

AUSTRALIAN MeatNews

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**Buy Australian Pork
Butcher Survival Tips
Fine Day Out for Food**



Season's Greetings

- From the team at -

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Take pride in being a butcher and do more than just survive, read how the Barbecue fraternity sees their butcher. Image courtesy of Jongen and Co, www.jongenandco.com.au

Giveaway

Win a copy of *Meat Mate – Cooking Red Meat to Perfection*. Page 27

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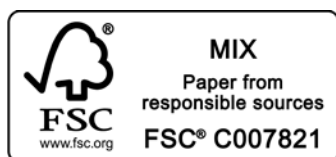
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Free meat processing pre-apprenticeship courses – 2019

From January 1, 2019, the Victorian Government will pay the tuition fees for pre-apprenticeship courses for eligible students.

Funded pre-apprenticeship courses include Certificate II in Meat Processing (Food Service) and equivalent courses in Commercial Cookery and Hospitality. Government is funding these courses in response to strong workplace demand for these skills.

Pre-apprenticeship or Apprenticeship Pathway courses are designed to help students determine their real interest and aptitude in their chosen area of work. Pre-apprenticeships are not a compulsory requirement to do an apprenticeship.

Certificate II in Meat Processing (Food Service) is being offered in a six month classroom-based format or a 12 month workplace-based program for students who are currently employed. Both formats will teach meat preparation and handling skills needed when working in kitchen and butchery environments.

In addition to the core units, the course offers elective units which will provide training in; vacuum packing, knife sharpening, species and meat cuts identification, trimming and slicing to specification and the preparation of minced meat, sausages and value-added products. Further options include retail skills and workplace maintenance training.

Certificate II in Meat Processing (Food Service) will be offered by William Angliss Institute, in Melbourne and South West TAFE that operates in south-western Victoria. The presentation formats are flexible and can be customized to meet the work and/or study time constraints of applicants.

More Information:

William Angliss Institute: Mark Agius T: (03) 9606 2160

E: mark.agius@angliss.edu.au W: www.angliss.edu.au

South West TAFE: T: 1300 648 911 W: www.swtafe.edu.au ■

Proud Sponsor of BBQ Baleout

A big shout out to all the state butcher teams who are competing 3rd-4th November in the Kingston Invitational BBQ Baleout.



"Aussie farmers are the backbone of our country and we want to celebrate the work they do and help raise funds so our Aussie farmers can get back on their feet and survive the drought," says organiser Shannon Walker.

"Barbecue relies on good home grown produce and we want to celebrate this with an event to support our farmers and showcase the quality product they produce."

Four state teams from Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria will battle it out in the ultimate skills test with mystery challenges to put their experience and innovation on the spot. All meat will be raffled off after the judging to help support Australia's rural communities.

Australian Meat News is proud to be a sponsor for the event and wish all the teams the very best. ■

Barnco is moving!

A fresh start will give Barnco a bigger warehouse and showroom to improve customer service and availability of product for the meat industry.

Located in an industrial complex, the new premises gives visitors better appreciation through the new layout in the showroom plus improved parking and access for larger vehicles.

For more than 40 years Barnco have provided the meat industry with processing machinery and equipment including slicers, dicers, vacuum packers, sausage fillers, knives and handling equipment.

“The move will allow us to increase our product lines along with the ability to hold more stock of existing lines, giving us the opportunity to pass on greater savings to our customers,” said Brad Barnco, sales and marketing manager, Barnco. “The larger showroom will give us greater opportunity to give demonstrations and improve our customer service.”

The move will take place in early November to 35/398 Marion Street, Condell Park NSW 2200
Ph: 1300 652 558 ■



JBS launches new standard of quality grain fed beef

JBS Australia has launched their newest premium brand in a growing, but strategic, brand portfolio.

The new brand, “Yardstick”, pays homage to the company’s four decades of producing high quality grain fed beef and claims to set the standard for the true measure of quality Australian beef.

JBS Commercial Manager Northern, Brendan Tatt, said Yardstick was a tribute to the continued dedication of a highly skilled and aligned supply chain of livestock producers, feedlot owners and processors that have maintained a dedication to excellence.

“Yardstick is the result of incremental gains on-farm, in the feedlot and at the plant level that have put us in the enviable position of being able to lay claim to being a benchmark by which all others should be measured,” Mr Tatt said.

“As a team we have been fine tuning our systems to ensure that our customers can expect nothing but the highest quality and consistency when they buy and rely on our branded beef products.

“Essentially, Yardstick is not a new product for JBS Australia, rather a considered strategy to consolidate our

high performing marble score two-plus grain fed beef under a single brand that promises a reliable and high quality eating experience.

“Given our experience and expertise in producing such high quality beef for more than 40 years, we would happily be compared to the competition week in, week out.”

JBS Australia has a competitive advantage in the grain fed beef sector, with the only two integrated feedlots and processing facilities in the country.

“Our integrated plant and feedlots at Beef City and Riverina Beef create the optimum environment to produce highly marbled and tender beef due to the low stress environment of simply walking the cattle to the plant and avoiding that extra journey on a truck,” Mr Tatt said.

Mr Tatt said the team has experienced strong demand and uptake with a number of high profile restaurants and hotels – both domestically and internationally – confirming they would be marketing the product, under brand, on their menus before Christmas. ■

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Fiery Buffalo Rub	10x150g	A fiery blend including cayenne pepper, Chinese five spice, white pepper and a hint of Worcestershire sauce.	9353379000104	\$9.85
Sweet Tennessee Bourbon Rub	10x150g	Rugged Bourbon and sweet flavours, spiced up with orange, chilli, pepper and ginger.	9353379000098	\$9.85

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Lamb defies the drought to Triumph at the Sydney Royal Spring Fine Food Show

Lamb entries have defied the devastating drought to be named winner of the 2018 Dick Stone Perpetual Trophy at the Sydney Royal “Taste of Excellence Awards” held at The Stables, Sydney Showground, Sydney Olympic Park in September.

The Dick Stone Perpetual Trophy has been won by Victoria’s Woodward Foods Australia for its export grade Lamb (USA). The Trophy is decided amongst the Championship winners to emerge from the *Branded Meat* section of the coveted Sydney Royal Spring Fine Food Show.

Dick Stone was a true gentleman of the Australian Meat Industry and was resolute in his commitment to promoting excellence in the sector.

2018 is the first year the Dick Stone Perpetual Trophy has been expanded to include beef, lamb and pork classes presented to the expert judges.

Chair of the Sydney Royal Spring Fine Food Committee and Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Councillor Lachlan Bowtell says this year’s competition was a testament to resilience. “Even through the ravages of drought Australian lamb producers have delivered yet again,” Lachlan Bowtell said.

“The high quality and flavours of the lamb presented to the judges this year made their role even more difficult. The Sydney Royal Fine Food Awards aim to reward excellence and this year was a true testament to the commitment and passion of not only lamb, but beef and pork producers, at times under dire circumstances,” Lachlan Bowtell said.

Chair of Judges in the *Branded Meat* competition George R. Ujvary agreed.



Royal Sydney Show Beef and Lamb Judging.

“The overall quality of beef exhibits this year was very high and it was interesting to see the gap between the marbling quality of grass fed and grain fed beef exhibits closing yet again this year,” he said.

“The marbling of Wagyu exhibits this year was exceptional and flavour across all categories was very good. In the Lamb competition, the standard of some exhibits was exceptionally high this year despite the conditions seen across the country which presented a number of challenges to producers.

“The top exhibits were sweet in flavour, extremely tender and exceptional in mouthfeel and appearance. Whilst the Pork competition is still in relative infancy, the standard of competition was high and we all look forward to seeing this competition develop in the coming years,” he said.

During the competition 11 Gold Medals were awarded across seven classes in “Branded Meat” one of a series of time-honoured competitions conducted by the RAS and Sydney Royal across the calendar year. ■

From the Gold Medallists, Championship winners in Branded Meat were as follows:

CHAMPION LAMB (Classes 1 to 3)

Woodward Foods Australia
Woodward Food Export Lamb
Woodward Foods Australia

CHAMPION PORK (Classes 4 to 5)

Diamond Springs Pastoral Premium
Free Range Pork

CHAMPION BEEF (Classes 6 to 8)

Manning Valley Naturally
Manning Valley Naturally Beef
Wingham Beef Exports

BRANDED MEAT GRAND CHAMPION (Classes 1 to 8)

Woodward Foods Australia
Woodward Foods Export Lamb (USA)

The Dick Stone Perpetual Trophy, donated by Peggy Stone, for Branded Meat Grand Champion Exhibit.

CL: 0002 Woodward Foods Australia
Woodward Foods Export Lamb (USA)



Cal Hogan and his grandmother Barbara at Meatstock 2017.



Cal Hogan from Southlands Quality Meats in Mawson, ACT with fiancé Jackie.

Meat your local butcher

What is your name, the name of your butcher shop and where is it located?

Hi my name is Cal Hogan and I am Canberra born and raised. I work for Alan and Donna Matthews who have owned Southlands Quality Meats in Mawson, ACT for 31 years.

How long have you been a butcher?

I have been working as a butcher since 2013, where Al carried on a tradition by presenting me with a meat cleaver. Engraved on it is "Callum Ringo Hogan on completion of your apprenticeship 2013 at Southlands Quality Meats Congratulations from Alan and Donna Matthews".



Why did you become a butcher?

My mother wanted me to have a back up plan just in case I didn't become a professional footballer. She must have known I was gonna get her height! I did work experience at Southlands Quality Meats and I started my apprenticeship as soon as I finished high school. It then turned into a passion for the industry.

Where did you do your training?

I went to TAFE in West Wollongong, where my nan and pop lived, all while working at Southlands Quality Meats.

What are the typical products you have in your store?

Because Al is a traditional old school butcher, I have learnt all aspects of the trade from boning to the perfectly rolled brisket or rib roast. We cover all the basics from perfectly cut steaks and chops to award winning ham, bacon and sausages.

Who is your typical customer?

Describing our typical customer is a hard one. We get a wide range of people from the aged community to families looking for something that the kids will eat and everything in between.

What are your favourite products?

I am very lucky I get to work with the highest quality produce available, but as a smallgoods maker pork is naturally my favourite.

What has been the highlight of butchering so far?

I've had a lot of highlights in the early start to my career. I won best full-rasher of bacon in Australia, 2015. 3rd in Australia earlier this year in the pork sausage category, but the one that meant the most was winning Sydney Butcher Wars 2018. The prize money helped me propose to my fiancé quicker.

What are some of the challenges you have faced?

The toughest challenge I've had was losing my nan two



Cal with Alan Matthews of Southlands Quality Meats

months before Meatstock 2018. She was there when I was runner up in 2017. With the support of my friends and family I ended up competing, I hope I did everyone proud.

What goals do you have for the future?

I have a few goals: I pride myself on making the best products I can so I would like to keep winning awards. Eventually I'd like to have a butcher shop with my fiancé Jackie and hopefully get the opportunity to represent the Australian Steelers one day.

What has been the best advice given to you?

One that comes to mind first is something that TAFE and AI repeat all the time, which is "if you wouldn't buy it yourself don't sell it!" Doing everything properly and not cutting corners helps with that.

How is superannuation important to you?

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Safer [and more cost effective] Waste Water Pumping

In these days of WHS scrutiny, there is a safer way to pump wastewater, according to engineered pump solutions provider, Hydro Innovations. They have written a white paper on ways to improve or even eliminate some of the dangers associated with working on or around waste water pumps.

Firstly, they maintain that using their Gorman-Rupp Self Priming Centrifugal pumps eliminates the dangers of "working over heights" and "working over water" usually associated with pumping wastewater with submersible pumps. Because the pumps are located "high and dry" above the wet well, operators do not have to be exposed to the dangers of open wet well pits when monitoring, inspection or maintenance is necessary. A correctly engineered solution will also eliminate the need for working in confined spaces.

Also, because the maintenance can occur while the pump is still connected to the pipe system, and no cranes or lifting devices are needed, the dangers of working with heavy swinging weights and working with cranes is eliminated. And when pump clearances need to be adjusted, Gorman-Rupp "V Series" pumps allow operators to make adjustments



externally, without removing the pump from service and without having to come in contact with the pumped fluid. To adjust submersible pump clearances, operators need to open wet well lids, use a lifting device and "man handle" pumps that are covered in the pumped fluid [which could be corrosive, contain "sharps" or be full of bacteria].

The Gorman-Rupp Ultra V Series pump has been built with operator safety as a high priority. These pumps feature pressure relief valves, "burst disc" flap valves that can uniquely be replaced without opening the pump, and the safest "fill port cover" of any self priming pump on the market. These features and others, separate Gorman-Rupp as the leader in self priming pump technology.

For the complete white paper on waste water pump operator safety, go to www.pump-stations.com.au or call Hydro Innovations on 02 9898 1800. ■

Fine Year for Food



The Bertocchi Smallgoods stand was designed to replicate a traditional Italian deli.

Held in Melbourne, Fine Food Australia, saw 25,000 visitors check-out the latest in food and food trends.

A feature this year was an increase in the number of foodstuffs that were labelled; 'free from' – free from gluten, dairy, vegan, all-natural. By no means a new phenomenon but the number of producers has markedly increased.

From a meat industry perspective, smallgoods featured, with Bertocchi having a most impressive display that replicated a classic Italian deli. Other smallgoods exhibitors included Casalingo, now trading as the South Food Group. (Read more about South Food Group page 24)

The principle focus of the exhibition is on hospitality, with cooking demonstrations, chef championships, chocolate and patisserie demonstrations as well as equipment. Of interest to retail butchers were; combi-ovens, dry-ageing cabinets, smoking ovens, smaller dishwashers



The Great Aussie Pie and Sausage Roll competition is a major part of the exhibition, with classic flavours featuring in the top winners.



and the like. We caught up with Nathan Finch at Unox, an ex-butcher himself, who assures us that a visit to Fine Food can unearth some treasures and industry insights.

Food equipment supplier Brice Australia had the classic Berkel flywheel meat slicers on show. Instantly recognisable by its iconic red, it turns out these units are not museum pieces or replicas, but the real deal. Retro-showmanship equipment for butchers and top-end restaurants is catching on where businesses want to make a statement. (Read more about Berkel products on page 28.)

Competitions are a major part of Fine Food Australia, including the Great Aussie Pie and Sausage Roll Competition, the winning pies were the classics – steak and pepper, chicken and veg, plain pies. Doing butchers proud were regular participants, Griffith Butchery from ACT. This year they won medals for sausage rolls, chicken and veg pies and a steak and stout pie.

Fine Food Australia 2019, will be held at Darling Harbour, Sydney. ■



The classic and iconic flywheel meat slicer from Berkel is still available!



Nathan Finch, a consultant with Unox and a well-respected butcher, says there is plenty to see at Fine Foods Australia.

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Strong competition, strong butchers

The emergence of competitions for butchers is giving many in the industry an opportunity to improve their knowledge, network with peers and promote their business. The biggest challenge is knowing what competitions are on and where.

As we move forward with each issue, *Australian Meat News* will keep you updated on competition dates.

Have we missed a competition or has a date changed?

Let us know at optimalnews@majestic.net.au

COMPETITION	DESCRIPTION	DATES	WEBSITE	CONTACT
Meatstock Butcher Wars	A feature of Meatstock, the competitors are given 30 minutes to produce a range of retail-ready products from a half saddle of pork and half a lamb. Judging is based on technique, speed, creativity and final presentation.	Melbourne 16-17 March, 2019 Sydney 11-12 May, 2019 Auckland 23-24 February, 2019	www.meatstock.com.au	Shannon Walker shannon.walker7@tafensw.edu.au
Lifeline International Young Butchers competition	Aimed at helping young butchers learn and network, competitors cut, prepare and cook as part of an awareness campaign for Lifeline WA.	Perth 21st April, 2019		Robert Retallick, Robert.retallick@gourmetbob.com
AMIC Sausage King	Designed to give AMIC member butchers an opportunity to produce the very best sausages.	State competitions held June and July 2018, National winners announced in March 2019	www.amic.org.au	
AMIC Apprentice of the Year	Recognises the skill and training of butcher apprentices.	National winner announced February 2019. Check state AMIC reps for state competitions	www.amic.org.au	
Great Aussie Pie and Sausage Roll Competition	During Fine Foods Australia	Sydney, September 9-12 2019	www.greataussiepiecomp.com.au/	Danielle Lindsay admin@greataussiepiecomp.com.au
World Butchers Challenge	An international competition, teams of butchers compete to produce the best retail ready products.	Sacramento, California, USA September 2020 (TBC)	www.worldbutcherschallengeaustralia.com.au	Senior Team: Trevor Saville, Savillesho1@bigpond.com Apprentices/ Young Butcher, Robert Retallick, robert.retallick@gourmetbob.com
World Skills Australia	Designed for apprentices to compete at a regional level in butchery and potentially, internationally.	2020	www.worldskills.org.au/skills/retail-butchery/	info@worldskills.org.au

COMPETITION	DESCRIPTION	DATES	WEBSITE	CONTACT
Melbourne Salami Festa	Produce the best family recipe in a range of salami categories. Open to amateurs and professionals.	Melbourne, October 2019	www.melbournesalamifesta.com	info@melbourne-salamifesta.com
Royal Sydney Fine Foods	54 classes of smallgoods and charcuterie for butchers and manufacturers.	September (Spring)	http://www.rasnw.com.au/sydney-royal-competitions/competitions/deli-meat/	Fine Food Show Coordinator dtomsen@rasnw.com.au
PorkMark Ham and Bacon Awards	The Australian PorkMark Awards for two categories of ham and bacon.	June 2019, Sydney	www.Porkmark.com.au	
Perth Royal Smallgoods Awards	Smallgoods competition for local industry to showcase and benchmark their products.	June	https://www.perthroyalshow.com.au/competitions/competition-entries/perth-royal-smallgoods-awards/	John Clark Competitions and Event Coordinator smallgoods@raswa.org.au
Australian Fine Awards	Branded meats and smallgoods as part of the Royal Melbourne Show.	September	https://www.rasv.com.au/australian-food-awards/	
Wagyu Branded Beef Competition	Wagyu producers showcase the premium Wagyu beef. Gourmet Sausage class is open to all butchers.	March 2019	www.wagyu.org.au	Deb Andrich deb@wagyu.org.au

A new world of protein snacks

New World Foods continue to go from strength to strength to bring Australian and international consumers the very best in jerky and biltong products.

An Australian-owned business, New World Foods has manufacturing operations located in Australia and the United Kingdom. The company was recently acquired by the well-known Australian entrepreneur Tony Quinn, who gained a reputation for his company VIP Petfoods and rescuing embattled Australian iconic confectionery company Darrell Lea. Tony is a well-resourced entrepreneur with great vision and is keen to invest in Australia's value-added meat industry.

New World Foods distributes two major brands, Local Legends and Mariani, offering beef and pork jerky and biltong, in a range of flavours including Five Spice, Teriyaki and Korean Bulgogi. It is readily available from supermarkets to convenience stores. The company's more recently

developed range of air dried Biltong meat snacks are already enjoying great success.

The company however, sees a future in butchers selling the products as part of the value-add range. The shelf-ready products are available in various pack sizes but can be ordered to take advantage of bulk pricing.

Owner, Tony Quinn, says that the meat snacks are one of the fastest growing categories worldwide as consumers look for products that provide a ready source of digestible protein.

"We are excited that our jerky and biltong are finding favour with the health-conscious, so much so we have recently launched a Wagyu-based jerky to take advantage of the monounsaturated fats that are predominant in Wagyu. In the UK, early sales indicate, it's going to be a winner", he said.

Tony definitely has a global vision, and is renowned for taking big steps and



backing the businesses he owns. New World Foods is already the No 2 ranked brand – and growing – in the UK under the brand, Kings. The business has identified other export channels where they can leverage the great name that Australian meat products have. There are also great opportunities in other countries to establish manufacturing operations.

"New World Foods represents everything that is good about Australian beef and pork and as a snack food in jerky and biltong, we plan to take the Australian beef story to the world," said Tony.

www.newworldfoods.com.au ■

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The future of independent butchery



By Jay Beaumont

Skip back 30 years, and a visit to the local butcher was a weekly mainstay of Australian culture, built largely on mince, bacon, sausages, rissoles, chops, T-bones, leg hams and family packs.

More recently, celebrity chefs and cooking competitions dominated the television sets; what they cooked translated into sales the next day for the very same cuts they watched the night before. A culture of Baby Boomer “foodies” emerged. It was a time when feta cheese and sundried tomatoes were considered exotic. Today, supermarkets now dominate the industry – Aldi, Costco, Coles and Woolworths. They have the edge on shelf life and buying power, meaning they’re cheaper, more convenient, and sometimes (dare I say it) offer better quality.

Independent butchers have fought back, with price wars, flashing lights, loss leaders, signs on top of signs, customer service and of course, value adding – marinades, flavoured sausages, ready made stir-fries, slow cooker cuts, and everything got stuffed or wrapped in pastry and bacon.

For some who didn’t embrace it, it meant the end of their business. For others though, it saved their business – and will no doubt continue to do so. But looking to the future, is value adding going to be enough? What else can independent butchers add to their arsenal to future-proof their business?

Get ready for the Millennials (who watch YouTube and not television) and enter the new world of barbecue.

The barbecue you already know – cooking snags and rissoles on a gas grill – has evolved. Real barbecue is now cooking meat, usually for a longer period, over wood or wood products. Barbecue is about using smoke to impart incredible flavour into meat. Major retailers in the space are claiming wood based cooking (charcoal, wood, pellets) to be the biggest growth area in their business. People’s cooking habits are changing. The four-burner, stainless steel gas burner is being replaced by bullet smokers, ceramic grills, offset smokers, parrillas, pellet grills, Unni ovens, drum smokers, roasting boxes and open table top grills.

In the last five years, the culture of barbecue has grown like crazy. There are now over 40+ barbecue based events in Australia and New Zealand, with over 300+ registered barbecue teams competing on a national sanctioned circuit. Last year over 40,000 people attended the Meatstock festival alone to celebrate this new culture, and thousands watched and cheered on butchers competing on stage.

Most butchers would assume that getting into “barbecue” means bringing in speciality cuts of meat, mainly brisket and beef ribs. Some have already tried this and failed. The real opportunity that barbecue represents though, is more than just the supply of meat. It’s about promoting a culture, not selling a commodity. It’s about connecting with a tribe of people who rally around your business, because you offer

continued on page 16

continued from page 15

something different and unique – something they can't find in a supermarket.

Savvy butchers are up-selling to help customers with an overall experience and creating advocates for their business out of customers.

Think dry rubs, thermopens, charcoal, pellets, custom knives, speciality cook books, aprons, sauces, wood chunks, smoking boxes, injections, seasonings, infused oils, condiments, flavoured butters, biltong, jerky, links, cabana, pickles, hot sauces, smoked honey and even meat based apparel ... the list goes on. The good news about this new barbecue culture is really in the retail up-selling opportunity, using dead space to fill shelves with products that you can't find in a supermarket – items that keep people coming back, again and again.

And when it comes to meat, attracting this new tribe to your business isn't just about stocking cryovaced briskets. They want quality marbled cuts, Wagyu and Angus, supersized tomahawks, meaty pork ribs, 7+ kg briskets, chicken ribs, speciality burger mince and even weird and wonderful flavours of sausages: Vegemite, stout and cheese; jalapeño and cheese; fennel and onion; pineapple and bacon; and hot chilli. They are prepared to spend more to create an experience and not just to eat.

There are a few business already excelling in this space: Char Char Char and Kelly's Meats in Melbourne, Neat Meat in Auckland, Goodwood Quality Meats in Adelaide, Low and Slow Meat Co and Super Butcher in Brisbane, Warnbro Quality Meats in Perth and the Australian Meat Emporium and Vic's Meats in Sydney, to name but a few. There are



dozens more who are taking advantage of this new culture, setting themselves apart from supermarkets and helping to redefine the way we eat meat.

Five years ago when you walked into the Australian Meat Emporium in Sydney, it was just like any other butchery – on a much bigger scale. Today though, while that ethos remains – offering quality bulk meat – they also now sell almost everything listed above. The landscape has changed and they have evolved.

Events like Meatstock and the World Butchers Challenge have put the pride back into the profession of butchery, and it's never been a more exciting time to be a part of this evolving industry.

Celebrity chefs move over; the future trends are now in the hands of butchers. ■

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Pork sector faces challenging circumstances

By Stephanie Flynn

Australia's pork sector is facing the 'perfect storm' of a confluence of factors including over-supply and low pig prices as well as the impact of high grain prices as a consequence of the drought.

The sluggish pace of negotiations on export protocols, to open access to overseas markets, is not offering any immediate relief for the sector to export its over-supply and pork imports continue to challenge the consumption levels of Australian pork in the domestic market.

But, according to Australian Pork Limited's (APL) Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Spencer, who will step-down mid-next year after 13 years at the helm, the future holds much hope for the industry in terms of increasing domestic consumption and export of fresh pork despite its current challenges.

"At the consumption end, it continues to be a good story for fresh pork with consumption growing very satisfactorily from 8.5kg per person in 2011 to more than 11.5 kg per capita today," Mr Spencer said.

"The industry is, however, struggling at the production end with low pig prices and that is a function of over-supply and, also, from very high grain prices which represent the highest single cost for feed and producing a pig.

"These two factors, when you add them together, are putting major pressure on the profit and loss statement, with most farmers probably making a loss every time they sell a pig and, while grain prices have spiked recently due to the ongoing drought, the over-supply has been a problem for over 18-months" he said.

Mr Spencer said that over the last year the cost of production has risen to more \$3.00 per kilo carcass weight, a rise from \$2.70, because of what is essentially a 'drought premium' for grain for which Australian pig producers pay more than the global market price.

Producers, on average, are currently (as at September) receiving \$2.75 per kilo, taking a huge hit to their bottom lines.

Biosecurity precautions hamper imports of grain and grain-based stockfeed into Australia which means that pig and chicken producers, as well as cattle feedlots, bear the brunt of drought-related short supply.

Mr Spencer admits that the industry has not been quick to respond to low pig prices by reducing production and, as a result, over-supply has persisted too long, and prices have been slow to recover.



Andrew Spencer, CEO of APL, will step down from the role he has held for 13 years in July next year.

"Some operators have stopped producing either permanently or temporarily and some have reduced production but, these developments are slow to give a reduction in supply and, until more recently, there has been no indication that it will impact on price," Mr Spencer said.

Export

While the nation's pork sector has an opportunity, through Australia's Free Trade Agreements

(FTAs), to export its excess supply, with seven export accredited plants at the ready, it is also a pathway fraught with challenges.

Australia has secured favourable outcomes for pork in the China-Australia FTA, the trade protocols for exporting Australian pork to China are still under negotiation and until such time that these are completed trade cannot get underway.

Trade with Japan in pork dates back to the early 2000s and precedes the signing of the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement but has been difficult for the industry in terms of export volumes due, in the main, to Australia's lack of competitiveness compared to major suppliers in that market.

It is a similar story with the Korea-Australia FTA under which tariff reductions on the desired cuts, predominantly frozen pork bellies, are not as favourable for Australia as they are for the U.S. and Canada.

Australian negotiators were unable to secure any tariff reduction on this particular cut, which represented

continued on page 18

continued from page 17



Australian producers achieve 24 or 25 pigs per sow compared to Europe's high productivity of over 30 pigs per sow.

46 percent of Korea's total pork imports last year, while the US, Canada and the EU have successfully negotiated total elimination.

"Where we have to compete against Canada or the U.S. on price we are not going to win, we have comparatively high production costs compared to these players and there are a number of reasons for this," Mr Spencer said.

"We are a bio-secure nation, we don't have any genetic material cross our borders for pork, so we are a closed genetic pool and a lot of the international genetic advances made in the last two decades have not been available to us, although our geneticists are doing a great job of trying to keep pace.

"In Europe, for instance, genetic advances enable their producers to obtain well over 30 pigs per sow per year which is a significant efficiency gain on the 24 or 25 pigs per sow we achieve, and they typically have larger carcasses, which is a huge cost saver for their processing sector, and lower feed costs too," he said.

But exports do hold a key to the successful future for Australian pork with an ambition for the sector to achieve 30 percent of production for export over the next decade or so, up from its current level of around 10 percent.

Domestic Market

The 'fresh and local' consumer movement has spawned a major growth segment in the pork industry both in terms of new operators and in product entering the high-end food service sector and farmers markets.

Attracting a premium, products developed by the boutique pork producers which have sprung up all over the country, are gaining momentum but Mr Spencer believes that only around 15 percent of domestic consumers are willing to pay the premium per kilo for these high-end products which are also finding their way into boutique smallgoods manufacturing.

APL is anticipating that the new Country of Origin labelling laws, introduced in July this year, may herald a change in consumer awareness that a large proportion of the smallgoods available at retail through supermarkets are made with imported pork.

Around 45 percent of all pork consumed in Australia is imported pork.

"If you ask consumers would they prefer Australian bacon or imported bacon, of course, they say Australian," Mr Spencer said.

"When you test, however, through their behaviour, they are strongly influenced by price and we basically cannot put Australian bacon or ham in front of them at the same price as products made with imported pork," he said.

The pork sector is the only sector in the meat industry to be open to such an extent to competition from imported product and the effects of this on the Australian pork industry has been substantial.

Nevertheless, APL believes that there is great potential for Australian consumers to increase their consumption of fresh pork and is the direction in which its promotional activities will continue.

"All fresh pork is Australian. We recognise that of the 109kg of meat people eat every year, only about 10 percent of that is pork," Mr Spencer said.

"The celebrity chefs and 'food fashion' have been major contributing factors to the increase in consumption of Australian pork as well as the low price of pork relative to other meats and these factors sit alongside the success of our promotional activities.

"But, our product has improved also, the processors have been doing more with branding, value-adding and with product development and the range of different quality products and cuts available now, compared to a decade ago, has improved well beyond expectations," Mr Spencer said. ■

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Study reveals impact of imported pork

By Stephanie Flynn

The impact of a flood of imported meat on a domestic industry is clearly evident in the experience of our pork sector.

The Australian pork industry has faced the dark side of a free-market approach to international trade for some years and seen over 37 percent of net domestic consumption captured by international producers.

While all fresh pork consumption is taken up by Australian pork, imported pork has captured the smallgoods consumption through hams and bacons.

Australian Pork Limited recently released an economic analysis by national consulting firm ACIL Allen

which provides a snap-shot of the effects of imports and the economic contribution to Australia of the industry as it stood in 2015/16.

Australia's domestic pork industry, as a whole, is estimated to have resulted in an economic contribution of \$3,270 million to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the 2015/16 financial year from pig production, primary processing, secondary processing and wholesaling.

If the economic contribution made by spending after tax earnings is also taken into account, the pork industry's contribution to national GDP is estimated at \$5,201 million.

By all measures, the economic

contribution of the domestic pork industry is sizeable and is considered 'at risk' from the impact of imported pork.

In comparing the contributions of the industry with and without imports, according to the analysis, if domestic producers were to supply the entire domestic demand, the contributions of the pork sector to GDP would increase by 33 percent from the \$5.2 billion upper estimate to \$6.9 billion.

Additionally, full-time employment would increase by 30 percent from 36,000 to nearly 47,100

In 2015/16 there was approximately 297,400 tonnes of imported pig meat



The economic contribution of a piggery to a local regional community is estimated at \$2,681 per sow rising to \$3,406 if the community includes an abattoir.

in Australia (shipped weight converted to carcass weight) with imports competing with locally grown pigs in the processed pork segments of hams and bacons.

The analysis suggests that if Australian producers were able to competitively replace imported pig meat with domestic pigs, it would represent an increase in domestic pig production of 60 percent.

The gross value of pig production saw a 53.8 percent increase between 2010/11 and 2015/16 to \$1,393 million equating to an annual growth rate of nine percent.

The importance of pig production to state and regional communities around Australia is highlighted in the analysis.

Pig production in NSW declined over the five-year study period, but production in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia increased with South Australia noted as having the highest share of pig production.

The closure of abattoirs is one of the major reasons behind the decline in production in NSW.

South Australia's share of Australian gross value of pig production was 24.1 percent with Queensland's share at 23.4 percent and Victoria's at 23.1 percent.

The economic contribution of a piggery to a local regional community comprising one major town of 8,000 to 15,000 residents and a surrounding area of 60km is estimated at \$2,681 per sow rising to \$3,406 per sow if the community includes an abattoir.

In 2015/16 the main export markets for Australian pork were Singapore, New Zealand and Hong Kong which, between them, accounted for 66 percent of exports.

APL has identified the potential for an

increase of 37 percent in exports by 2020 as an important priority for the industry.

The slow pace of negotiations on the trade protocols for export of Australian pork to key North Asian economies is the major factor limiting the sector from taking advantage of the benefits of Free Trade Agreements.

Nevertheless, there are key opportunities for export of Australian pork particularly to China and Korea.

If exports were to increase by 100,000 tonnes, requiring a 26 percent increase in pig production, the contribution of the industry to GDP would increase by nine percent and full-time employment would increase by eight percent. ■

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Australian pork products gain momentum at retail



By Stephanie Flynn

Ham has long been traditional fare at the Christmas tables of Australians and, despite the push by the seafood industry to see it replaced with prawns, it is as popular as ever according to veteran butchers, Scott Mitchell and Des Munroe.

Australian Meat News spoke with the team of butchers at Noosa Village Meats, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, to see what consumers are saying about Australian pork and how aware they are of the abundance of imported pork entering the Australian food chain.

Scott Mitchell is celebrating a quarter of a century as a butcher, with 23 of those years working for Noosa Village Meats.

"There is something special about the taste of Australian leg ham at Christmas and that is what keeps it on the customers' shopping lists from their butcher," says Scott.

"But pork products, especially 'ready to go' meals using pork, have become a big trend and that is the main difference I have seen over the last two decades," he said.

Des Munroe has been a butcher for 46 years and is responsible for all the smoking and curing of the hams and bacons for Noosa Village Meats.

"We do both boneless hams and hams with the bone in for Christmas which is just as popular as it always was but there has been a swing toward the boneless hams," Des said.

"There is no question that customers are now aware of the fact that a lot of hams and bacons are made with imported pork and an increasing number ask if our products are made with Australian pork," he said.

Ashley Deimel manages the store and agrees that the first questions asked by customers is whether the pork products carried by the store are sourced locally and whether it is Australian pork.

"I think butchers are now having some success in attracting customers back since supermarkets carry so much imported hams and bacons and that is a win for us," Ashley said.

"The pork sector has done wonders with the range of cuts in fresh pork now available, compared to a decade ago, and the



After a 25 years as a butcher, Scott Mitchell says that the Christmas ham is still as popular as ever.

cooking shows and pork promotions are creating customer demand for the full range of cuts.

“Customers are keen to try cuts like pork bellies and rely on butchers to advise them how to cook the pork product they are purchasing, and the quality is of such a consistently high standard that they always come back and tell us how good it is,” he said.

Although not a butcher, Naomi Gordon has been working on the customer service side of the business for 18 years.

“Customers have moved a lot more to pork now because of the price of red meat and, even though the price may have been the catalyst to begin with, they keep buying pork because of the quality and taste,” Naomi said.

“Personally, I buy a lot of pork now too for all the same reasons that our customers do,” she said.

The newest addition to the team at Noosa Village Meats is first year apprentice, Chandler Camradt, who has worked in a butcher shop for five years before taking up his formal apprenticeship.

“Customers give us great feedback all the time on the quality of Australian pork and certainly we have not had any complaints at all since I have worked in the store,” he said. ■

Winners of the September 2018 Find a Word Competition

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[Jennifer Bailosowski](#), Two Oceans Poultry Club, Augusta, WA

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[Ryan Moss](#), Tibaldi Smallgoods, Coburg, Vic

[Leo Loh](#), Leo's Quality Meat Market, West Pennant Hills, NSW

[Max Tarling](#), Mt Barker Chicken, Rockingham, WA

And special thanks to all the sharp eyed entrants who spotted a few mistakes in the puzzle.



Naomi Gordon personally buys more pork now for all the same reasons as customers.

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Retail snacks turns a byproduct to benefit



Casalingo Smallgoods is a name familiar to most in the smallgoods business. A recent name change to South Food Group parallels some innovative additions to its traditional smallgoods product lines.

When a company uses 100 pigs per week, to make a large range of pork-based smallgoods, inevitably there will be by-products. Pig skins hold little value and were a big issue for South Food Group.

General Manager, Carmine Ventura was looking for solution when he became aware of a company in Melbourne that specialised in pork crackle as a snack food – the idea of utilising their own pig skins to make a similar product evolved. They bought the company.

Rendering off the fat from the skin and then frying creates a high protein snack that puffs up similar to popcorn. It is sold as an alternative to potato crisps and nuts and contains less fat than most potato crisps. It is sold through Dan Murphy's and Asian supermarkets

under the brands Crackle & Co and Chicharon.

It has also found a lot of favour with the ketogenic and paleo diet fans who are looking for low sugar, low carbohydrate protein-based snacks.

"Establishing a retail distribution network for the crackle products has actually been surprisingly simple," says Carmine. "We are already sending a heavy pallet of smallgoods around the country, so adding a few boxes of lightweight snacks did not add to the overall freight cost."

South Food Group are looking to expand further into the protein snack sector, as well as expanding the overall smallgoods offering. A key decision will need to be made for the future as to which is the better option – to move premises as the current site has run out of floor space, or to

streamline what they have to improve productivity.

"It is exciting time for the company as we have the retail ready protein snack products that is evolving at a nice steady rate, while the export market continues to grow.



Crackle & Co is a recent innovation into the retail ready snack category making the most of pork skin, a byproduct of smallgoods.



South Food Group owners Carmine, Maria and Domenic carry on family tradition with the Casalingo brand of Italian smallgoods.

“Attending Fine Foods Australia has allowed us to connect even further with new channels and the crackle has given us a handy conversation starter. Trade shows are definitely giving us a good deal of exposure – we will look to doing more in the future.”

A Familiar History

It is not an unfamiliar story – an Italian immigrant moves to Australia in the post-war period and does what he knows best – opens a butcher shop. With sales out the front and smallgoods manufacturing out the back, the Italian butcher develops a reputation and soon the business grows. Familiar names such as Bertocchi, Fabbris, D’Orsogna and Tibaldi follow a similar path.

The other recognisable name is Casalingo.

Carmine Ventura – the third generation – manages Casaling Smallgoods with his parents Domenic and Maria.

Carmine’s grandfather (Carmine’s namesake) emigrated from the Abruzzo region on the central east coast of Italy. He set up shop in North Fitzroy, Melbourne. He soon developed a reputation for excellent prosciutto, the family business expanded into wholesale, supplying delis and butchers across Melbourne.

Domenic took over the management in 2001. The company moved to a factory in Clayton, a south east suburb of Melbourne.

“Dad wanted to move away from retail and focus on wholesale,” says Carmine. “We had a good reputation and customer base to just focus on our premium smallgoods products such as prosciutto, porchetta, pancetta and our family recipe for Italian sausages. We had three main brands for smallgoods, Casalingo, Greenvale Farm and Fiora.”

The business started exporting and now sees products going into

20 countries, most notably Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, Maldives and Fiji, supplying resorts and hospitality businesses involved in tourism. Exports now accounts for 15% of sales.

Trade shows played a significant part in generating interest in these markets.

“Those trade shows were very successful, but the biggest stumbling block was that we operated under the Casalingo brand, but had other brands, which made it a little confusing. The decision was made to re-brand under one name, with the individual brands representing a specific product set,” Carmine explained.

As a consequence, South Food Group was born 18 months ago and all products are now labelled with their unique product brand and the company logo plays a secondary role.

The Casalingo brand is for Australian grown pork for premium, traditional dry-cured products; Fiora is for ham and bacon; Greenvale Farm is Australian grown free range pork products.

“Initially, we were concerned that using the name South Food Group would make us look too big and corporate, but we want to emphasise that we are still a family-owned Australian business that still has the flexibility to adapt to our customers’ needs.” ■



Lean Lamb and Smaller Serves

A new Australian survey is suggesting that lamb producers are breeding the wrong animal for future consumers.

Younger buyers prefer lighter lamb cuts, while genetic and farming practices have resulted in larger traditional lamb cuts, which have less appeal.

Researchers from NSW and WA reported that the size of the ideal lamb cut is determined by a buyer's age and their frequency of consumption. They found that younger and less-frequent lamb-meat buyers prefer light cuts.

But Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Sheep Industry Innovation meat quality program leader Professor Dave Pethick said the industry has responded.

"The industry has moved on – it was all about lean meat yield to make lamb leaner, as fat is costly to the farmer and butcher," he said. "However in the last 10 years, we have developed new breeding values for eating quality – a world first.

"So we have breeding values for shear force and intramuscular fat (IMF) that help to underpin eating quality, and these are now being used commercially."

Meat Standards Australia (MSA) sensory consumer testing has shown that IMF is a positive attribute for consumer satisfaction, Prof Pethick said. "So we can now select for both lean meat yield and eating quality."

While grading will produce meat that goes towards meeting consumer demand, the professor believes this will not see lambs being bred to meet specific market segments, such as younger or older buyers.

"I don't think so – the only demographic attributes we can pick up when we do consumer testing is that the millennials are prepared to pay a little bit more for quality, but the effect is small," he said. "I think it's more about portion size, cuts and

fabrication and value adding to appeal to the different sectors."

Nutritional reputation for lamb will also play a role in attracting younger consumers, despite many misconceptions. Professor Pethick said lamb has an undeserved reputation for being unhealthy due to its fat content.

"The opposite is true under more modern fabrication such as trim or denuded lamb," he said.

"Lamb is a classical red meat and supplies many nutrients – iron, zinc, B12, other B vitamins and high-quality protein. The average value of fat for lean lamb is 4.2%, which is a very low level."

Through its meat quality program, the CRC has researched factors including taste preferences; consumer perceptions of sheep meat of different ages and acceptable price points for cuts of different quality; the impact of animal age and meat aging on eating quality and genetic factors such as the negative affect muscling (lean meat yield) has on IMF and therefore tenderness and flavour.

"This work has led to the realisation that an individual grading system is possible," Prof Pethick said.

"Assuming we can deliver the necessary measurement technologies for the processing sector – to underpin a more refined and accurate prediction of consumer satisfaction of cooked lamb.

"The end goal is to select for lean meat yield and eating quality together at line speed in the abattoir so that the industry can move towards a cuts-based grading or sorting system. This would ensure consumers are purchasing meat packages that are of a more consistent standard throughout."

Research by the CRC saw testing on the loins of about 10,000 lamb carcasses from different farms over five years. The research revealed substantive levels of average long-chain omega 3, meaning that lamb can be considered

officially a source of the health-giving fatty acids.

While the beef industry has run campaigns based on the relative merits of grass or grain-fed beef, this approach hasn't gained traction in the lamb industry.

"The CRC used large numbers of untrained general public for our MSA testing, but they cannot taste the difference between grass versus grain, and this is also the case for beef," Prof Pethick said. "Grass is highly variable and so the degree of finish can be harder to achieve on grass, but there are also very good pastures around at certain times of the year. So the grass versus grain is more a provenance thing."

The professor said he believed some processors are creating grass brands. "However in many parts of Australia it is common sense to have a blend of grass and grain across the season," he said.

"Also grain feeding is easier in lambs as less grain processing is required."

The industry has been working towards a Mark II of the MSA model to add greater precision to the eating quality predictions and to enhance on-farm practices to improve the end product delivered to consumers.

Professor Pethick said while Lamb MSA Mark II was still some way off, the goal was now in sight.

"An enhanced MSA prediction could be constructed which builds on the existing system, as we now have new data available that allows us to capture much of the variation in eating quality," he said. "The next challenge is to assess these factors at line-speed in an abattoir.

"A key component in achieving this will be the need for MSA-registered producers to understand the principles of supplying lamb that meets consumer needs. An individual grading system will also enable more meaningful carcass feedback to producers." ■

What everyone who cooks meat should know

This is a book every butcher should give to every customer. It's a commonsense guide on how to choose a cut and then select an appropriate cooking method to get the best meal outcome.

Meat Mate – Cooking Red Meat to Perfection by Phil Strasser is a manual describes the complex biology, chemistry and physics of cooking meat into meals that everyone can understand. The book also explains why some muscles are naturally tough, while others are more tender based on the biology of the livestock and the different approaches needed in cooking to create great eating outcomes.

It describes how the forms of heat – sear, grill, dry-fry, dry-bake, braise and stew affect meat and the appropriate cooking tools to use

Preparation, seasoning, heat and time are described as procedures rather than recipes to transform the many muscle groups of cattle, sheep and pigs to create beef, lamb and pork meals.

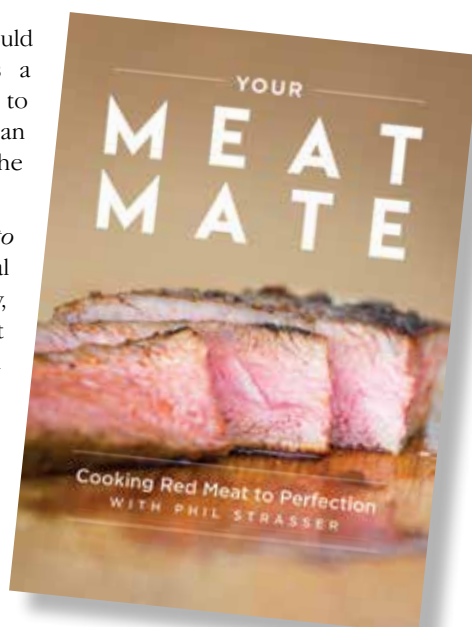
The purpose and effects of key ingredients such as salt, oils, herbs and spices are also discussed as is the timing and method of application.

On a more philosophical note the author points out the price/quality irony of meat: "The cheaper and tougher cuts are more flavoursome than the expensive and tender cuts. The more exercised the area of the animal's body, the greater and tougher the connective tissue and therefore the tastier the meat. Tough cuts are cheap because they are perceived to be challenging but once you know how to cook them you can create the most delicious meals within any household budget."

The main section of the book applies the practical meat and cooking science to beef, lamb and pork. For each species, cuts are ranked from tender to tough and the appropriate cooking methods are discussed along with some recipes.

For beef, at one end of the spectrum is Osso Bucco. "The leg is the toughest area of the animal because it does the most exercise. Exercise is why this cut is so delicious when it is cooked properly..."

Brisket is: "... large and thin. It is also fatty, packed with gelatin and tough so it requires long and slow cooking.



It is unbelievably moist tasty and tender if braised for several hours."

In the middle is rump. "It is the least tender cut of the tender cuts. This cut will be slightly chewier yet it contains more flavour for the same reason it may be chewier – it has more connective tissue."

At the other end of the spectrum is tenderloin and scotch fillet. Tenderloin is described as the tenderest but can benefit from seasonings, marinades and sauces to enhance its flavour. While what makes scotch fillet so tasty is "... its relatively high fat content that keeps the meat flavoursome moist and tender."

Meat Mate provides the knowledge needed to develop meat cooking skills.

The skills needed to better execute the core kitchen competencies needed to make great meat recipes work.

Making your customers better cooks is a great way of value-adding your product. It costs little and butchers, customers, their friends and families get to enjoy the benefits.

Meat Mate is self-published by Phil Strasser.

It can be bought on-line at: www.philbysfinefoods.com.au RRP \$30.00 plus postage.

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WIN WIN

Win a copy of *Meat Mate – Cooking Red Meat to Perfection* by Phil Strasser.

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Question: *What year was the Berkel slicer first released?*

Entries Close: 17 February 2019

Vintage equipment slicing a premium edge

Classic equipment is bringing a point of difference to the butcher shop and deli that is functional and engaging.

The visual appeal of equipment such as dry-ageing cabinets is well known, as is customers' interest in combi-ovens or smoking ovens. All are functional and add a certain dynamic and pizzazz to the shop. It conveys to the customer that the butcher takes pride in the processes and equipment that generate their products.

By no means new to the butcher equipment mix is the meat slicer.

With no shortage of uses in the butcher shop, the meat slicer turns out bacon rashers, sliced and shaved ham, silverside and other smallgoods. Generally a benchtop device and power driven, it has been in use for decades.

In the past ten years, the meat slicer has seen a resurgent interest in vintage versions, most notably the iconic red Berkel meat slicer.

Seen more as a sentimental purchase to add decoration to the shop, more and more butchers are recognising that the Berkel meat slicer can still hold its own against its modern contemporaries.

First invented in 1898 by Dutch butcher and metallurgist, Wilhelm Andrianus van Berkel, the original design

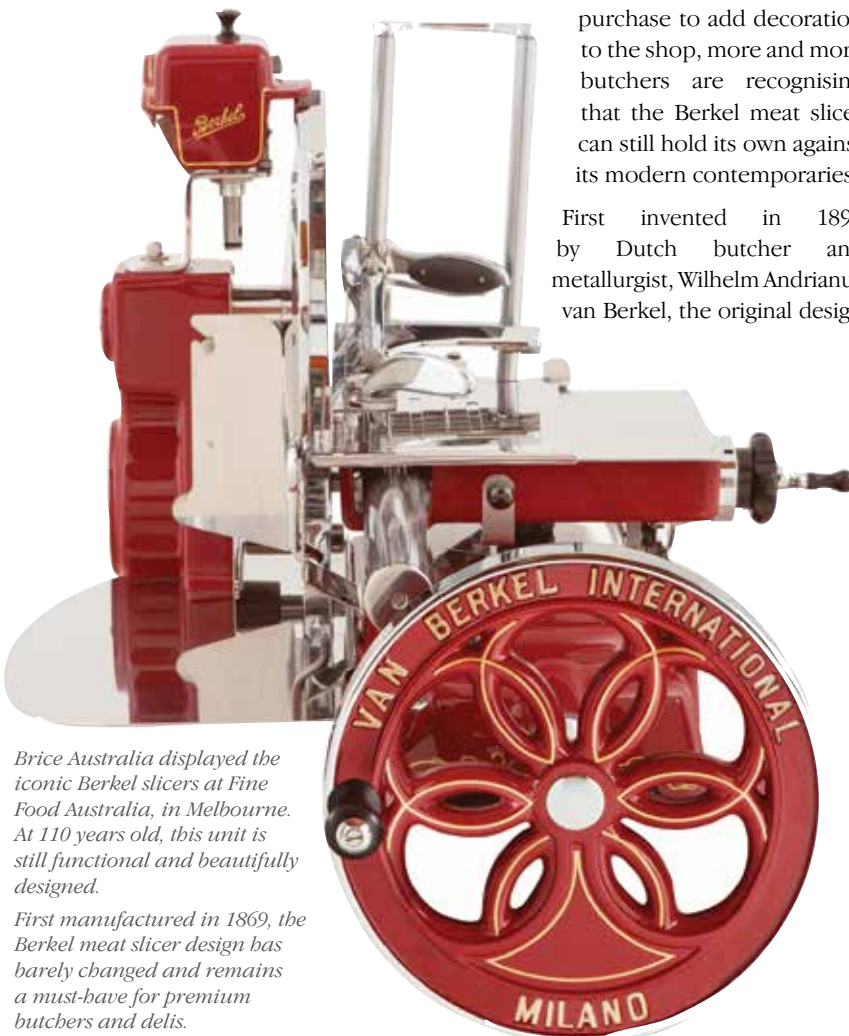
remains largely unchanged. Observing the slicing action of a butcher using a knife, Berkel designed the slicer to rotate the blade while moving the carriage forward to produce a consistent slice thickness. In its first year, Berkel sold 100 units, followed by 600 in the second year. Growth of the company rapidly expanded throughout Europe.

"Berkel initially designed the meat slicer for his own shop and it hasn't really changed much for more than 100 years," said Adam Tanti, national sales manager, Brice Australia. "The quality, design and reputation of the Berkel meat slicer mean that the original units are still functional and highly desirable as a collector's item."

Such is the desire for beautifully designed equipment, Wrights Auction in the US conducted an auction in 2017, for fully restored units manufactured up to the 1950s – "Design in Motion, The Berkel Slicer Machine". Prices reached US\$22,000.

Hand driven, the original Berkel utilised a flywheel mechanism that was geared to move the blade and carriage in unison. Current models can be fully electric or semi-automatic where the blade is moved by the flywheel and the carriage by power. Slice thickness on Berkels can be finely adjusted up to 1cm, but is perfect for slicing and shaving for products such as prosciutto.

The modern versions have had some modifications to comply with occupational health and safety, but in such a way that it does not detract from the design.



Brice Australia displayed the iconic Berkel slicers at Fine Food Australia, in Melbourne. At 110 years old, this unit is still functional and beautifully designed.

First manufactured in 1869, the Berkel meat slicer design has barely changed and remains a must-have for premium butchers and delis.

Jack Brice founded Brice Scale & Slicer Co in 1939. The company manufactured electric slicers, mixers and potato peelers. In 1954, the company was incorporated and became Brice Australia. For the next 80 years, Brice Australia established a reputation for high quality equipment to supermarkets, food service and retail. Brice Australia is the exclusive distributor Berkel slicers and equipment in Australia.

“Brice is the agent for Berkel here in Australia and we brought in one or two of the modern meat slicers in the vintage styling six years ago, thinking it would be a novelty that would not last,” said Adam.

“We were surprised, and continue to be, that the market for the retro meat slicer has had so much uptake. And it shows no sign of abating anytime soon.”

Sales of the vintage-style Berkels are going into high-end butcher shops and hospitality where smallgoods are sliced to order with reverence in front of the customer.

“Butchers who want to make a point of difference with their shop, who produce their own smallgoods, can slice the bacon rasher to order on Saturday morning, engage with the customer and make them feel that they are getting something special. The product quality, the equipment, the service and the shop fitout are all part of the image that encourages the customer to come back rather than get their bacon at the supermarket.”

In hospitality, the art of slicing charcuterie is not too dissimilar to silver service, where the smallgoods for the antipasto platter is sliced in front of the customer on the Berkel vintage-style slicer.

In addition, says Adam, the Berkel slicers are becoming a popular addition to the high-end home. In a house and land package where the fittings, furnishings and décor are coordinated at the build stage, the option to select coordinated kitchen equipment – crockery, cutlery, pots

and pans – can be taken up and now is including on a regular basis, coffee machines, mixers and now, meat slicers.

With Berkels available in the iconic red, plus black and cream and the option to colour to order, the meat slicer is back in fashion.

“There are some very good meat slicers available in the market that are functional and practical, and then there are some that are cheaply made with the motor welded to the chassis.

“The Berkel after more than 100 years remains the premium slicer, beautifully designed, functional, fully serviceable and adds to the aesthetic and drama of the butcher, deli and home,” Adam said. ■



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Parwan Prime: a story you can share with your customers

Parwan Prime beef and lamb is a brand that has evolved from the values and practices of the Failli Family business, which for 50 years, has been committed to the local livestock and meat industry.

Westside Meats Australia raises cattle and sheep, operates a slaughter and boning facility and wholesales beef and lamb to retail butchers and smaller independent supermarkets.

Cattle and lambs for their premium Parwan Prime brand are processed at their Bacchus Marsh facility, 60km west of Melbourne, and exclusively grown-out and finished on their nearby 4000 acre property – Parwan Valley.

“We control the land, water, pasture, hay, silage, irrigation, supplements and fertilisers used to grow the stock. We control the on-farm handling, transportation and processing,” explains Michael Failli.

“This way we can assure our customers Parwan Prime beef and lamb is wholesome and ethically produced.”

“Hands-on” and “local” characterise the Westside business culture. Founded by Luigi Failli, his sons now jointly run the business. Brothers Michael, Joe and Pietro manage the operation from farm to wholesale. Josie, their mother who has been involved with the business since the 1960s, oversees the bookkeeping.

The southern European tradition of “family business” is a core value at Westside. In 21st century Australia the “family” has been extended and renamed “stakeholders”. Stakeholders include, suppliers, staff, customers who include independent butchers and food service operators and ultimately the consumers who buy the meat.

Westside take great pride in the fact they do not export any of their product. It is all sold domestically – to the extended family, to whom Westside is directly accountable – as opposed to the highest bidder on the other side of the world.

“Our focus is independent local butchers, with Parwan Prime we are supplying the best product we possibly can at the best prices we can sustain.



Westside Meats is a hands-on operation. It all started with Luigi Failli who emigrated from Italy in 1961. Luigi worked for William Angliss and then opened his own butcher shop in 1963. Working long hours and with the support of his wife Josie they opened a second shop in 1965. Soon after the business expanded into meat wholesaling, buying stock that was killed under contract. In 1974 the business started processing stock in Bacchus Marsh. The business continued to grow, operating out of various facilities around Melbourne. In 1999 the slaughter facility, boning room and wholesale operation was consolidated in a new facility in Bacchus Marsh. Luigi Failli died in 2008.

“We are all in this together, to make a living and to deliver the best to our customers.” Michael said.

Parwan Prime beef and lamb is supplied in carcase and boxed formats. Beef is from 400-550 kg live weight Angus, Murray Grey and Red Angus cattle and lamb from 18-26 kg live weight sheep. All are HGP free.

Year round supply is assured given the extensive supplementary feeding system employed at the Parwan Valley Property.

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Butchers who choose to stock Parwan Prime will receive a point of sale kit that includes posters, aprons, and a video to show on the shop screen and brochures to share with customers.

Parwan Prime lamb and beef are grown out and finished, predominantly on pasture, on the naturally nutrient rich volcanic soils of the Parwan Valley. Pasture is fertilised using natural organic compost. This natural environment and modern Dr Temple Grandin designed handling facilities limit stress and contribute to a quality and consistent product.

"Parwan Prime has evolved to deliver all the quality, consistency, environmental and ethical benefits a real paddock to plate system can potentially achieve," Michael said. ■

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Gladstone to build processing facility powered by solar, hydrogen

A new beef abattoir to be one-third solar-powered is planned for construction in Gladstone, Queensland.

The \$308m export facility proposed by Asia Pacific Agri-Corp (Projects) will be partly powered by a 78MW solar farm, with a bio-gas capture plant and a 33MW solar-powered hydrogen facility to service its boiler. It will have a throughput initially of 600 cattle/day, rising to 1800/day within two years of opening and peaking at 2400/day on multi-shifts, seven days a week.

The developers believe the facility can reach maximum production within five years of operation, depending on stock availability.

“We looked at the energy use of the abattoir and with the way that power prices go, it left the business vulnerable to price spikes in electricity costs,” said managing director and former Gladstone resident Daniel Daly. “We have our own solar farm on the site, so we’re able to do behind the meter or through-the-fence power deals, which keeps our costs controlled for the processing.

“There was also other costs associated with waste water and removal of waste water would be considerable. We’ll combine

the surplus of power from the solar with the waste water into an onsite hydrogen plant.”

The facility, called Euroa after a heritage-listed homestead at the site, will have 95ha of solar panels to reduce daytime use of grid electricity. The hydrogen plant could also be used as a battery or as back-up. Large-scale battery storage is anticipated. Gas will also be produced by treating wastewater from the abattoir in a tank style high rate anaerobic digester (HRAD).

Project consultants Pitt & Sherry reported: “The HRAD is established technology that works very well for meatworks waste. It significantly reduces the biological load and reduces the nutrient considerations for disposal to primarily those of the base inorganic nutrients, phosphorous, nitrogen, nitrite, ammonia and salts. The HRAD captures the methane produced and with flaring or reuse in boilers removes the global warming potential of this product. The methane will be used in boilers on site and contributes significantly to the financial outcomes of the works.”

The initial start-up will require approximately 2.66 MW of



The Gladstone export processing facility will capitalise on solar and hydrogen for energy and be capable of 1,800 head is scheduled to commence building in 2019.

installed capacity, rising to 8.4MW for full production. Around 60% will be used for the refrigeration requirements of the facility. For initial production requirements, it is proposed to install eight chillers holding 100 head each, chilling to around 4°C.

Associated facilities for beef and hide processing, rendering, freezing, packing and storing are included and the proposal includes holding pens for 4500 animals although no feedlot is planned.

The company will undertake detailed design prior to starting construction, which is expected to begin in May 2019 with completion due in 2021.

The plant is expected to create 308 construction and 335 operational jobs. Fit-out would be to international standards, including Halal, and the target market is reportedly China – with no anticipated affect on domestic trade.

The proponents are planning to process cattle averaging at 500kg liveweight. The facility allows for the production of boning using chilled carcasses. Cuts will be wrapped or vacuum packed and boxed before proceeding to a plate freezer or chiller followed by a palletising area, final storage and eventual dispatch. The facility will also have

the ability to send bone-in product to the freezing and packaging area.

Queensland's independent Coordinator-General approved the development application, subject to 29 conditions concerning noise, dust and odour, and the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning Cameron Dick said the project would be the first of its kind in Australia.

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development Mark Furner said: "The abattoir, processing, packing and export facility is proposed to incorporate the latest and most advanced technologies used in meat processing plants, including the incorporation of robotic systems."

One of the project backers, Calliope grazier and former Gladstone councillor Leo Neill-Ballantine has been campaigning for a revived Gladstone abattoir for several years. In 2014 he said: "Central Queensland has got more cattle than any other region in Australia and we have the second biggest port in the country. There's a lot of potential."

The original Gladstone meatworks was the mainstay of the city prior to its closure in 1962. All product was exported, with 95% being shipped to the UK. ■

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Step down the chill for improved beef colour

Step-chilling improves beef colour and retains colour longer, according to early-stage research by a team of Australian-Chinese scientists.

Researchers from the Shandong Agricultural University College of Food Science and Engineering, and the NSW DPI Centre for Red Meat and Sheep Development at Cowra compared beef steaks chilled conventionally with those that were stepped-chilled.

It is a method of chilling meat that has not been tested extensively before.

NSW Department of Primary Industries senior principal research scientist Dr David Hopkins said the research was driven by a need to reduce the time required to hold product chilled post-slaughter.

"This is a cost," he said. "If you can chill quicker, but still maintain quality then there is potential to improve efficiency. There is also some evidence that tenderness can be improved."

However, a specialist in chiller technology doubts the revised practice would result in lower power bills. Managing director at Minus40 Engineers, Michael Bellstedt predicted that step chilling would see the same level of power consumption.

"Although cooling is intermittent, the total amount of heat that needs to be removed is unchanged, just stretched over a longer period," he said. "As cooling is still conducted to the same air temperatures, the refrigeration is no more or less efficient."

Mr Bellstedt said a meat processor would not need to change their equipment to undertake step chilling but suggested there might need to be some adjustment to the controllers that manage the chilling process.

The meat scientists initially step-chilled meats at 0-4°C for five hours, then holding the temperature at 12-18 °C for six hours, followed by 0-4°C again until 24 hours post-kill.

They reported the meat measured about 15°C for five to 10 hours post-kill.

The temperature decline was slow, but the pH decline was rapid, they reported.

"It is all about controlling the pH/temperature fall," Dr Hopkins said. "The initial chilling is to get the temperature down, but then let the carcass go into rigor at a high temperature."

"You need temperature control to ensure you control the bacteria."

The scientists found beef steaks treated with step-chilling had better redness than conventionally chilled samples measured at one-day and at one-week of chilled storage.

They reported the step-chilled beef showed a better colour stability than conventionally chilled steaks.

Dr Hopkins said that more work is being undertaken to validate the results.

As an offshoot to the research, the scientists discovered a meat protein that could act as an indicator of meat oxidation. The researchers reported that certain proteins called oxidoreductases play a role in decreasing meat oxidation and improving the colour of beef. Of these proteins, one called pyruvate dehydrogenase accounted for more than 60% of the variation in colour values.

"This protein can be considered as a potential beef colour biomarker," the scientists reported. "The present study provided valuable information for studies on the molecular mechanism of colour improvement from step-chilling, as well as for identifying markers associated with beef colour." ■

The appeal of lamb to younger consumers

The report looks at the US, noting recent growth in the fast, casual and quick service restaurant trade. Australian-based commodity analyst Georgia Twomey said: "Lamb not only taps into the growing trend to eat out of home, as a unique item on the menu, but also lends itself as a protein of choice in the ready-prepared meal kits."



Georgia Twomey, Rabobank commodity analyst.

While real opportunities lie with the millennial consumer, aged between 18 and 38 years, alternative proteins would require lamb marketing to justify the meat's value proposition, she said, adding the industry needs to "keep abreast of what is driving consumer trends and continually look at ways to position their product to capitalise on this new demand." ■

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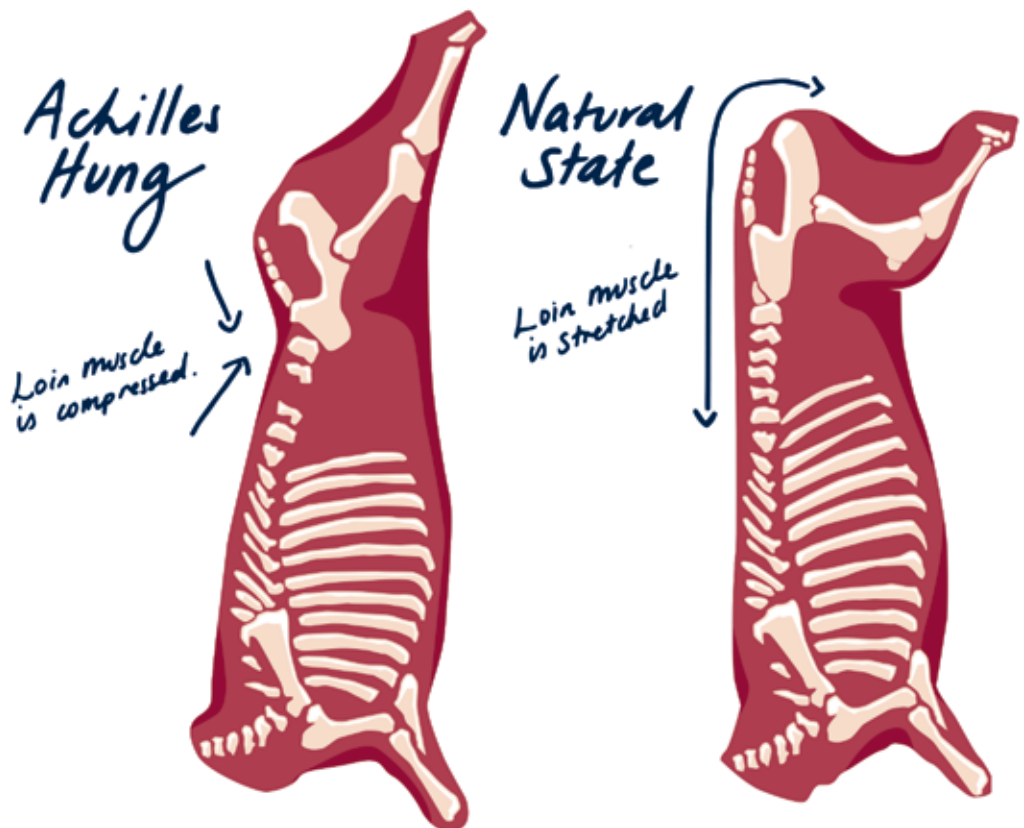
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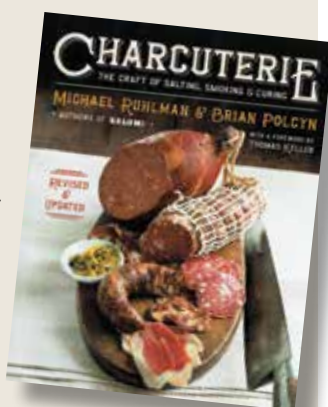
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Book Competition Winner

The copy of *CHARCUTERIE, the Craft of Salting, Smoking and Curing* (Revised and Updated) by Michael Ruhlman and Brian Polcyn was won by Ashley Rees.



Ashley correctly answered the question: How many tonnes of plastic is used globally? The answer: 270 million tonnes.

Ashley works for D.R. Johnson and enjoys making charcuterie as a hobby. Congratulation Ashley and thanks to all who entered the competition.

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