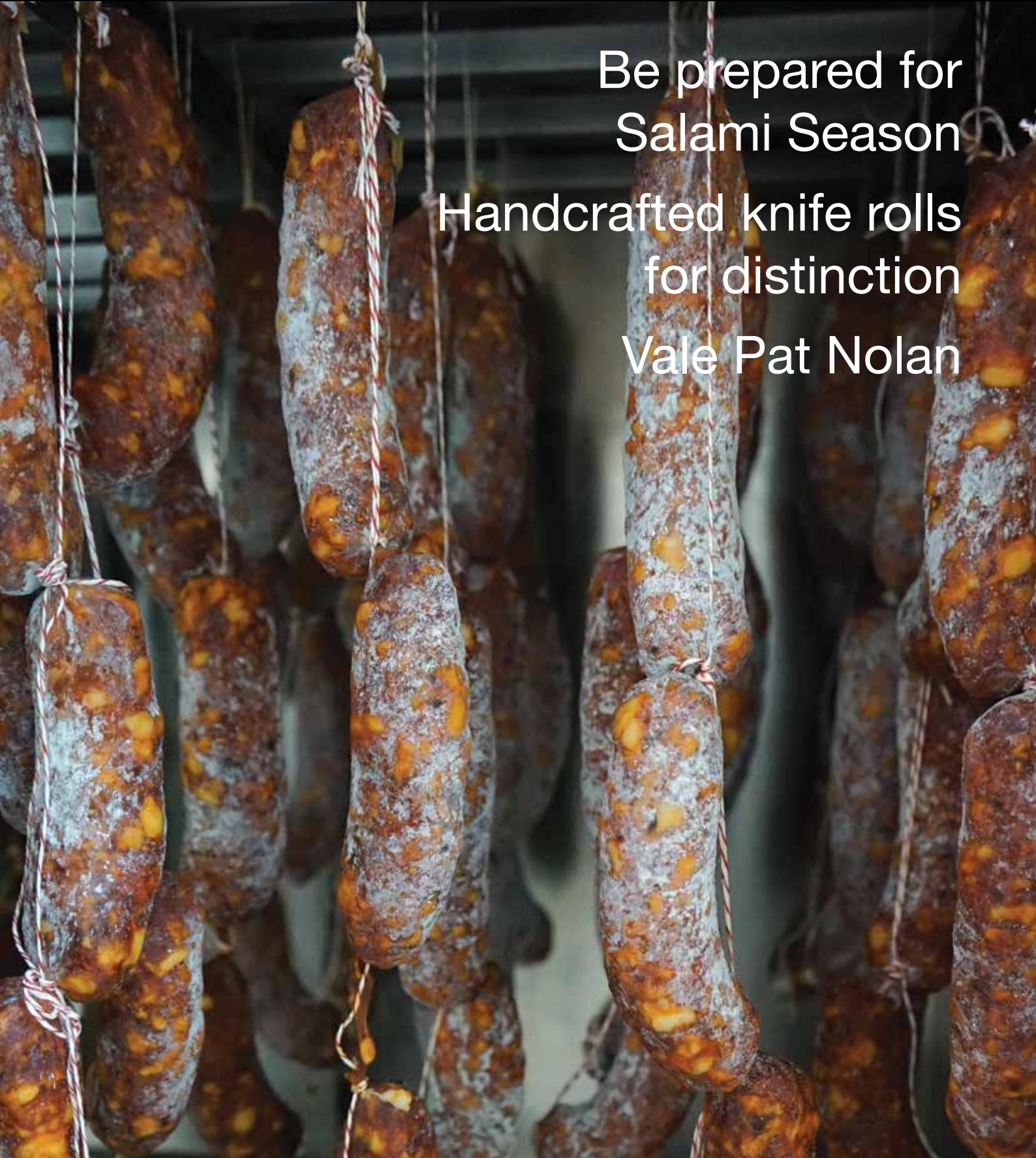


# AUSTRALIAN MeatNews

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VOLUME 19 | NUMBER 2 | MAY 2021



Be prepared for  
Salami Season  
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*The winter months are traditionally salami making season - butchers can be a great source of knowledge and supplies.*

## Giveaway

Win a copy of *The Pie Room*. See pages 33 & 35





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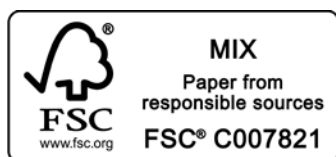
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## 2021 Wagyu branded beef competition winners announced

The announcement of the Australian Wagyu Association 2021 Wagyu Branded Beef Competition winners is an annual highlight for Australia's leading luxury beef brands. The medallists were recognised during a much anticipated Gala Dinner during the 2021 WagyuEdge annual conference on the Gold Coast last night.

With 36 entries from across the country, the competition represents the very best Australian Wagyu has to offer. Judged across three classes – Fullblood, Crossbred and Commercial – the competition is the only one of its type that is supported by an independent breed organisation. The aim of the competition is to promote the excellence achieved by Australian Wagyu brands and to recognise the continuous focus on optimising quality in Wagyu beef production. Champion awards are presented to the highest scoring entry in each category. The highest scoring entry across all categories is presented the Grand Champion Award.

This year, marked the 10th Wagyu Branded Beef Competition since its inception in 2012. A hallmark of the WBBC has been the fierce competition and improvement at the leading edge of Wagyu brands, with no brand in past years ever achieving back to back category or Grand Champion titles.

The 2021 Wagyu Branded Beef Competition has provided a first for the industry, with Stone Axe Pastoral taking out the 2021 Grand Champion titles for its Class 1 Fullblood entry – repeating its performance of 2020.

The Stone Axe entry was also the Champion Class1 Fullblood entry again, and achieved 54% marbling and an eye muscle area of 99cm<sup>2</sup>. The judges found it to have unbelievable richness, complex flavours that are sweet, dairy and cereal, with a melt in your mouth juiciness that was exquisite.

Champion of the Class 2 Open Crossbred category was Direct Meat Company with their Connors Wagyu brand. This entry sample achieved a very high marbling of 45%, with an eye muscle area of 78cm<sup>2</sup>. Judges described the sample as having a wonderful balance of rich and clean beefy flavour with lasting juiciness and tenderness.

In another first for the 2021 Branded Beef Competition, Pardoo Beef Corporation's Okan Wagyu Brand became the first commercial category entry to defend its title, winning the 2021 Class 3 Commercial Champion title to defend its 2020 title. This entry was 35% marbling and a rib eye area of 102 cm, the Pardoo Okan entry is a beautiful example of commercial wagyu steak. Visually this steak rated very well. The judges described the cooked sample as a delightful balance of clean flavours, fresh aroma and buttery tenderness with lasting juiciness.

Judging of the Wagyu beef is based on five criteria: visual appeal (raw and cooked), juiciness, flavour, aroma and the physical sensation in your mouth. The judging process was overseen by Chief Judge Pete Lewis and Chief Steward, Ron Fitzgerald, with a panel of 18 judges from across the industry and affiliated industries.

"I would like to thank the Australian Wagyu Brands for the continued, growing support they are showing for the Wagyu Branded Beef Competition," said Ron Fitzgerald, AWA Branded Beef Competition Coordinator.



"I count it a rare privilege to be in a room where so many extremely high quality steaks are displayed together, representing the best beef Australia has to offer. It is great to see the depth and quality of the Australian Wagyu Industry being demonstrated in the entries and I think the ensuing awards and publicity are an appropriate recognition of the excellence these brands are achieving as they provide the Australian Wagyu Producers a conduit to supply the Australian public and the rest of the world."

The Champions and Gold medal winners from each class are:

### Class 1: Fullblood Wagyu

**Champion: Stone Axe Pastoral, Stone Axe**



Gold: Stone Axe Pastoral, Stone Axe  
Mayura Station, Signature Series  
Irongate Wagyu, Futari Wagyu  
Rangers Valley, Infinite  
Direct Meat Company, Connors  
Kilcoy Global Foods, Carrara 640

### Class 2: Crossbred Wagyu

**Champion: Direct Meat Company, Connors**

Gold: Direct Meat Company, Connors  
Mort & Co, Master Selection  
Pardoo Beef Corporation, Okan Wagyu  
Poll Wagyu, Poll Wagyu

### Class 3: Commercial Wagyu (Marble Score 5-7)

**Champion: Pardoo Beef Corporation, Okan Wagyu**

Gold: Pardoo Beef Corporation, Okan Wagyu  
Kilcoy Global Foods, Carrara 640  
Stockyard Beef, Stockyard Silver

"The level of quality and range of brands continues to increase year on year, highlighting the high level of competition and the continual focus on excellence in producing Wagyu, the world's luxury beef," said Australian Wagyu Association, CEO, Matt McDonagh.

"We congratulate Stone Axe Pastoral on being the 2021 Grand Champion and the only company to have attained Grand Champion Wagyu brand in successive years.

"With ever increasing numbers of entries, I would like to Mr Ron Fitzgerald, the organising committee and Judges for their time to make this happen. I would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Prime Cut Meats and Comcater Brisbane for hosting the event for preparation and judging to give such a stellar outcome."

For full results, the Wagyu Branded Beef Competition results booklet is available for download here: <https://www.wagyu.org.au/wbbc> ■



## Research finds link for small bleeds in capillaries in lamb

South Australian researchers have pinpointed possible causes for a post-slaughter condition that costs yield loss in lamb carcasses.

The research, by scientists from the University of Adelaide, found that a sample of 12,286 lamb carcasses through a SA abattoir revealed 14% displayed ecchymosis, an undesirable appearance in the intercostal muscles of the meat caused by small bleeds from capillaries broken during the slaughter process. The lesions have to be heavily trimmed during processing, incurring labour costs and yield losses.

Early career researcher Leesa-Joy Flanagan said: "Ecchymosis remains poorly understood, but fractured capillaries indicate a weakness in vascular tissue."

The researchers found that kill date and time in lairage were the two most-possible contributors to an increased incidence of ecchymosis. They also found significant variation between lines of lambs. Other factors they investigated were the effects of breed, morning or afternoon shift, direct or market consignment, hot standard carcass weight and deviation from lot average carcass weight, as well as palpated fat score.

A further study of 3802 mutton carcasses found low incidence of the condition in those animals.

Ms Flanagan said: "Ecchymosis had a significant prevalence in lambs only. The time lambs spend in lairage and their bodyweight may be predisposing factors for ecchymosis before slaughter and warrant further investigation."

"The interaction of size and weight extremeness appeared to predispose lambs to developing ecchymosis at slaughter. Farm of origin was another identified risk factor, but whether it was size and extremeness influencing body composition or other mechanisms involved in vascular integrity, is not known."

Lead researcher Dr David Rutley said that ecchymosis in lambs could be used as a model to study vascular weakness in humans. ■

## Did you know that's made from imported pork?

Each week, imported pork arrives on Australia's shores, directly affecting the profitability of Australian pork producers and creating a need to differentiate local pork from imported. Research conducted by the Australian Pork Limited's insights team in 2018, showed that consumers are almost entirely unaware of the fact that the majority of Australia's ham and bacon is made with imported pork. This means directives to look for Australian pork in ham and bacon, currently lacks meaning to consumers, as they believe they are already buying Australian pork.

In response to this, on March 14 APL launched a campaign in Adelaide only, running until the end of June, to educate and raise awareness around the prevalence of imported pork and the country of origin label. APL's pre-campaign report showed that 33% of respondents think the intended purpose of the country of origin label is to communicate that the product is made in Australia. To combat this, the campaign communicates to look for full bar chart on the country of origin label. Clarity around the meaning of each component is required for this campaign, as currently 13% of respondents believe the bar chart on the label means the amount made in Australia and a further 15% do not know what the bar means.

The results of this campaign will help APL understand whether awareness of imported pork motivates Adelaide consumers to find and purchase ham and bacon made with Australian pork. It will also pave the way for future communications and campaigns around imported pork messaging, creating opportunities for producers and the supply chain by differentiating ham and bacon made with Australian pork.

### Pork border seizures an urgent reminder for biosecurity vigilance

Australia's biosecurity authorities have intercepted almost 200 pork products containing African swine fever (ASF) or foot and mouth disease (FMD) at Australia's international mail centres in recent weeks, a substantial increase on the same time last year.

The announcement – made by the Department of Agriculture – is another warning for Australia's pork producers, and an acknowledgement of the catastrophic threat on Australia's doorstep.

Australian Pork Limited (APL), the industry body representing Australian pig farmers, praised the diligence of Commonwealth biosecurity officers, but urged producers to double-down on on-farm biosecurity efforts in the face of the increasing threat.

APL CEO Margo Andrae said the volume of returning positive fragments was of immense concern to the industry and a reminder to Australia pork producer be on high alert.

"The transfer of diseases like ASF and FMD would devastate the industry, close exports markets and damage our

industry's future – worth \$5.2 billion and employing 36,000 people across the economy," Ms Andrae said.

Pork products were seized at international mail centres in Brisbane, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne over two fortnightly periods during the recent holidays. Twenty-four per cent of these products tested positive for ASF and one per cent to FMD.

"We have been working closely with the Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Australia and other industry partners on ASF preparedness for more than two years, conducting national simulation exercises. However, keeping this enormous threat off our shores is the number one priority," Ms Andrae said.

While the disease does not directly affect public health or food safety, it is highly infectious and terminal for pigs, posing a significant threat on the entire industry. There is no cure for ASF. Any passengers carrying and not declaring these goods when entering the country face fines of up to A\$420,000 and imprisonment for up to 10 years. ■

## Arthritis trim in lamb costs

Arthritis trimming is cutting up to \$18 off lamb carcass values, according to new research from NSW. The study found losses of between \$2.95 to \$18.08 for an over-the-hooks carcass price of \$7.83/kg and an average hot standard carcass weight (HSCW) of 23.13kg. It was the first time losses had been calculated for the practice of trimming arthritic tissue off lamb carcasses.

The researchers found shank or leg arthritis in 217 of 42,164 lamb carcasses processed over six months.

Lead researcher Paige Mazoudier said: "Processors supply limited feedback about disease and defects. We used arthritis as a case study and aimed to develop a scoring system estimating HSCW losses due to trimming at processing, to improve feedback to lamb producers."

Ms Mazoudier, who is now studying for her PhD at the University of Adelaide, last year won the SARDI Science Bursary for Women for her research. "I want to understand how feedback about disease prevalence in abattoir processing can affect the on-farm decision-making process," she said.

The study was undertaken by scientists from Charles Sturt University, MLA, the University of Melbourne and Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit, a joint venture between NSW Department of Primary Industries and the University of New England. The study was assisted by Gundagai Meat Processors. ■





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## Super Butcher new owners

A Gold Coast real estate developer has bought one of Australia's largest independent red meat retail networks.

The sale of Super Butcher to businessman Damian Hall marks the end of the McDonald family's link to the five-store, warehouse-style butcher shops across Brisbane's suburbs and the Gold Coast.

The McDonalds, a notable Cloncurry grazing family, acquired control of the business in 2014 by buying out the 30% stake owned by their business partner, Sydney-based wholesaler and meat trader, Gary Stone of Melrina in an amicable deal.

The two had earlier taken over the business after it went into liquidation in 2012 owing up to \$10m to creditors, mostly wholesalers.

Founded by Bindaree Beef's Andrew McDonald (no relation) from Inverell NSW, the business once operated nine warehouse outlets, stretching from Sydney to Brisbane, as well as online sales.

Through his family's firm MDH Pty Ltd, Don McDonald took over the business and handed control firstly to his son Zanda, who died in a farm incident in 2013, and then his daughter Susan. A qualified accountant, she is credited with overhauling the firm's inventory and accounting systems.

As a Queensland Nationals member, she won election to the Senate in 2019 and her workload in that role is one reason Don McDonald sought to sell the business. He said the retail operations became 'less relevant to our cattle and branded beef business', adding: "Nobody else in the family was keen to get involved in the retail side, so we thought the best thing was to put it on the market.

"It was time to move," he said, noting that 2020 had been a year of strong performance across red meat retailing.

The sale draws a line under MDH's earlier plans to expand the Super



*Susan McDonald, Super Butcher*

Butcher footprint, with Toowoomba considered as a potential store location.

The sale, an off-market transaction, was announced in late March. Businessman Damian Hall is managing director of a specialised retail and commercial property development company. He had a background in banking and working as a commercial property agent before shifting into childcare property development.

Super Butcher is a warehouse retailer, selling from stores sited mostly in industrial areas at Ashmore, Birkdale, Browns Plains, Eagle Farm and Oxenford. They operate as virtual cold stores and are set to 3 degrees C. Customers arrive rugged up in coats and hats while unsuspecting shoppers are offered overcoats at the front doors of the cavernous buildings.

The unique sales proposition is not just cold surroundings, it is quality. MDH's own branded beef is sold through the outlets alongside other high-end, branded commercial beef from Australia and sometimes New Zealand. It is displayed chilled on large stainless steel display stands and it is mostly sold as whole primals such as

whole briskets and rumps, rib-sets and rib fillets.

There are also conventional-packed retail steaks, mince and sausages and value packs are big sellers; the most popular offering five meals for \$50 per kit also offers BBQ, burger and protein packs.

The business also incorporates a dry-aging facility at its Eagle Farm outlet, and offers a free service to slice, dice and vacuum seal, as well as home delivery to Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast.

The range is exhaustive, ranging from conventional cuts to the exotics: tallow to biltong, kangaroo to crocodile and rabbit – wild and farmed. Rubs, sauces, pickles, truffle salt, cultured butter, liquid smoke and other grocery items are also available.

The turnover is high, the margins are low and the average shopping cart purchase size, like the cuts, is hefty. The average outlay is enough to warrant the company's 10-week, no-interest payback deal.

Sen McDonald said: "We don't see anybody else doing what Super Butcher is doing, in terms of a business model: in recognising the producer,



## Meatstock in Toowoomba features Boning Wars

recognising the brand, and because of our buying power and turnover, being able to pass that on to the consumer.”

The McDonalds sought to fashion Super Butcher as a cellar door for meat, educating customers on those elements that determine flavour and texture of the meat they buy. Sen McDonald also set out to win customers back from supermarket shopping, believing that better prices for similar quality was part of the solution. Convenience was another factor. “We, as independents, have to give them another reason to shop here,” she said.

Don McDonald believes the model will serve its new owner well, despite his lack of experience in red meat retailing. “The variety on offer, the story behind the various brands, and the sharp pricing is the key,” he said. ■

The crew at Meatstock are super excited to announce that they’re adding a new location to the schedule in 2022. For the first time, the festival is coming to Queensland.

Promoter Jay Beaumont said “We believe that Toowoomba has the potential to be hugely successful and we can’t wait to take the festival north of the border.”

The festival will also include a brand new event, The Boning Wars, which is set to be the first of its kind anywhere in the world!

The competition format will showcase the team skills of a boner and slicer (or portioner) as they break down and present a beef hindquarter for the panel of experienced judges.

Points for each team will be determined by their speed, knifework, yield and presentation and the winner will be

crowned Australia’s first ever Boning Wars Champion. The winner of The Boning Wars will take home a huge chunk of the \$2500 cash plus trophies and prizes which are up for grabs.

“The city of Toowoomba plays an enormous production role in the Australian beef industry and we couldn’t think of a better location to hold this new and exciting event.” Jay said. “Thousands of people in the region rely on the beef industry for employment and the industry, in turn, plays an integral role in the fabric of the community here and all around the country.”

Entry is open to anyone in the industry Australia wide, from small processors right through to the big plants, so save the date – Saturday 9th April 2022.

For entry details and more information contact [jay@meatstock.com.au](mailto:jay@meatstock.com.au) ■



— AUSTRALIAN —

# BONING

— WARS —

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## SPONSORSHIP

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- Event to be officially known as the X Australian Boning Wars.
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- Social media photos of the event.

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### 2/3 PLACE

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- Company introduction and Trophy Presentation to 2nd or 3rd place team on the LIVE presentation stage.
- Logo on the big screen during the presentations.
- Complimentary 3x3m Indoor or 3x3m Outdoor Expo space.
- 5 complimentary event superpasses to Meatstock Toowoomba to give away to staff/clients/customers.
- 3 x tickets to the V.I.P Room/Marquee.
- Social media photos of the event.

\$2.5k



# Salami Season – helping your customers make the perfect smallgoods

The winter months herald the start of the salami season – a time when many Europeans make their own smallgoods based on recipes handed down from generation to generation. A time when customers will turn to their local butcher to source the necessary ingredients and advice.

Many butchers will already be familiar with making smallgoods, but on a more commercial level. The home salami maker is more likely to create the family's secret recipe salami on a small scale. The principles are essentially the same.

To help the home salami maker create a product that is rewarding – and safe to eat – it is worth being a resource for advice as well as stocking the nettings, foundation ingredients and spices.

“The fundamentals of salami making are the same regardless of whether it is a Cacciatore or a Hungarian salami,” said Andrew Morabito, Teacher Meat & Allied Trades, TAFE NSW and self-confessed home salami maker.

“A stable temperature and humidity, starter cultures, salts, sugars and good quality pork are what we refer to as the foundation ingredients. Whatever the recipe, these key ingredients need to be in the right ratio in order for the salami to cure properly with the right bacteria. The spices and flavours can be altered to suit your personal taste.”

A stable temperature is one of the reasons that salami season is in winter, where the temperature can remain relatively cool and consistent. While smallgood manufacturers are



required to use health department approved curing rooms, often the home salami maker will have a dedicated shed, laundry or other part of the house adapted for the purpose. This room needs to have space and airy so that air movement is gentle – not a roaring gale. The simplest way to measure the room's conditions, says Andrew is to get a weather station from a hardware store.

Typically, a 45mm salami will require 3 – 4 weeks to cure; larger will take longer. A salami that dries too quickly may result in case hardening, where the outer skin dries out, preventing moisture from inside the salami to escape via the skin pores, and risking the salami going bad.

## Pork

Traditionally, salamis are made using female pork, to remove boar taint. However, Australian castrated males, are unlikely to have boar taint and will work equally well. Some butchers may have noticed that the use of vacuum sealed, or frozen pork can lose colour – this occurs when the juices of the meat dissipate into the bag (or leak when defrosting) which contains myoglobin, the protein that gives meat the red colour.

Andrew says that when he makes a salami at home, he prefers to use 95CL pork, adding 15% pork fat to the overall content. Clean back fat from the neck or over the loin is the best.

## Salts and nitrates

The role of salts and nitrates is to assist with the moisture absorption and to create an environment that prevents 'bad bacteria' from developing. The ratio of salts will be dependent on the level of fats in the salami. According to MLA guidelines around 2.5 – 3.0% of salt is added. Nitrates typically in the form of sodium nitrate are used to kill the 'bad bacteria' and convert to nitrites, which often give meats a reddish colour.

"It is important to understand why we add salts and nitrates to salamis," says Andrew. "For generations, our grandparents, would use rock salt which usually had trace elements of sodium nitrate, not understanding the role it plays in preserving salami. Table salt, or sodium chloride, does not have those trace elements, so a nitrate needs to be added."

Typically sodium nitrite measures around 125mg/kg – we take on more nitrite in our diet from leafy green vegetables than from salami, so concerns about the health implications of nitrites can be alleviated.

## Starter cultures and sugars

Like bread or cheese, fermented meats like salami need a starter culture to reduce the acidity (pH) within the first 48 hours from the start of fermentation. Like yeast in bread, sugars are added to 'feed' the bacteria of the starter culture.

Using around 0.05% of starter culture will need around 0.7% sugars. Glucose, sucrose, brown sugar, honey are all sugars that can be used.

Starter cultures are available in smaller quantities for the home salami maker from some food ingredient suppliers, and in different forms. The choice of which one to use, comes down to personal taste, as some will leave a sourer flavour than others.

## Hygiene at home

Back in our grandparents' day, the salami mix may have been done in a wooden trough – which would impart the bacteria needed. In today's society, food grade plastic tubs and stainless steel are used, thereby requiring cultures to be added for the fermentation process.

The biggest risk to the home salami maker, says Andrew is listeria, but can be reduced by ensuring that everything is fully sterilised, that the same recipe and procedure that worked last year is strictly adhered to this year, to remove risk from changing the foundation ingredients and upsetting the preservation balance.

"Mother nature provides us with some pretty good indications of whether the salami is fermenting and drying properly.

"If the mold on the outside is a white/greenish colour and if the smell is like a smelly cheese you should be ok.

"If the mold is looking red or black, and the odour is terrible, then it has gone bad. If in doubt, chuck it out."

## String, netting and spices

Cotton string is recommended over nylon. As the salami dries and loses moisture, the size will shrink – nylon will slip, whereas cotton tends to stick to the salami, preventing it from dropping on the floor. Standard butcher supply nettings are perfectly ok for home salami makers.

Once the foundation ingredients are in place, the level of spice and flavour can be altered to suit personal taste. Some European traditions call for specific ratios of spices in order for it to be called a particular type of salami, but often the family recipe will be based on one handed down through the generations based on what is available to that region.

"The home made salami has for generations been a traditional family event, where every person in the family knew what their job was, and they did it precisely every year, following the recipe and method to the letter.

"For many of our grandparents those recipes have been handed down, without understanding why they did things in a particular way. I'm a big believer in using modern methods and technologies with those old recipes to create the best possible salami, that is safe and enjoyable to eat." ■

# The next generation of Secondary Seal Technology

Confinement odour and blood drip in vacuum packed meats are a main cause of complaints for supermarkets, especially on export meats such as beef and lamb.

Krehalon SSL™ Plus technology takes Secondary Seal (SSL™) to the next level by reducing confinement odour and introducing fat adhesion properties that improve blood drip control and enhance product presentation of vacuum-packed meats over extended shelf life.



Comparison between SSL™ Plus product (right) and standard shrink product (left).

## Commissioned study to prove odour reduction and shelf life benefits of SSL™ Plus

in association with  
**Campden BRI**  
food and drink innovation

Testing was carried out on 700 lamb legs packed in Krehalon's SSL™ Plus in order to determine potential shelf life extension, blood drip loss and confinement odour reduction benefits over

standard sealing shrink bags. Products were stored at 0°-3°C for 28 days and then split into 'Commercial' and 'Retail' temperature abuse trials.

### SSL™ Plus proved significant odour reduction compared to standard bags over shelf life

	RAW LAMB ODOUR		GAMEY ODOUR		STALE BLOOD ODOUR		OVERALL SENSORY QUALITY	
	Standard bag	SSL™ Plus	Standard bag	SSL™ Plus	Standard bag	SSL™ Plus	Standard bag	SSL™ Plus
Day 1	2	2	0	0	0	0	Excellent	Excellent
Day 28	4	3	0	0	0	0	Very good	Excellent
Day 35 - Retail	5	4	2	1	4	2	Satisfactory	Fairly good
Day 47 - Retail	6	5	4	2	5	3	Just acceptable	Fairly good
Day 55 - Commercial	6	3	4	0	5	1	Just acceptable	Good
Day 61 - Commercial	7	5	6	2	7	1	Poor	Fairly good

### Strength of odour grading:

A panel of experienced sensory assessors measured the intensity of each odour (raw lamb, gamey and stale blood smells) giving it a rating from 0 (absent) to 9 (very strong). An overall quality grading was then awarded to each – from 'Bad' to 'Excellent'.

ABSENT	VERY WEAK	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG	VERY STRONG
0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10

### SSL™ Plus offered improved visual appearance of the lamb legs at end of shelf life:

SSL™ Plus  
Towards end  
of shelf life



Standard Bag  
Towards end  
of shelf life

## Features & benefits

- Odour reduction**  
Reduced confinement (gamey and stale blood) odour associated with long-life vacuum-packed meats
- Improved pack presentation**
  - Reduction in unsightly blood pools within the bag
  - Visual 'whiteness' of product fat with no blood discoloration
  - No relaxation of the bag, retaining product shape over shelf life.
- Extended shelf life**  
Bacteria is proven to grow faster in blood than the surface of the meat. As such, SSL™ Plus helps prolong product shelf life through:
  - Improved control of blood movements within the bag
  - Reduced overall bacteria count.
- Thinner but stronger**
  - SSL™ Plus offers higher puncture resistance, allowing the use of thinner materials.

Interested to learn more?

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# Generations of tradition at Siketa Meats

Siketa Meats is well known in Geelong for its European smallgoods, brought to the community through its owner, Croatian, Bruno Senior, more than 40 years ago.

An emigrant, Bruno began life in Australia as a fruit picker in Mildura, when a chance accident changed the course of his life. When a truck-load of pork carcasses rolled on the road, Bruno was more than happy to help with the clean up, a chance conversation with the driver, and Bruno relocated to Geelong to help in the butcher shop for whom the carcasses were destined.

Four years later the butcher offered Bruno the opportunity to buy the business. Bruno was 17. With help and support from family and friends, Siketa Meats began. In 2010, the business moved to a new, larger premise on the same street, enabling Bruno's son, Tony to improve how the business operated, including rails to allow the butchers to process full carcasses on site.

"Dad learned his skills and family recipes and traditions back home in Croatia," said Tony Senior.

"His family were traditionally fishermen, but always did a home kill, using every part of the animal to ensure that there was a source of protein all year round by making salamis, or air-dried meats prepared in the cold months for the summer meats.

"They never had a lot of animals, so when it was time, the animal was treated with respect, and that tradition continues today in the shop, in that we do not use carton or cryovac meats, only fresh and utilise everything. I have found from experience, that to truly get the best results in our smallgoods, the meat must be as fresh



as possible. You want the bacteria levels to be correct for when you add the sugars and salts for preserving to get the best results. I always find that carton or cryovac cuts just don't have it."

Customers in the area are mostly European, looking for traditional cuts and smallgoods, and will wait patiently to speak Croatian to request the cut they require. The majority of product is based on pork, so the butchers will easily spend the day boning up to 30 pigs per day to meet demand, particularly for traditional events such as orthodox Easter and salami making season. Tony prefers female pigs, to avoid boar taint in the smallgoods.

All the pork is sourced from local farmers who have been with Siketa for many years, and who understand the ebb and flow of demand through the year. Cevap, a garlicky, spicy sausage, is easily the most popular value-add product, with the recipe a closely-held secret.

The business has its own dry aged room, to do prosciuttos, salamis,

kranskys, pork belly – anything that can be dry aged.

"We were fortunate to be in an industry that benefitted from COVID – we added extra staff, and started doing deliveries.

"Customers were initially apprehensive to come into the shop, but were reassured by our commitment to their safety. The restriction of five customers at a time, also meant that we were better able to serve our customers which has been an overall positive for us."

Siketa Meats has four peak seasons through the year – Easter, Orthodox Easter, Salami season and Christmas. With the cooler months, families who make their own salamis turn to Siketa Meats for supplies, including the sauces, casings, nettings and spice across a four week period. Tony said that on average 100 people per week visit the shop in that time to source the ingredients for home made salami.

The short window of opportunity to make smallgoods for the shop occurs between August and October, before the Christmas preparations begin. ■

# Value-added paves the road to success

By Stephanie Flynn

**T**he long road of experience for veteran butcher, Darren Prosser, has enabled him to hone-in on what makes a retail butcher shop profitable.

After close on 45 years as a butcher across three states, Darren has identified customer service and value-added products as the cornerstones of success.

Since entering the industry in South Australia as a young lad where his brother owned a store, he went on to do his apprenticeship in Port Augusta with a smallgoods manufacturer before heading off to Katherine in the Northern Territory working for a retail butcher where he spent nine years.

Years in the red desert environment triggered a hankering for green pastures so he moved to Queensland where he has since successively purchased, built-up and sold several country town butcher shops from Toowoomba to Gladstone and Noosa.

He first purchased his current store at Noosa Outlook in 1989, developed the customer base and sold it before re-purchasing the same store again five years ago.

The store had been run down when he re-purchased and the customers, although still residing in the same suburb had wandered off to other butcher shops, but on hearing of his return became his customers once again.

He credits his focus on service as the catalyst for the customer loyalty shown to his store, a level of service he developed by understanding small country town retail butchering.

“What we have over the supermarkets, where we cannot compete on convenience, is better quality at a better price and a better range but,



*Darren Prosser with his 'Chicken Mignons' and his team, L to R, Cameron Prosser, Dean McDonald and Ethan Purser.*

most importantly, we can offer that personal service,” Darren said.

“I know 99 percent of my customers’ names, it is something we follow throughout the store with all staff encouraged to find out their names, where they are from and a little bit about their lives by engaging in conversation,” Darren said.

“Another aspect of this personal touch is that we all try and remember what each customer purchases so we can ask them for feedback the next time they come in, this is particularly relevant for the value-added lines which are now the cornerstone of our business,” he said.

Darren remembers, laughingly, the first value-added product into butcher stores decades ago with the introduction of ‘crumbed steak’, but his passion for value-added lines started with an MLA promotion back in the late 1990’s.

MLA invited entries from across the nation to submit recipe ideas for a

cookbook to be published and issued to all butchers to stimulate the introduction of value-added lines and Darren submitted his ‘Beef Swaggies’ recipe which won a spot in the published cookbook.

Two decades later, Beef Swaggies – a piece of flattened top side steak covered with an Italian parmigiana sauce, topped with baby spinach, ham and cheese and marinated – remains a top seller in his extensive range of value-added lines.

The range of value-added lines in the store today is impressive and, according to Darren, now account for over 80 percent of his business.

But there is a lot of time and effort required to build a butcher store on value-added lines.

Darren starts work at 3.00am, his son Cameron at 5.00am and other staff at 6.00am in order to prepare the lines for store opening each day.

Then there is the development of new lines which need to be tried and tested





*Customer demand is high for heat and serve value-added lines.*

before becoming a permanent part of the range on offer in the store.

Darren will offer the new test lines at no charge to his valued customers to try and provide the all-important feedback loop which guides his product development.

Whereas once upon a time the customers in Darren's area were elderly, today the profile has changed dramatically with families inhabiting the area which means that he must keep his pricing at a level that makes value-added lines affordable to feed a household of several people.

Darren has observed another noteworthy change from even a decade ago which is that around half of the customers shopping in his store are men.

Understanding the psychology of customer buying habits is also important from Darren's perspective he notes that customers like to feel that they make some contribution to the meal service.

It is all about heat and serve lines that appeal to men and women and at a price that meets the budgets of the families in the area which means cost savings must be made at the processing level of the business without compromising quality.

"We do not buy carton meat, we buy carcase and break it down ourselves and design value-added lines around the use of all the parts," Darren said.

"Consistency is a very big word in this industry, covering both quality and constant supply, both of which are very important and needs to factor into your decision on suppliers," Darren said.

Darren makes every attempt to source locally where possible, given the guideline of consistency, using Nolan's Meats for beef, SunPork in Kingaroy for pork and suppliers in Brisbane for Tasmanian or Victorian lamb.

As to the future, Darren is of the view that the COVID-19 lockdown last year has heralded a permanent change in

custom for butcher stores noting that turnover remains considerably higher today than it was pre-pandemic.

He believes that it reinvigorated the 'cook at home' trend which was evident a decade ago and which may well become a permanent change as people find they like cooking at home and eating good quality food without spending a fortune in restaurants.

"I would estimate that retail butchers have picked up 50 percent of what was once food service sector business," Darren said. ■

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# Quality and craftsmanship for butchers

Finding a point of distinction for a butcher shop can come in a variety of forms – a popular value-add ready meal, paddock to plate, or perhaps a preference for local producers. The presentation of the shop can also be crafted to be a unique welcoming environment that brings customers in the door.

How the shop looks is a reflection of the philosophy of the owner and staff, some choose to do a shop fit with a modern look, while others opt for a traditional look or a deli. Artwork, antique butcher equipment, shelving and cabinetry all add to the décor of the shop.

The finishing touch can be uniforms. The trademark black and white apron of a butcher is still very popular, but increasingly, butchers are looking for alternatives to the butcher's apron and blue shirt with caps, logo aprons and more recently, leather goods.

A butcher's pride and joy would undoubtedly be his knives. To care and protect his knives on the job requires somewhere to store them within easy reach. A knife holster and knife roll have been around in some form for years. Holsters and rolls made from leather are making a comeback as butchers realise the potential to give the shop a point of difference, with the added bonus of a functional, hard wearing part of kit for the trade.

Maka's Kniferolls have been finding increasing popularity in recent years. Hand crafted in Tasmania, Mick Kerkham – Maka – has been making knife rolls, holsters and other leather goods for 15 years with chefs, butchers and tradies regular customers.

A landscape horticulturist by trade, Maka had a side gig of selling safety kneepads to tradies, who then asked for tool belts. Seeing an opportunity, Maka armed himself with a sewing machine capable of handling leather and taught himself the basics. A few requests for knife rolls from friends in hospitality, and the business was away.

"I love the smell of leather, its versatility and its durability," said Maka. "Leather can be folded, sewn and curved and it turns out I have a flair for working with leather."

"Butchers are looking to knife rolls to complement the shop image, with that vintage look. A few butcher shops I have worked with have also had each roll, holster and apron embossed with the employees' name to make it unique. It is an inexpensive way to freshen up the look of the shop."



"In many ways it resonates with butchers in particular who share a nose to tail philosophy, in that everything is used, there is no wastage. It is the same with the leatherwork, I try and use every single piece in some way to minimise the wastage."

Leather is available in a number of forms. From cattle, yearling leather is softer than from steers and better suited to soft bags. The tougher, thicker steer leather is ideal for knife holsters. Maka uses a thickness of around 2.2mm for the holsters for longer durability without losing the suppleness.

Sourced from a tannery in Victoria, Maka prefers to use more natural colours – blacks, tans, browns, but does take advantage of the coloured leathers such as a vibrant red, green and blue.

The rolls and holsters are also sealed and polished to prevent moisture absorption, making them a hygienic and safe for food handling. The sides of the holsters are held together by rivets rather than sewn, so prevent the knives from catching on the stitching, which in turn protects the knives. With continued care, Maka says the leather goods can last for many years. In fact, he says, that he has not had one piece returned for repair in 15 years.

The reputation of Maka's work is such that he is a regular exhibitor at butcher events, has secured regular orders from around the country, and more recently into a specialty store in the US.

"Butchers take pride in their knives, and a knife roll and holster is an extension of that – they are just as likely to become a heirloom as an everyday tool. For the shop, it adds that point of distinction and gives the entire shop the message that it is a shop that cares about its craft."

Maka leather goods [www.maka.com.au](http://www.maka.com.au) ■





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# Animal and human health interrelationship

By Stephanie Flynn

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has called for countries not to take sanitary restrictions linked to COVID-19 on international trade in animals and animal food products unless there is a scientific justification for doing so based on a risk assessment.

The OIE has stressed the importance of facilitating safe trade in food animals and animal products to avoid interruption of food chains for the most vulnerable populations.

According to the OIE, a 'One Health' approach, with close collaboration between animal and public health authorities, is imperative to reduce the impact of the disease and to understand the risks for animal and human health as well as ecosystems as a whole.

The call comes as several species of animals in Europe and around the world have contracted SARS-CoV-2, the virus which is the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic, from infected humans. Research is currently underway around the globe into the susceptibility of farmed livestock and into the transmissibility of the virus via food and packaging.

## Catalyst for concern

Late last year, the first transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from humans to animals occurred in Europe in minks, with Denmark ordering an estimated 15 million of the animals destroyed after finding that humans had infected the animals which developed mutated versions of the virus which then jumped the species to reinfect humans.

According to reports, at least 400 people contracted the mutated strains with at least one of these mutations placing vaccines in jeopardy. Other culls have since been implemented as several nations throughout Europe and the United States reported the virus had spread from humans to mink populations.

Since that time, countries around the world have reported the infection of a range of animal species by humans prompting the OIE to classify the SARS-CoV-2 virus as an emerging animal health issue and, as it is likely to become endemic in humans, highlights the potential for zoonosis, a disease which can be spread from humans to animals.

The OIE has specified three species, to date, as highly susceptible including Canids (mammals in the dog family), Felids (mammals in the cat family) and Mustelids (mammals in the weasel family) the latter of which includes minks and ferrets, but all mammals are potentially at risk.

So far, animals have been infected with the virus by close contact with humans but there is an imperative to contain

the spread so that SARS-CoV-2 does not become transmissible between both farmed animals and between wildlife species.

## COVID research on livestock and food

The OIE has established a committee responsible for risk assessments on the safe trade in animals and animal products which met for the first time late last year and will continue to meet on an ad hoc basis.

According to the minutes of its first meeting, the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and its French counterpart (ANSES) have conducted and currently are conducting risk assessments on a range of issues of concern to the meat industry.

DEFRA's research is considering the risk of livestock exposure to the virus from infected humans, the potential of contamination of imported meat from infected countries and the risk of pets exposed to infected humans and onward spread from pets to humans and other animals.

ANSES reported on its findings into the risk of human infection through contaminated cooked or uncooked food.

ANSES concluded that cooked food was safe for human consumption based on heat inactivation data for other viruses in the Coronaviridae family, although thermal inactivation studies on SARS-CoV-2 specifically had not been included.

The ANSES conclusion specified that coronaviruses are inactivated at temperatures when preparing hot food within four minutes at 63 degrees Celsius.

Although the committee concluded that companion animals and livestock in contact with COVID-19 cases in humans have a high risk of exposure it noted there was a lack of information on the susceptibility of livestock species to the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Early studies, however, have shown promising signs for the meat industry.

Experimentally in laboratories, intentionally infected pigs and cattle have shown an extremely low susceptibility to the virus while chickens, ducks and turkeys have shown no susceptibility and no transmission between the animals.

## Biosecurity policy in Australia

Both the Biosecurity Division of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and the national Animal Health Committee, which sits under the National Biosecurity Committee, have issued policy statements in

*continued on page 20*





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*continued from page 19*

response to the development of animal infections with SARS-CoV-2 which apply to the nation's protein production and processing sector.

According to the Department of Agriculture, SARS-CoV-2 has not been reported in pets, livestock or wildlife to date in Australia.

Its advice to animal owners, managers and handlers is to ensure that good precautionary biosecurity practices are followed including washing hands both before and after contact with animals and ensuring animal housing conditions are clean.

Landowners have also been advised to implement good on-farm biosecurity practices and farmers or workers infected with COVID-19 are asked to avoid close contact with animals which includes face to face contact, sharing food and close contact with pets.

- Infected pets or working dogs are to be kept in isolation along the same lines as humans.
- If pets or livestock become ill a vet is to be contacted by telephone.
- Confirmatory diagnostic testing needs to be performed at the CSIRO Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness.

All cases of SARS-CoV-2 in animals are required to be reported to the OIE.

### COVID-19 and food

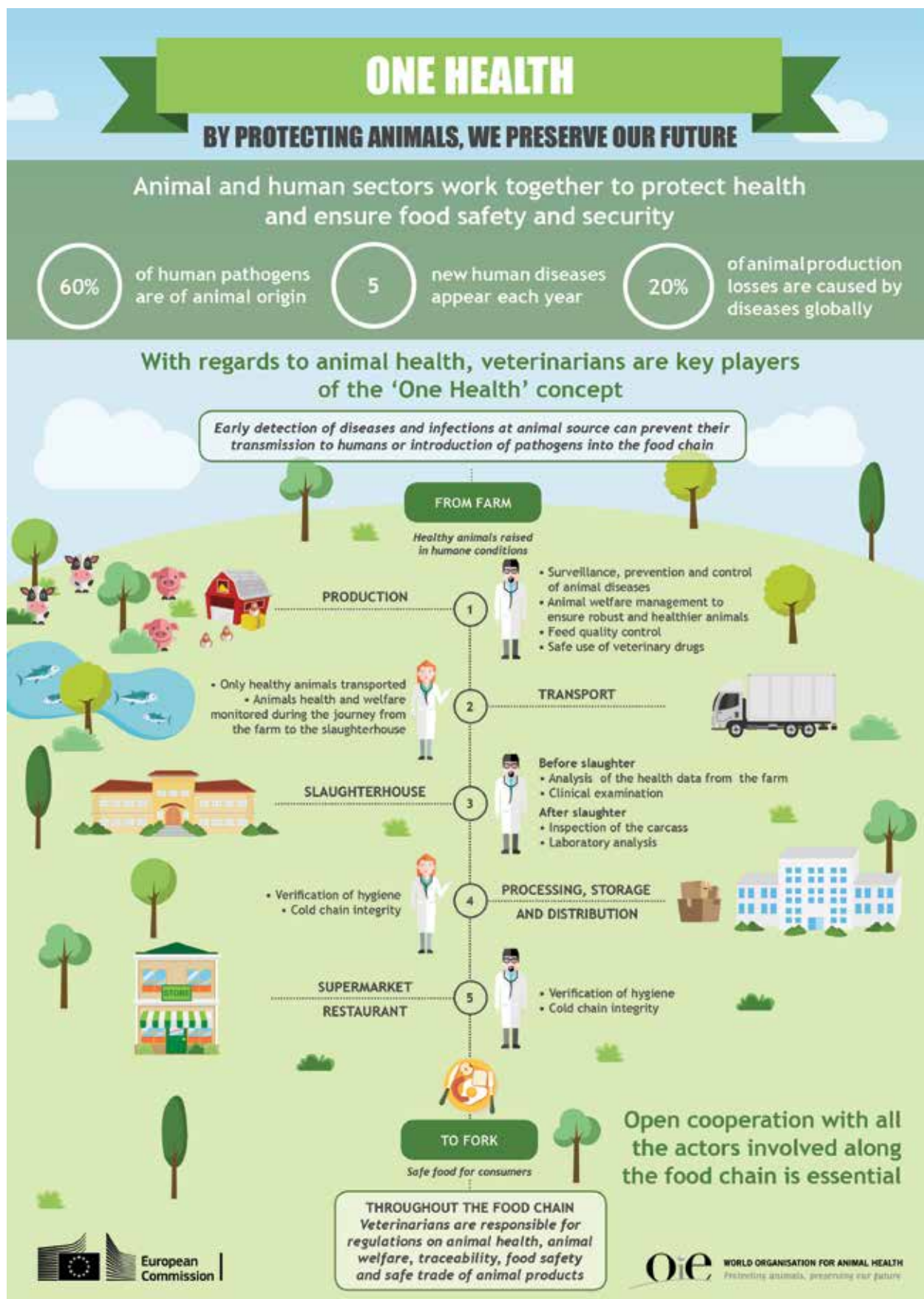
The OIE has released the latest confirmed scientific data which has application for disinfecting surfaces and spaces along the protein industry supply chain including transport, processors and butchers. The virus can persist on surfaces such as plastic, stainless steel or glass for 3 to 7 days, and on cloth, paper and wood for 1-2 days. The SARS-CoV-2 virus is most effectively inactivated within one minute by 62 to 71 percent ethanol, 0.5 percent hydrogen peroxide and 0.1 percent hypochlorite.

In February, Food Standards Australian and New Zealand (FSANZ) announced that there is no evidence to suggest that people will get infected by swallowing the virus in or on food with research showing that it is inactivated in the acidic environment of the stomach.

Further it is not likely that transmission to humans occurs through meat in Australia, nevertheless, FSANZ advises, following World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, properly cooking meat and not eating meat from diseased animals.

The WHO has also announced that there is no definitive evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through food or food packaging, but that further investigation is needed into the potential for spread of the virus through frozen food and packaging via cold chain food as well as the potential for surface contamination to act as a source of infection or the food itself. ■





The OIE'S 'One Health' Info Graphic depicts the key role, from farm to fork, the meat industry plays in controlling the spread of SARS-CoV-2 between humans and animals.

# China's recovery from ASF drives down global meat prices

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARES) released its Agricultural Forecasts and Outlook in March couching its projections against a backdrop of both an upside and downside scenario with the world's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic being the key factor in the potential for global and domestic economic growth.

The recovery of China's pig herd and pork production from African Swine Fever (ASF), which has swept the nation since 2018, will drive a decline in prices on global protein markets as its protein import needs decline through to 2025/26, affecting Australia's beef and sheep meat exports.

Australia's meat export capacity is likely to face continued challenges as the nation's cattle herd and sheep flock rebuilding continues through to 2022/23 with herd rebuilding and, therefore, cattle and sheep prices trending downward through to 2025/26.

Australia's agricultural export earnings are likely to record a third consecutive annual decline in 2021, down four percent to A\$46 billion, with the major

contributor being lower livestock and livestock product exports due to the current phase of domestic herd and flock rebuilding.

## Economic backdrop uncertain

According to ABARES, throughout the outlook period, to 2025/26, economic activity will remain at pre-COVID-19 levels across all geographic regions globally and below pre-COVID-19 levels in advanced economies.

The strength of global economic recovery, over both the short term and medium term, remains uncertain and uneven with emerging economies predicted to grow faster than advanced economies.

ABARES forecasts growth in advanced economies at 4.4 percent in 2021 moderating to 3.0 percent in 2022 while in emerging and developing economies a growth rate of 5.9 percent is anticipated in 2021 moderating to 4.8 percent in 2022.

Over the medium term, between 2023 and 2026 global economic growth is expected to average 3.4 percent with emerging Asia expected to grow faster than regions such as Latin America and emerging economies in Europe.

An upside scenario assumes falling community infection rates of COVID-19 will lead to faster economic recovery in an increasing number of countries by 2022 resulting in stronger demand and higher prices for agricultural exports.

This would mean the food services sector will grow faster, global travel will recover at a faster rate and beef and lamb prices will be higher due to stronger global demand, although impacts on meat exports would be offset by the anticipated continued strength of the Australian dollar.

Under a downside scenario, extended delays in containing the spread of COVID-19, either by a slow pace of vaccine rollouts or ineffectiveness of the vaccines due to new strains, will weaken demand for Australian agricultural exports and result in lower prices for high-quality exports.

The Australian economy has seen a recovery earlier than other nations due to the low incidence of COVID-19 and ABARES anticipates domestic demand for meat and other agricultural products to remain strong throughout the outlook period to 2025/26.

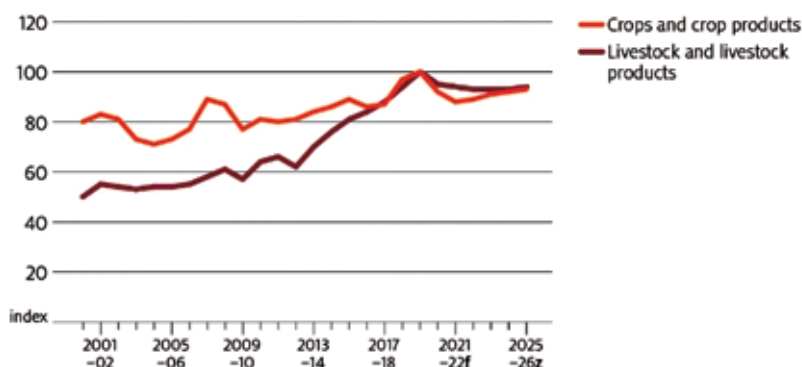
ABARES also cautions that the main risk to the continued recovery of the Australian economy is a resurgence of COVID-19.

## China recovers from ASF

In special focus in ABARES' Outlook is China's recovery from ASF outbreaks which have been the impetus for major structural change in the nation's pork production sector moving from family-based enterprises to large scale corporate farms, vertically integrated, with capacity for biosecurity controls along the supply chain.

According to ABARES, the Chinese pig herd and pork production are now on a rapid path to recovery and by

Australian Crop and Livestock Export Prices  
2001 to 2025





2025/26 China is expected to exceed its pre-ASF production level.

As a consequence, China's import demand for pork and other proteins will continue to decline and have a significant impact on global protein markets lowering prices.

Since 2019, falling pork supplies and rising prices led Chinese consumers to substitute imported meats with poultry having risen 77 percent, beef 72 percent and sheep meat by 42 percent.

Australian beef and sheep meat exporters have been a major beneficiary of China's change in demand for protein imports and will face the prospect of a challenging time ahead as this high demand declines through to 2025/26.

### Beef and veal exports to be constrained by herd rebuild

Favourable season conditions in Australia in 2020/21 and 2021/22 will likely lead to prolonged domestic herd rebuilding and a resultant higher production and exports from 2022/23 onwards.

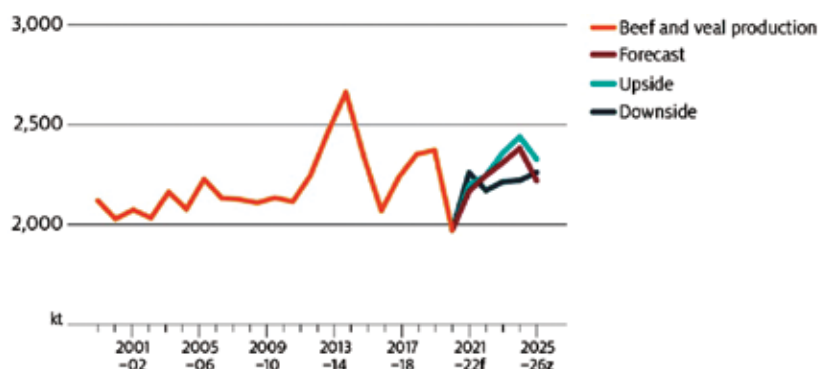
ABARES anticipates herd rebuilding to begin to slow next year leading to an increase in cattle availability and lower domestic cattle prices making beef and cattle exports more competitive on global markets.

By 2025/26 average saleyard prices are expected to have fallen from 593 Ac/kg in 2021 to 461 Ac/kg with the fall driven by higher domestic cattle availability and lower global beef prices through the outlook period.

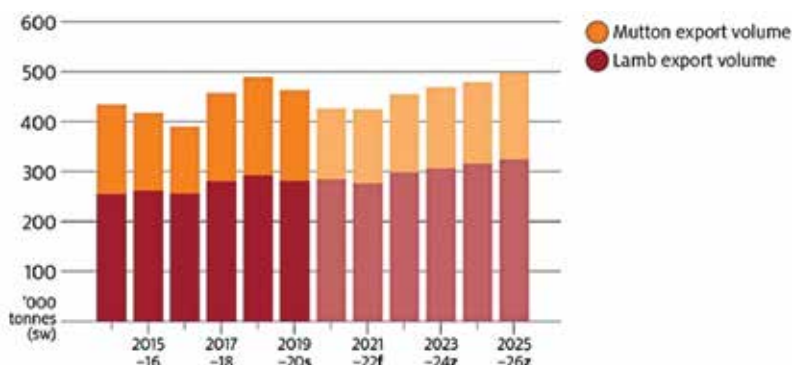
ABARES identifies differing factors affecting the short-term and medium-term outlook for exports.

Over the short term to 2022/23 lower global beef prices will be influenced by

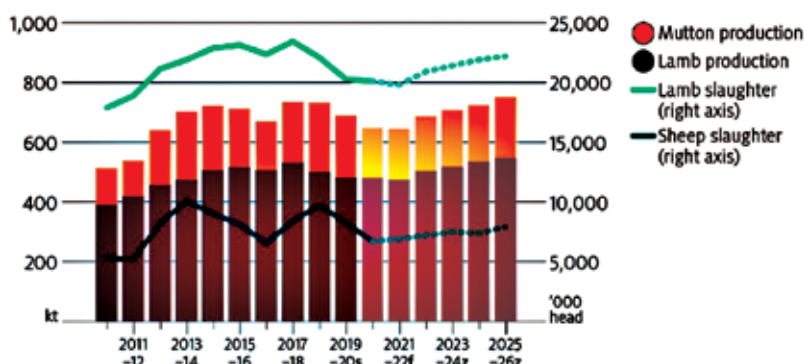
Beef and Veal Production 2000/01 to 2025/26



Lamb and Mutton Exports 2014/15 to 2025/26



Sheep and Lamb Production and Slaughter 2010/11 to 2025/26



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## Outlook for beef and veal

Category	unit	2018–19	2019–20s	2020–21f	2021–22f	2022–23z	2023–24z	2024–25z	2025–26z
Cattle numbers <b>ab</b>	million	24.7	23.4	24.0	24.3	24.4	24.4	24.4	24.6
• beef cattle	million	22.4	21.1	21.6	21.9	22.1	22.1	22.1	22.3
Slaughterings	'000	8,704	8,699	6,594	7,234	7,654	7,816	7,941	7,355
Production	kt	2,352	2,372	1,971	2,167	2,245	2,310	2,381	2,219
Consumption per person	kg	22.8	19.6	19.8	19.1	18.8	18.4	18.2	17.9
<b>Exports</b>									
Japan	kt	302	284	242	286	300	311	324	296
United States	kt	241	240	188	222	233	242	251	230
China	kt	228	331	161	190	199	207	215	197
Korea, Rep. of	kt	189	170	161	191	200	208	216	197
World	kt	1,222	1,290	959	1,135	1,190	1,236	1,284	1,174
• nominal	A\$m	9,476	11,258	7,912	8,905	9,251	9,513	9,766	8,807
• real <b>c</b>	A\$m	9,759	11,442	7,912	8,774	8,974	9,055	9,114	8,038
Live feeder/ slaughter cattle exports	'000	1,125	1,237	808	928	935	1,025	1,090	1,105
• nominal	A\$m	1,368	1,562	1,100	1,210	1,139	1,280	1,345	1,330
• real <b>c</b>	A\$m	1,409	1,588	1,100	1,192	1,105	1,218	1,255	1,214
<b>Saleyard price</b>									
• nominal	Ac/kg	446	518	593	552	513	495	478	461
• real <b>c</b>	Ac/kg	459	526	593	543	498	471	446	421

**a** Includes dairy cattle. **b** At 30 June. **c** In 2020–21 Australian dollars. **f** ABARES forecast. **s** ABARES estimate. **z** ABARES projection.

## Outlook for sheep meat

Category	unit	2018–19	2019–20s	2020–21f	2021–22f	2022–23z	2023–24z	2024–25z	2025–26z
<b>Prices</b>									
<b>Lambs</b>									
• nominal	c/kg (cw)	723	807	751	736	706	699	685	673
• real <b>a</b>	c/kg (cw)	745	820	751	725	685	665	639	614
<b>Sheep</b>									
• nominal	c/kg (cw)	452	584	590	561	533	517	496	479
• real <b>a</b>	c/kg (cw)	465	594	590	553	517	492	463	437
<b>Sheep numbers</b>									
Total sheep <b>b</b>	million	65.8	62.7	65.3	67.5	69.5	70.8	71.7	72.0
<b>Slaughterings</b>									
Lambs	'000	22,087	20,272	20,100	19,800	20,900	21,400	21,900	22,200
Sheep	'000	9,730	8,268	6,700	6,900	7,200	7,500	7,400	7,900
<b>Production</b>									
Sheep meat	kt (cw)	732	690	649	647	688	708	725	752
<b>Exports</b>									
Sheep meat <b>c</b>	kt (sw)	489	462	426	424	455	469	479	499
<b>Sheep meat value</b>									
• nominal	\$m	3,865	4,056	3,635	3,456	3,430	3,392	3,228	3,248
• real <b>a</b>	\$m	3,981	4,123	3,635	3,405	3,327	3,229	3,012	2,964
Live sheep	'000	925	1,089	810	802	882	970	1,067	1,174
<b>Live sheep value</b>									
• nominal	\$m	121	157	111	97.7	93.7	92.6	88.7	88.7
• real <b>a</b>	\$m	125	160	111	96.3	90.9	88.2	82.8	80.9
<b>Consumption per person</b>									
Sheep meat	kg (cw)	6.3	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.7

**a** In 2020–21 Australian dollars. **b** At 30 June. **c** Fresh, chilled and frozen, shipped weight. **f** ABARES forecast. **s** ABARES estimate. **z** ABARES projection. Sources: ABARES; ABS; MLA



increasing exports from the US and Brazil into high value markets including China.

China's full recovery from ASF will be the major factor influencing the medium-term outlook triggering an ease in global demand for protein and putting downward pressure on beef prices.

Australia's live cattle exports have been challenged in recent times with the high price of cattle effectively pricing the industry out of the market.

According to ABARES, this development has had a flow-on effect in major markets such as Indonesia which has sought cattle from Mexico and Brazil as alternative suppliers.

Live cattle exports are forecast to increase over the outlook period as domestic prices for young cattle fall increasing Australia's competitiveness.

As with beef, global supply of protein in response to China's decreasing import needs is also projected to affect

the price of lamb and sheep meat over the outlook period.

Remaining high in 2021/22 at 736c/kilo for lamb and 561c/kg for sheep, the average saleyard prices are forecast to fall for lamb, by 10 percent to 673c/kilo, and for sheep, by 19 percent to 479c/kg, by 2025/26.

Restocking activity and a smaller national flock have reduced mutton exports since 2019/20 and, while export demand remains strong in the short-term to 2022/23, export volumes are likely record a 23 percent decline in 2021/22 due to these factors.

ABARES highlights that while China is the largest consumer of Australian lamb and mutton by volume, it is a lower value commodity in that market and as such is open to competition from cheaper substitutes.

The major competitors are domestically produced poultry and beef from Brazil which will, according to ABARES, gain ground with Chinese

consumers and is expected to place downward pressure on prices over the period to 2025/26.

ABARES cites, as a further challenge to lamb and sheep meat exports, the upgrade in New Zealand's Free Trade Agreement with China which, although not formally detailing any market access increases, signals improved relations between our biggest competitor and our biggest consumer market.

As Australia's national flock grows, with growth rate estimated at between 7 and 12 percent over the outlook period, production and slaughter will be boosted.

The price of sheep is expected to weaken in response to an increased availability making Australian sheep for live exports more competitive on global markets. ■

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# RSPCA animal welfare scorecard shines a spotlight on regulation of slaughtering establishments

The RSPCA has released a detailed report and interactive map that highlights the current state of animal welfare regulation at Australian slaughtering establishments.

The scorecard allows the public to compare, for the first time, the way governments regulate animal welfare in abattoirs, knackeries and poultry processors across the country – a move that will not only increase transparency but also strengthen the push for better and more consistent regulation.

RSPCA Australia Chief Scientist Dr Bidda Jones said that the report and scorecard shone a spotlight on significant gaps in animal welfare regulation across the processing industry.

“For a long time, the RSPCA has been concerned about the differences in how Australian slaughtering establishments are regulated between states and territories, and what this means for the welfare of animals at those facilities,” said Dr Jones.

“Voluntary industry standards that go above minimum regulatory requirements can improve animal welfare outcomes when they’re in place.

“But the public should be able to have confidence that all animals in Australia are handled and slaughtered humanely. With the current regulatory system, having that confidence is not always possible.

“If we are going to have surety that animal welfare is being upheld at these establishments – which affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of animals every day – then better regulation is how we achieve it. This is crucial to improving the outcomes for Australian farm animals.”

Dr Jones said the report and scorecard examine seven key measures: animal welfare requirements, audit frequency, auditor training, oversight, CCTV use, company training, and transparency.

“One thing is clear from this report, and that is that in many areas – such as CCTV use – there’s still a long way to go before we can say that all animals slaughtered at Australian abattoirs, poultry processors or knackeries are handled and killed humanely.

“There’s a lot the public doesn’t know about animal welfare in Australian slaughtering establishments – including even how many animals are being slaughtered.

“That’s why the RSPCA has released this report and scorecard, to give the community a greater insight into exactly how animal welfare is being regulated at Australian abattoirs, knackeries and poultry processors.

“We urge government and industry to take note of this report and scorecard. The resumption of progress on the development of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Processing Establishments provides a crucial opportunity to put in place measures to genuinely improve animal welfare and meet the community’s expectations.”

Australia Meat Industry Council chief executive Patrick Hutchinson is reported to have said that animal welfare was considered “vital in the sustainable operation of processing establishments”, and agreed with recommendations outlined in the report to develop a national animal welfare standard.

“AMIC participated in the development of the initial draft standards under NSW leadership, and for several years has pursued both Commonwealth and State regulators to progress the development of the Australian animal-welfare standards and guidelines for livestock at processing establishments to implementation,” said Mr Hutchinson.

## Winners March 2021 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

Natasha Goldsmith, Steiny’s Traditional Mettwurst, Tanunda SA

### Victory Narrow Curved Boning Knife

Wayne Barker, Barker’s Butchery, Oberon NSW  
Chris Roberts, Chris Roberts Butchers, Mathoura NSW  
Jason Piper, AMIEU, Carlton Vic  
Susan Polzin, Cam & Sue’s Quality Meats, Gayndah Qld  
Dylan Couch, Plaza Quality Meats, Berri SA



## Summary of recommendations

**Recommendation 1** – The development of Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Processing Establishments (applicable to cattle, sheep, goats, horses, pigs, deer, buffalo, camels, alpaca, donkeys and poultry) to replace the Model Code must be urgently prioritised.

**Recommendation 2** – The Standards and Guidelines must include species-specific standards where requirements differ for all points of processing from arrival until confirmation of death, including unloading, holding pen and race design, general handling, emergency killing, stunning and slaughter requirements. The Standards and Guidelines must include a requirement that they are independently reviewed and updated every five years to reflect scientific and technical developments.

**Recommendation 3** – Once endorsed, the Standards and Guidelines must be made a regulatory requirement for all abattoirs, poultry processors and knackereries through referencing in the relevant legislation in each jurisdiction.

**Recommendation 4** – Audits must be conducted at a minimum of quarterly at abattoirs, poultry processors and knackereries. Audit frequency must be based on a compliance rating with audit frequency increased if breaches or non-conformances are identified.

**Recommendation 5** – Where animal welfare is part of the scope of an audit, a minimum level of training in animal welfare, equivalent to Animal Welfare Officer training, must be required and held by auditors to cover all aspects of live animal handling at the slaughtering establishment.

**Recommendation 6** – Those officers who undertake investigations to enforce animal welfare legislation (through the implementation of the national Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines) must be required to have both training in animal welfare, equivalent to Animal Welfare Officer training, as well as the Certificate IV in Government Investigation as is currently applied in the NT.

**Recommendation 7** – On-going state, territory and federal government funding must be dedicated towards training and capacity building for all staff, auditors and investigators to help ensure high animal welfare standards and that non-compliance with animal welfare standards at abattoirs, poultry processors and knackereries is identified and addressed.

**Recommendation 8** – To demonstrate ongoing animal welfare compliance, all slaughtering establishments must be required to conduct on-going verification of animal welfare through monitoring protocols (reflecting the relevant provisions of the current Australian Standards, and then the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines when they are adopted) and licensing and/or registration requirements.

**Recommendation 9** – All slaughtering establishments must have an Animal Welfare Officer who is competent in all facets of production and who is responsible for the oversight of animal welfare at the facility and for reporting breaches of animal welfare to management to ensure appropriate actions are taken to address breaches.

**Recommendation 10** – Equipment for remote monitoring (e.g. CCTV) of procedures must be installed in livestock processing facilities and reviewed for internal plant operation. This equipment must allow a clear view of all areas where live animal handling occurs, including unloading facilities, lairage areas, restraint, stunning, shackling, and sticking processes.

**Recommendation 11** – A minimum level of training must be mandated as a licensing and/or registration requirement for all staff involved in activities that impact animal welfare at abattoirs, poultry processors and knackereries. Training must be certified by a registered training organisation.

**Recommendation 12** – Information on each regulatory authority's compliance and enforcement framework for animal welfare standards in abattoirs, poultry processors and knackereries must be made publicly available and be easily accessible.

This must include details of what the minimum animal welfare standards and regulatory requirements are for: audit scope and frequency, auditor training, oversight (regulatory authority) training, company training and CCTV use.

**Recommendation 13** – Detailed reporting of the following information must be publicly available and updated annually:

- The number of export and domestic abattoirs, poultry processors and knackereries operating in each jurisdiction, as well as the species and number of animals slaughtered.
- The number of audits undertaken at each slaughtering establishment and the outcome of each of those audits, including details where critical non-compliances have occurred.
- The number of Animal Welfare Incident Reports or complaints submitted per slaughtering establishment, including details on the nature of the report or complaint as well as a descriptive outcome of the investigation findings and action taken.
- The type and number of slaughtering establishments operating under an Approved Arrangement that allows unstunned slaughter and the number of each species of animal subjected to unstunned slaughter.

*continued on page 28*

continued from page 27

## ANIMAL WELFARE SCORECARD FOR KNACKERIES BY JURISDICTION

1 The *Model Code* is only a voluntary code under regulations

2 Food safety auditors do not audit animal welfare, but RSPCA SA inspectors can undertake routine inspections

3 Company person trained in zoonotic disease identification, and ante- and post-mortem inspection

4 Company person trained in zoonotic disease identification and post-mortem inspection



# Upping our game in processing efficiency

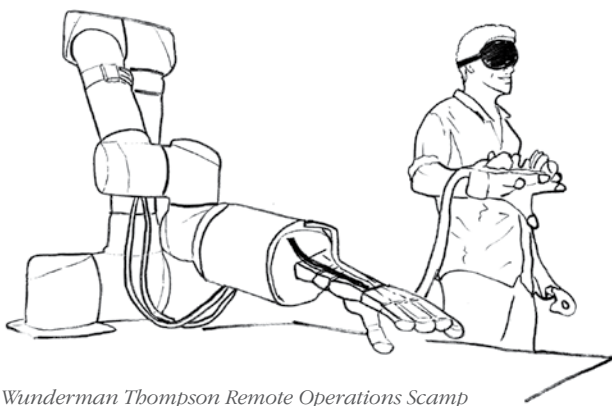
What could video games and the Australian meat processing sector possibly have in common? If you've always thought of game-playing as an activity that happens outside work, it might be time to think again.

'Gamification' is a term that is gaining traction in a lot of industries and it's something you'll probably be hearing more about across the processing sector. In essence, gamification is about bringing elements of game-playing, like point scoring, competition or rules of play, into a non-game environment.

In the processing sector, AMPC is testing whether gamification could help businesses upskill staff from hands-on operators to console operators, to increase efficiency and productivity, enhance safety and open up roles to a wider field of candidates.

## Bringing the game to the processing facility

What might it look like? Imagine a game where staff mark cuts on images of beef sides, as though they were using a saw. They'd be challenged to get faster and more accurate, and they'd earn points for getting it right. They'd basically be playing a video game to gain real skills they could put to use at work.



*Wunderman Thompson Remote Operations Scamp*

This is exactly what AMPC is working on in the first stage of its gamification innovation project.

AMPC (and the industry) have a vision to eliminate all WH&S incidents from processing operations. Where possible, dangerous tasks will be fully automated, and where this is not possible, semi-automated or remote solutions will be sought that will allow the operator to do their job

without being directly exposed to dangerous tools and implements.

This project is about semi-automated/remote solutions, and beef scribing has been selected as the starting point.

The goal is that at the conclusion of all development stages, Australian beef processing facilities will have operational staff undertaking scribing activities without being right next to the carcass, holding onto the scribe cutting saw. What comes out of this project remains to be seen, but ideally operators would be based in a control room.

In addition, it is hoped this project will help support the development of an online training tool for operational staff, creating new ways to educate potential staff about processing roles within beef plants, and open up new ways of remunerating staff based on cutline placement accuracy and speed.

AMPC hopes the project will also broaden the range of staff able to work in beef scribing including those on light duties and those with reduced mobility.

## How the project will roll out

This is a five-stage project, beginning with concept development then moving onto evaluation by real operators and a range of assessments in the processing setting. The final stage would be industry adoption. AMPC is currently focused on Stage 1.

AMPC is keen to hear from solution providers and researchers who believe that they could successfully execute a Stage 1 project. The aim is to evaluate different ways gamification can be used for operational staff to engage with a databank of images of beef sides and mark/identify where the scribe cuts should be made. AMPC has already had interest from Company X, HDT Global, Intelligent Robotics, Lumaten, Strategic Engineering and Wunderman Thompson, but is keen to hear from as many potential providers as possible.

The project is aligned with AMPC's strategic plan, which highlights Advanced Manufacturing as a core investment theme. The goal is to make operations more efficient while also improving WH&S for operational staff.

## Get involved

If you are a solution provider or developer and would like the opportunity for AMPC co-investment support to demonstrate and evolve your offering in gamification and demonstrate it in meat processing environments, get in touch with Stuart Shaw or Amanda Carter at AMPC. ■

# Planning for EOFY

The end of financial year is fast approaching, and your window to use tax planning strategies is nearing an end. Make sure you only pay your fair share of tax by having a conversation with your accountant. If you are not sure what to ask, here are a few discussion points.

**Instant asset write-off** – the limit of \$150,000 has been temporarily extended until 30th June 2022 in certain circumstances.

**Work related expenses** – what are considered private expenses and what are work related expenses especially the usual motor vehicle, laundry, entertainment and travel deductions and the best way to claim these.

**Rental property expenses** – there have been many changes regarding deductibility for rental expenses. What are eligible deductions?

**Working from home deductions** – The temporary working from home tax deduction of 80 cents per hour short cut method verses the 52 cents method.

**Pre-paid Expenses** – Provided cash flows allow, some business expenses can be pre-paid and you receive a tax deduction in the financial year you make the payment.

**Trading stock** – What methods of valuation you can use (cost price, market value, replacement value or special valuation) and the different basis for each valuation available each year.

## What needs to be done by 30 June?

- Have your bookwork up to date so you know exactly how you have traded for year to date.
- Do tax planning with your accountant to legitimately reduce your tax obligations.
- Trust resolutions to be signed by 30 June to get the most tax advantage for the year.
- Ensure your employees super guarantee contributions are received by the super fund prior to 30 June if you want the tax deduction in this financial year.
- Ensure your personal super contributions are received by 30 June as well, be aware of super limits and caps.
- Make sure you can substantiate all expenses and income in case of an ATO audit. People caught cheating by the ATO can face considerable penalties including fines and penalty interest, not to mention the disruption to business from an ATO audit. It is important to remember that the ATO now has considerable data matching capabilities, so they can compare what happened to what you put in your tax return.

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 **Knives**

# Industry farewells an icon

## Pat Nolan 1929 – 2021

March saw the passing of Queensland meat industry icon, Pat Nolan, who founded the now premier beef processing company Nolan Meats Pty Ltd, from the humble beginnings of a butcher shop in the town of Gympie in 1958.

The father of six, daughters Clare, Mary and Helen and sons Michael, Tony and Terry, was renowned not only for his efforts in building a major meat industry company but also for his untiring contribution to the community and town of Gympie, 150km north of Brisbane.

Born in 1929, Mr Nolan survived the Great Depression, the second World War and a myriad of hardships since, all of which contributed to his development as a strong, dedicated, innovative and hardworking individual.

Mr Nolan entered the meat industry as an apprentice in a butcher shop in 1945 and by 1957 at the age of 28 purchased a partnership, by offering

the deeds to is partly built family home as collateral, in what was later to become a retail butchery within his own stable of three stores.

A year later, he opened his own butcher shop, Pat Nolan Meats, in Gympie's main street and, within five years, he purchased a small beef slaughter yard in the region to supply his own store which he later expanded to include an intensive piggery to guarantee his own pork supply.

A statement issued by his family on the passing of Mr Nolan described his passion to promote locally grown produce and locally made products and businesses as well as his innovative approach to designing and making, himself, what could not be purchased.

"He knew improvement in any field came with persistence of purpose, the value of compound effort and he knew about continuous improvement long before quality assurance became fashionable," the family said.



*Pat Nolan in his later years tinkering in his workshop.*

"He passed this innovative spirit onto his family and his many apprentices over the years with gems of advice such as 'use a bit of bloody gumption' and 'Come on- get in amongst it and you won't be so far away.'"

Mr Nolan's philosophy and advice remains as current today as it was during his lifetime.

He leaves one of Australia's premier beef feed-lotters, processing and exporting companies, Nolan Meats Pty Ltd, under the guiding hands of his three sons Michael, Tony and Terry Nolan.

The company he built is now export accredited, has a capacity to process 2,500 cattle a week and employs nearly 400 staff, local of course. ■



*Pat Nolan (centre) in his first shop, Pat Nolan Meats, in 1957.*



# The Pie Room

A book that is timely for the coming winter months, *The Pie Room*, by Calum Franklin is full of inspirational pies – both savoury and sweet.

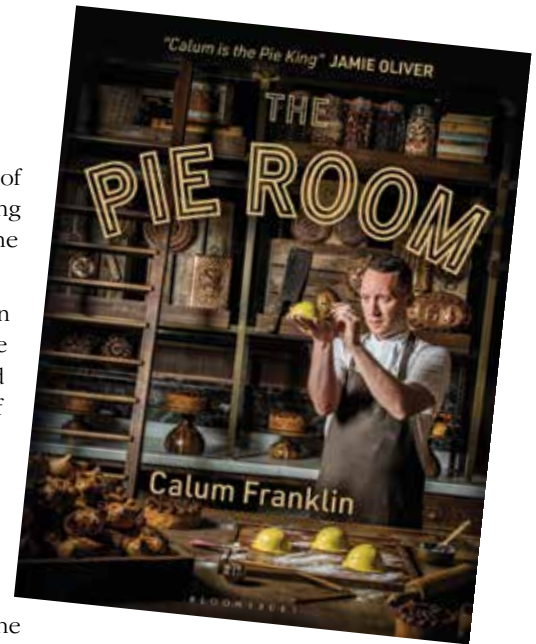
The author is an awarded chef and currently the Executive Chef of Holborn Dining Room, a well respected brasserie in London. The Pie Room is part of the kitchen that sits within Holborn. Using long forgotten pie moulds and tools, Franklin developed a passion for creating artisan pies.

The book, presented in hardcover, provides recipes that are achievable by most home cooks, using a variety of pastry techniques including a simple egg wash, through to extravagant decorations, as well as the different types of pastry such as shortcrust, sweet, suet, puff and choux pastry. The balance of well made pastry for a pie is

something that forms the backbone of many pie competitions, including those in Australia held during the Fine Food Festivals.

Once pastry is mastered, Franklin provides a range of recipes from the classical sausage roll to crowd pleasers such as the traditional beef pie, beef wellington and chicken, mushroom and tarragon pie. Included in the mix of recipes are vegetable-based options. It is also surprising to see vol-au-vents making a comeback. Apple, rhubarb or pecan tarts are part of the pudding range. The book also provides classic side dishes and sauces to complement the savoury pies provided.

Each recipe is fully photographed in a rustic setting, and while prepared by a chef, will provide the retail butcher with plenty of inspiration for



value-add options and to stretch the skills.

Retailing at \$52.95, *The Pie Room* is published by Bloomsbury and available from Books for Cooks.

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

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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 July 2021**

Last issues winners and answers, see page 26



## BALANCE SHEETS

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INVESTMENTS

GINGER

EQUIPMENT WRITEOFF

MOON

SELF MANAGED

RED

SUPER FUNDS

ORANGES

BUSINESS DEDUCTIONS

LEMONS

CASH

HONEY

FALLING LEAVES

ROSEMARY

WINTER MENUS

THYME

B	U	D	G	E	T	S	S	E	S	T	S	O	R	F
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“

”

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## BOOK COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to Ken Simpson, from My Butcher Duke Street in Gympie. Ken has won a copy of: *The Butcher's Cook Book* by Shannon Walker.

Ken submitted a correct entry to the question: *What type of casing is traditionally used for a European sausage?* Answers Hog.

Ken is based in Gympie, Queensland and AMN is produced in Victoria. The competition winners are selected, from the correct entries, by the random number generator on our computer, yet Ken has managed to win this edition's Book Competition and last edition's Find a Word Competition.

Perhaps he may have done better at the races or buying Tatts tickets or has he figured-out how to hack our systems?

Ken, thanks for entering our competitions and enjoy the book and knives. ■



## WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win: *The Pie Room*, by Calum Franklin RRP \$52.95

Answer the question below.

Send your answer and name and address & phone number to:

Australian Meat News Book Competition

Email: [athol@ausmeatnews.com.au](mailto:athol@ausmeatnews.com.au) (preferred)

or By post: PO Box 415 Richmond Vic 3121

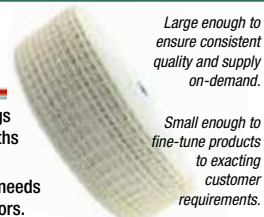
Question: *Who is the Grand Champion of the 2021 Wagyu Branded Beef Competition*

**Entries close 15 July 2021**



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**ASTECH** automatic bandsaw, portion cutting  
**KOLBE** bandsaws, mixing/grinding, grinding  
**TREIF** slicing, dicing, portion cutting  
**SCHRÖDER** injecting, brine mixing, massaging  
**REX** vacuum filling, auto linkers, mince lines, forming attachments  
**STEPHAN** cutting, mixing, emulsifying  
**LORENZO BARROSO** clippers  
**VAKONA** vacuum, massaging, tumbling, mixing, marinating  
**REICH** smoke houses, ovens, fermentation rooms, water cookers  
**BOSS** vacuum packing, dip tanks, auto packing lines

## CONTACT

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