

# AUSTRALIAN **Meat**News

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## Snags are back!







# Season's Greetings

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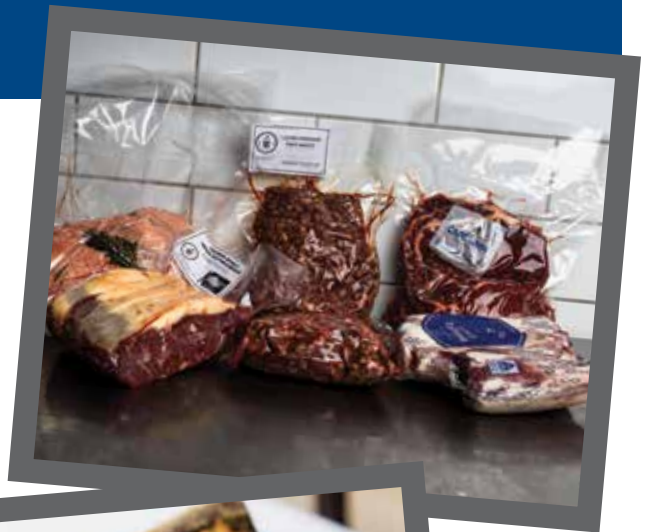
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#### PRODUCTION TEAM

Publisher/Editor: Athol Economou  
athol@ausmeatnews.com.au

Managing Editor: Deborah Andrich  
deborah.andrich@gmail.com

Layout & design: Jocelyn Harvey

Find-a-Word: Jo Edwards

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Stephanie Flynn

Deborah Andrich

Susan Webster

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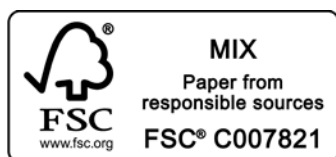
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## Hospo for Life provides vital mental health support

Hospo for Life is an industry specific mental health service, launched in 2019 by well known chef and butcher, Liam Crawley.

After losing a number of colleagues and close friends to suicide, Crawley was overwhelmed by this mental health crisis hitting so close to home, and believed that had a service been available to hospitality and butchery workers, it may have made a difference.

"I knew, from my own past mental health crises, that this is something that we



Liam Crawley

as an industry needed and had a service like Hospo For Life existed when I was in my late teens and early 20s it is something I would have both accessed and benefited from," said Liam.

Affiliated with Altius Group, Hospo For Life enables those seeking help to more than a chat on the phone to a counsellor, but affords them access to an accredited psychologist, free of charge, 24/7 with any subsequent appointments booked with the same psychologist. Partnering with Altius Group has also given Hospo for Life an opportunity to offer Workplace Workshops that are run by Wellbeing Specialists and focus on specific topics of concern that are often faced by hospitality workers.

"When COVID-19 hit and hospitality workers were losing their jobs left, right and centre we were lucky enough to be contacted by Warner's Distillery in the UK who wanted to help us help the industry through such a difficult time," said Crawley.

With a bit of brainstorming Hospo Happy Hour was created with Warner's donating \$5 from every bottle of their gin sold through Dan Murphy's to cover the costs of having Psychologists, Exercise Physiologists and Wellbeing specialists speak about industry specific mental and physical health and wellbeing topics. The series ran for 22 episodes over a six-week period featuring a new topic in every episode as well as industry leaders speaking about their mental health journeys.

"The series was a big success for us with nearly 100,000 people tuning in over the course of the six weeks."

The service has recently launched their search for "Hospo Heroes" where members of the industry can either nominate themselves or someone they admire who inspires, educates or leads by example to feature in a monthly episode to share their story to help us create a more connected community.

Liam added that the group is in the final stages of developing the Hospo For Life app which will be powered by Altius Group and will contain content specific to the mental health needs of hospitality and butchery workers, support tools, health tracking and recipes by some of our Hospo Happy Hour guests.

For anyone needing assistance, or if you would like to donate, please contact Hospo for Life at [www.hospoforlife.com.au](http://www.hospoforlife.com.au) ■

## Executive roles lacking women, new report finds

A new international report has for the first time established how many women are working within the meat sector. It found that women make up only 36% of the meat industry workforce and are under-represented at every level above junior positions, holding just 14% of board-level director roles and just 5% of chief executive roles.

The independent report, commissioned by Meat Business Women, also identified several 'broken rungs' in the career ladder that prevent women in the meat sector from advancing to more senior roles. It suggests women find it easier to pursue careers in Marketing, Finance, HR, R&D and Quality fields – however those disciplines still rarely act as stepping stones into the most senior positions.

Meat Business Women founder Laura Ryan says a lack of gender representation is putting at risk the future success and sustainability of the meat sector. "This report should be a wake-up call for the meat sector. Our findings show just how much the meat industry is lagging behind other sectors, including grocery, when it comes to creating workplaces that attract and promote female talent. In

doing so, it is failing to reap the rewards that come from creating and nurturing a diverse workforce."

Ryan continues: "It's been asserted that companies which have executive committees with female membership of at least 33% have a net profit margin over ten times greater than those companies with no women at that level. Fundamentally businesses with diverse workforces are more profitable and have better share prices".

The new report, which draws on survey data from the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and the USA, highlights that the lack of formalised mentoring, networking opportunities and senior female role models is a particular source of frustration for women in the sector.

The report finds that visible role models who lead in an aspirational way help attract and retain talent within an organisation. The report flags though that by having relatively low numbers of women in senior roles the meat industry gives the impression that leadership positions are either not available or not suited to women.

Ryan says: "The message we're hearing from women in the meat industry is

loud and clear: they love the sector, they're excited about the opportunities it offers and they want to help it succeed, but certain barriers exist. Together industry and Meat Business Women can break those barriers down."

"The good news from our research is that there are lots of practical steps companies can take to improve gender representation and ensure female talent can thrive. It is our hope that the sector uses the insights from this report to better understand how it can create a diverse and inclusive workforce. Meat Business Women is already partnering with a significant number of organisations towards that goal."

Meat Business Women intends to use the findings of this report to continue its support of the meat industry through a portfolio of initiatives such as mentoring programmes, networking events, development toolkits and other resources.

To view the report or learn more about Meat Business Women visit [meatbusinesswomen.org](http://meatbusinesswomen.org). ■



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## Industry-first study examines CL measurement

All methods approved to determine chemical lean (CL) meat are fit for purpose, but the industry needs a reference 'library', according to an industry-first study.

CL, the amount of lean red meat compared to the amount of fat in a meat product, is a mandatory requirement prescribed under AUS-MEAT for any bulk-packed meat product destined for export.

The comprehensive comparison was the first of its kind in the Australian meat industry. Researchers reported that each of the 15 methods approved by AUS-MEAT performed satisfactorily in a range of tests involving lamb, pork and beef of differing CL content.

Study leader, Peter Watkins of CSIRO at Werribee Victoria, explained: "Engagement with Australian meat processors indicated that a range of methods were used for CL measurement in industry, ranging from wet chemical to instrumental-based techniques."

Present methods used across the industry include solvent fat (Soxhlet) extraction, and microwave moisture analysis, along with instrumental techniques such as near infrared reflectance and transmittance, nuclear magnetic resonance and X-ray.

Dr Watkins said: "Anecdotal evidence suggested that some Australian processors use techniques such as Soxhlet extraction or microwave oven moisture determination as reference methods, with instrumental techniques used in-house to monitor CL tolerance."

He said little information appeared to be available on the



*Dr Peter Watkins, study leader CSIRO*

types of methods used by Australia's overseas trading partners for CL determination.

"Our hypothesis was that differences could exist between the methods used for CL determination. Overall, this was substantiated," he said, adding that some differences were possibly due to calibration issues or sample differences. "That said, there was enough agreement between methods to show that most methods performed satisfactorily," he added.

He noted that the comparisons required vastly differing sample sizes, from 27.2kg cartons of meat used for X-ray analysis down to 5g for Soxhlet fat extraction. Standardising the samples was a challenge, particularly for smaller-sized samples.

Dr Watkins explained: "Other comparative studies use certified reference material, which is usually expensive. The availability and use of such materials would be useful for this study, but the associated cost would have been prohibitive due to the required sample sizes.

"Future studies could develop appropriate materials by mixing lean meat and enough fat to reach a planned CL level."

The CL study, which was financially supported by the AMPC, also saw the participation of Katherine Stockham from the Federal Government's National Measurement Institute and Sarah Stewart and Graham Gardner from Murdoch University's School of Veterinary and Life Sciences.

Peter.Watkins@csiro.au ■

## Mobile on-farm abattoir Provenir wins innovation award

Mobile farm abattoir, Provenir, have won the prestigious 2020 delicious. Harvey Norman Produce Award Trophy for Outstanding Innovation, Sustainability & Community.

The delicious Harvey Norman Produce Awards celebrate the country's new, innovative, native and consistently outstanding Australian ingredients grown, caught, sourced or produced with dedication, passion, knowledge and regard for the environment.

The Trophy for Outstanding Innovation, Sustainability & Community is awarded to an individual, business, group or community in the food or agriculture industry demonstrating outstanding innovation in the production of food, using sustainable methods along with a community focus to achieve such innovation. A passion for animal welfare and producing the best quality beef led the founders of Provenir to develop Australia's first, and only, mobile on-farm abattoir.

Eliminating stress associated with live animal transport, Provenir's commercially licensed mobile abattoir processes livestock at the point of production, capturing the true provenance and quality of beef that their partnering farmers work so hard to achieve.

The win for Provenir comes less than two years after the start-up company was granted a licence to operate their mobile, on-farm abattoir - the first of its kind in Australia.

In commenting on the award Chris Balazs, CEO and co-founder of Provenir, said: "This Award perfectly encompasses the vision of Provenir to disrupt the red meat industry with our innovative on-farm processing, to be environmentally conscious and support regenerative farming practices, to build a community of conscientious consumers and farmers who share a vision for highest animal welfare practices and celebrate true provenance." ■

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Recently, they acquired the expertise of a qualified chef - Tommy Prosser (pictured) who had been a long-serving customer of Kingsmore Meats.

On-board to consult on dishes available at the new butcher shop and take-away food kiosk in Coogee, NSW.

Having a chef on the team helps communicate the story about the produce, from field to plate, showing customers what is achievable with the proper care and techniques.

UNOX ovens are now becoming synonymous with butcher shops across the nation. Kingsmore have a CHEFTOP MIND.Maps™ 10 tray combi oven which Tommy jumped at the opportunity of using.

Utilising the oven for a wide array of products, from cooking fresh homemade pies and sausage rolls, slow cooking and roasting meats and vegetables for the weekly specials.

It is the signature dish that really stands out - the cacao brined and chocolate spiced organic wagyu beef pastrami using the cacao from Jessica Pedemont's shop - South Pacific Cacao, to make Tommy's unique chocolate spice blend.

"It is such an incredible combination with the flavour profile similar to the classic Mexican Mole," Tommy explains.

One of the main benefits of a MIND.Maps™ oven is the ability to set programs to cook the different recipes a chef has developed. It keeps the quality the same and consistent through each and every dish.

"Chefs have their own methods of doing things which can make the end product vary so differently, our UNOX oven helps to eliminate the guess work from the kitchen staff whilst offering valuable support."

UNOX are well known for their level of customer service, Tommy describes it as dealing with the likes of a family run business, where the customer always comes first even though it is a HUGE international company.

Even during this current Covid-19 environment UNOX is always on-hand to help, the technology alone in the ovens ensure food is consistent and complying to strict safety standards of each and every business.



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Chad Horner

## Meat your local butcher

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

My name is Chad Horner. My wife Emma and I run Narangba Select Meats which is located on Main Street Narangba, about 40 minutes north of Brisbane.

### How long have you been a butcher?

I have been a butcher for about 15 years.

### Why did you become a butcher?

My older brother was a butcher and one day his boss asked me if I'd like an apprenticeship with him. So I took the opportunity.

### Where did you do your training?

The opportunity I was offered was at Wamuran Meats. I completed my three-year apprenticeship there before moving to Kingaroy Butchery for a couple of years and finally to Ryan's Meats in Wondai before I bought my own shop in 2010.

### What are the typical products you have in your store?

We offer lots of different sausages, including gluten-free, and mince as well as a selection of value-added products such as Beef Wellington and Chicken Shaslick.

### Who is your typical customer?

Our typical customers are local families who generally spend about \$40 each time they come into the shop.

### What is your favourite products?

Our best products are probably our smallgoods, including bacon and leg ham off the bone, plus our two types of jerky. Then, of course, there's our award winning honey and Worcestershire chicken sticks and our award winning sausages.

### What has been the highlight of butchering so far?

Did I mention our award winning sausages? Well, one of the biggest highlights was winning the AMIC Queensland Sausage King competition at the Brisbane Exhibition, a.k.a EKKA. In 2011 we took out first place for Gourmet Sausage with our Bacon, Cheese and Tomato sausage and again in 2019 with our Honey Wurst in the Scalded Cooked Sausage category.

### What are some of the challenges you have faced?

I guess our biggest challenge is competing with supermarkets. Our task is to convince customers that independent butchers offer better value for money by being expert tradespeople with superior quality products. And we don't simply sell meat. We can also give our customers valuable advice on the best ways to cook it.

### What goals do you have for the future?

Our aim is to grow the business by augmenting our range of products to attract new customers. Our current range includes chicken Kiev, our famous beef burgers, hickory barbeque pork chops and doubled smoked pork spare ribs, a customer favourite. And did I mention our award winning sausages, right?





## MEAT YOUR LOCAL BUTCHER

We're currently looking at extending our range of value-added products to include lasagne, pot roasts and chicken casseroles.

### What is your retirement dream?

I'd really like to buy a large fishing boat and with any luck, retirement will give me the time to actually use it!

### How is superannuation important to you?

To me, superannuation is like saving for a rainy day, but that day is way into the future. It's important because it's the money that will support Emma and me when we retire and head out in that big boat I mentioned. I've been with AMIST Super since I was an apprentice and because they're the meat industry fund, they know what people in this industry need. I have always felt very confident that my super is being looked after.

*Chad Horner with his wife Emma from Narangba Select Meats, Narangba, QLD.*

Locked Bag 5390 Parramatta NSW 2124  
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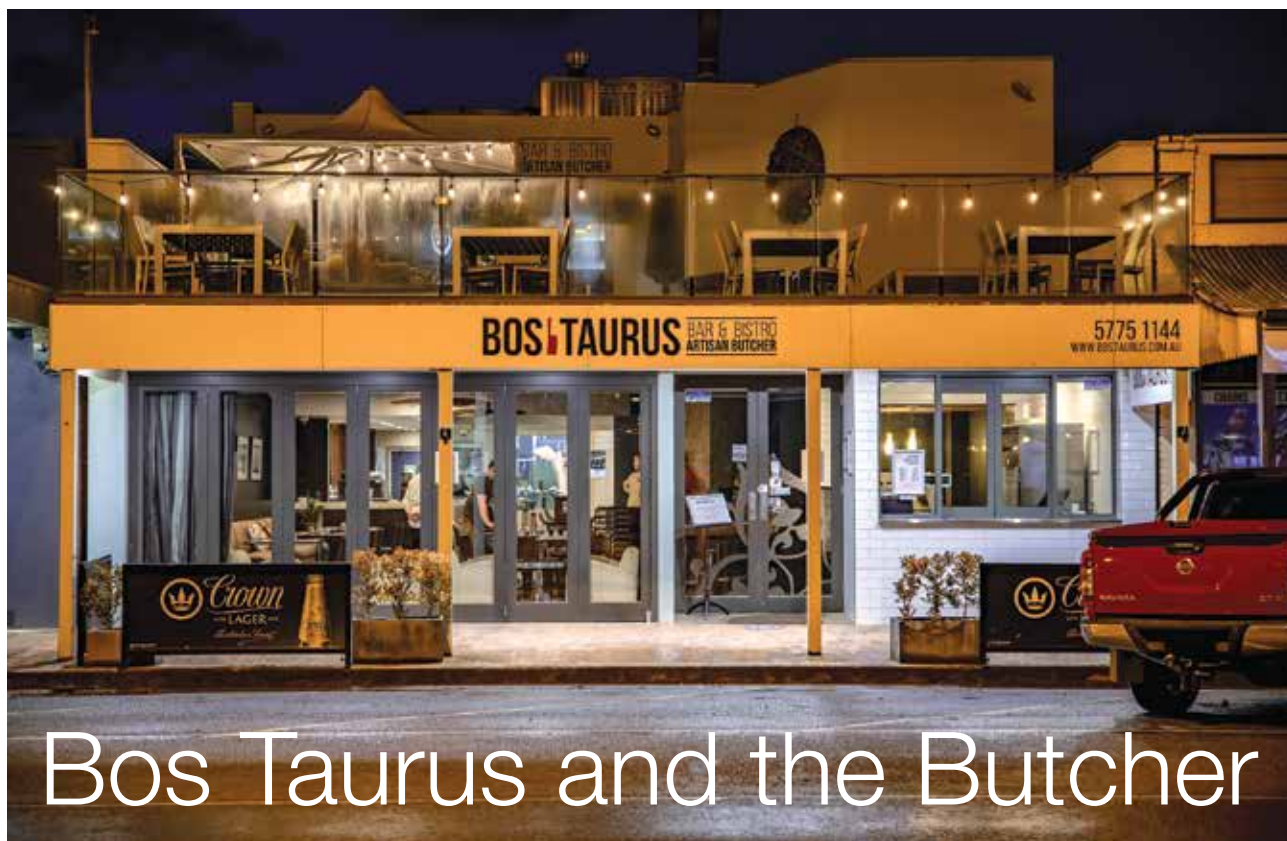


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## Bos Taurus and the Butcher

Any number of restaurants have a butcher on staff, just as a number of butcher shops employ a chef. The principle reason is recognition that each brings to the business a skill set that gives customers a superior outcome.

What is not so common, is to make the butcher a key feature of a restaurant, a point of interest to differentiate from others.

Bos Taurus, a restaurant in Mansfield, Victoria has taken that approach, and its name is indicative of the type of cuisine on offer. Styled in the fashion of a New York steakhouse, the restaurant specialises in steaks and dry-aged beef.

Mansfield is principally a tourist town, with the camping in the summer and skiing at Mt Buller in the winter. A number of Melbourne private schools have campuses in the region, giving a range of customers from family-oriented budgets, to wealthier Melburnians.

Owner, manager, butcher and chef, Chelton Crow together with wife, Jane opened Bos Taurus in 2016. Originally the Deck on High, operated by his parents, Chelton saw the opportunity to open a steakhouse that celebrated locally sourced beef, in much the same way a coastal town celebrates local seafood.

The butchery, sits within the restaurant itself, so that customers can see firsthand what the butcher does in preparing meat for dining. Contained within the 'micro-butchery' is all the equipment expected of a butcher shop, without the display cabinet of fresh products.

When Bos Taurus first opened, Chelton engaged a butcher, placing himself as the apprentice. With his experience as a qualified chef, Chelton was able to fast track his apprentice, focusing on theory. Today, the restaurant employs two chefs, while Chelton does the majority of the breaking down, allowing the chefs to do the finer knife work to suit the dishes on the menu.

Beef, lamb and pork is sourced from local producers, and from their own farm to give the provenance of paddock to plate. By using forequarters and Argie's (hindquarters with the leg removed), the butchery supplies the steaks for the restaurant as well as the secondary cuts for items such as sausages, burgers and mince. Dry-aged beef uses bone-in cuts such as t-bones and ribeyes. Brisket and long cut beef ribs are low and slow cooked, a speciality that quickly sells out in the restaurant.

"There are three reasons to have the butchery associated with the restaurant," says Chelton.

"The first is that it gives a point of difference for us in a town that has 33 eateries, where all the pubs have steaks on the menu. The restaurant is designed to be a fine dining experience, not a bistro.

"The second is that it gives another retail stream for the restaurant, where customers can buy the same cuts as available on the menu. It also means that we can source our meat at higher quantities, giving better efficiencies of scale."

Working in corporate hospitality and hotels, prior to opening the restaurant, Chelton understands that hotels in particular





with alcohol sales offsite (pub with a bottle shop), provided a business model that would work with a restaurant/butcher strategy.

Chelton and Jane have since bought a farm, and now source beef from their own cattle, providing a third reason for the butchery, as it now means that the operation is vertically integrated and each point is commercially viable.

The reaction by customers has been positive to the concept of the butcher within the restaurant. Children, said Chelton were the surprise packet, curious to learn more about where their meat comes from. The restaurant also offers vegetarian dishes, and seating can be placed should diners prefer not to be in line of sight of the butchery.

“We offered a range of heat and eat meals through the COVID lockdown, items that appear on the menu. The menu changes seasonally, so we will use items like pulled lamb in lighter salad dishes for the summer rather than the heavier winter dishes.

“The butchery doesn’t have a display cabinet the way a conventional butcher shop would, but you can still pick up meat and value-add products from the restaurant butchery. We cryovac it in portion sizes to extend shelf life for us and for our customers. It also means we can plan ahead for menus, bulk deliveries and still have cuts available for the spontaneous buyer.” ■







# Welcoming the Summer of Triumph

As we gather round BBQs and dinner tables this summer season, family and friends will come together in celebration, marking an end to the year that has been. Of course, in the food industry there's always work to be done, and from paddock to plate, everyone plays their part to keep everything ticking along.

At Bunzl, we are here to support you, stocking all your needed cures, netting, twine, shrink bags, casings, meals, marinades, stuffing. We're ready for the rush, so you are too. And as we all return back to normality, families will be toasting their 'favourite local butcher', helping to keep longstanding traditions alive.

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# Alison Meagher – Butcher Girl

The art of butchery is about the knife skills, the understanding of the anatomy, how it comes together as food. Equally as important are the skills to show consumers how to achieve that.

For Alison Meagher, who confesses that she loves food and the presentation of it, her first pathway was through university studying consumer science and specialising as a food stylist. Like many students, she worked part time. In Polkinghorne's butcher shop. On opportunity for a student exchange during her studies sent her to the US – the first person to do so for the course.

After graduating, a working holiday again saw Alison in London for a couple of years at Lidgates Butchery, doing knife work and the displays.

"I was quite taken by the art and presentation of butchery," she said. "It was then I decided to come home and do a butcher's apprenticeship."

Undertaking an apprenticeship was a challenge, as a young woman, in a traditionally man's world, Alison felt she needed to prove that she was sincere and up to the task. Her first couple of years as an apprentice, she was fortunate that the owner of Bennetts of Canterbury was a woman and supported the journey.

A desire to learn more, Alison finished her apprenticeship with Peter Bouchier, at Butchers of Distinction. Regardless, the value of her food styling skills was well received.

"As a butcher, I love breaking down carcasses and unravelling the riddle to get the seam down to the bone. I love teaching people the best way to cut, prepare and cook the meat. A lot of modern butchering is about presentation, how the display looks and how appealing the product is. It's a challenge, and satisfying when you have nailed it."

Alison was fortunate to be a brand ambassador for Elders China for six



years, promoting and educating the China market on Australian beef brands such as Robbins Island, Cape Grim and Killara.

Her role was to speak with diners at the table in some of China's most exclusive restraints such as the 1515 West Restaurant in the Hotel Shangri-La, Scena Restaurant at the Ritz Carlton Shanghai, Tivano at the Temple House Chengdu (Swire Group Hotels) and many Intercontinental Group Hotels throughout Asia.

"My role was to speak the diners to discuss what they may like to eat for the evening, show them the cuts, present the cut for approval while they took many photos of themselves with the cut, before sending it the Chef for cooking to the diner's specification. As Elders expanded their markets, Alison travelled through South East Asia as the Brand Ambassador.

A desire to return home, Alison and her young family returned in 2020 to settle in Warnambool where she is now establishing herself as an ambassador for the greater meat industry.

Under the persona 'ButcherGirl'

Alison intends to establish a business where brand owners can engage her to promote their product and educate their customers. In an online environment, this is through video and livestream events, held within her own studio, which is set up as a 'butcher shop' that will draw on her strengths to present meat and her butchery skills.

"A lot of people around the world don't have the education around beef that you would expect, so it is good to have someone like me who understands that and can teach them, particularly secondary cuts. A lot of chefs are not aware of the flavour and versatility that they can have, for example chuck tail flaps are a good cheap alternative, and a good way to still have Australian beef on the menu or buffet where cost might be a consideration."

Meat & Livestock Australia have engaged Alison to be the celebrity butcher for BeefWeek in Rockhampton for 2021.

tel:0450 662 471

alison@butchergirlalison.com

<https://www.butchergirlalison.com> ■

# Bone broth

The market for bone broth for discerning consumers has been busy since a revival about five years ago, spurred by interest in the paleo diet. Even mainstream soup firm Campbell's has a broth product.

The popularity of bone broth is expected to grow with the 'nose-to-tail' philosophy of avoiding food waste and represents an opportunity for butchers.

Some butchers stock commercial brands, while others sell pre-packed bone broth bags of about 1.5kg, containing beef marrow and neck bones. Cannings Free-Range Butchers in Melbourne market a frozen home-made bone broth at \$15.90 for 700ml, but also offer customers a DIY recipe and ingredients.

Cannings spokeswoman Jess Pickering said: "Customers who make their own bone broth generally use either our beef chuck bones or chicken carcasses, both of which are fantastic for making broth from scratch.

"Both the DIY options and the pre-made broths we sell are very popular, and winter is always an extra-popular time as people are craving hearty, warming meal options.

"All kinds of people purchase the bone broth, however it's especially popular with health-conscious customers. We have lots of people who will come in and grab some regularly. Often people are drinking bone broth daily because of the health benefits, but it also works wonderfully where you would usually use stock in dishes like casseroles, soups and other slow cooks.

"All of our bone broths are made in-house ...with love! ... by the team at our Kew store using our free range chicken or free range, grass fed and finished beef bones."

Queensland-based firm Broth of Life claims it released the world's first dehydrated bone broth and the first certified organic bone broth powder. The more updated requirement among customers is for broth made from the bones of grass-fed beef and free-range chickens. Some broth makers boast that their product is made from animals raised without the use of antibiotics or growth hormones, fed non-genetically modified feed and slaughtered humanely.

There is also a sales push among makers using only Australian and NZ ingredients, while some manufacturers go even more regional. The Cherry Tree Kitchen free-range chicken bone broth sources its ingredients from NSW's Northern Rivers.

Competition is driving diversification. The Australian Bone Broth Company is marketing a Halal version while Golden Pig is offering 'Vietnamese style bone broth' which is claims is healing and paleo-friendly.

Australian-based restaurant critic and columnist for the New York Times, Besha Rodell said: "I think there's a huge amount of health interest in bone broth; it ticks a lot of boxes.



There's all kinds of traditional medicinal use of beef around the world, and bone broth is in a perfect sweet spot."

Collagen protein from bones and connective tissue especially features in health benefit claims which range from weight loss to anti-aging, from joint health to avoiding wrinkles as well as its ability to boost the immune system and fight 'leaky gut syndrome': where stress and bad diet make the intestines unnaturally permeable.

The science behind the health claims is muddled. Glutamine, an amino acid found in bone broth, has been found to be a potential solution to leaky guts in rats, not humans. Two pre-clinical studies from the Center for Biomedical and Life Sciences at Missouri State University suggested enriched chicken bone broth might help maintain gut microbiota and also might have a role as therapy for chronic migraine headaches. A 2000 study reported that chicken soup had a mild anti-inflammatory effect. However, there are no definitive findings around beef bone broth. The much-touted collagen dissolves into its component proteins in the human gut. In the scary corner, bones can sequester heavy metals like lead.

One company is even advertising a vegetarian version, based on miso and including agar agar.

Other developments include triple-concentrated, FODMAP-friendly and freeze-dried products. Some promote their extra-long simmering time – up to 36 hours, others note that they roast the bones before simmering.

And of course there's a version for pets, promising it supports joint and bone health in animals.

The big mover, however, are the new additions added for extra benefits. Nature's Way Superfoods Collagen Bone Broth is fortified with 1200mg of hydrolysed collagen. Turmeric and ginger, both organic, are now regular additives. A beef bone broth can now include extracts of cinnamon, bay leaves, peppercorns, pink salt as well as carrot, celery, onion and garlic – all cooked in filtered water. Chicken bone broth adds lemongrass to that mix.

A 'superblend' manufactured by Gelpo for the Peter Evans brand includes dehydrated Beef Bone Broth with Wattleseed,



'wild-harvested' Lemon Myrtle and Kakadu Plum. A mere 100g costs \$44.95. The manufacturer claims they simmer "only grass fed, organic beef bones ... with nothing but organic apple cider vinegar and Himalayan salt which help in extracting the minerals and goodness from the bones" A slow drying process ensures nutrients are not destroyed by heat, they add.

Packaging is also sharpening its act. The product is sold liquid in jars or UHT packs, in microwaveable sipping cups, as a shelf-stable dried product or as heat-and-serve pouches. Single-serve pouches are now available, ideal for the single, health-conscious millennials that dominate the buyer profile.

In the US, the trend is even more advanced. Manufacturers are using bone broth to fortify soups while others supply the energy drink industry. These makers control the electrolyte content, aiming for a two-to-one potassium-to-sodium ratio, to meet the market for recovery and rehydration drinks.

Some American marketers guarantee the amount of collagen in their frozen chicken bone broth and a New York firm, Supplement Manufacturing Partner, grinds bones to supply dry mix marketers. The beef bones are cleaned and finely ground then mixed with water and heated to remove all blood, impurities and fat before being dried into a powder and on-sold.

California firm The Osso Good Co has a retail outlet with a cafe offering drinks blended with broth; a 'broffee' combines the broth with pasture-raised butter, cold-brew coffee and sea salt. The 'Immune Boost' is chicken bone broth with lemon and raw honey. The company also herb-infused blends for claimed health benefits. It's Ener-Qi, for example, is said to provide energy, vitality and strength while the Revive variety claims to help support gut health and digestion.

Osso Good co-founder and chief technology officer, Jazz Hilmer said the company aims to "craft with ingredients customers can trust and feel good about."

Another firm B-Nourish, incorporates Chinese herbs into its patented processing to 'warm the soul from the inside out'.

US manufacturers are more adventurous in their ingredients. Apart from a wider range of flavourings – cayenne, chili and chipotle – they use more meats. Turkey is a common base stock, sometimes sold with cranberry and sage flavouring. Pork is also used – something that does not appear to have reached commercial production in Australia – while one of the more obscure stocks is used by Texas-based Epic Provisions, part of the General Mills empire. It produces an 'artisanal' broth using pasture-raised bison and fortified with organic apple cider.

Kangaroo bone broth anyone? ■

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# Wagyu Flavour Wheel improves the butcher-customer relationship

The range and variability of beef for the butcher is vast, and the knowledge about each one is extensive. For butchers who want to talk with their customers about where the beef comes from, how to cook it, and what is going to taste like, it provides an opportunity to engage and get to know the customer's preferences.

If the supplier had descriptions of the flavour, aroma, mouthfeel and texture on the beef ready to hand, it would be an enormous benefit to the butcher and counter staff, to assist the customer with deciding which beef will suit tonight's dinner.

The development by Australian Agriculture Company (AACo) of the Wagyu flavour wheel for the Westholme brand is designed to meet those challenges for the entire supply chain up to the consumer. The flavour wheel utilises 100 words to describe flavour, taste, aroma and texture.

A common practice in the wine, seafood, coffee and cocoa industries, flavour wheels are used extensively to describe the flavour and sensation of eating the product, with scientific grounding to develop the words. It is believed to be the first time the concept has been applied to beef in a commercial sense, and in particular, for Wagyu.

The need to outline the attributes of AACo's brand, Westholme and Wagyu more broadly has been the driving force behind the flavour wheel's development.

"The Westholme brand supply chain is literally paddock to plate, with many players involved in the process of moving the product to the consumer," said Hugh Killen, CEO of AACo.

"We partner with each one of them in describing our product along the way. For a distributor that may handle more than one brand of Wagyu, the flavour wheel will give them the tools to help sell that product into retail and hospitality.

"For the chef, the quarterly menu planning process is a significant part of their role, and knowing the flavour characteristics of Westholme Wagyu will improve the menu in terms of enhancing the dish with appropriate sides and

wines. That conversation can then extend to the butcher who will be supplying the Wagyu."

AACo commissioned Dr Heather Smyth at the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation, based at University of Queensland, to undertake the project to define the flavour wheel for Westholme Wagyu.

Dr Smyth, a flavour chemist, has undertaken similar projects with other food industries, but was excited to be involved in the project.

Using a trained tasting panel of 12, portions of the loin cuts are taken from a sample set to create the initial sensory profile.

From there, the team fine tunes the descriptions to come up with an agreed set of terms. The tasting is repeated with other samples to ensure that the descriptors are consistent across the food, and the taster.

"Many food industries have created a flavour wheel, and there are many that are based more on a marketing strategy, than science, so often the descriptors poorly reflect the products actual sensory qualities," said Dr Smyth.

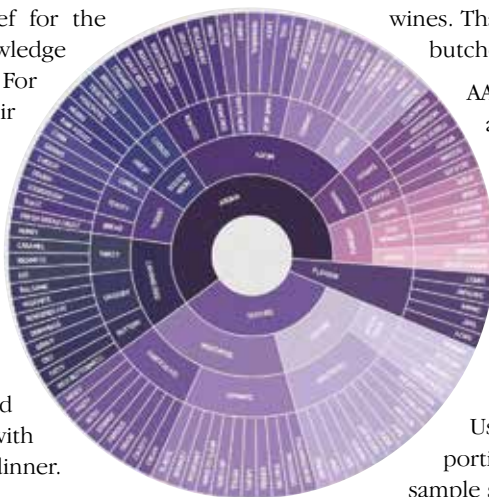
"We know that taste, flavour, aroma and texture in the case of beef is dependent on the volatiles and fatty acids within the meat – of which we know of around 800 – and that can depend on the genetics of the animal, how it was raised, what it ate and how it was processed. As a consequence of those volatile compounds and fatty acids, a scientific approach to describing the meat can be achieved with a more rigorous approach."

The wine and coffee industries often use flavour wheels with reference to 'terroir', the taste that is achieved dependent on where the grapes were grown. That concept of 'terroir' says Dr Smyth can be attributed to beef.

While most Wagyu are finished in the feedlot, where they were raised whether it be Gulf Country or the Darling Downs will play a role in the final beef. So too will the genetic potential of the animal.

"Most people can tell the difference between A5 Japanese Wagyu and Australian Wagyu," said Mr Killen.

"In Japan the animals are raised on feed since weaning and it





creates a unique eating experience. The same is true of Westholme Wagyu raised on the Mitchell grass of the Gulf Country compared to their Darling Downs cousins. The feed, whether it is sorghum, barley or proprietary mixes will also play a role. I'm certain the feed history and therefore terroir is a part of the Westholme Wagyu flavour."

For the consumer, that translates into a higher eating experience, where the butcher knows what the customer preference is for flavour in their beef, and can recommend a cut that is better suited to their palate, cooking skills and cuisine.

### The science behind the wheel

A panel of 12 trained taste tasters initially 'brainstorm' the flavours and textures that are first noted in the beef sample. A method developed in the 1980s, sensory descriptive profiling creates a set of words put forward by the taste testers, which can be in the hundreds. The panel then convenes to reach an agreed set of descriptors, or to find an alternative word that is better suited such as 'herbaceous' compared to 'grassy'.

These are then compared to other flavour chemicals that might be used as a reference, or other foodstuffs – an aroma described as citrus might then be compared to a lemon, orange or grapefruit, to more closely define the citrus aroma present in the product, or to find a more appropriate term.

The way Wagyu is cooked can change the flavour and texture considerably, something that Dr Smyth quickly learned. Under-cooked produced a more metallic flavour, while over-done gave it a stewed, earthier tone. Therefore, laboratory-controlled cooking processes were used for every portion, with samples delivered to the tasters at the same time to minimise any effects cooling may have.

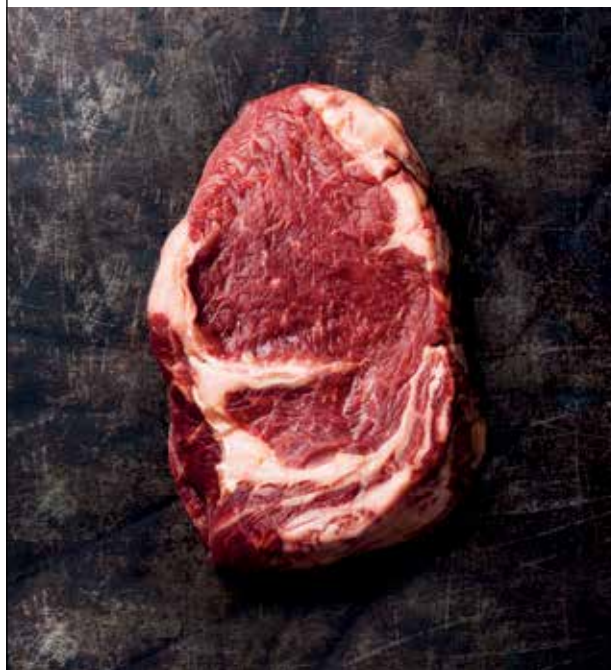
"Replication is an important aspect of creating the flavour descriptors," said Dr Smyth. "Each taster needs to be able to rate terms reproducibly for the same sample set, but additionally across different cuts and animals.

"Ideally, we would take a larger sample of animals for taste testing and perform the same process across the seasons to see if there is any variability, however, that would create a large project very quickly, and AACo were keen to develop a robust baseline that is still representative of their brand."

Dr Smyth said the next phase for beef industry flavour wheels would be to find the relationship between the volatiles and fatty acids and the contribution each one makes to a specific flavour profile. From there exploring "provenance" becomes possible, understanding how particular regions, diets or genetics impact those components in the beef that give rise to the distinctive flavours and differences between brands. Different cuts and marble score may also be assessed to expand the flavour language. Ultimately, a depth and breadth of knowledge about beef flavour will allow producers to control and optimise sensory outcomes and deliver consistent high-quality eating experiences for the consumer. ■



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# Butchers boom with internal migration wave

By Stephanie Flynn

Queensland, most notably the Sunshine Coast, has experienced a major wave of internal migration from the southern states in 2020 as people vacated the big cities to avoid COVID-19 and opting for a 'lifestyle change' funded by Government stimulus payments.

The massive wave of arrivals has had a major impact on towns throughout the region, doubling the population in some centres and driving-up the price of rentals and property prices.

Although internal migration to Queensland's Sunshine Coast from Victoria and New South Wales has been a developing trend for the past five years, making it the fastest growing city in the nation, the COVID-driven 'invasion' has proven to be a boon to a region that found its borders closed to what was normally a tourism-driven economy.

But with the full impact of the nation's recession yet to be experienced, a clearer picture will emerge as Government hand-outs are wound back, raising questions as to the sustainability of the migration wave and the ability of the 'newly arrived' to survive without realistic full-time employment possibilities.

*Australian Meat News* spoke to two butcher shops – one in Noosa Junction, the other in the hinterland town of Cooroy, to obtain their take on what impact the massive changes of 2020 have had on their businesses and what they believe lies ahead with the approach of Christmas and the full impending impact of recession.

Five years ago, Luke Ulcoq and sister Renee bought 'The Cleaver' butchery in Noosa Junction and invested over



*'The Cleaver' in Noosa Junction offers a unique range of heat and serve options developed on the premises by Renee which have proved immensely popular with customers.*



*Luke and Renee Ulcoq with staff member, Ashton Cooney (centre).*

\$250,000 in renovating the store and reorienting its stock to high-end quality meats and introducing an extensive array of unique, value-added heat and serve products.

As part of the reorientation, Luke and Renee abandoned the store's long-standing wholesale division which serviced the abundance of restaurants in the Noosa region and focused on the retail side of the business.

With the advent of COVID-19 lockdowns, which saw restaurants close, it was a move that Luke and Renee are thankful they made.

"The restaurants had really priced families out of the 'dining-out' market so tourist apartment rentals had become a big part of our growth," Luke said.

"We saw a lot of repeat business from younger-aged customers who regularly rented apartments for their holidays but, since the lockdown and before border closures, people moved to live here in huge numbers, the 'invasion' happened and now they have become regular customers.

"But work, or rather the lack of it, may sort all that out because the reality is that one needs to work to live and work opportunities are very limited in regional areas and will be even more so as we go forward when all the Government hand-outs phase out and nation's borders remain closed to inbound international tourism.

"The reality is that, certainly in this region, only casual work is available and even that will be limited as we go forward because all of this Government stimulus has simply dragged





*Luke and Renee have spent close to a quarter of a million dollars renovating 'The Cleaver' since purchasing it the store five years ago.*

out the inevitable and that is the closure of businesses in a region that has been heavily tourism dependent," he said.

While Luke and Renee initially registered with 'JobKeeper' during the full lockdown, they were quick to remove their business from that support programme, opting instead to stabilise their business on a normal business footing, but they were thankful for the Payroll Tax exemptions implemented by the Queensland Government which, Luke says, was a big relief for a small, family run business.

According to Luke, during the lockdown demand for home cooking sent sales of meat through the roof and it is a trend he says has continued as the mainly older-aged demographic of the area are still reticent to dine out in restaurants and prefer to buy quality produce for home cooking.

Luke and Renee are the third generation of a beef farming family from Gayndah in central Queensland, a background that Luke maintains has allowed him to read the supply chain and price implications of the effects of what has been a long and major drought in the nation and a major sell-off of our national herd.

"I could see what was going to happen with meat and prices which is what motivated our approach to reorient the store to high-end meat and customers, it was decidedly a big move as, for six months, we had to carry the store through the transition because your whole customer base changes," Luke said.

"While it certainly caused many a sleepless night, I can say it was well worth it as we are now turning over through the retail alone what we were once doing with both the wholesale and retail side of the business combined and are well placed to ride the boom wave as borders reopen and Christmas holidays approach," he said.

Luke believes that Christmas will be an extraordinarily busy period for Noosa and the Sunshine Coast as the relaxation of border restrictions on southern state tourism are lifted enabling families from across state borders

to reunite and restrictions continue apply to any overseas travel for Australians.

"I think people will have a traditional Christmas lunch with turkey, ham and seafood at home as opposed to restaurant dining particularly given the recession and the continued COVID-19 restrictions on patron numbers at restaurants and, as tourist numbers drastically increase over the summer holidays, they will be shopping and cooking at their holiday apartment rentals for the same reasons," Luke said.

"Of course, there is also the possibility that new waves of COVID outbreaks and the full impact of recession may threaten all of our expectations, so there is certainly a challenging and interesting year ahead of us," he said.

Just 22 km away the hinterland town of Cooroy has almost tripled its population with its population at nearly 9,000 and still rising with the interstate migration wave.

Angela and Trent Kirkpatrick have grown the Cooroy Butchery and Smokehouse with the town both through retail and wholesale aspects of the business since they purchased the business 15 years ago.



*Trent and Angela Kirkpatrick celebrate 15 years this year since purchasing the Cooroy Butchery and Smokehouse.*

"There has been a big wave of migration from other states, we have a lot of new faces in Cooroy young families who have bought houses here in recent months and the development of an 'over-50's' lifestyle residential village which has attracted a lot of people from the cities," Angela said.

"We are in a good central spot here in Cooroy right in between Noosa and all the lovely camping grounds and national parks around Kenilworth so not only have we had

*continued on page 21*

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*continued from page 19*

the residential growth but also a growth in the number of tourists from the city and from Noosa on their way to camping holidays all of which have boosted our retail side of the business," she said.

Angela and Trent had a substantial wholesale business servicing the region's hotels and restaurants, a role which meant Trent was on the road full-time with deliveries until COVID-19 lockdowns closed down the food service sector which meant that side of the business disappeared overnight.

The whole experience meant that their business had to be restructured with staff reductions to ensure its survival and while the retail side of the business experienced a boom over the last six months, things are only just starting to pick up now on the wholesale side.

Angela and her family are local beef farmers from the Gympie region with Angela and her siblings still maintaining their holdings, so her understanding of the industry continues to inform her retail business decisions.

"Retail sales are still definitely higher than they were pre-COVID and some of the things we introduced for that period, such as no contact home deliveries are still in high demand today but pricing across the full range of proteins have risen dramatically and some cuts are still hard to get," Angela said.

Much of the difficulty in supply has stemmed from the retaining of stock for breeding by farmers, who have high hopes that the record breaking drought has come to an end, as well as the reduction in output by key processors such as JBS Swift which has reduced both the size of its labour force and hours of operation citing the dual difficulties of supply for slaughter as well as diminished global demand.



*The Cooroy Butchery and Smokehouse in the hinterland town of Cooroy, 20km inland from Noosa.*

"Surprisingly, people are happy to pay these higher prices and are not even questioning it, not a lot of people are asking for budget meat, they are still buying quality but at quantities they can afford," Angela said.

"We have introduced a bulk pack for freezer filling which has become immensely popular. Selling at a \$150 price tag, it includes a range of basics such as mince, chicken breasts, bacon, a pork roast, rump steak and sausages," she said.

The store's extensive range of smallgoods, done in their own smokehouse facility has also seen a rise in demand.

Angela and Trent are considering what a COVID Christmas may look like and are planning for the fact that it could go either way.

"We could be busier than normal if borders open fully or, if borders remain closed and families cannot visit from interstate, gatherings will be smaller," Angela said.

"So we have decided to just prepare for a normal Christmas and we do all our own hand-produced smallgoods and Australian hams at our smokehouse facility which are, of course, our biggest seller although we also sell a lot of the traditional fare such as turkey for the Christmas period.

"It is quite possible, we believe, that given families have been effectively separated for most of the year, it could be the driver of a resurgence in the big, traditional Christmas lunch," she said.

But she is keenly aware that next year could see the depth of recession really bite as Government support winds back considerably and people in the region actually have to go and get a job to earn an income, a factor which is guiding what business decisions she is presently taking. ■



*Cooroy Butchery produces a broad range of hand-produced smallgoods on the premises.*

# Rising to the COVID business challenge

**E**xpansion, construction, renovation – even starting a new business – Queensland has seen signs of new industry amid the pandemic malaise to overcome the challenges of business during COVID.

On the Sunshine Coast, Marcus Boocock defied the advice of his solicitor and the wariness of the banks to open his new store, Boocock's Quality Meats, at Stockland Birtinya on 15 June, amid the COVID crisis.

"The first person who said I was crazy was my solicitor," he laughed. "She said: 'I must talk to you ... do you realise what's going on at the moment? Businesses are closing everywhere!'"

"The unpredictability of COVID has made opening a new business very different to the norm, and at times during the process, more complicated," he said. "One of the biggest dramas was that the banks were unwilling to loan. Luckily I was able to source funding elsewhere."

Marcus previously owned a butcher shop in Noosa, but moved to be closer to family. He is a fourth-generation butcher from a family that started in the business in 1905 in Geelong, Victoria, and had shops in Melbourne before moving north about 20 years ago.

"Getting staff has also been a bit of a battle – they've been hard to find due to COVID and the many issues associated with the pandemic. So originally there was just three of us working flat-out seven days a week, but I've got a good crew around me now."

While he had no problems sourcing equipment for the new shops, finding quality product was a whole different matter. "It's hard finding quality meat," he said. "I'm sure it's all COVID-related. There's just not a lot of quality meat around and, with people unable to go to restaurants, everyone's trying to recreate the restaurant experience at home with quality meat."

Overall, however, Marcus believes the pandemic has given him an opening for his business. "It's given me an opportunity to get a foot in the door – an opportunity that I otherwise wouldn't have had. And to be honest it's really been the people in the community here that has made the difference during the pandemic. We're a close-knit community and I'm truly grateful to have the support of each and every one of them."

Meanwhile, in the regional centre of Emerald, butchers Jason and Tracey O'Loughlin employed more than 30 local tradespeople when they expanded their business into a boutique fresh food supermarket.



*Boocock's Quality Meat owner, Marcus Boocock and store manager Jacob Kemp.*

Their business Fair Dinkum Meats has diversified as Fair Dinkum Fresh and added fruit and vegetables and smallgoods to its meat displays. It aims to employ 24 staff.

Jason has been a butcher for more than 30 years. The couple opened their first butcher shop at Springsure in 2013. They then opened a butchery at Blackwater before establishing Fair Dinkum Meats, a three-time winner of both the Queensland regional Sausage King competition and the Central Highlands Business Excellence Awards.

Jason said: "Plans are already afoot to establish a co-op to supply our business and wholesale to other smaller retailers and businesses in the central Queensland area."

The O'Loughlin's latest venture was assisted by a Queensland Government Rural Economic Development (RED) grant. Another grant recipient is Ashton's Butchery, which will expand throughput at the Millmerran Abattoir.

Director Rob Ashton said the RED grant would help install additional refrigeration space and configure processing lines. This would help double the throughput at the Millmerran Abattoir which the Ashtons took over two years ago. The family also run butcher shops in Pittsworth, acquired in 1977 and at Dalby, opened in 2006.

"It will create 15 jobs, and the new layout will significantly improve operator efficiency and safety for our meat workers," he said.





*Billy Gibney, of Meat at Billy's has defied COVID-19 and re-furbished the Ashmore store.*

Additionally, the Ashtons are soon expecting delivery from Germany of a newly ordered pig processing plant that will reduce scalding and dehairing to a single process.

Another meat business making of the COVID cocoon was Meat at Billy's, a high-end butcher shop chain in suburban Brisbane. The main store at Ashgrove shut for a fortnight in early October for a redesign that saw new walls,

roof, floors, display cabinet, display fridge and retail shelving. The renovation expanded customer floor space from 8m<sup>2</sup> to 14.5m<sup>2</sup>.

A spokeswoman for the store said: "There's a brand-new set of Wedderburn scales waiting somewhere to be delivered and installed. They were scheduled to go in ready for the re-opening, but they've been held-up somewhere – like so many other things currently!" ■



# Trust in Butchers Increases

**B**utchers are increasingly becoming a trusted information source for red meat buyers, according to the latest annual MLA consumer sentiment report.

About 20% of people interviewed used butchers and supermarkets for information about meat's environmental and animal welfare credentials. And while one-in-three consumers used the internet, online searches dropped in 2020, according to the national survey.

MLA Managing Director Jason Strong said: "Given strong consumer patronage of supermarkets and butchers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not surprising we are seeing these channels become increasingly important sources of information for consumers."

The national survey was based on the responses of around 1500 city-based people aged 18 to 64 who are responsible for buying groceries and preparing meals. The 15-minute online survey has been conducted annually for MLA by a consultancy every June since 2010.

Perceptions of the red meat industry are improving, as is knowledge of the industry among city shoppers, according to the 2020 survey.

"Despite an environmentally, socially and economically challenging year, perceptions of the red meat industry are improving," Mr Strong said, noting that 67% of respondents felt 'good' or 'very good' about the Australian beef industry, and 62% felt good or 'very good' about the Australian sheep industry.

Overall red meat consumption has remained stable. Most red meat eaters have not reduced their consumption, nor are they planning to do so in future, with 62% of consumers eating about the same amount of red meat compared to a year ago. Red meat consumption has remained relatively stable over time in Australia. According to Nielsen Homescan, 95% of Australian households buy beef, and 76% buy lamb.

Cost and health remain the primary drivers for people to avoid buying red meat, according to the survey. Among red meat reducers, a total of 31% said they resist buying red meat due to price, followed by 29% citing health concerns. Environmental concerns (15%) and animal welfare (12%) were also mentioned.

The number of consumers in metropolitan Australia who claim to be vegetarian has remained stable since 2016, at 7%. And 39% of claimed vegetarians still eat meat.

Mr Strong said perceived industry knowledge has increased, with around one in three respondents feeling they have a 'good knowledge and understanding' of the Australian beef and lamb industries.

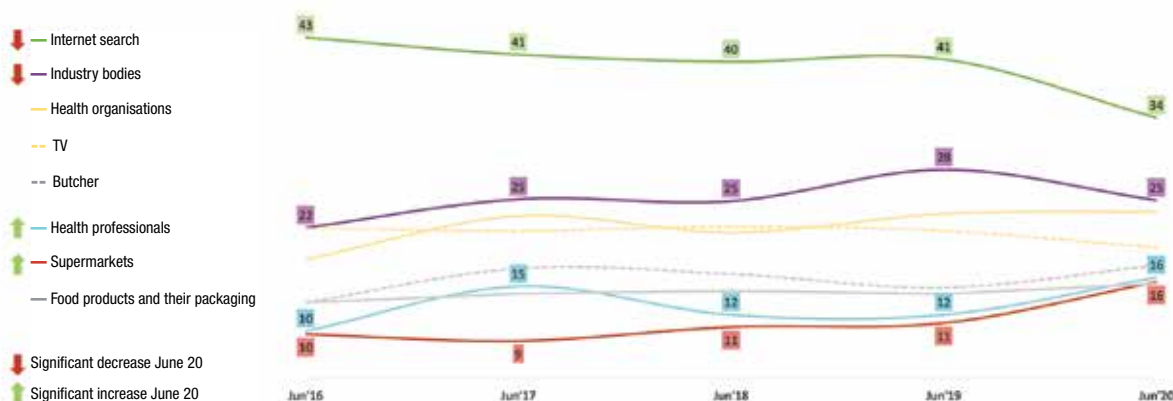
"However, consumers are less informed about the specifics, highlighting the need for the industry to continue to increase awareness and engagement with community and consumers," he said.

Conducted annually since 2010 by strategic consultancy firm Pollinate on behalf of MLA, the research measures and tracks consumer sentiment in the community towards the Australian red meat industry.

## Supermarkets have also become more important for animal welfare information, as have health professionals. Internet and industry bodies are declining



### Sources of information about beef and lamb animal welfare (Top 8 - %)



Q. Thinking about situations where you might be looking for information and advice about Beef, lamb and animal welfare

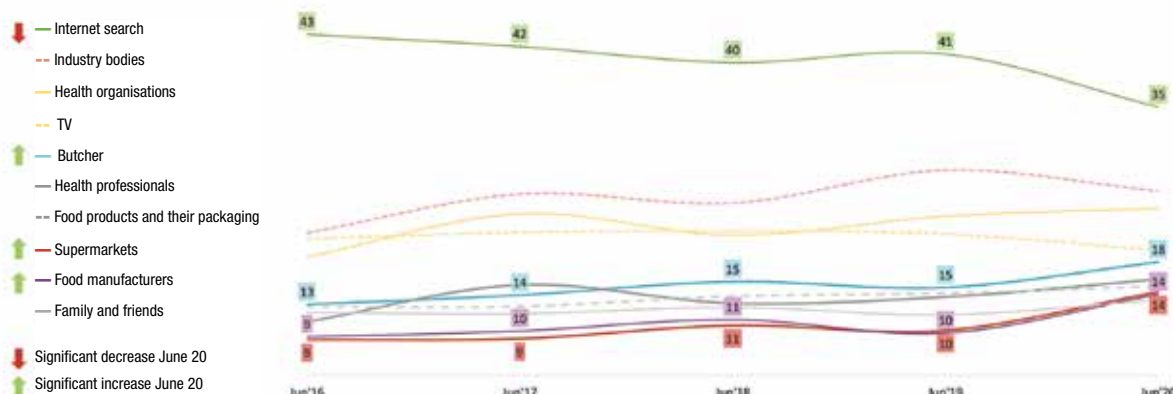




## Supermarkets are also becoming more important for information around environmental impact, along with manufacturers and butchers.



Sources of information about beef and lamb environmental impact (Top 10 - %)



The research is used to inform the industry's community engagement strategy addressing community concerns, and benchmark the impact of MLA's programs on building community trust in the beef and lamb industry.

Mr Strong said: "Consumers are hearing more positive messages about the industry, particularly in relation to industry standards and the positive impact on the Australian

economy. Within this is a real acknowledgement that producers do a good job and are widely respected.

"This is very encouraging for the industry, particularly in a year where a number of significant events have impacted the red meat industry across Australia including drought, bushfires and the global COVID-19 pandemic." ■

## Foodbank serving up Aussie pork to those in need

Amid the social and economic disruptions caused by COVID-19 in recent months, Australia's pork industry has been working with the country's leading food relief organisation, Foodbank Australia, to support Australians struggling to put food on the table.

In a collaboration involving the Federal Government and Australian Pork Limited (APL), Foodbank Australia's provision of protein to members of the community in need has been boosted by weekly deliveries from several pork wholesalers across the country.

More than a quarter of Australian pork is usually consumed in foodservice outlets, so when restaurants, pubs and clubs across the country were forced to closed earlier in the year, alternative markets had to be found.

APL CEO Margo Andrae said while the rise in homemade meals increased pork sales at butchers and supermarkets, the supply chain has still been under pressure in adjusting to COVID-19 restrictions.

"Australia's weekly pork production is very consistent. While supply chains have been disrupted in recent months, we've

continued to process about 100,000 pigs a week nationally," Ms Andrae said.

"Even with retail sale increases, we were looking at ways to take pressure off of our processors and wholesalers to ensure the market stayed as stable as possible and producers had some certainty."

"Wholesalers Linley Valley Pork (WA), Holco (SA), Global Meats (Vic) Mastercut Meats (NSW) and Top Cut (Qld) have been pivotal in this wonderful initiative, providing pork to Foodbank at a significant discount to ensure the funding can be stretched as far as possible," Ms Andrae said.

"We're proud of the role our industry is playing in providing food security for those in need, but we're also very grateful to Foodbank because the weekly supply arrangements have given processors and wholesalers added operational certainty for their businesses and employees.

"This has helped keep employees at our plants working and helped ensure producers could be confident they had a buyer for their weekly turn-off of pigs." ■

# The Power of Packaging

Of all the varied consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps the most positive has been the juggernaut resurgence of local food business.

Longstanding institutions, such as the local butcher, fishmonger, or green grocer had been dying by inches over the last few years, as huge supermarket chains increasingly monopolised more of their business.

But now, a surprising shift has occurred in the landscape, and people are once again coming to rely on their local businesses to fill the gaps that the supermarkets have recently created.

However, post-pandemic, will things gradually go back to the way they were?

## What can you do to keep customers?

It is important to focus on keeping your customer's interest. If you make yourself memorable enough to your customer, you will remain top-of-mind when they think of buying meat or fish.

One of the best ways to do this is to work on building your brand.

All businesses have a brand, made up of the things your customer associates with your name and products. The key is consciously creating an appealing brand and making sure it is well known to your consumers.

A simple change you can implement, which makes a world of difference, is to focus on your food packaging. Packaging is a necessity in a butcher's business, but how many of them utilise this ubiquitous product to their advantage?



Printing your branding onto your packaging is gold. Every time a customer buys and takes your product home, they take your name and brand with them.

The packaging may stay in their home for days, further strengthening your brand in their mind.

Even unbranded printed packaging still greatly increases product shelf appeal for customers, making it instantly more eye-catching, as well as adding a sense of quality.

Think labels, which are very simple to design and have fast turnaround time.

## Packaging Options to Suit Your Needs and Budget:

A common argument against this for many small businesses, is that it is too expensive, and thus not viable. But it doesn't have to be as expensive as you may think. A full colour print of your logo may be a more premium option, but there are several economical alternatives.

A single colour stamp print does an equally good job of conveying your brand with far less expense.

At the moment local lives on and is in fact stronger than ever.

It is imperative that this continues post-COVID 19. Local business owners should take the initiative to implement new innovations to keep customers engaged.

Growing a business requires making this type of intelligent investment, and printed packaging may be a great place to start for you.

Contact Viking Food Solutions on 1300 88 99 51 ■



# Snags are back!

**S**ydneyers have been queueing around the block for a Bunnings snag. In Queensland, Theebine State School (enrolment – three kids) is preparing to feed at least 350 people with a sausage fund-raiser in late November. Forbes-folk flocked to support their local Men's Shed and voting Canberrans have celebrated the return of the democracy sausage.

The sizzle is back.

Bunnings chief operating officer Deb Poole said: "Community groups and customers are keen to see community sausage sizzles return and we're really excited to be bringing them back."

The hardware giant suspended the community BBQ fund-raisers on March 18 under COVID-19 lockdown regulations. Other venues such as Dan Murphy soon followed suit.

There was public meltdown. The first Bunnings community sausage sizzle was run 26 years ago at Sunshine in suburban Melbourne and now more than 40,000 sausage sizzles are run by local community groups each year.

*MasterChef* judge Melissa Leong lamented: "For me, no weekend is really complete without a trip to my local Bunnings. There, I'm guaranteed ... to have consumed at least one sausage sizzle on the way in. (OK, and maybe one on the way out.) I'd give my entire collection of house plants for a sole square of refined loaf, a grilled snag topped with raw-yet-somehow-burnt onions, expertly prepped by the local soccer team and/or primary school."

Bunnings trialled re-opening charity sausage sizzles in Tasmania and the Northern Territory mid-year, with Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia following slightly later. ACT stories resumed in October and, by late October, only Victoria was awaiting a firm date for re-opening.

In suburban Canberra, a kind gesture from a local butcher meant Namadgi School did not have to buy sausages. Platinum Meats in South Point Tuggeranong donated 500 snags, 9 dozen eggs and 10kg of bacon.

Co-owner Kristy Alderson explained that the school initially approached them, seeking a discount. "And we thought 'everyone's been doing it so tough' we just gave them the order." The business she runs with partner Ken Hawthorn has no connection with the school and has only opened in early September.

The tiny Theebine State School fund-raiser on November 21 is being hosted for free by a local campsite Gootchie Creek and the organisers are sourcing the meat locally.

Resumption of sizzles has also coincided with elections in ACT and Queensland. In the ACT, 14 sausage sizzles took place in the 82 polling places. North Ainslie Primary P&C would normally expect to raise around \$5000 on the day.



*Kristy Alderson of Platinum Meats embrace the return of the sausage sizzle with a donation to a local school.*

Server Trudy Green said: "It's part of a festive atmosphere. It emphasises that we know that democracy is important and voting is important."

However, one Canberra school took the snag to the sky and organised drone delivery for online orders. Palmerston District Primary School normally raises \$3000 on election day but in October the school's Parent & Citizens Association were approached by drone firm Wing. The sausages were cooked at two local businesses and delivered by drone; the company offering a matching donation towards improving the school playground.

The sausage sizzle resumption is not without challenges. There's paperwork, and lots of it. "There's pages of instructions on what you've got to have, but these sausage sizzles are a vital part of charity fund-raising for small-scale community groups, said Ken Arnett, secretary of the Rotary Club of Summerland Sunrise in Lismore, northern NSW.

The new rules around communal sausage sizzles include layouts that promotes physical distancing and increased personal hygiene processes. These specify:

- Separate ordering and pick-up points to allow for 1.5 metres' physical distancing.
- Increased cleaning processes and hygiene requirements.
- Increased signage to guide customers.
- Cooks and servers to wear a face mask or face covering during sausage sizzle.
- Hand sanitiser on hand available.
- One person/one job, and only one person holding the sauce bottle.
- Prominently display the price and strongly advise customers to offer correct change. ■

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The products were initially produced to extend the shelf-life of cooked ham and corned beef using natural infusions of plant extracts from fruits and herbs and vinegar - balanced to give maximum performance without imparting significant flavour. In addition, these compounds have secondary functions through their intrinsic components (including essential oils) which prevent the growth of bacteria, yeasts, and moulds.

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The result is a range of food-safe, natural antimicrobials without flavour-impact which can be used economically in food or on food-contact-surfaces.



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Smoked and non-smoked meats, including smallgoods, chicken, beef, pork and lamb	✓
Raw meat which is either marinated or will be further processed, including chicken, beef, pork and lamb	✓
Cooked and ready-to-eat meats, including chicken, beef, pork and lamb	✓
Smoked seafood	✓
Non-smoked and cooked meats, including chicken, beef, pork and lamb	✓
Cooked seafood	✓
Label Declaration	Citrus Extract

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# The signs ahead for the future of food

Recognising a pattern and predicting what will happen next, is something most of us can do. A child learning to ride a bike will invariably hit the post you just told them to look out for. Not eating enough breakfast will end up with a big morning tea. A technology breakthrough will send the company's stocks soaring.

The stock market uses predictive patterns to forecast what will happen tomorrow, or the next month, or perhaps the next three months. Weather forecasting will model what is likely to happen in the near and far future.

When you are looking at societal behaviour and recognising patterns to predict where our future might lie, is what a futurist does. A futurist, like a stockbroker will report what might happen and leave it at that, but some futurists, like Melissa Clark-Reynolds analyse patterns and forecasts and see ways that we can change our behaviour to give a better outcome.

A digital strategist and a prominent business woman and Board director in the New Zealand beef and lamb industry, Ms Melissa Clark-Reynolds specialises in predicting how the future of meat will unfold in the coming years. A part of her research has been epidemiology – a particular relevant subject in the light of the current pandemic.

In a recent podcast with Australian Pork Ltd, Ms Clark-Reynolds discussed the current COVID-19 pandemic comparing it to African Swine Fever, and other pandemics that have occurred in the past and the opportunity we have to change how we view meat and farming practices to minimise the impact of future events.

"Pandemics occur around every three years, and this current COVID-19

episode may end up being the practice run for a bigger one in a few years' time.

## Pushing the Bounds of Nature

"As agriculture continues to push into new habitat, we come in closer contact with animal species that we have not traditionally had to share space with before. What that can mean around the world is that insects like mosquitoes can survive in greater areas spreading malaria, or we encroach on bats and risk disease jumping the species barrier, like it has with the current coronavirus."

African Swine Fever is borne by ticks in the wild boar population or in contaminated faeces, and close contact with farmed pigs has created many of the outbreaks for many years.

Ms Clark-Reynolds said that recognising the patterns in agriculture and learning from it, means should there be another pandemic, it may not have the disruptive impact on food security and health that we have experienced in 2020.

## Elimination vs Management

A positive is that countries that have overcome a disease, through elimination of a virus, as opposed to controlling a disease with vaccines have access to a wider range of markets and to trade meat at a premium.

Recently New Zealand had an outbreak of mycoplasma bovis disease in the cattle population, and rather than create a vaccine, the approach was to eliminate the disease. Since 2017, 250 farms were infected. A program of eradication of the disease now has only four farms classified as infected in 2020. The program has created the only beef product globally that is able to demand a premium price and kept



*Digital strategist and Board director in the New Zealand beef and lamb industry, Ms Melissa Clark-Reynolds.*

markets open to those who value that stand point.

Farmers in New Zealand, therefore need to review farming practices from a national level through to the paddock to keep their cattle free of the disease, to open up opportunity based on improved farming.

## Positive Provenance can Create Premiums

Another opportunity that Ms Clark-Reynolds has identified is premium markets based on regenerative agriculture, highlighted by the current buying behaviour of fashion shoe label Timberland.

Timberland are actively seeking hide for the purposes of producing boots that are certified as produced under regenerative agriculture. With the hide market currently at an all-time low – and excess hides are being composted, – if those hides had been produced under conditions that are desirable to Timberland, they would not have gone to waste.

The recent award to Provenir by delicious (see page 6) also points the way to creating a premium market for meat that is produced with environmental and animal welfare considerations in mind.

Provenir's concept of ethical low stress processing; where a premium price for the meat can be achieved and where

*continued on page 30*

*continued from page 29*

the farm of origin is known, means the premium can be shared with the farmer.

Compare that to commodity meat, says Ms Clark-Reynolds where processing is done en-masse, the farmer is very much a price taker.

### Global meat processors investing in “alternative protein”

“It is interesting to see that some of the owners of massive feedlots in the US such as Cargills and JBS are now investing heavily in alternative proteins, which suggests that they have recognised that there is a market for those wanting to eat meat, but less of it,” Ms Clark-Reynolds said.

“And we can see that trend occurring in Australia, which has the highest level of vegan product sales, but still has one of the largest consumptions of red meat. Rather than dismiss the impact of alternative proteins, companies like Cargill, are recognising the opportunity.

“There is a lot of debate around the world regarding doubling production to feed the global masses, but we also need to understand how we can feed the livestock. Sourcing soy products for example to feed pigs, often comes from protected rainforest, pushing humanity closer to mammals such as the bats.”

Ms Clark-Reynolds suggests that a change in mindset is needed to improve outcomes for the meat industry, through improving the unit value rather than pushing for more production.

The current pandemic has given the meat industry an opportunity to build on premium product, online sales and more direct customer relations through the local butcher. Sourcing proteins through suppliers who have a commitment to improved farming practices, value-adds product with a positive provenance story that appeals to consumers and builds more options for independent processors and retailers. ■



## Meat process plant reduces odours with safe aeration technology

A meat process plant needed aeration to reduce odours at their wastewater treatment system. The plant had a large 350,000 litre tank, with in-flows exceeding 4 megalitres per day. They also wanted a system that was easy to maintain and safe for operators.

Engineers at the plant selected a Venturi-Aeration system that consisted of two VA-1100 [6"] venturi-aerators, “powered” by two Gorman-Rupp pump model V6A60-B with a combined discharge rate of 140 litres per second [L/s]. The Gorman-Rupp pumps draw the wastewater from the tank and discharge it at pressure into the venturi-aerators. Air is drawn into the aerator at a ratio 2.2 times the pump flow, where it is mixed with the wastewater. Water is then discharged back into the tank, where “hydraulic sheer” facilitates the release of soluble gasses and volatiles from the water, which is now saturated with dissolved oxygen.

The discharge of the two aerators were set up tangential to the side wall to induce a “spin” to the contents of the tank, causing solids to migrate to the centre, where the pump suction lines were positioned. This way, large solids are collected, smashed through the pump and aerator, reducing their size and making them more available for biological reaction.

The plant has found the system very easy to access for monitoring and maintenance because it is located outside of the tank [not in it or on it]. They therefore need no lifting apparatus to access equipment, and there is no “working over water” or “working at heights” to contend with or write up on risk assessment documents.

Hydro Innovations Regional Manager, Shaun Allgood visited the plant, and noted that everything had been installed and was functioning perfectly. A spokesperson from the plant said they had no problems at all with the system. Shaun will continue to stay updated on this project and provide assistance when needed.

Smaller projects are possible with the use of smaller venturi-aerators, which are available in 50mm, 80mm, 100mm and 150mm sizes. Larger projects are approached by using multiples of the larger unit, sometimes using a dedicated large pump to “drive” two, three or even four venturi-aerators.

More information may be obtained by emailing [info@hydroinnovations.com.au](mailto:info@hydroinnovations.com.au) ■



# The Ethical Omnivore,

## Laura Dalrymple and Grant Hilliard

Increasingly, butchers are hearing questions from their customers – where did the meat come from? Who was the farmer? What sort of farm do they have? What is the best way to cook it?

Customers like these are seeking the answers for a number of reasons. It might be driven by the realisation that a butcher can provide those answers better than a supermarket. Some have health concerns that push them to look for products with less chemical inputs, or non-intensive productions systems like organic and biodynamic. Others might be concerned with climate change and the effects of farming on the environment.

For 14 years, the team at Feather and Bone, a butcher shop in Marrickville, New South Wales, had heard those questions and felt it was time to put pen to paper to respond, and more importantly to showcase the farmers that produce food that mitigate the problems associated with intensive farming.

The result is *The Ethical Omnivore*, written by Feather and Bone owners, Laura Dalrymple and Grant Hilliard and published by Murdoch Books.

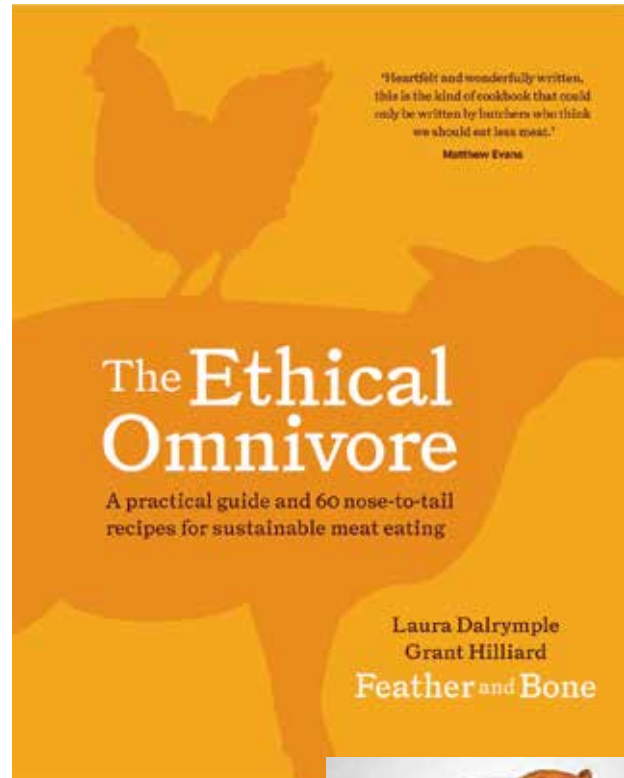
A hardcover, the book takes an open and honest approach to explaining how our food can be produced in a way that minimises the impact on the environment using farming practices that aim to leave the land better than how the farmer found it.

Included in the farmer profiles are rare breed producers – Berkshire pigs, Wagyu, Buffalo, Sommerlad chickens and Texel lamb, all of whom are committed to a more wholistic form of farming. For all these farmers, reducing animal stress for the final journey is equally important. Slaughter is approached with sensitivity and honesty.

It is one thing to source ethically produced meats, but it is also important to respect the animal and utilise nose to tail. Many home cooks no longer have the skills to prepare offal, or secondary cuts, so the book provides a number of recipes by the Feather and Bone community that showcase all cuts and celebrate their multicultural customers. Recipes include pigs ear banh mi rolls, chicken liver pate, beef skirt tortillas, classic French cassoulet and spit roast lamb in the great outdoors.

Released in August 2020, the book is available from Feather and Bone, RRP \$39.99

<https://featherandbone.com.au/products/the-ethical-omnivore>



### Evolution of an Ethical Butcher

The beginnings of Feather and Bone have not followed the usual origins of a butcher shop. Co-owner Grant Hilliard found it curious that wine could be described with provenance and terroir, but those attributes were not applied to meat.

After hearing about a rare breed sheep farmer describing his lamb meat as something out of the ordinary, Hilliard set about finding out more, and introduced it to chefs in Sydney. Realising that hospitality were demanding proteins with greater flavour, the business evolved into a supplier of rare breed meats into hospitality.

As more rare breed farmers came to light, a range of proteins became available. It also became clear that these farmers often had a different approach to farming and farm management.



*continued on page 32*

*continued from page 31*

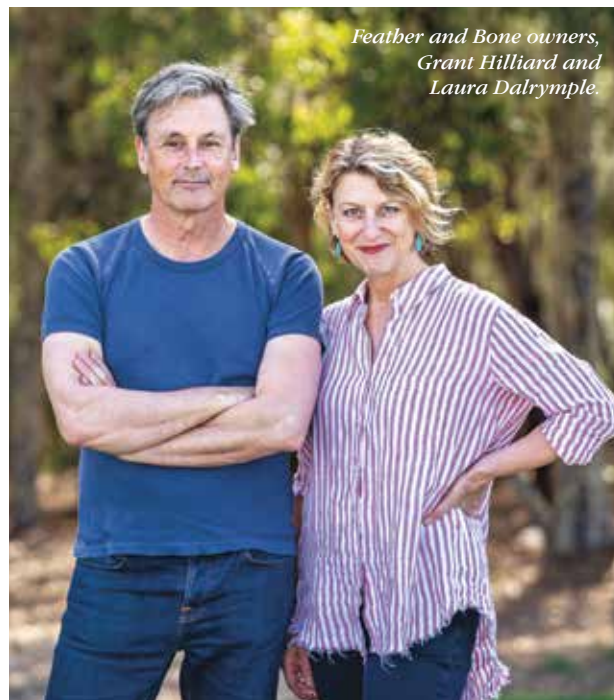
“These farms were not intensive systems, but more focused on wholistic management of the whole farm, not just the animals,” said Laura Dalrymple, co-owner of Feather and Bone.

“It became clear that the really good produce we were able to get was coming from farms where the priority was not on one species, but on creating a dynamic rhythm for the whole ecosystem on the farm. The processing stage was also carried out in a stress-free way as much as possible so that the meat is not compromised at the end.”

The shop buys the whole carcase from the farmer, which in itself places greater pressure on the business to find a home for the cuts. The Feather and Bone kitchen utilises those by creating broths, pates and value-add products that makes it easier to eat and prepare things like offal in a more palatable fashion.

“The customers that come to Feather and Bone, have found us for a particular reason,” said Laura.

“We have a reputation for quality food that gives a good eating experience, but more importantly we focus on providing food where we know how the food is produced, and that is important to our customers.



*Feather and Bone owners,  
Grant Hilliard and  
Laura Dalrymple.*

“They may have health challenges, they might want to eat less meat but better quality, and those who want ethically produced meat.

“The past year with drought, fires and now the pandemic has seen an increase in customers who are concerned about our food system and want to make new choices. They come to us, knowing we might have the products, and hopefully some answers.”

It was providing these answers that led to the development of *The Ethical Omnivore*.

A process that Laura had been thinking about for several years, was given the go-ahead by Murdoch Books in 2018. The book was not without its challenges, and Laura readily admits that although she had written dozens of newsletters and articles, a book is something entirely different.

The fundamentals of the book were in place from the beginning, but like any print media, what is published in one year, can change the next. As the events of 2020 unfolded, the principles of the book became even more poignant to provide farmers and the supply chain with support.

“It was important to us that the book didn’t come across as patronising, or a diatribe of how to live your life, but more a user-friendly approach for consumers to eat meat better. We want people to be inspired by the farmers, not be overwhelmed and understand how those farmers tread lightly on the landscape.

“We want consumers to understand that we are rewarding farmers who are demonstrably doing better by the environment, our health and animal welfare. And we want farmers to see that there can be a better way to farm, and that the consumers are looking for ethical produce.”

See page 35 for details on how to win a copy. ■

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2020 has birthed a huge new wave of home foodies, learning to love experimenting with new and more sophisticated flavours in their kitchens. This has paved the way for



an exceptional demand for dry aged product, which will only grow as these cooks expand their repertoire.

Consumers are becoming increasingly willing to spend more to get the taste they want. This movement of less budget meat making its way into shopping trolleys and consumption of higher quality meat as the preferred option, means dry aged meat is definitely here to stay.

Various models are available, to suit room area sizes, from 10m<sup>3</sup>, 16m<sup>3</sup> and 24m<sup>3</sup>.

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# FIND A WORD

NOVEMBER  
2020

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The words in the list below 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 28 letters remaining: these form the answer to the competition.

When complete, send your copy by mail or email. Include your name, address and phone number to go in the draw for another great prize from **BUNZL**. Results will be published in next issue of Australian Meat News. **Entries close 15 January 2021**

Last issues winners and answers, see page 35



L	A	N	I	N	A	C	H	S	N	A	O	L	K	N	A	B	P
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WILD WINDS  
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ALMONDS  
FAKE NEWS

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REMEDIAL  
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FIRE SEASON  
KEEPING  
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APART  
SONGS OF THE BUSH  
DRONES  
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## BOOK COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to Des Barritt, from Barritt's Butchery, Maryborough Qld. Des has won a copy of: *Charcuteria – The Soul of Spain* by Jeffrey Weiss.

Des submitted a correct entry to the question: What does MLA expect its income to be in 2025? Answer \$245.5 million, and was lucky enough to be selected by the random number generator in our computer.

Des, his family and the team have operated Barritt's Butchery since 2005. The business has a strong customer focus and sharing information is as important as the meat products they sell. In addition to beef, lamb, pork and chicken, Des makes a wide range of smallgoods; from traditional bacon to unique charcuterie, often developed with the guidance of customers who are willing to share some of their European culinary heritage.

Congratulations Des, hope this book stirs your creativity.



## WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win: *The Ethical Omnivore* (RRP \$40.00)

Answer the questions below.  
Send your answer and name and address & phone number to:

*Australian Meat News*  
Book Competition

By post: PO Box 415 Richmond Vic 3121

Email: athol@ausmeatnews.com.au

Questions: *How many Sausage Sizzles are run by community groups in Australia per year? and what percentage of CEO roles in the meat industry are held by women?*

**Entries close 15 January 2021**



## Winners August 2020 Find a Word

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to our sponsor BUNZL. Bunzl will contact all winners and make arrangements to deliver your prize.

### Simitar Steak Knife and Lesnie's Steel

Luke Iles, L & L Master Butchers, Bentleigh Vic

### Victory Narrow Curved Boning Knife

Alyson Lewis, Label Press Pty Ltd, Carole Park Qld

Mark Sengstock, Fairfield Butchery, Maryborough Qld

Mimma Princi, P Princi Food Service, Beaconsfield WA

Emma Messapasa, Krueger's Fine Meats & Smallgoods, Shepparton Vic

Marc Chambers, Wammco International, Katanning WA



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rob.drummond@multivac.com.au

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