic

Alen Skaro, Techstaff Pty Ltd, Melbourne Vic

Ms Victoria Goodfield, Goodfield Quality Meats, Cunderdin WA

Ms Nicole Downer, Vic's Premium Quality Meats, Laverton North Vic

Campbell Weekes, Nicholas Fish Market, Mosman NSW



Boutique abattoir extends its capabilities

Koallah Farm, a paddock to plate farm and abattoir near Camperdown, Victoria has extended its' licence to include deer, buffalo, llamas and alpacas.

Commissioned in 2014 to service beef and lamb, then pork and goat last year, the facility aims to provide primary producers and butchers with a unique service to access boutique markets. The facility can slaughter, butcher, age, vacuum pack, label and box meats ready for market.

Steven Castle, managing director said that the staged introduction of different licenses was driven by farmers who wanted better access to markets and returns for their animals, particularly those farmers who are small-scale.

"Until now, alpaca growers right here in south-west Victoria had to truck their animals interstate for processing. Similarly, it was very difficult to have private buffalo and deer processed, boned and packed fresh for retail," he said.

Venison producers have welcomed the additional license as many abattoirs in recent years have stopped processing deer, making it difficult for farmers to process their animals in a timely manner. A venison producer from the Yarra Valley has commented that the herd levels are a fraction of what they were 20 years ago and expects to see the industry rebound with the Koallah Farm development. ■

From mining boom to dining boom

Mining magnate, Gina Rinehart continues her push to expand NT agriculture portfolio through the purchase of two more cattle stations and an export cattle yard through her company Hancock Prospecting (HPPL)

The company had previously invested in three stations, Fossil Downs, Liveringa and Nerrima. Fossil Downs located near Derby has access to the Broome export port, while the joint venture with Dowford Investments of Liveringa and Nerrima also includes the defunct abattoir at Waroona.

The latest acquisition of Riveren and Inverway in the Victoria River District from Indonesian company Japfa Santori, less than two years since the company bought it, adds a further capacity of up to 40,000 head of cattle to the Hancock Prospecting portfolio.

To facilitate the supply chain into overseas markets, particularly Asia, the company most recently bought Phoenix Park which is capable of handling 20,000 head of cattle for export with extensive infrastructure and irrigated cropping.

"This is a strategic acquisition for HPPL and will give HPPL the ability to supply cattle throughout the year including during the wet season, so we hope to be reliable suppliers to our markets," Rinehart says. ■

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Hen meat – a great value-adding opportunity

Hen meat, derived from hens bred as egg layers is increasingly finding a role in value-added meat meals.

Historically, laying hens were rendered when they reached the end of their productive lives, but not because the meat is no good.

Hen meat is derived from birds about two years of age compared with broilers that are typically processed at about 45 days of age.

“Hen meat has a stronger chicken’ flavour,” explains Nathan Cherry, production manager at specialist hen meat processor Supreme Poultry, “Hen meat makes a flavoursome chicken meat and is being increasingly used in further processed and value added products.”

Supreme Poultry is on a mission to develop processes and to work with its customers, to develop hen meat based meal solutions for consumers, Nathan said.

Hen meat is widely used in Asian and traditional European recipes in part, out of economic necessity but also because of its flavour intensity. Many traditional recipes specify ‘rooster’ as the preferred chicken meat for this reason.

In Australia, hen meat is minced and reconstituted to make molded and crumbed products such as chicken schnitzel and chicken kiev. It also has wide application in Asian style products including dim sims, wontons and spring rolls.

“The potential for hen meat is unlimited,” Nathan said. “Hen meat can be used alone or blended in sausages, patties, burgers, meatballs – it’s only limited by one’s imagination.

“Hen meat is competitively priced and is a safe and wholesome food resource.

“Significant tonnages are available and gone are the days of hens being used only for broths, soups and casseroles,” Nathan said.

At Supreme, hens are processed and meat is packed and frozen in 15kg cartons. Cuts include Maryland – skin on/off, breast meat, wings, mince, whole birds size 10 to 16, special orders and pet mince products.

Supreme can separate caged from free-range hens and supply certified free-range hen meat that allows provenance branding at retail.

Supreme operate dedicated hen processing plants in Melbourne and Sydney with a processing facility and head office at Mangrove Mountain, near Gosford, NSW. ■

Lenard’s expansion to double footprint by 2020

Leading chicken franchise, Lenards Chicken has set an ambitious plan to expand the number of stores to 500 by 2020.

New CEO, Chris Caldwell who was previously with Bakers Delight, Tattersalls and Village Roadshow, aims to re-vamp the stores with a fresh, modern look to draw customers back to Lenards.

Like many meat industry retailers, Lenards has been challenged by supermarkets and rivals in the ready-to-eat poultry sector.

“The supermarkets can never match the freshness and quality of product and customer service that a really good individual operator can offer,” said Caldwell. “They offer a cheap and convenient offer. That is where it stops. A large percentage of customers in the market are prepared to pay a bit more to get a better quality product.”

Operating for more than 30 years, Lenards Chicken provides a range of value-add products and aims to introduce into the new look stores a range of hot products including whole roast chooks. ■

Chicken consumption has increased from 13kg per person in 1974 to 44kg in 2014. The growth in chicken consumption has been driven by the production of purpose-bred and fed broilers. Broiler meat is easy and quick to prepare and is favourably priced compared with beef and lamb.

Changes in Consumption and Price:
2000 to 2014 (ABARES)

	Chicken	Beef	Lamb & Mutton
Per capita consumption	+ 43%	- 20%	- 50%
Price	+ 23%	+ 68%	+ 105%

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Steaming bowls of Pho – this one served with meat balls, tripe, tendon, brisket, sliced beef flank and what may have been sausage of some sort. Served with bean sprouts, Thai basil, chilli and a squeeze of lemon. The beef stock and meats would make an excellent value-add alternative

Footscray Market bursting with Asian value-add ideas

The rise of street food as a basis for value-add inspiration – particularly Asian means a visit to a market with a predominantly Asian customer base. Footscray Market and surrounding restaurant precinct, in Melbourne's inner west is one such destination.

The 2011 Census reports 27% of the Footscray population was born in in SE Asia and about 40% speak an Asian language, particularly Vietnamese, Mandarin and Cantonese. The Market is open Tuesday through to Saturday.

The Market's website shows that there are six butchers, five poultry stalls and a couple of seafood shops, surely true Asian sausages would be plentiful. Armed with a local as a tour guide on a quieter day, an exploration of Asian sausages awaited.

Wall to wall meat, mostly pork and poultry, a token couple of stalls of fruit and veg – albeit very fresh and distinctly Asian produce. We could see in one stallholder a number of pigs heads – indicating that perhaps that

day they would process up to six carcasses.

Photos were allowed but questions were not.

Each stall would have cuts typically seen in a Western butcher, legs, primal and so on, but beef flank, rolled up for sale like a roulade was atypical. In the poultry sections again the usual offerings of marylands, whole chooks, thighs, wings. And turkey tails, roosters and duck heads and chicken feet, hearts and livers. It seems the concept of using everything from beak to tail and tail to snout is strong in typical Asian foods.

Only one stall sold sausages – 'Chinese', Spanish chorizo, Philippino Longanisa (the Filipino take on the chorizo) and continental and thin

western sausages. The Chinese sausages had a beautiful sweetness, without the saltiness that might be expected if soy was a major ingredient.

The local precinct of restaurants range from Indian, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Chinese and more, and none tailored to meet the Western palate. It is genuine Asian food that is inspirational and should be visited to understand how ingredients are used.

What Pho is that?

To investigate the use of the beef flank, a quick search of foodie websites shows that it is integral to Pho – the very popular Vietnamese version of a beef noodle soup traditionally eaten at breakfast. Pho is believed to have its origins in France – a beef consommé – given a Vietnamese twist.



Beef flank, a key ingredient in making a traditional Vietnamese noodle soup, Pho.

The key to a good pho is the stock. A beef stock using flank, bones and oxtail simmered for six to eight hours with a little sugar, cardamom, star anise, fennel, cinnamon and coriander for spice. Roasted or charred onion and ginger can also be added. The noodles are made from white rice flour. To serve, stock is poured over a bowl of noodles and garnishes of coriander, Thai basil and fresh greens such as bean sprouts, chili peppers and spring onion. Add a small slurp of hoisin and fish sauces to finish. What defines the local version is the sliced meat on top – brisket, tripe, slices of flank, meat balls and the meat from the oxtail.

For the butcher, pho represents an option for value-add. Prepared stock ready to take home and thinly sliced meats to serve are easily achieved.

continued on page 10



Any one for Lion Chops?

continued from page 9



*Not interested in doing the rotisserie chook?
Make some pate, pork devon and roast
pork with crackle and you are on the way
to a traditional Vietnamese pork roll.*

Packaged with a selection of herbs, fresh greens and noodles and a family meal could be ready quicker than a rotisserie chook.

Want to do something with pork; banh mi might be the way to go

Based on the French baguette, *banh mi* refers to the bread not the final product which is known as the Vietnamese pork roll.

A traditional banh mi uses three variations of pork – pate, pork cha lua (which is essentially a pork version of Devon) and pork belly. To construct a banh mi, cut the baguette lengthwise like a hotdog, spread lashings of pate, then good quality mayonnaise. Layer across the cha lua and pork belly (roast pork can be used instead).

To finish, garnish with strips of Lebanese cucumber, pickled daikon (Japanese radish) and carrot, some slivers of spring onion, fresh coriander and sliced chilli. Season with white pepper and liquid seasoning – which can be soy or good old Maggi. Work with the local bakery for the bread and the butcher can produce another value-add product for the lunch crowd. ■



Footscray Market is where the locals go for Asian cuts and specialties.



Difficult to ask questions, but on a quiet Thursday, six pigs heads were clearly visible indicating the amount of turnover just one of six butchers in Footscray Market may do in a day.



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Industry boosted by evolution of trusted supplier: Woodward Foods

As the meat industry grows increasingly competitive, one longstanding supplier is stepping up its support of butchers and independent retailers in launching its new brand and portfolio of products under Woodward Foods Australia.

Formerly Swan Hill Abattoir, the industry can expect to see Woodward Foods bring the culmination of five generations of expertise to the shopfront with its new premium beef and lamb products.

Under its founder Robert H. Woodward, the business started in 1888 as a local meat processing facility and steadily grew a reputation for consistent quality and reliability.

Chief Executive Chris Hadziliadis said at the heart of the rebranding process was the 'Woodward'

heritage and values, which holds a great deal of significance for the company.

"We are now a business 400 strong on the brink of expanding internationally. While our business has transformed throughout its growth, it has always been in accordance with the Woodward family values that remain at its core. It's this approach – 'from our family to your family' – which gives our customers faith in the quality of our meat," he said.

Today, the business is more than just a processor. It is a unique and diversified Australian meat business including specialised breeding programs and a wholesale distribution network, spearheaded by Murray Valley Meat Trading Company.

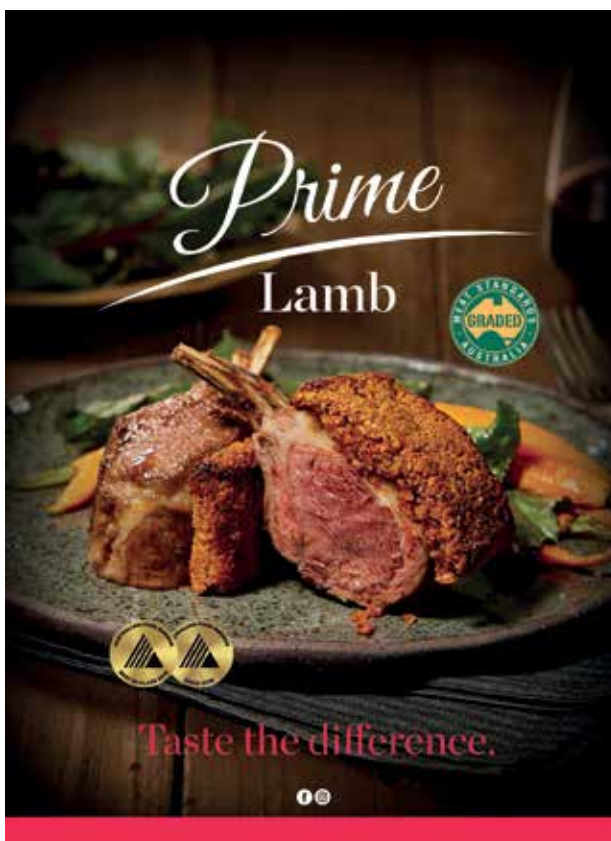
With a true 'paddock to plate' offering, it has grown to become a favourite supplier among butchers and retailers, developing a reputation for consistently delivering meat of a superior quality.

Testament to this quality was Woodward Foods' success at the recent RASV Australian Food Awards, picking up the 'Best in Class' medal and 'Gold' medal awards in the branded lamb category for its Prime Lamb.

After such successes nationally, demand for quality Australian produce will see Woodward undertake international operations after successfully obtaining an export licence earlier this year, a step that marks a new chapter for the business.

How will this rebrand and dramatic growth affect customers?

The rebrand will see a suite of new visual merchandise and resources including a new logo, product packaging in line with its 'paddock to plate' offering, new website, marketing materials, social media presence and other consumer engagement promotions.



The new Woodward Foods Australia product and brand portfolio

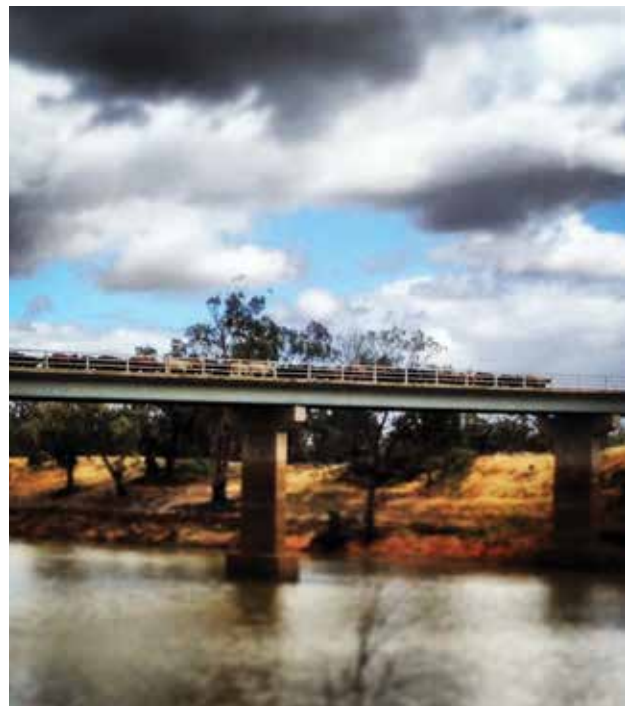
- **Woodward Foods Finest Beef** is MSA graded and has a well-loved texture and flavour from its carefully balanced grass fed foundation, combined with grain assisted feed in some cases, to produce a consistently flavoursome and delicious eating experience
- **Woodward Foods Natural Beef** is 100% grass fed, free to roam and free from any hormone growth promoters for a nutrient rich, lean and wholesome meat for everyone to enjoy
- **Woodward Foods Prime Lamb** is MSA graded, nurtured by grazing on pastures and free of hormone growth promoters. It's quality where you can taste the difference. At this year's prestigious RASV Australian Food Awards Prime Lamb was the recipient of the Best in Class medal and the winner of a Gold medal in the Branded Lamb category.



Hadzilijs said that the combination of these initiatives would help butchers and independent retailers grow demand for premium, boutique meat products and offer their customers an unparalleled shopping experience.

“Woodward Foods is committed to quality, and as a boutique provider, we can offer butchers and independent retailers a superior product and service that’s just not available at a mass level. Quality and value is at the core of what we do and we’ll continue to work towards building our network without compromise,” he said.

To find out more about our range of new products or become a Woodward Foods Australia customer please call our distributor, Murray Valley Meat Trading Company, on 02 9642 8888 or visit www.woodwardfoods.com.au



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Get organised for Christmas NOW!

With Christmas about 120 days away, it's time to get organised, particularly if you plan to sell ham.

The flexibility and convenience of ham make it a popular summer stand-by to feed family and friends who just happen to drop in.

For many households, glazed ham has been the centre-piece of Christmas dinner competing with turkey and other meats. An additional feature, for an often hectic Christmas day is that a glazed ham can be prepared in about one hour.

Australian Pork Limited's Marketing Manager, Mitch Edwards suggest butchers glaze some hams and feature them in the shop, as a way to promote them for Christmas.

He said, for smaller meals butchers could glaze a ham made from a hand of pork and forequarter or for an even smaller meal a hand of pork alone.

But unlike fresh turkey, beef or lamb, ham has to be made in advance.

The first question is: How many hams do you expect to sell? While last year's sales are a guide, Jenny Fletcher, Channel Manager with Australian Pork Limited suggests butchers survey their customers. "Tell your customers they need to order their hams early.

"Ask them direct and record their order and contact details on an informal basis, to be confirmed later," Jenny suggested.

Butchers should ask customers if they want a glazed ham or plan to glaze it themselves for Christmas dinner or a ham for slicing over time.



Prepared in about an hour in the oven, Glazed Ham is becoming an increasingly popular Christmas dinner.



Wrapping your finished ham in ennio Tinsel-Net™ will give it a festively, fancy finish.

While there is inherently error in this approach it provides some indication of what might be needed.

The next step is supply. If you are preparing hams yourself you need meat, ingredients and netting. If you are ordering them in, you need to place your orders.

Surveys commissioned by APL, have found consumers are tending to seek quality as opposed to discount product. The high profile promotion of "cheap" ham in the summer of 2014 did little to increase the volume of sale compared with 2013.

APL consumer research also shows "Australian" is the attribute most valued by consumers. Butchers should ensure all purchased hams are made with Australian pork and carry the appropriate logos.

Butchers selling ham made from fresh pork should highlight its Australian

provenance when talking to customers.

To further differentiate and highlight hams, specialist netting and casing supplier Ennio International has launched a range of decorative nettings that allow butchers to give their hams a bespoke touch. To make their hams that bit "festively fancy" butchers could try Ennio Tinsel-Net™. Applied post cooking (and over a vacuum pack, if required) it comes in a range of festive colours; gold silver, red green and purple.

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Australian Pork Limited has a range of free point of sale material to assist butches, including Ham Bags. More information is available on the APL website www.australianpork.com.au ■



The AustralianPork Mark ensures a product is made with Australian pork.

Staff, admin and buyer-habits dash second shop dream

If you are thinking that the income and lifestyle benefits of owning two retail butcher shops may be worth the investment, it may be wise to think again.



James Swindles – “it would be better to invest your capital in the store you already have”

By Stephanie Flynn

James Swindles shares his experience of a recent foray into dual shop ownership and, as he discovered, fact and fantasy can collide when unconsidered factors arise.

Celebrating a decade of ownership of the Noosa Fair Butchery in one of Queensland's key flagship coastal resort towns, Noosa Heads, and with the experience of over 30 years as a butcher, James and wife, Kim, had imagined that a second shop may be the key to stepping back into a more relaxed lifestyle.

They also believed that such a move would be an insurance policy against the economic fluctuations that affect tourism destinations.

Three years ago, in the town of Nambour 30km away from the location of Noosa Fair Butchery, one of its successful independent butcher shops had come up for sale and presented the opportunity James had been seeking to dive into his second shop.

He quickly found the myriad of challenges that he had not anticipated,

continued on page 16



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continued from page 15



Noosa Fair Butchery is a stylish independent butcher shop in the heart of one of Queensland's premier tourist towns.

covering staffing, administration and buying as well as getting to know totally different market demands, were going to step up his working life and stress levels not the opposite as he had imagined.

"I had been lucky, on reflection, with the shop in Noosa with really good, loyal and well trained staff," James said.

"I thought I would have a better lifestyle with staff managing the day to day operations of both shops and I could step away and be less bound – how wrong I was.

"Turned out it was really hard work, the first problem was the shortage of available well-trained butchers and the second problem was that the store in Nambour was not trading at the level I had anticipated," he said.

James now knows that the biggest issue facing the industry is a shortage of skilled tradespeople across the whole spectrum of staffing requirements.

It is a problem, he believes, that experienced butchers, himself

included, have created for themselves by not taking on enough apprentices over the past decade.

As a consequence, James found he was spending a great deal of time in hiring and training staff for the new store and trying to find the 'right' mix of managers and support staff who stayed in the job.

It was a situation James was to battle for the three years of owning the second store.

The second major issue was that the Nambour store took three years to build to the trading level he had erroneously thought would be so from the outset.

Although the two stores were geographically located in the same region, his experience in the Noosa store did not prepare him for the customer demands in Nambour, a market which had totally opposite demographic and socio-economic features.



Noosa Fair Butchery will undergo expansion and renovation now its owner has sold his second store.



Nambour Plaza Meats has just been sold by James Swindles after a three-year project to build it up.

"Nambour customers bought their meat in the same way customers did decades ago when I was an apprentice – basic cuts and bulk purchasing like 2kg of steak, chops and sausages and 2kg of corned beef – with less regular visits but a higher per visit spend," James said.

"Whereas our store in Noosa is more like one in an upmarket suburb in a big city and customer purchasing centres on higher-end and modern cuts, value-added product, less spend per visit but more regular visits," he said.

The implications were that the buying for the two stores had to be totally different – carcass meat for Nambour as opposed to the carton meat for the Noosa store.

It also took a lot of effort and time to attract the Nambour customers, building trust was the key factor to developing a loyal customer base.

The third big surprise was the amount of administration work such as two sets of books and systems which turned Kim's support role into a full-time occupation.

As opposed to being able to step back into a more relaxed lifestyle, the ownership of two shops in actuality saw James and Kim plunged into a high-powered and stressful life mentally and physically fully immersed in the day to day operational and administrative functions.

The pair sold the Nambour store last month after three years of building it up and in a word, James says he is re-energised and, for the first time in years, is excited to get up every day and work in his Noosa store.

"Stress affects you in insidious ways and you don't realise it until the source of your stress is lifted," James said.

"The relief of now having only one store has already given me great mental freedom to be creative about extending my product ranges at Noosa Fair Butchery, renovating the store and has also improved my relationship my staff and my family primarily because I am not so cranky!

"To others in the industry who are contemplating purchasing a second store, I would definitely say it would be better to invest your capital and time in the shop you already have, even if it means that you invest more in rewarding the right staff with higher incomes so you are not trapped in the day to day operations," he said. ■



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Take a Break – refresh your business and yourself

Any small business owner will tell you they don't have time to take a holiday, but in doing so they may be doing themselves and the business a disservice.

Like most small businesses, a butcher is often the owner and the face of the business who works easily 12 – 14 hours a day, six days a week. In the short term of setting up a business and getting going, that may be necessary until the business is running smoothly and bringing in enough income to employ staff.

It is important though, according to Anna Cochrane CEO at Meridian Agriculture, to build in mechanisms for the owner butcher to take time off from the business.

“For many small business owners, we suggest thinking it about in this fashion: what would happen to your business if you or someone in your family was seriously ill and you couldn't work – would your business continue to operate?”

Building into the business a chain of command, operating procedures that everyone knows and a good line of communication between yourself and staff all contribute to the business continuing in this scenario. It builds trust amongst your employees, leadership and responsibility.

A break from the business doesn't mean illness; holidays are an important part of your working life.

There are a number of good reasons why small business owners should give themselves a break.

Holidays are essential for mental health and family relationships. They provide opportunities to have discussions that do not include the business which is refreshing in itself – happy family, happy life



Anna Cochrane of Meridian Agriculture advises that taking a break is a must for the small business owner for his wellbeing.

Being able to take holidays is a measure of business success – your management, training of other staff members to assume responsibilities and the ability to afford a holiday

Having a holiday is an investment in your business as you come back with fresh eyes. You see things more clearly that you may have grown used to that really need to be addressed.

Research has shown that taking a break can actually improve your profitability by as much as 20%

Take the time to learn new skills, attend meetings and trade shows, both local and internationally to bring back fresh ideas, methodologies, technology and techniques.

Self employed people work long hours – fatigue, stress and exhaustion can

hinder productivity and for butchers working with sharp knives and hazardous equipment, it can become dangerous.

There is never a good time to take a holiday. By communicating with staff, holidays can be planned in advance to ensure everyone gets a break. Set an example to your staff to show that it is okay to take a break.

Your first thought, is ‘that's all well and good, but who can I trust to fill my shoes while I'm gone?’

It turns out that there is a growing community of skilled butchers who are more than happy to help in the shop while you are gone either as a secondary butcher or in a more managerial capacity. Depending on how long you are planning to be away



Graeme 'Roaming Butcher' McLaren is a 'locum' butcher armed with his knives, can come in and give a hand when the boss is away or to help with staff numbers during peak periods.

– a week to a couple of months – there are options.

Graeme McLaren is one such butcher.

Enjoying life now that the kids have left home, Graeme and his wife Gailene have hit the road to travel the countryside, picking up short term work wherever they go.

A well-known butcher from the Ulladulla region on the south coast of NSW, Graeme has been in the industry for more than 30 years, working in several butcher shops and supermarkets in the district before taking the plunge to run his own shop.

“In the 30 years of being a butcher, I learned a great deal of skills, gained a lot of experience and met some great mentors in the industry,” said Graeme, from somewhere up near Winton, Qld. “I saw different approaches and methods to doing things and spent time running my own business. I have built a reputation for being professional, reliable and good at what I do.”

Graeme and Gailene’s decision to hit the road came after working the typical long hours of a small business owner – six days a week, 14 hours a day. The couple hadn’t had a break for two years and realised now that the kids were independent it allowed them the freedom to come and go as they please and enjoy life.

The couple has been travelling now for more than nine months since selling the shop in Ulladulla and travelled 16,000kms from Elliston in SA to Yarrowonga on the Murray River to Winton, Qld. To look for work, Graeme has set up the ‘Roaming Butcher’ Facebook page that acts as a blog of his whereabouts and as an online reference. Facebook sites dedicated to butchers often advertise for staff and he keeps tabs on the online conversations.

“If Gailene and I decide we are going to head in a particular direction in a month’s time, I put a post on Facebook to say I’m coming and to offer my

services. I also go through the phone book to ring butchers and supermarkets in the area to see if they need anybody. Sometimes it is through word of mouth - someone knows I’m going to be in the area who knows someone needing a butcher. Two or three phone calls later and I’ve got a job.

“You have to be fairly flexible in your approach; sometimes the job is for a week or two, sometimes three months to help cover a peak season. Having accommodation and a car is vital. My tools of trade are my knives, a tax file number, references, my own Super fund and I have a police check to reassure the employer.” (Check with your financial advisor on whether a tax file number or ABN will work best for you)

“If I am coming in for a more managerial position it is usually for more than a week or two as the staff should be able to handle a short absence. It makes it a lot easier for me and the business owner if all the systems are working smoothly and all the staff know what they are doing. Having defined ways of doing things that everybody knows means that it should pretty much run itself – I’m just there then to make some decisions should they come up. Ideally, a handover period of a couple of weeks is the best way to go.”

For Graeme and Gailene, it has been a lifestyle choice that they don’t see ending too soon and admit it is not for everyone. Graeme said it is a great way to meet people, learn new skills and to share his knowledge of the industry. As a hard-working, small business owner he would readily recommend that utilising an itinerant butcher is invaluable for those who need a reliable person to look after the shop while they take a break. ■

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Tips for presenting your best at AMIC Sausage King Competition

By Dr Eddie Andriessen BVSc RCA
Meat Industry Consultant safemeat1@bigpond.com

The South Australian Smallgoods and the Metro Sausage King and Butchers Best Burger Competitions were held at Regency TAFE in June/July 2016, with the finals held at the Central Market in Adelaide on the 15th July 2016.

The South Australian winners will be announced at the annual dinner in September. They will go on to compete in the National competition.

Ten judges worked their way through 146 smallgoods entries and 94 sausage king and burger entries. The judges commented on the high standard of products with one judge saying that for the entries in the mettwurst and the dry cured categories – “these products are at a high level and the people making them know what they are doing to produce a quality product”.

I participated as an assessor on the judging panels and I congratulate the ultimate winners in the various categories.

It was evident to me that some people submitting entries had an inadequate concept of what is assessed during the competition and with better attention to detail, could have done better. Most of the products submitted for judging were of good saleable quality overall, and with some attention to detail they could be winners in their class.

This article is designed to help people to present their entries in the best possible light.

It is important to note that product is not just assessed on its taste profile but also on its visual appearance both cooked and uncooked. The visual appearance both raw and after cooking accounts for approximately 40% of the points in sausages and

butchers burgers with taste and texture accounting for the remaining points.

The items that contribute to the visual appearance of sausages and burgers include:

- A fresh internal and external appearance
- Visual appeal of the product (this is what the consumer will make their decision to buy on)
- Good colour or bloom
- A well filled out and well-made product (workmanship)
- Splitting of skin after cooking is considered a defect
- Significant shrinkage after cooking is also considered a defect (workmanship)
- Minimal protrusion of sausage meat from the ends

Many entries fell down because of poor initial presentation.

Whilst not a requirement in the entry rules of the sausage king or burger competitions it is my view that you can maximise points in this area by perhaps ensuring that all entries are vacuum packed to maintain bloom and colour.

Workmanship is a very important criterion that is assessed as part of the process. Most of the tasters have extensive experience in the meat industry and can be very critical of poor workmanship especially sausages that split during cooking and/or shrink after cooking and bursting of the ends. This should not occur if the sausages are properly made.

It is worth noting that if sausages and burgers shrink during cooking many



Pictured L to R: Judges for the SA Sausage King competition: Graeme Elliot, Regency TAFE; Belinda Hanson-Kenny, food technologist; Eddie Andriessen, food safety consultant and Brian Berry, retired smallgoods manufacturer.

of the flavour elements can be lost thus changing the taste profile.

Another presentation issue is the use of natural casing versus artificial casing. Straight sausages are not as visually appealing as natural casings. If you want to produce a quality product you need to use quality ingredients.

Texture is another attribute that is assessed. This is assessed on both raw and processed products.

Raw and cooked sausages will be cut open to assess if:

- The texture is even throughout the product (different textures may be used so long as they are evenly spread throughout the product)
- That the firmness is consistent throughout the product

In the smallgoods categories the visual appearance and workmanship accounts for 20% of the points allocated to a product. Items that are assessed include:

- Does the product have a fresh internal and external appearance
- Is the presentation acceptable in size, shape, colour and customer appeal

- Is the workmanship of a high standard
- Is the product well-made and well filled out
- Is the product crinkled or distorted

Once again vacuum packaged product is far superior to ordinary packaging. For example if the colour in a ham is not stable, vacuum packaging can help slow the colour degradation.

When it comes to flavour a number of items are assessed by the taste panel:

- Is the flavour appealing
- Is the flavour true to a specified description (Fritz should not taste like Devon)
- Is the flavour profile balanced (common faults include too much salt or not enough sweetness)

The flavour profile is very important in all products.

When describing products on the entry form, be sure to include all major flavours. It is disconcerting to the tasters to detect a different taste profile to that which is described.

Make sure that the taste profile is balanced. A single flavour like smoke should not overwhelm other flavours.

Aroma is an important part of the taste profile. What the product smells like on first cutting is a crucial part of the tasting exercise. The aroma should match the taste and any one flavour should not dominate.

It is vital that contestants assess and taste their products on a regular basis, in particular, the product from the batch that is being submitted as an entry should be assessed prior to submission for judging.

Make certain you are happy with the product before you submit it.

Also for sausages and burgers make certain they are as fresh as possible, preferably vacuum packed and kept under proper refrigeration at all times.

A few products are rejected every year because they have gone 'off'.

The most difficult group for the assessors to judge is the innovative products section.

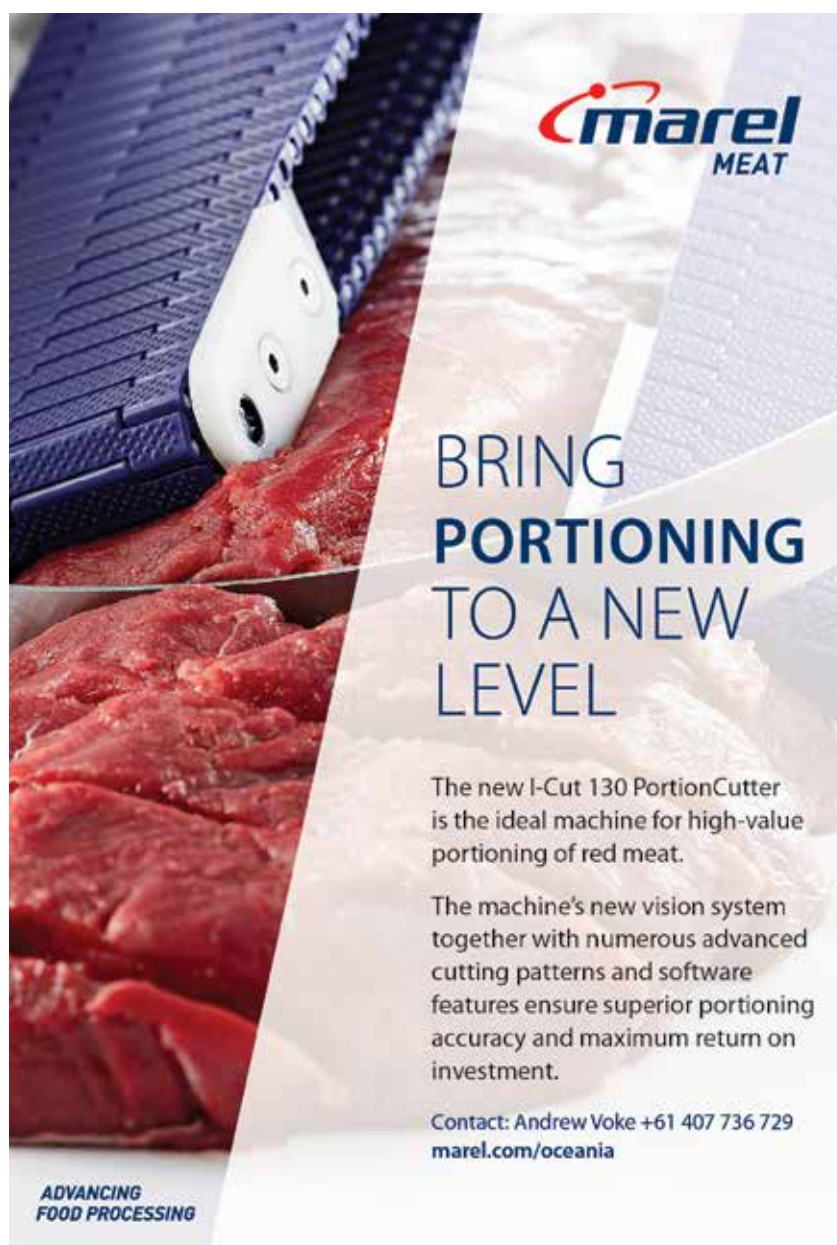
The guidelines state that the product must be unique or modified from the normal and must have been recently developed.

Different flavour profiles were the

most common entries in this section. Most failed to impress. Often the flavours were unbalanced.

Standout products were rare and usually involved a different presentation of a standard product.

In summary if you are going to enter any of these competitions ensure the best presentation you can achieve and taste the product before you send it to the competition. ■



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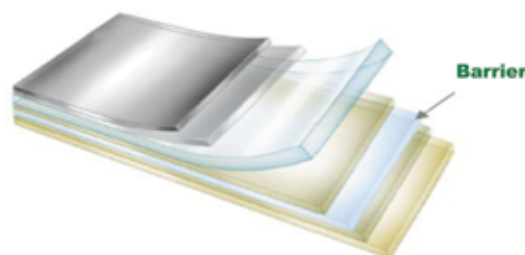


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The new blast chill and plate freeze equipment in the cold chain warehousing system at NCMC.

Upgrades provide greater efficiencies and compliance at NCMC

The upgrade project at Northern Co-operative Meat Company nears completion with the cold chain warehousing system all but finalised to give the company a fully integrated abattoir and processing facility that suits a range of livestock and clients.

The Northern Co-operative Meat Company (NCMC) project is designed to provide the company with facilities that will enable future growth and greater efficiencies. Four key upgrades were identified that are pivotal to the business: the knocking box and race; steam services relocation; the tannery and cold chain management system.

Using the design build project delivery methodology, Wiley completed and commissioned the knocking box, animal race and the steam services relocation by January and the tannery was completed in March. The cold chain management facility is expected to be complete in October/November.

The NCMC business model is based on a co-operative, catering to more than 100 operators who use the facility to process their livestock for domestic and export markets. Processing a range of cattle breeds and veal brings its own challenges.

“There are only two other twin rotary knocking boxes in operation in Australia, making the installation at NCMC leading edge technology,” said Wiley’s Senior Project Manager, Barry Murphy. “Rotary knocking boxes are regarded as the gold standard in this type of equipment due to the reduction of stress on the animals, safety of the operators and production rates achieved.”

The knocking box at NCMC is longer than other similar units and was designed to suit a larger range of cattle. The nature of the co-op means that NCMC receive a variety of cattle which has an impact on cattle length as well as weight, meaning that for shorter cattle, their head position is incorrect. A simple design modification has allowed the operators to shorten the length of the knocking box to keep the animals forward.

Since commissioning, the knocking box and animal race systems have been functioning very well, managing the daily

continued on page 26

continued from page 25



To accommodate a wide range of cattle, minimise stress and improve operator safety, NCMC incorporated a Temple Grandin designed race, which leads to a length-adjustable rotary knocking box that rolls the body onto the processing table.

production levels each day. The downturn in available herd numbers has meant there is capacity for further increased production to meet requirements at that time without any further modification.

In addition, the design of both the veal and beef races are based on industry expert, Dr Grandin Temple's principles, and have delivered exceptional animal welfare outcomes including a reduction in problems experienced in either race since January. The design has helped reduce stress on the animals and improved life for the drovers by enabling a greater storage capacity within the races which benefits the production flow.

The Tannery

Wiley were engaged by NCMC to construct and upgrade the existing chrome precipitation plant to allow increased processing, modifications to the process to improve waste stream segregation and additional hair removal with new hair shavers. The general waste water flows were also redirected to run through the existing dissolved air filtration (DAF).'

The key objectives achieved from the project were;

- Ensure long term environmental sustainability and continuation of the EPA licence
- Maintain Gold Rating with Leather Working Group
- Maintain and potentially improve on the existing higher value markets for CHT's wet-blue hides
- Tannery expansion capabilities-360 Tonne per week to 540T per week
- Reduce environmental Issues with paddock Irrigation, excess irrigation waters and salinity

The tannery has been fully operational since March and providing NCMC with upturns in wastewater quality and economics with less chemical inputs and improvement to the quality of the final products.

Cold chain management

The final piece in the NCMC puzzle is an upgrade of the cold chain management system, comprising an automated storage and retrieval system, plate freezing capacity, blast chill tunnel

and full 'cold chain compliant' loading dock facilities. The upgrades when completed will manage 'cold chain' requirements through best practice form the boning room to loadout.

"Due to the nature of the NCMC business the company produces a large range of product and volumes, this has in the past required a greater amount of product handling than is ideal," said Barry. "The new automated storage and retrieval system (ASRS) supplied by Dematic for installation into the facility designed and delivered by Wiley, will allow NCMC to better manage product flow by being able to place small order skews (those products that are less than a full pallet) in the storage facility and fill the pallet when sufficient numbers are produced, significantly reducing the amount of manual handling. This installation is the first ASRS in a frozen environment in Australia and only the second in the World."

"Also, in a first for Australia, the loading dock system will be able to accommodate shipping containers and pantech trucks (refrigerated trucks that have hard wall freight hulls) in a fully sealed, refrigerated environment. Each loading dock has an 'igloo' that the truck backs into and a seal

encloses the access point to the back of the truck – and now containers – to maintain full cold chain compliance. This development we believe will soon become the norm for the industry."

"To date, we have completed upgrades to the front end of the facility with the design and construction of the new knocking box with good results. With the tannery completed and the cold chain management elements in commissioning phase, we can finalise the distribution end of the business to give NCMC a complete upgrade that caters to their unique business model and provides opportunity for flexibility and growth."

When the project is completed, NCMC will have achieved improvements at the entry point of the process by improving animal welfare, capacity and working environment with the flexibility to adapt to any length of animal through the new Knocking Box and race ways. There will also be more efficient cold chain management through the construction of the new blast chill tunnel, plate freezer, ASRS and loading docks. In addition, the tannery has seen increased performance in wastewater management, improvements in economical outlay and final product quality. ■

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Automation improves NCMC cold chain

A first in Australia is the full automation of cold chain storage and despatch for the Northern Cooperative Meat Company site, provided by Dematic.

The project to upgrade the abattoir at Casino, designed and delivered by food industry specialist Wiley and Co, included a new system of order and SKU (stock keeping units) chilling, storing and despatch methodology.

Dematic are a leading supplier of automated storage solutions that integrate the whole cold chain system including conveyors, racking and guided vehicles, have provided NCMC with a complete package. The new system includes infeed and outfeed conveyors, multi-shelf storage utilising a shuttle system for retrieval and a full software package that integrates with the NCMC system for full carton control.

In a first for Australia, Dematic have integrated both frozen and meat products into a single system.

The system devised by Dematic is capable of handling more than ten thousand cartons per day and a storage buffer of several thousand cartons. Cartons are stored in a single aisle of racks and stored and retrieved using a shuttle system that removes the need for forklifts and manual handling. The system was designed to allow for easy capacity expansion by the addition of further multishuttle racks as needed.

“Dematic both here and overseas have successfully implemented many



The Dematic multi-shuttle system is similar to the one installed in the NCMC Casino project. Fully automated, the cartons and SKUs are stored with full cold chain compliance and retrieved as needed, reducing OH&S issues, forklift damage and extending shelf life of products.



multishuttle-based systems, in fresh, frozen or chilled product applications, but never handling frozen meat cartons,” said Soeren Schauki, Business Development Manager, Integrated Systems at Dematic. “We knew it worked for those aspects individually, but this is a first in Australia.”

Prior to the NCMC project, the system was fully tested in a simulated environment to make sure it would work. Over several months the system was put through its paces with frozen product to ensure that the boxes would maintain their integrity, that the cold chain compliance would be kept and that the shuttles would be able to move the very heavy export cartons that can weigh as much as 27kg. By doing this, Dematic were able to minimise any hiccups with the NCMC installation.

The system is in response to many in the meat industry that have invested in automation for slaughter and boning processes but have not kept up with current technology for cold chain systems. The automated storage and retrieval system (ASRS) combined with the conveyors allows meat processors to improve efficiencies in chilling and storage, reduce manual handling to improve worker health and safety and as a positive, extend shelf life of products.

“It wasn’t until we tested the system that we realised that improvements

are made to product shelf life,” said Soeren. “In an automated system, the operator programs the software to retrieve a specific order or SKU and it arrives at the loading dock within a few minutes. In the past, manual stock picking would mean that a whole pallet would be taken out with a forklift, dismantled to retrieve the carton and then re-packed and taken back to the storage point. All of which could take half an hour or more to the detriment of the other cartons on the pallet.”

As each carton leaves the boning room, it is given a unique identifier barcode and sent to the chiller or freezer, then onto another conveyor to the storage point with a specific location. When an order is received, the shuttles move up, down and across the racks and side elevator to bring that particular carton down to the conveyor that will then go onto the loading area.

The barcode identifier contains information on day of processing, how long it has been in storage, what orders are associated with it and it has the ability to link in with the NLIS data if required. Traceability is therefore greatly improved.

While the project at NCMC is a first for Dematic, it is a system that will work with any meat processing facility. Using an automated storage and retrieval system gives greater stock control, reduced manual handling, reduced product damage and greater shelf life and is far more efficient in moving orders and SKUs from processing to dispatch. ■

USA and Brazil resume reciprocal trade in beef

In early August, the USA announced it would allow imports of chilled and frozen beef from Brazil. In a separate decision the USA announced it had reached agreement with the Brazilian government to export US beef to Brazil.

The decision to allow imports into the US is underpinned by the US Food Safety and Inspection Service’s recent determination that Brazil’s meat safety system is equivalent to that of the United States and that chilled and frozen beef can be safely imported from Brazil.

The initial quota for beef into the US is 60,000 tons. Industry observers suggest allowing exports to the US will help Brazil gain access to key markets in Japan and South Korea.

On the US export side, the USDA reached agreement with Brazil’s Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply to allow access for US beef and beef products to the Brazilian market for the first time since 2003.

Commenting on the export agreement, US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the Brazilian market offered long-term potential for US beef exporters to supply Brazil’s 200 million consumers and growing middle class with high-quality American beef. ■



The new floors installed by Roxset are designed to provide full compliance for goat meat export.

New floors underpin safety and compliance for goat processor

A three-year staged upgrade delivered purpose-designed floors with minimum disruption at Western Meat Exporters.

Western Meat Exporters is a dedicated goat processing facility near Charleville, south western Queensland. The facility was built in 1997 in response to increasing demand for goat meat from the US.

Initially, the facility processed around 1,500 goats per day and a few sheep. Now, the facility processes only goats – about 3,300 goats per day - for export to the USA, Taiwan and European Union.

Over time the floors of the abattoir, chillers, boning room, boot wash, loading areas and hallways had deteriorated. “Wear and tear was making the floors harder to clean, slippery underfoot and it was showing its age,” said Campbell McPhee, managing director of Western Meat Exporters. “We knew that the flooring technology had improved, so we approached Roxset for guidance.”

The challenges at Western Meat Exporters included: the cold floors of the chillers, the strong chemicals used to clean waste products on the floor in the boning rooms, heavy

machinery such as forklifts in the loading areas and one room dedicated to high temperatures for the skin-on products. No single floor specification would suit all spaces.

Western Meat Exporters chose to replace all the floors over a three year period to minimise the impacts on the day to day running of the facility.

“The floors at Western Meat Exporters were breaking down particularly at the expansion joints and beginning to lift, which made it increasingly difficult to maintain,” said Bruce Willan, managing director of Roxset. “In our discussions with management, we soon realised that the facility would require more than one specification for the various floors – harder wearing for areas that became wet and greasy, compared to a lighter floor for general hallways.”

The floors installed are from Roxset’s SE range which are ideal for abattoirs and meat processing facilities as they are designed to be heavy duty, anti-slip and able to cope with corrosive cleaning chemicals and high usage wet and greasy applications.



The floors at Western Meat Exporters need to be able to cope with wet, greasy conditions.

"We installed the SE4 which is 6-8mm thick in the heavy duty, wet and greasy areas," said Bruce, "while the hallways were laid with the SE2 floor as the demand is less. All our floors meet the compliance standards Western Meat Exporters need for their large export operations."

"Installing the floors was relatively straight forward, although the shutdowns were also an opportunity for Western Meat to do other maintenance work as well, so we needed to be mindful of that."

"The relatively remote location out at Charleville meant that we needed to coordinate with management to ensure the timely delivery of the floors to meet the installation windows of opportunity."

"Overall, Western Meat is now able to move forward with a modern contemporary floor, that ticks the boxes for export compliance and will be easier to maintain and clean for at least another ten years," Bruce said.

"The new floors have been terrific," said Campbell. "We are happy with the results and our ability to clean them and keep our workers safe with the non-slip surface." ■

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Safety in pet food is a shared responsibility

Plastic and metal contaminants in rendered product can find its way into pet food, livestock meal and tallow creating bigger issues than simply downgrading what many view as just a waste byproduct.

Pet foods are unique in that they constitute in many cases, the sole diet for an animal throughout its life. A significant component of pet food is rendered product so the presence of contaminants can be an issue for pets and their owners. While not a new problem, the risks associated with contaminants are increasingly a concern for the rendering industry and finished product manufacturers.

In a proactive move, the Australian Rendering Association is endeavouring to garner support from industry bodies such as MLA and AMPC to remove plastics from raw material before it reaches the rendering facility.

Suppliers of raw material – supermarkets, abattoirs, processors and to a lesser extent, butchers are the principle source of contaminants in raw material sent to rendering facilities. Rubber gloves, ear tags, NLIS tags and carton liners are the typical findings. Parts of machinery, trucks or pallets have also ended up in the material sent to rendering plants which can be potentially dangerous to operators and impact the efficiency of contaminant control systems, causing increased wear and tear.

The true value of rendered material is underestimated and is often treated by many as mere waste and the collection bins as dumpsters. The cause can be the end of shift cleaning procedures where everything on the floor is lumped together into the raw material bin without any due diligence to sort raw material from waste. Similarly, meat products no

longer suitable for sale but suitable for rendering are left wrapped in packaging and need to be collected before rendering.

The flow on effects are two-fold: the plastics slip through the screening process at the rendering plant due to its small size and end up in animal meal and pet food kibbels (dog and cat biscuits) or the load is rejected at these plants due to the contamination present and secondly, causing damage to



Blue gloves are now the obvious contaminant in many raw materials sent to a rendering facility.



A roller book entered a rendering facility causing significant damage to plant equipment resulting in a downgrade of more than 60 tonnes of out-of-spec tallow.

equipment that can set a facility back in time and money for labour and servicing stoppages.

Andrew Bennett, the former Vice President of the Australian Renderers Association has launched a roadshow to illustrate the problems the contaminants are causing.

“Our first step is to educate the industry on the effects that foreign contaminants like plastic and metals can cause,” said Andy. “For animals, the presence of foreign objects can potentially cause serious illnesses like stomach blockages, internal intestinal tearing or anaphylactic shock. In aquaculture, the presence of plastics in waterways is causing concern for fish producers.

“There is a very real possibility of product recalls if the presence of physical contaminants in pet food is detected, despite the controls that already exist with manufacturers.



Recalls not only impact the pet food manufacturer, but also the raw material supplier with loss of sales and volume.”

Ideally, the Association would like to see greater commitment at the supplier end to ensure that foreign objects do not get sent to the rendering facility in the first instance. The approach to long term physical contaminant control needs engagement from the entire supply chain. Education and improved industry practices against an agreed industry standard as a minimum from primary processors to renderers is the first step.

In addition, investigating alternate technologies is being considered, such as using objects made of food safe products to further reduce trace incidental contaminants in the end product. The Fats and Proteins Research Foundation (FPRF) in the USA is also working on the issue. Pet food manufacturers and suppliers such as Adept Co in New Zealand are also interested in investigating what improvements can be made.

Physical removal has its challenges.

“Screening through mesh at the rendering facility is usually done after the products go through the hammer mills, which means pieces as small as 6mm can still get through,” said Andy. “Magnetising works for some metals, but not aluminum – the clips on chicken bags are aluminum and end up looking like ball bearings once they go through the hammer mills.

“We have seen other recycling facilities not related to meat using reverse polarity magnets, which essentially blow out metals. Using those technologies will work if ear tags are magnetised, but it won’t work for plastics. The other technology that has potential is infra-red inspection that

Often seen as the end of the line for unwanted meat products, the rendering industry is often the sight unseen good guy of the meat industry. Providing a valuable service to turn unwanted product into something useful, the rendering industry supplies product to a vast array of industries including pet foods, soaps and edible fats such as lard.

The industry is heavily regulated and does give due diligence to providing quality products, but needs the meat industry as a whole to come on board to continue to improve that service; stakeholders need to be aware of the repercussions of their actions across the supply chain.

Changing how things are done is therefore the big challenge facing the rendering industry today.

To find out more, contact Andrew Bennet on 0417 966 272.

recognises the chemical composition of different polymers (plastics) and isolates those.

By collaborating with industry and organisations like MLA and AMPC the Australian Rendering Association hopes to gain some traction to begin to solve this problem. Conversations to date have seen a receptive audience and we hope to establish regular contact that will see the issue progress moving forward.” ■

Taskforce recommends rural bank and debt restructure

By Stephanie Flynn

Queensland's Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce has included the establishment of a Rural and Industries Development Bank, the instigation of a Royal Commission into rural financing and a Farm Debt Reconstruction Authority among its 14 key recommendations to the State Government in its final report lodged with the Treasurer, The Hon. Curtis Pitt, in May.

In releasing the Taskforce Report, Chairman, Rob Katter MP said that both levels of Government have ignored the struggles faced by rural Queensland, particularly in relation to debt and financing, over the course of many years which has resulted in a crisis throughout the agricultural sector.

"It is clear that the drought assistance programs such as the system of concessional loans as well as the current financing regulations which restrict the ability of the banks to deal with the particular nature of agricultural financing, are among the key issues at the root of the sector's problems," Mr Katter said.

"Rural and regional Queensland is showing signs of increasing financial dislocation and consequential social decline, a

problem stemming from a combination of natural disasters and poor policy settings at both State and Federal levels of Government.

"The percentage of financially distressed primary producers throughout the State is significant and requires a major policy response," he said.

The Queensland Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce was instigated by the State's Treasurer, Curtis Pitt, in November last year alongside a Rural Debt Banking Roundtable in a bid to seek solutions to the burgeoning rural debt crisis in Queensland.

At a media conference the Treasurer said that the Government would be instituting a Rural Debt Survey in 2016 and was close to finalising a commitment from all banks in order for the survey to commence.

The Palaszczuk Government has been quick to respond to some key recommendations of the Taskforce with the announcement of a \$78 million rural assistance and drought package in the Queensland State Budget handed down on 14 June.



The Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce conducted meetings in 13 regional areas and Brisbane during the course of its investigations.

The Treasurer has allocated \$42 million to extend existing drought relief measures and \$36 million to tackle rural debt and vermin control in the sector.

In his Budget speech, Mr Pitt also announced the establishment of a Rural and Industries Development Authority (QRIDA), to replace the existing Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority.

“QRIDA will be a new body with improved powers and more responsibility to tackle rural debt, it will be accompanied by a new Office of Rural Affairs within the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries,” Mr Curtiss said.

“QRIDA will have a broader role including an industry development emphasis and an expanded charter to include policy research and advice to Government regarding the financial stability of Queensland’s agricultural sector, including partnerships with the private banking sector,” he said.

The budget measures include funding allocations to mental health support and assistance for education for children in drought affected areas as well as the introduction of a stamp duty exemption for intergenerational farm transfers.

Grants of \$2,500 will also be made available to primary producers for advice on climate risks, financial management, succession planning and multi-peril insurance options.

The Treasurer also announced the introduction of new Legislation for compulsory farm debt mediation in a bid to stem the burgeoning problem of bank foreclosures in the State’s agricultural sector, a measure that will bring Queensland in line with other States.

The Taskforce report said that contrary to common beliefs, the State’s rural debt has been growing for many years and dispels the myth that the cause is limited to the impact of drought or the live export ban of recent years.

It cites poor lending practices in the 1980s and asset inflation policies which led to bank credit expansion and debt build-up, exacerbated by the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, as the main drivers of the current economic crisis facing the agricultural sector.

The Report noted that Queensland’s agricultural debt in 2011 totalled \$17 billion with over half held by beef enterprises. An analysis by Dr Mark McGovern, which forms part of the Report, estimates the current level of agricultural debt at over \$20 billion.

“Current levels of debt in Queensland agriculture are difficult to determine as financial institutions no longer supply information, and this is unacceptable,” Mr Katter said.

“Essentially our findings conclude that debt reconstruction is needed if the industry’s viability is to be restored,” he said. ■

The 14 key recommendations of the Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce:

- That the Government establishes a Rural and Industries Development Bank with the capacity to issue tailored rural loans to businesses along the supply chain, including beyond the farm-gate.
- That the Government make provisions for a contemporary Farm Debt Reconstruction Authority with the ability to address untenable financial arrangements.
- That the State Government facilitate the development and uptake of a commercial multi-peril insurance (income protection) for all primary industries.
- That the Government initiate a Royal Commission to investigate financial conduct within the finance sector.
- That the Government as a matter of priority ensure sufficient mental health workers are provided to identify struggling regions.
- That the Government extend and expand a funding model to facilitate inter-generational transfer of farm properties including stamp duty exemptions.
- The extension of productivity enhancement loans to include water infrastructure and vermin fencing with long repayments.
- That the State’s Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate be extended to desilting of dams.
- That an Office of Rural Affairs be established within the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to collect and collate data and recommend policy changes to Government for improved outcomes to rural Queensland.
- That preferential consideration be given to local businesses and authorities in construction of infrastructure projects as opposed to engaging contractors outside the region.
- The allocation of public funding for ongoing education for producers aimed at capacity building for farm financial management and climate risk management.
- Additional funding be made available for children’s education in drought affected areas.
- The Farm Household Allowance eligibility to be revised to facilitate accessibility for primary producers.
- That the State Government make strong argument to the Federal Government that any drought that lasts longer than two years be declared a natural disaster.

A guide to *bloody good food*

BEEF and Other Bovine Matters by John Torode is a reference and indulgence for beef lovers. More than 200 recipes range from carpaccio to sweet beef mince pies – from beef as a flavour to beef as the central protein.

John Torode, an Australian by birth, was the co-presenter and a judge on the BBC's *MasterChef* program and more recently the BBC's *Good Food Show*.



Torode is a self-confessed beef lover with an urge to share his passion for cattle, beef cooking and the making of “bloody good food, food that people want to eat”. He describes breeds, the qualities of different muscles, cuts from head to tail and the use and abuse of meat language.

BEEF is written from an English perspective but recipes are drawn from all over the world with extensive sections on raw beef, soups and gravies, pies, stews, offal and veal and a special section of cooking “Big Hunks” for parties.

The book has brilliant photos and background information that is particularly useful when it comes to veal, offal and sweetbreads.

BEEF and Other Bovine Matters is published by Quadrille. Available from Books for Cooks, Melbourne www.booksforcooks.com.au RRP A\$45.00 ■

WIN WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win a copy of *BEEF and Other Bovine Matters* by John Torode

Send your answer and name and address to:

Australian Meat News BEEF Book Competition

By post: PO Box 415
Richmond Vic 3121

Email: optimalnews@majestic.net.au

Question:

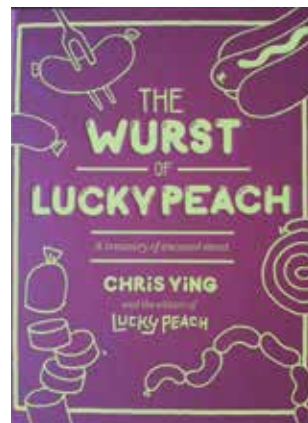
What was Queensland's Agricultural debt in 2011?

Entries close 10 October 2016

Book Comp Winner

Congratulations to Steve Clifford of Clifford Quality Cuts in Castlemaine Victoria.

Steve and Leonie Clifford have been in the butchery game for 20 years. They employ five people and make their own smallgoods. Known as a historic goldfields town, Castlemaine has added to its tourist appeal with a vibrant arts community and in more recent time a reputation for fine food.



Steve correctly answered; Gascony, to the somewhat cryptic question about the location of a charcuterie course. The question related to the story on Ben Duff and the rigors of upgrading his butchery skills in southern France.

Steve has won a copy of *The Wurst of Lucky Peach* by Chris Ying, a study of the making, history and provenance of sausages around the world.

And special congratulations to the team at Westbridge Meats, in Toowoomba Queensland. This enterprising mob tried to ‘hack’ the book competition lucky draw by sending multiple entries.

Each entry has a different name and address, a different \$1 stamp and the handwriting was “different” on each entry, but you didn’t need to be a graphologist to see the similarities. But what gave it away, was the envelopes – each had the Westbridge company logo on the front! Perhaps some of the names are real, some might be the family pets!

Anyway, *Australian Meat News* instigated an investigation. It turns out the mob at Westbridge are obsessed with sausages and just had to win the book! It turns out they were so desperate they went and bought a copy on line.

Australian Meat News has resolved to reward the Westbridge mob for their passion for the meat industry and innovation and enterprise with a copy of *The Complete Jerky Book* by Monte Burch, – how to dry cure and preserve everything from venison to turkey. ■

Dry aging can turn sheep into lamb

Sensory trials have established dry aged hogget and mutton can match wet aged lamb for eating quality.

Recently completed trials have found dry aged hogget and mutton was preferred to wet aged lamb by taste test panels. These results signal there is considerable potential to re-position hogget and mutton as a premium sheep meat.

Run by South Australian Cattle Co Pty Ltd and funded by MLA, the results were published in mid 2016. The trials compared the eating quality and yield of four aging pathways: traditional wet aged/vacuum packed lamb with dry aged; lamb, hogget and mutton.

The dry aged meats were aged for 39 days at 0-2°C and at a relative humidity of 70-80% - typically used for dry aging beef. The meat was taste tested by panels of 15 - 19 food industry experts including chefs and food media.

Eating Quality

Dry aging was found to improve the tenderness and flavor of lamb, hogget and mutton.

The panel taste tested loin, leg and forequarter cuts.

For all cuts, dry aged lamb rated best for likeness (a subjective measure used by the judges to rate overall enjoyment), rating significantly better than wet aged lamb

Compared to wet aged lamb, dry aged hogget and mutton scored marginally better on loin cuts and significantly better on forequarters. Wet aged lamb leg scored better on likeness than leg from dry aged hogget and mutton.

The dry aged lamb was the most liked across all cuts. The dry aged hogget was the second most liked in the trial, followed by the dry aged mutton. The least liked overall was the wet aged lamb.

The most liked cut of the whole trial was the dry aged forequarter from lamb, hogget and mutton..

Tenderness

Dry aged lamb matched the tenderness of wet aged lamb in the loin and leg cuts, and was rated significantly tenderer than any other treatment in the forequarter.

Dry aged hogget was also rated tenderer than wet aged lamb in the loin, forequarter and leg. Dry aged mutton was rated more tender in the forequarter and equal to the wet aged lamb in the loin and the least tender in the leg.

Dry aging of lamb, hogget and mutton also improved the eating experience by reducing undesirable livery, blood and metallic flavours. Dry aging improved the desirable roasted flavor.

In summary the trials found dry ageing increased the positive flavour attributes of tenderness, roasted and buttery fried characteristics in all cuts and increased tenderness in the forequarter cuts in lamb, hogget and mutton.

These findings parallel the reported effects of dry aging on beef flavor and tenderness.

Yield

Yield loss is an issue with all dry aging. Comparing weights at the start and for a similar aging period; beef loses were in the order of 10%. Lamb, hogget and mutton sides were found to lose about 15%. Dry aged lamb primals lost 18% compared with vacuum packed product.

However if yield is measured in terms of weight at beginning of aging vs plateable weight, wet aged lamb yielded 53%. Dry aged lamb yielded 37.6%, dry aged hogget 36.1% and dry aged mutton 37.2% – on average about 15.9% less than wet aged lamb. The trial reported less weight loss for dry aged half carcasses compared to individual cuts.

The authors say the reduced weight loss when measured in terms of plateable yields has to do with the way meat dries from the outside inwards, trapping moisture in the inner volume. Trimming the outer surfaces of dry aged cuts removes less mass than the equivalent trimming of a wet aged cut.

The trials found there were no food safety and microbial issues with dry aged sheep. No mould was observed. It also concluded that visually sheep meat behaves similarly to beef in terms of drying and physical appearance. ■



food processor supplies

The words in the list at the bottom are all hidden in the grid. They may be found in straight lines running horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Some of the letters are shared by more than one word. When you have found all the words in the list, there will be 23 letters remaining: these form the answer to the competition.

ENTRIES CLOSE: 15 OCTOBER 2016

First prize is a Swibo 22cm Steak Knife with a 14" Lesnie's Steel. Five Swibo Boning Knives are also up for grabs! To enter, find the words, cut out or copy the page or just send the answer with your name and address and contact details to: Find a Word, Australian Meat News, PO Box 415 Richmond Vic 3121 or or scan and email to: optimalnews@majestic.net.au

Be sure to write your name, address and phone number and ANSWER clearly.

Last issues winners see page 4

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S	W	E	E	P	C	H	I	M	N	E	Y	K	N	A	B	O	B	A	R	R	B
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F	E	E	D	E	R	S	G	N	I	R	P	S	E	E	N	T	E	L	L	I	M

Find the hidden words TO WIN

one of SIX SWIBO KNIVES

SERVICE FIRE PUMPS	BUSH GOATS
FEEDLOT	BULK GRAINS
OILSEED	CHIA
CLEAN WATER TANKS	BUFFALO
SPRAY RIGS	RABOBANK
BOXTHORN PULLER	RIO
SWEEP CHIMNEY	MILK PRICES
DAM LINERS	FAMILY VALUES
FEEDERS	RODEO
BRONZESLASH	BILLIES
STORE	EXISTING CLIENTS
SILVER	ALMOND
WOOL PRESS	RAINFALL
GRAIN	SHOWDAYS
GOLD	PODIUM
BROADACRE	PREMIUM FOOD
EQUINE	BLUEBERRIES
BALL	MILLET
CHAFF CARTS	BUSINESS PLANS
BOER	SPRING
RURAL LENDERS	
BOOMSPRAY	

YOUR NAME: _____

BUSINESS NAME: _____

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THANK YOU to all the entrants

Don't forget to try your hand at this months puzzle (above) and make sure you include your contact details when you send your entry to:

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