

AUSTRALIAN MeatNews

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VOLUME 20 | NUMBER 3 | AUGUST 2022

Northern Territory
– take a look up north

Is a brand a guarantee?

ICMJ competition winners





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PUBLISHED BY OPTIMAL MEDIA

PO Box 415, Richmond 3121

Telephone (03) 9421 2855

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Australia wide: \$73 plus GST

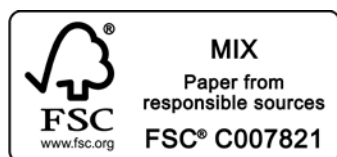
Asia/Pacific: \$A100

Europe/Nth America: \$A120

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Renderers Symposium in Brisbane

Registrations are now open for the 16th Australian Renderers Association International Symposium. To be held in Brisbane, September 27-30 it will be the first face-to-face event for the Association since pre-COVID.

The theme for this year's event is *Strategic Directions: Innovating with Integrity for a Prosperous Future*. Guest speakers will present on a range of topics including market access, trade, logistics and supply chain integrity across rendering, feed milling, pet food, livestock, aquafeed and more.

The Symposium will also host a Trade Hall for partners and exhibitors to showcase the latest technology, innovations and services relevant to the industry. A partner day tour is also on offer, taking in the scenic Glass House Mountains.

For more information or to register visit <https://www.ausrenderers.com.au/> ■

Sweeten up the shelf life of lamb

Vacuum-packed lamb meat with elevated glucose levels extended its shelf-life by more than 76%, according to Tasmanian research.

Meat with elevated glucose levels reduced the meat pH, and researchers suggest this could have curbed the growth of spoilage microbes.

The research led by Prof. Tom Ross was undertaken by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture's Centre for Food Safety and Innovation at the University of Tasmania in Hobart.

Researcher Laura Rood (pictured) said: "Vacuum-packed lamb produced in Australia has a shelf-life of 90 days under export

conditions of -1 to 0 °C. However, access to some markets requires more than 90 days shelf life because of poor storage conditions or needing to allow time to sell product".

"Studies to understand the potential mechanisms of microbial spoilage of vacuum-packed lamb are, therefore, important to assist the development of shelf-life extension."

The research team added glucose solutions up to a concentration of 0.84 g per kg to the surface of meat, followed by vacuum-packing. They then conducted a series of shelf-life trials at 4°C, measuring the meat's sensorial qualities, bacterial growth, pH and residual glucose and lactic acid over 35 days of storage.

Based on a sensory analysis, all glucose treated meat extended the shelf-life, ranging from 8% to >76%, relative to untreated samples.

Laura said: "These results indicate that glucose plays an important role in microbial spoilage of vacuum-packed lamb and will assist the development of practical solutions for shelf-life extension." ■





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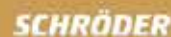
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Craig Mostyn, V&V Walsh join forces

The West Australian family-owned businesses behind upmarket protein brands Linley valley pork and Amelia Park Lamb and Beef have united to form one of the largest agribusinesses in WA.

The combination of one of Australia's leading diversified food and agribusiness companies Craig Mostyn Group with V&V Walsh, one of the WA's biggest meat processors and exporters, brings together almost 165 years of West Australian business history.

Neil Kearney, Executive Chair, Craig Mostyn Group said: "This is an exciting time for us as a company in the lead up to our 100th year anniversary next year.

"This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to investing in and growing agriculture and food processing in WA, as well as creating sustainable local jobs and promoting our WA export industries."

"We look forward to continuing to build on the legacy of our founders as these two great Western Australian companies become one."

V&V Walsh grew from humble beginnings in a Bunbury butcher shop in 1957 to becoming one of the biggest meat processors and exporters in WA, specialising in lamb and beef. Craig Mostyn Group began in 1923.

Craig Mostyn Group will build on the recent growth of the V&V Walsh business and continue to work with the management team at V&V Walsh to provide further investment. The strong V&V Walsh brand will continue to be used in export markets while former CEO Peter Walsh will remain in an advisory role.

The combination takes place five years after the initial partnership between the two companies. The Craig Mostyn Group purchased 50 per cent of V&V Walsh in 2017. The purchase of the

final 50 per cent will take effect on Friday 1 July, 2022.

Mr Kearney said the combination marks an exciting time for Craig Mostyn Group and the industry, as the company continues to diversify and grow its brands and offering to its valued customers and loyal consumers. It demonstrates the Group's ongoing commitment to investing in sustainable agriculture and processing in WA despite the challenging environment caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. ■



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Portoro places priority on Luxe Sustainable Beef

Billed as ‘More than a marble score,’ a new luxury beef brand has hit the market fresh from southern Australia – and it works its outstanding sustainability credentials right to the bone.

Deliciously full-bodied in taste and highly marbled, JBS Southern has launched Portoro: natural beef that benefits from a tailored feeding program and state-of-the-art sustainability practices.

Raised at Yambinya Station in New South Wales’ southern Riverina region, Portoro is sourced from cattle which are cared for through the JBS Farm Assurance program, a renowned initiative that ensures the supply chain – from producer to processor – meets expected standards for food safety, animal welfare, quality assurance and traceability. Feed and water are sourced locally, and all Portoro cattle are free from GMOs, added hormones and antibiotics.

Sydney’s prestigious Otto Ristorante, located over the water in Woolloomooloo, has been serving passionate food enthusiasts and celebrities for over 20 years. Otto Head Chef Richard Ptacnik said Portoro made it onto his discerning menu for its unique, uncompromised flavour and tender, buttery finish.

“The Portoro brand tells a story about excellent taste and animal welfare – I value that and so do our customers,” Chef Ptacnik said.

“The marbling on each cut tells its own story: while it’s consistent it is also quite distinct which makes it easy for us to craft a unique eating experience every time.”

Robert Ryan, Group Beef Sales Manager at JBS Southern, explained why Portoro is said to be ‘more than a marble score.’

“Yambinya Station has been able to use its holistic and sustainable practices to its advantage and create an exceptionally luxurious, high marbling steak,” Mr Ryan said.

“Positive environmental outcomes, animal welfare, a propriety cattle acclimation process and encouragement of natural animal behaviours all unite to meet and then exceed the consumer desire for sustainably-raised, highly marbled meat. This process achieves beef marble scores of 5,6,7+ on a regular basis.

“This approach creates a paradigm shift in the market for premium grain fed beef, and the first time I tasted a Portoro steak I knew we were onto something special.”

To create the iconic brand mark, JBS Southern took inspiration from world-renowned Italian fashion houses. The timeless, clean-lined Portoro brand mark reflects luxury, style and exclusivity.

Portoro will be found in the finest steak houses and boutique retail outlets in Australia and globally.

JBS Southern are known for their world-renowned brands that redefined the grass-fed beef market: Great Southern, King Island Beef and Little Joe.

Portoro is exclusively available in Australia through Andrews Meat Industries.

www.Portoro.com.au ■

France bans the word ‘meat’ on vego products made in France

A product made and sold in France to be a sausage or steak, that is plant-based will no longer be able to use the word ‘meat’ on its packaging. The decree issued in the French government gazette, *Journal* official states: “It will no longer be possible to use terminology belonging to sectors traditionally associated with meat and fish to describe products that do not come from animals.”

This will include terms such as ‘steak’, ‘lardons’ or ‘sausage’, to describe plant-based products that are considered as meat substitutes.

The rule will enter into force from October 1, 2022. Products made and labelled before this date will be permitted to remain on sale until December 31.

The decree lays out precise rules for the amount of vegetable protein allowed in meat products for them to be able to keep their ‘meat’-related names, for products that come from animals but have some vegetable protein.

For example, a hamburger (minced meat) may continue to carry a ‘steak haché’ label provided that its vegetable protein

content does not exceed 7%. This percentage drops to 3% for frankfurters, 1% for black pudding or dry sausage, and 0.5% for bacon.

Local farmers’ union FNSEA says the decree does not go far enough, as it will still allow for importation of plant-based products using the terminology banned to local producers.

French meat industry association Interbev welcomed the implementation of the law initially adopted in 2020, just after the end of the pandemic lockdown.

“This provision is a first step on French territory, a pioneer in the protection of its names, which should be extended at European level,” it said in a statement.

Terms like “milk”, “butter” and “cheese” are already banned at the European level on products that are not of animal origin.

The word “burger” used by many brands including U.S. firms Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods and Burger King to attract consumers, would still be allowed as it does not specifically refer to meat, an Interbev spokesperson said. ■



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Multivac opens in the heart of Queensland's meat industry

Company officials attended the recent opening of the new, bigger Brisbane warehouse facility of packaging specialist Multivac.

The new Yatala building measures 1200 sq m, up from the 350 sqm occupied previously; its 93 pallet spaces have grown to 520 spaces.

The move saw the company cross the M1 freeway; a 2km hop from Ormeau to Yatala.

Among the 50 guests attending the opening were Multivac regional vice-president Philipp Losinger and national sales manager Tony Anevski.

German-based Multivac is a multinational corporation serving clients in more than 140 countries and employing around 5,200 people globally. Its Australian HQ is in Melbourne and it has state offices in WA, Queensland, SA and NSW. The Queensland operations started with three staff in 2006.

Multivac Queensland now operates from a sleek new building set up with fully racked warehouse space, easy access and superb logistics linkages. All existing 20 staff – 14 of them technicians – have made the move and continue to service clients across Queensland and into northern NSW stretching down to Armidale.

The location puts the company at the heart of Australia's meat industry and, as a result, business at the Queensland state office matches that of its NSW counterpart.

Queensland state manager Niels Juel said: "We have a very large and loyal customer base. Queensland is the capital of beef and we are in with all the beef customers."

Clients range from the major national retail names to small butcher shops. Niels said the move to larger premises will benefit both. "Moving to the new premises means better service and a lot more spare parts," he said. "And we are still close to the customer."

He said consumables, the packaging materials such as the plastic films that are formed into pouches, are a growing part of the business.

Also growing are sales of equipment to retail butchers.

Sausage fillers are keenly sought by butchers along Queensland's coastal regions, especially those making 500kg of sausages or more a week. The automated extrusion technology can handle different casings and can also make



Customers comprised most of the crowd attending the opening of the new Multivac premises.

rissoles for meat balls. "It's a growing market because of the cost of labour and the problem of just having labour available," said Niels. "Automation with the sausages is a growing market for the efficiency it offers; anything that can help the smaller butchers.

"Very often a butcher would be making sausages say, Tuesday and Friday, and they would spend six hours doing that. We now have a machine that can do that easily in a quarter of the time they used to take. It's a much faster process." It's also so accurate to the gram – a 50g sausage is exactly that, with no wasted premix. And presentation, likewise, is uniform. Payback time? "Very often less than a year," he said.

Also popular are vacuum chamber machines used to packed fresh or cooked meats. Niels said: "It's an all-rounder,



Philipp Losinger presented the team with a traditional German cowbell, which is always rung at the conclusion of a successful project.

everything from a sliced pack to a bone-in". Much of the technology comes as bolt-on modular design, to handle growth.

Niels foresees more business servicing premium market demand, as well as increased sales to abattoirs. He also sees a shift to greener packaging technologies – but within limits.

"We need plastic for biosecurity, that cannot be compromised," he said. "Nevertheless, we are now using less material. We are optimising the product to the pack ratio, which is really important. No longer are you are having a small shank in a big pack."

The business offers a model that differs from most. Niels explained: "Traditionally, you would buy the machine from the supplier who sells you the machine and then walks away, or comes back two or three times a year to service the machine. Here, the customers buy the machine and the film from us and there's one point of contact. We very often make a supply contract and we are the one point of contact.

"This ensures a smoother supply chain and also ensures materials are of the right specifications to the right machine. Very often if we are having film – for example a pre-printed film that has to have an index the same length as the index of the machine – if that print registration is out of whack, the machine says no. As machine experts, we know what the correct settings should be."

Multivac's product portfolio includes thermoforming packaging machines, traysealers, labelling and quality inspection systems and even turnkey production lines. Multivac's partners include Bizerba, Cabinplant, Fritsch, Handtmann, Provisur, Schröter and TVI. ■

APL releases new recipes for Australian Pork Butchers program

Recipes developed by butcher Bec Gamble, are designed to be quick and easy in the workroom, using cost effective ingredients to help butchers increase their gross profit.

The products in the range are focused on giving customers who aren't familiar with cooking with pork a straightforward way to start incorporating pork into their weekly shop.

Market research indicates that customers with young families are still not familiar with cooking pork beyond the classic roast, which is no longer a weeknight dinner consideration. To engage these customers, a butcher can provide a simple, cost-effective, but inspiring solution to a weeknight meal. Pork value-added products are the perfect way to do that.

Value-adding to a pork cut breaks the confidence barrier for a consumer who is unfamiliar cooking with pork. Once they have experienced an easy pork value-added product, they will be more inclined to start including pork into their weekly shop. More pork purchased in a store means a better bottom line for butchers. It is becoming increasingly obvious that financial pressure is influencing the way customers shop now and into the future. Pork's relative cost-effectiveness versus other proteins presents an important opportunity to stretch a shopper's budget in these challenging times. Research shows that even with a stretched budget, consumers are still willing to pay extra for convenience and inspiration. This new recipe range is designed to provide a grab-and-go offering for customers. This allows butchers to offer a quick and easy dinner solution to time-poor customers, whilst also providing inspiration and joy. Providing a memorable experience to a customer is a way for a butcher store to become a habitual shopping option.

All 20 recipes from the new range can be accessed for free on the porkbutchers.com website.

If you are interested in staying up to date with Australian Pork's value-add recipe offerings as well as free point-of-sale kits and marketing insights, join the program for free by signing up on the website or joining the Australian Pork Butchers Facebook group. ■

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LES1000204	Herb, Chilli and Garlic Glaze Gluten-Free	2.5kg
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Salt Cured Meats vs Dry Aged Meats

The tradition of producing salt cured meat during the winter months has always been about taking quality pork and preserving it for future storage and consumption. Understanding salt, spices and cultures are essential, as is the environmental conditions used to finish the cure

Salumi – the Italian term for cured meats including salami, prosciutto, pancetta etc – use these principles. In commercial settings like butchers and hospitality, the curing environment is required to be performed in approved curing rooms. More recently, dedicated salumi cabinets have been on the market that provide a cost-effective alternative for small batch salumi.

A dedicated salumi cabinet ideally provides a temperature range around 8-12°C with humidity around 70-80%, to allow the salt in the meat to draw out the moisture. Typically, meat is considered cured once the moisture loss is in the order of 30%. The length of time for curing, depending on the size of the meat, can be from 3-4 weeks to several months, or – in the case of prosciutto or jamon – 1 to 4 years.

In contrast dry ageing is not a method of curing the meat, but rather allowing the meat to age in a controlled environment

with low temperature and high humidity. The flavour result of dry aged meat is often a deeper, more earthy profile with a significant increase in tenderness. A dry ageing cabinet operates at around 80-85% and a temperature of 2-4°C and typically meat is aged for 20 to 60 days.

“When dry ageing meat, the first week is important to ensure that the rind or crust forms on the outside of the meat without drawing too much moisture from the meat or allowing the meat to spoil” says Dave Cann, of Cleaver Salumi Cabinets. “By having a clean environment for dry ageing, the rind or crust will seal the meat for the ageing process so that spoilage bacteria are kept under control and the moisture is contained.”

“For salumi, in contrast, where we are looking for moisture loss, if the surface dries too quickly, it becomes hard, and the meat may not cure properly and can remain raw in the centre.

“So, for either process a controlled environment is vital to produce a safe product for butchers and restaurants.”

With one process requiring the removal of moisture (salumi) and the other trying to maintain moisture (dry ageing),

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Dave Cann, creator of Cleaver salumi cabinets

manufacturers of salumi cabinets and dry-aged cabinets have kept the two processes as separate product lines. In the past, combining the two processes has proved to be problematic.

CLEAVER Salumi Cabinets was born from inspiration by Dave Cann. With a long history in hospitality, he and his wife, Michelle, set up a cooking school in Warragul, Victoria, offering salami classes in the winter.



With increasing demand for the classes, Dave looked for salumi cabinets that would enable smaller domestic salami making a financially viable option and extend the classes throughout the year. With none available, he decided to launch this own brand – selling the first cabinets in 2016.

This year, CLEAVER is releasing an industry first – a unit that can do both functions – salumi and dry-ageing, in a size that suits smaller batches for butchers and hospitality.

Temperature and humidity are controlled through a control panel, while the addition of UV lighting and air filtration provides a cleaner environment for dry-ageing. They are available in three sizes, the range caters for smaller operators such as butchers, on-farm producers and hospitality.

“We have spent the past couple of years designing, testing and developing the units to provide salumi and dry-ageing in the one cabinet.

“We are also happy to work with butchers, particularly in Victoria where regulations are higher for this type of equipment, to get the paperwork done.

“We have a couple of butchers and restaurants in NSW and Queensland that have had successes with our equipment, so we are confident that others will too. They look great in the shop, add to the provenance of the store and produce sensational salumi and dry-age meat.” The dual function cabinets will be available from CLEAVER Salumi Cabinets from August 2022. ■

UQ takes home individual overall meat judging champion at 2022 ICMJ National Competition

The 2022 ICMJ National Competition has wrapped up in Wagga Wagga with Katja Zapf from the University of Queensland taking out overall individual meat judging champion.

Katja finished five points ahead of Cole Petit from West Texas A&M University, with a total score of 1087 out of 1247. Overall Team Champion was awarded to West Texas A&M University with University of Queensland coming in just 49 points behind to secure the Runner Up spot.

ICMJ President Dr Peter McGilchrist said this year's competition was fierce, despite a two-year gap since the last event. "The attention to detail of the students was very impressive. They were totally focused on determining the value of the carcasses and primals by weighing up yield and quality attributes," he said. "Talent and enthusiasm of the students for the red meat industry was spread right across all the universities which is reflected in the spread of competition results."

Dr McGilchrist said it was also encouraging to see the collegiality between teams and competitors throughout the week.

The top 17 placegetters at the Wagga Wagga competition were whittled down to a top ten after a round of interviews. "There has never been a more impressive group of students coming through," Dr McGilchrist said. Those 10 students, along with nine



The Overall Champion Team – West Texas A&M University – pictured with MLA's Laura Garland (far left) and ICMJ Australia founder John Carter (far right).



others selected for the Coaches XI, will attend the ICMJ Industry and Development Week later this year. The coaches XI are selected for their leadership skills and dedication and their potential to have a positive impact on the red meat industry. From there, a team of five will be selected to represent Australia in an international meat judging competition in the US in January.

The ICMJ National Conference is an annual event for university students

and recent graduates from around the world. The program includes seminars, Q&A panels, interactive workshops, a careers expo, social events and the 2022 National Meat Judging Contest held at Teys Australia.

ICMJ activities are supported by foundation partners Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC).

It is also supported by conference partners including Teys Australia, Coles, Australian Pork Limited, NH Foods, Kilcoy Global Foods, AACo, Fletcher International Exports, Grad Link, JBS, Herefords Australia, Fulton Market Group, AMIST Super, Angus Australia and Allflex.

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ICMJ 2022 National Competition results:

Overall Championship – Individual
John Carter Founders Buckle.

Sponsored by AMPC Australia and presented by ICMJ Australia founder, John Carter.

Individual Overall Runner Up:
Cole Petit, West Texas

Individual Overall Champion:
Katja Zapf, University of Queensland

Overall Championship – Team: Roy McDonald Shield

Sponsored by Meat & Livestock Australia and presented by MLA's Mel Smith.

Overall Team Runner Up: University of Queensland – Lawton Elliot, Nick Loughan, Samuel Turner, Katja Zapf

Overall Team Champion: West Texas A&M – Caleb Baker, Jacob McMillan, Carter Mortensen, Cole Petit.
(Coached by Loni Lucherk)

Tom Carr Award for Coaching Excellence: Will Sylvester, Marcus Oldham College.

Presented by Demi Lollback from ICMJ

Finalists Selected for Industry Development Week

Lawton Elliott, UQ
Rachel Franklin, USYD
Jack Jansen, UNE
Anna Johnston, UNE
Callum Melton, UNE
Austin Smith, Murdoch
Harriet Taylor, Marcus
Samuel Turner UQ
Jasmine Wholton, CSU
Katja Zapf, UQ

Coaches XI selected for Industry Development Week

Li Li Dui, Uni Adelaide
Meg Kennett, Marcus Oldham
Jillian Burgess, USYD
Lachlan Young, UQ
Kaitlyn Adesson, Murdoch
Chloe Sansom, UMEL
Jasmin Campbell Brown, CSU
James Palmer, LaTrobe
Connie Blake, UNE

Pork Judging

Sponsored by Australian Pork Limited and presented by Rachel Bryant.

Carcases for the competition were sponsored by Rivalea Australia.

Individual Runner Up: Maddie Bignell, UNE

Individual Champion: Cole Petit, West Texas A&M

Team Runner Up: University of New England – Maddie Bignell, Jack Jansen, Anna Johnston, George Simiana.

Team Champion: West Texas A&M – Caleb Baker, Jacob McMillan, Carter Mortensen, Cole Petit

Lamb Judging

Sponsored by Fletcher International Exports and presented by Gab Ryan. Lamb carcasses for the competition were sponsored by Coles.

Individual Runner Up: Cole Petit, West Texas A&M

Individual Champion: Austin Smith, Murdoch

Team Runner Up: West Texas A&M – Caleb Baker, Jacob McMillan, Carter Mortensen, Cole Petit

Team Champion: Charles Sturt University – Sophie Hanna, Olivia Henzen, Angus Pilmore, Jasmine Wholton.

Retail Cut and Saleable Item Identification

Sponsored by Coles and presented by Georgia Eastwood.

Individual Runner Up:
Nick Loughlan, UQ

Individual Champion: Katja Zapf, UQ
Team Runner Up: West Texas A&M – Caleb Baker, Jacob McMillan, Carter Mortensen, Cole Petit

Team Champion: University of Queensland – Lawton Elliot, Nick Loughan, Samuel Turner, Katja Zapf

Eating Quality Evaluation

Sponsored by NH Foods Australia, presented by Maria Thompson, Agstar Projects

Individual Runner Up: Harriet Taylor, Marcus Oldham

Individual Champion: Jasmine Wholton, CSU

Team Runner Up: University of Sydney – Rachel Franklin, Jessica Hua, Ryan McCluskey, Alice Shirley.

Team Champion: University of New England - Maddie Bignell, Jack Jansen, Anna Johnston, George Simiana.

Beef Judging

Sponsored by Teys Australia and presented by Stephen Thomson.

Individual Runner Up:
Sophie Angus, USYD

Individual Champion:
Lawton Elliot, UQ

Team Runner Up: West Texas A&M – Caleb Baker, Jacob McMillan, Carter Mortensen, Cole Petit

Team Champion: University of Queensland – Lawton Elliot, Nick Loughan, Samuel Turner, Katja Zapf.

Overall Placings

Sponsored by Kilcoy Global Foods and presented by Jemma Harper at AMPC.

Individual Overall Runner Up:
Caleb Baker, West Texas

Individual Overall Champion:
Katja Zapf, UQ

Overall Team Runner Up: University of Queensland – Lawton Elliot, Nick Loughan, Samuel Turner, Katja Zapf.

Overall Team Champion: West Texas A&M - Caleb Baker, Jacob McMillan, Carter Mortensen, Cole Petit.

Overall Questions

Sponsored by Australian Agricultural Company and presented by Laura Garland from MLA.

Individual Overall Runner Up:
Maddie Bignell, UNE

Individual Overall Champion:
Lawton Elliott, UQ

Overall Team Runner Up: West Texas A&M – Caleb Baker, Jacob McMillan, Carter Mortensen, Cole Petit.

Overall Team Champion: University of New England – Maddie Bignell, Jack Jansen, Anna Johnston, George Simiana

Beef Pricings

Sponsored by JBS and presented by Aaron Graham.

Individual Overall Runner Up: Cole Petit, West Texas

Individual Overall Champion: Katja Zapf, UQ

Overall Team Runner Up: University of Queensland – Lawton Elliot, Nick Loughan, Samuel Turner, Katja Zapf.

Overall Team Champion: University of Sydney – Rachel Franklin, Jessica Hua, Ryan McCluskey, Alice Shirley.



*Gary Haines, James Morrison,
Phillip Hoskins, Penny Morte,
Luke Francis Ingles,
Reno Wilson,
Jackson Edwards*

Malanda Butchery and Bones Knob Butchery team in FNQ

The Atherton Tablelands in far north Queensland has all the beauty of tropical Queensland, with the addition of cold winter nights due to its elevation. A food bowl for much of the region, it has dairy, avocados, bananas, sugar cane, cropping and whatever else you can think of. And plenty of beef.

Surprisingly, there is only one piggery and two abattoirs servicing the huge region, with a handful of butchers around Atherton, Tolga and Malanda.

Gary Haines, owner of the butcher shop in Malanda, took on the business with a partner (who was a butcher) more than thirteen years ago, later buying him and is now the sole owner of Malanda Meat Co. The business at that turning point was struggling to pay its bills.

With the help of the head butcher who offered to stay on, Gary's team have transformed the Malanda Meat Co to a thriving business that employs more than 15 staff. The shop is the major supplier of fresh, pre-packed meats to a chain of supermarkets in the district, plus frozen products as far north as Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands and west to Mt Isa.

"We were processing 2-3 bodies per week when I bought my partner out, plus a handful of lambs and pigs," says Gary. "Now, we would easily do 20-30 bodies of beef, 20 pigs and about 100 lambs per week.

"The majority goes through the supermarkets, hospitality and up north – the shop display cabinet is only around 30% of our overall business.



Grant Oliveri and newly qualified butcher David Edwards

In Malanda itself, the local supermarkets offer competitive pricing, but the loyal customers for the shop will still come to Gary 'for the best beef or sausages in town'.

Gary readily admits that they are not the flash, top end of the market, but pride themselves on producing a good, consistent quality product. In one week, the shop turned out 2 tonne of sausages for wholesale and retail outlets.

Local supply for Gary represents an opportunity to operate a paddock to plate model for his 2,500 head of cattle that are bred, weaned and fattened in the Tablelands region. It is one of the reasons he went into the butcher shop trade in the beginning – to trade his cattle.

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continued from page 17

The majority of his cattle were slaughtered through the abattoir in Tolga. Another smaller facility, known as Bones Knob Butchery also has the capability for slaughter. In July 2021 the opportunity to purchase Bones Knob Butchery arose providing Gary with an opportunity to then amalgamate this meat processing facility into his business model. This meant that Gary now had control of the supply chain from paddock to plate.

With the wave of Covid reaching the Tablelands, Gary could see that it would be inevitable that the shop in Malanda and Bones Knob would be hit, and likely be short staffed. In a pre-emptive move, shifts and rosters were re-arranged to minimise the risk should staff become ill. To his credit, when the first butcher went down on the Thursday night shift and another on Friday, the business was able to keep going for the periods of isolation required for the illness. By the time the first butcher was well enough to return to work the following Saturday, the Malanda shop was down to one butcher and two packers. On Sunday, that butcher rang and said 'I don't feel too good, hey'. The shop made it through without closure or missing any orders.

The irony is that the business had their busiest two weeks on record – processing 44 head of cattle, 140 sheep and 28 pigs.

“Without the dedication and loyalty to keep going, we would never have got through that time, the staff worked like buggery to keep the shop going and to fill all those orders. It's a real credit to the butchers, packers and everyone at the shop and the crew at Bones Knob.”

That loyalty is born from leading by example. Gary describes himself as tough but fair, and will be the first one on site for the morning shift at 5am. His philosophy with apprentices is that they have to want to be there and earn the right to stay – once they have done that, Gary will support them in whatever way he can.

“I'm not going to make apprentices stay, there is no point, but those that do will be supported all the way. A few kids that have gone onto other ventures, like their own businesses



Bones Knob Butchery Manager Grant Oliveri



Gary Haines & Manager John O'Connor

are very successful, and have a great work ethic. They know, that they can ring me anytime for help and advice and I will give it. It's true the other way – if I need help, I know I can ring them.”

That tough but fair approach extends to his customers. Gary won't take on a new customer until he has spoken to them, asked why they are coming to Malanda Meat Co, and if it is an issue with a previous supplier, then he advises to resolve the issue first. He says if the issue isn't resolved, he will happily take them on. The process of taking on a new customer means ensuring that all the processes are in place, orders are filled to the customer's satisfaction and it has been operating smoothly. Then Gary will consider a new customer.

“I'm the first to admit that I am not a butcher, I went into this game to have an avenue to sell some of my better cattle – those that don't go to the feedlot or live export. What we have at the store in Malanda and Bones Knob is a reputation for good quality and I'm happy with that. To consistently provide top-quality grass-fed cattle that I can truly say is paddock to plate from calf to carcass that I am proud to serve to my customers.” ■

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Darwin's largest locally owned wholesaler opens to public

By Stephanie Flynn

In a city where the notion of home delivery means delivery by light plane to remote regions and distance travelled by customers means several hundred kilometres, three Territorians have made a successful business partnership last more than 20 years.

Indrek Urvet, Grant De Ruyter and Joseph Scott, three business entrepreneurs, none of whom have a butchering background, have successfully built Prime Meats NT into Darwin's largest locally owned meat wholesaling business by focusing on the hospitality sector to provide portion cut quality meats to meet the needs of restaurants and resorts.

After a brief foray into a separately located retail butcher shop, the three opened a shop front at their wholesale factory to sell direct to the public. Supported with extensive television advertising, the expansion has been a major success attracting customers from remote parts of the Territory as well as Darwin locals.

All raised in Northern Territory, the three are no strangers to the 'give it a go' mind-set, meeting when they were all working in the hospitality sector in the 1990s, they decided to form a partnership to supply the sector with wholesale fruit and vegetables which at the time was poorly serviced.

They set about renting a property, building a cool room, buying a second-hand car, van and refrigerated truck and developed a customer base from the contacts they knew from their prior work in the hospitality sector.

Over 20 years they built the business which they eventually sold in 2014 to an international company which was establishing a nationwide supply chain.

Prevented by the terms of the sale from operating with that sector again and unwilling to rest on their laurels as such a young age, the trio decided to use their considerable wholesaling knowledge to set up a quality meat supply business for the hospitality industry.

"Between the three of us we pretty well knew everyone in the industry and even though we were not butchers, we knew the business side of operating in wholesaling, so we leased a premises, hired butchers and starting slowly building the business up focusing on portioning and premium cuts to meet the demands of the food service sector," Mr Urvet said.



L TO R Mr Indrek Urvet with some of his team members, retail service staff Dael Wilson and Cassie Neale and butcher, Grant Chapman.

"There are a couple of wholesalers in town, large national suppliers as well as international wholesalers all doing fresh and frozen meat, so it is very competitive in this sector particularly in the face of rising prices, but being locals has been a tremendous advantage," he said.

This competitive nature of wholesaling in such a remote city as Darwin acts as a limit to further expansion leading the trio to look at meat retailing to grow their business.

They took a short-term lease on a shop in the busy suburb of Parap to test the waters in meat retailing, an expansion that they soon decided was taking too much of their attention and resulting in additional costs that would not be sustainable for their core business.

"We did not like the way it was heading and thought the best thing we could do is return to grass-roots and set up a retail outlet within our wholesale premises," Mr Urvet said.

"We did a few renovations at the front and opened it up to the public so when customers come in they get a look straight down to the wholesale side of things which gives a good image to the public that they are buying from a wholesaler.

"In order to promote the retailing operation, we advertise a lot on television, using all three local television stations, which in fact is cheaper than radio these days, and we change the schedule throughout the year to account for the tourist season and major celebration periods like Christmas.

"We can sell at wholesale plus prices, we do not do bulk cheap meats it is more along the lines of quality meat at wholesale prices, and we give everyone the same quality portion cuts as we give restaurants.

NT Prime Meats' wholesale operations has recently established a retail shop front at its factory supplying wholesale quality meat to the general public.



“We also have the capacity to be able to sell someone 1,000 sausages straight away or portion cut 500 steaks for parties or corporate functions, or fishing boats and we now have a lot of customers that come through the door from these sectors, it has become an important part of our business,” he said.

Today, NT Prime Meats' operation employs two butchers, six staff as well as the three partners full-time. The business supplies product around the Northern Territory to resorts, companies, remote indigenous communities, to customers like fishing lodges on the Tiwi Islands and delivers orders by light plane.

As well as drawing individual customers from the metropolitan Darwin area, NT Prime Meats also attracts customers who work in remote regions like Katherine and travel several hundred kilometres to shop monthly at their retail shop front.

In addition to supplying traditional meat products, the store also stocks local, wild-caught Barramundi, crocodile, salmon and buffalo. According to Mr Urvet, there is an increasing interest in buffalo with quite a few restaurants serving dishes featuring this meat and the Middle Eastern community using buffalo in a lot of their cuisines.

Operating a meat wholesale and retail operation in the nation's most remote city has a number of unique challenges not the least of which is the distance of supply routes which add a great deal to costs for the business.

“There is a component in costs that other states do not have and that is a huge freight bill given the distance from southern



The product range at NT Prime Meats includes locally made condiments and products, the full array of traditional meat products as well as local wild-caught Barramundi, crocodile, salmon and buffalo.

suppliers, costs have risen 40 percent just in the last month, so cost control is a major part of operating successfully,” Mr Urvet said.

“We buy from suppliers across southern states and use the freight corridors from both South Australia and Queensland but avoid that from Western Australia which is the most expensive route,” he said.

“It has taken a while, but now we have got the formula right in adding the retail space to the wholesale operation and we have a direct presence as owners everyday on the floor, it has made a big difference, it has not been an easy road, but we are now doing very well,” he said. ■

Darwin's frontline to LSD and FMD

By Stephanie Flynn

Outbreaks of Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) have this year been recorded in the Indonesian cattle industry prompting an immediate biosecurity alert and surveillance programme in Australia to protect the nation's multi-billion-dollar meat export industry from disease incursion.

Originally limited to Africa, LSD has been progressively spreading through China and South East Asia since 2019 and was officially reported in Sumatra in Indonesia in March this year for the first time.

Indonesia also reported an outbreak of FMD in May, its first since 1986, and it has since spread through several provinces across Java and, in July, an outbreak was confirmed in Bali, a popular tourist destination for Australians.

Australia's Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) issued statements on the threat of both diseases warning that an incursion of either would see substantial consequences for our beef, water buffalo and dairy cattle industries nationally and severe economic losses to Australia's meat processing sector.

LSD is a viral disease that causes fever, depression and skin lesions in cattle and water buffalo and although it rarely causes mortality it results in animal welfare issues and significant production losses.

FMD is a contagious viral disease of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs with severe consequences for animal health.

There is currently no LSD vaccine approved for use in Australia but the establishment of an FMD vaccine bank in 2004 has ensured Australia has access to vaccines if a response to an outbreak of that disease is needed.



Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer, Mark Schipp and Deputy, Beth Cookson, visit Darwin's Berrimah Export Yards in May as part of the industry engagement to respond to the emerging biosecurity threats

According to DAWE there would be substantial trade impacts if Australia was no longer recognised as being free from LSD.

DAWE advised that modelling by the Australia Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences in 2013 determined that a large outbreak of FMD in Australia would have significant financial impact, estimated at the time to be around \$50 billion over 10 years.

DAWE has an extensive Biosecurity Surveillance Framework in place across northern Australia, which includes on-farm biosecurity protocols, as well as it has strengthened the nation's international borders around the country for incoming sea and air passengers, cargo and mail and strict management by Government personnel for returning livestock vessels.

Given the Northern Territory's extensive live export trade and proximity to Indonesia the Northern Territory Livestock Exporters Association (NTLEA) has been playing a significant role in Australia's defence against incursion of these diseases.

The Northern Australian Biosecurity Surveillance Framework was established to facilitate collaboration between communities, industry and Government and is guided by senior representatives from the Federal Government,

Queensland, Western Australian and Territory Governments, scientists and animal health specialists.

According to Mr Tom Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer of NTLEA, the industry has drawn on lessons from outbreaks of both African Swine Fever in terms of management of the situation until access to a vaccine for LSD is possible and can be rolled-out, an effort that has been pursued in earnest since the outbreaks earlier this year.

“It is expected that there is an almost inevitability of LSD reaching Australia simply because it can blow here on a monsoonal wind, it is fully airborne, so when you look at the ways that the various systems in the wet season can carry particles, we are certainly preparing as though there is an inevitability to it and also that we could get it, stamp it out and it could blow back here again if it becomes endemic on our doorstep,” Mr Dawkins said.

“At the moment, LSD would be catastrophic in that it would shut down our market access for both livestock export and red meat markets as well as dairy markets for the whole nation given lot of our trade agreements are built on our disease-free status.

“Whereas the risk of LSD is based on things out of our control, FMD has a different shape, it is more mechanical in its transmission in that it can be airborne over a short distance but more so carried in soil particles.

“There are established protocols in place to wash down vehicles, ships and vessels within the livestock export system which undergo extensive disinfection on their return journey from Indonesia, standards which have been in place for a long time, personnel are similarly required to follow preventative measures in regard to footwear and clothing,” he said.

Mr Dawkins sees the greatest risk for the incursion of FMD is as a casual transmission via tourists that might not be aware of biosecurity protocols, for example, as it has now spread to Bali there is a high risk of people bringing it back from there on their belongings via any airport in Australia.

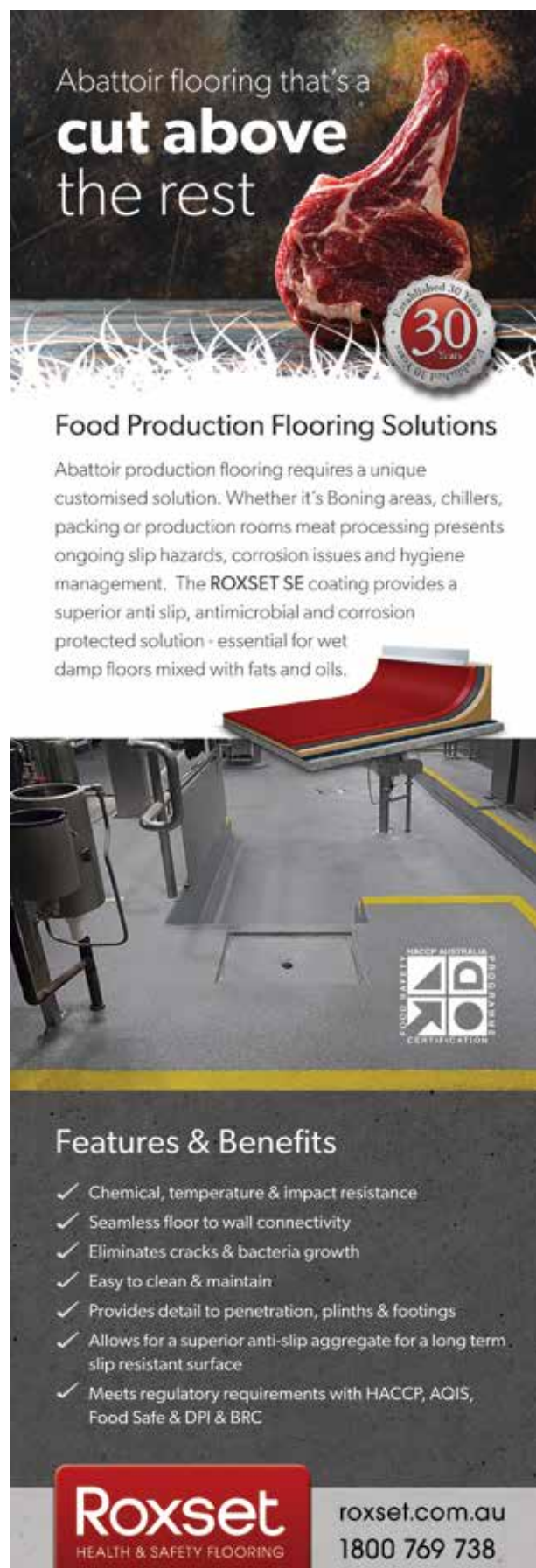
The postal system is also a key point of entry and surveillance has been stepped up using technology and dogs to monitor this entry point by seizing products that come through the mail.

But already Australia’s trade with Indonesia has been affected by the outbreak of the two diseases.

“We are in this flux between the declaration of both diseases in Indonesia and the roll-out of vaccines so, in the meantime, there is a kind of lockdown in place where cattle movement within Indonesia has been limited and our customers certainly are tempering their orders for cattle while they do not have vaccine access,” Mr Dawkins said.

“The Australian Government has provided funding to Indonesia in order to facilitate and assist in the vaccine roll-out against both LSD and FMD but until then we are in a slower trading period with our largest live cattle export market,” he said.

For more information on FMD and LSD, visit www.mla.com.au



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NT cattle industry looks both North and South

By Stephanie Flynn

While the Northern Territory is renowned for its role in the live cattle export trade it also plays a significant part in the nation's meat supply chains in the south of the country, feeding organic and quality beef to the domestic market and has played a key role in providing cattle to restock the nation's herd.

Darwin Port is central to the considerable northern cattle supply chains that stretch from Broome in the north west of the country around the top end to Townsville in Queensland's north, a system built over a century by pioneering Australian pastoralists and cattle business operators.

In its more recognised role, the Northern Territory also plays a major part in Australia's largest live cattle export market, Indonesia, not only supplying live cattle and boxed beef but also in transferring technology and knowledge to support that nation's food security and employment in its domestic industry.

Tom Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer of the North Territory Livestock Exporters Association (NTLEA) spoke with *Australian Meat News* about the industry in the north, how it operates over the vast distances and how it works with Australia's closest neighbour, Indonesia, and its second largest live export market, Vietnam.

The NTLEA was established in 1980 by exporters and pastoralists with supply chain infrastructure interests to guide the development and governance of the Northern Territory's cattle industry.

Taking up the role at the helm of the NTLEA last year, Tom Dawkins says that the Territory's role domestically in recent times has been unprecedented as re-stocker demand drove movement of cattle from the north to the south and east of the country.



Mr Tom Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Territory Live Export Association at Darwin Port.

"Last year, for the first time, we saw more cattle leaving the Northern Territory on a truck rather than a ship because of the short supply in southern and eastern Australia given the nation was so understocked due to drought and, when that broke, the pull on cattle from the north including the Kimberley region into Eastern supply chains was unprecedented," Mr Dawkins said.

"It is a fluid catchment in this region of the country, if we think of a line which is shaded, some NT animals go into the domestic flow to Queensland and vice versa from Queensland into live export, we will regularly see WA cattle or Qld cattle sent to Darwin for live export.

"The NT also supplies a substantial number of its cattle into the domestic market with the areas around Alice Springs having a lot of British breed cattle, with less Brahman and Bos Indicus content, and that region is able to access southern markets as well as organic markets, some will also come north for export," he said.



*Mustering cattle at the renowned Tipperary Station south of Darwin which plays a major role in supplying the NT live export trade.
Photo: Jess Wright*

According to the North Australian Beef Situation Analysis released in 2020, the north Australian beef industry represents the largest economic land use covering around 60 percent of land area.

The economic value of the industry is worth \$5.03 billion to the national economy of which \$3.7 billion is production at the farmgate and \$1.3 billion in first stage processing.

Supply chains have a large geographic spread including movement of animals through breeding, growing and fattening properties as well as through feedlots and processing at abattoirs concentrated near major population centres on the east coast.

Live exports, according to the report, represent a significant proportion of Northern Australian beef supply chains.

LiveCorp puts the total value of livestock exported from Australia in 2020/21 at \$1.5 billion in cattle with 79 percent of those for slaughter at a value of \$1.2 billion.

The largest markets for live cattle export in 2020/21 were Indonesia, accounting for 54 percent of exports and Vietnam 28 percent.

“For us in Darwin, which is the biggest livestock port in the world, for a sustained period 80% has gone to Indonesia,” Mr Dawkins said.

“We have well established supply chains into Indonesia which has strong policies in place where the provision of beef, in particular, is a national priority and, historically, we have had a scenario where around a third of beef has been



*Berrimah Export Yard in Darwin is part of a system of quarantine yards around the NT at which cattle for live export are prepared for the journeys.
Photo: Matt Hoffman*

from their local herd, a third from imported boxed product and a third is from Australian cattle which, therefore, play a big role in their food security.

“Brahman cattle which are suited to northern Australia are the backbone of our trade with Indonesia which is almost concentrated on two islands, Sumatra and Java. We supply live cattle into their feedlots where cattle are fed for 100 or 120 days, a system which employs many people and supports businesses there,” he said.

The role Australia plays in feeding Indonesia’s population has been estimated by the NT Cattlemen’s Association at 26 million people.

According to Mr Dawkins there is an overlap with northern Australian pastoralists having interests in Indonesian feedlots

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and abattoirs and, similarly, South East Asian investment in cattle stations in the Territory.

To service this significant partnership and the live export trade to other key markets, the Northern Territory has developed an extensive infrastructure from the farmgate, where pastoralists are renowned for their cattle breeding pedigree and land management practices, through to a system of eight to ten yards in the Katherine and Darwin regions which are all licensed export quarantine premises.

In a system governed by the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL), cattle in the yards are checked by the Government and exporters' vets and put on feed rations for three or four days in preparation for the journey by sea which takes four or five days to Indonesia and can be longer to other markets.

At these facilities cattle are introduced to feed and water troughs, which requires some adjustment given they have roamed freely on extensive stations and sourced naturally occurring feed and water.

The animals also require this time to adjust to socialising in close quarters with others as part of the preparation for the journey.

With animal welfare a top-of-mind issue for the industry, extensive work has also been done within Indonesia to establish supply systems that meet stringent guidelines under the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance Scheme (ESCAS).

ESCAS requires livestock exporters to demonstrate that livestock remain within approved supply chains at all times



Australia's livestock exporters work with in-country staff and importer customers to ensure ESCAS welfare standards are adhered to.

from discharge within the importing country to the point of processing.

Although Indonesia is currently Australia's largest live cattle export market, Territory producers have also supplied a range of other markets including Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Brunei.

As Mr Dawkins explained there is a wide range of differences in the requirements of Australia's two current major markets, Indonesia and Vietnam, with each country having different internal systems.

"Vietnam has been a cattle trading country for a very long time and as a result their own herds have been a source for China in a massive way so there has been a shortfall in Vietnam which is also experiencing an increasing demand for red meat creating the opportunity for Australia's presence in that market," Mr Dawkins said.

"Vietnam has been a different market to Indonesia. They have not built into their supply chains the 100-day pre-slaughter feedlot model, without which there is sometimes a limited ability to build more of a profit margin by fattening feeder cattle over the course of a few months. As a result, they are more sensitive to higher prices for heavier cattle such as those we have seen over the last year and which have had an effect on volumes to that market.

"Townsville and Vietnam are very compatible, you can export heavier slaughter stock from northern and central Queensland and there is an ability to source more crossbred animals from herds which aren't always as dominated by Brahman genetics.

"The journey we have gone on with our Indonesian customers to uphold the welfare expectations that we have and, also, to be



Cattle loading at Darwin Port which is the world's largest live export port. Photo: Jess Wright



Purpose built livestock transport ship, the Gelbray Express, departs Darwin for Indonesia. Photo: Vroon Livestock

respectful of their halal and other cultural practices is something of which we are very proud.

Mr Dawkins said that domesticated village cattle or small-holder cattle that are accustomed to human-handling are common throughout south east Asia are therefore very different to larger Brahman cattle for slaughter practices, which has created its own challenges.

“We have made great inroads in both of these countries in bringing technology like stunning to the slaughtering process and the infrastructure associated with that in an abattoir to ensure animals get to the point of slaughter without any distress or pain. It speaks to the role Australia has played in building modern animal welfare standards,” he said.

But Indonesia remains the main focus for the Territory’s live cattle exporters given the nation’s population of 280 million and it is expected to become the fourth biggest economy in the world by 2050 providing strong future for the trading relationship.

Not only is the nation a burgeoning market for Australian beef and cattle exports it also provides Australia’s northern pastoralists with a system for turning off lighter cattle, especially in drought years.

According to Mr Dawkins, various regions around the Territory experienced a clipped wet season this year putting pressure on how quickly pastoralists needed to turn off their stock.

“The key breeding regions of Katherine, Victoria River, the Barkly and the Gulf experienced an ordinary wet season and buying feed is not part of what they do, whereas southern livestock models are built around supplementary feeding at particular times, it is not so up this way,” Mr Dawkins said.

“Live export provides a very important release valve for the whole northern cattle industry when there is a drought although in the Territory we do not tend to experience the sort of extreme flood and drought, boom and bust weather cycles that Queensland does,” he said. ■

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Research highlights changing attitudes to live export industry

Australians see the live export industry as delivering economic benefits to the nation and farming communities as well as fulfilling a vital role in food security for less developed nations according to qualitative research funded by the Livestock Export Program, a collaboration between Livecorp and Meat and Livestock Australia.

Conducted by data science company, Voconiq and based on a platform of research developed by the CSIRO, the research programme was first implemented in 2019 to establish a benchmark of community sentiment toward the live export industry, with the second survey conducted last year.

The research examined community attitudes toward all components of the live export value chain and further surveys are planned for the years ahead to continue gauging changes in community perceptions.

An analysis of the two surveys conducted so far was released in March this year by the live export industry's representative body, Livecorp, shows increasing acceptance of the industry, its welfare standards and economic contributions to both regional communities in Australia and to the people who live in our key export markets.

Among the key improvements since the initial benchmark survey is a marked decrease in the proportion of the community that indicated live export 'bothers them' and a strengthening in the recognition that farming communities would suffer hardship should the industry discontinue.

There was also an improvement in sentiment regarding animal welfare throughout the supply chain while animals remain under Australia's control systems.

There was also considerable strengthening in community attitudes and awareness of the role Australia's live export industry plays in improving the diet and nutrition in developing nations and in the provision of a safe source of fresh meat as well as breeding stock to ensure food security for people in destination countries.

According to the report, the export of 'know-how' and technology as well as livestock were also viewed as positive extensions of the Australian live export industry.

Probing attitudes toward each aspect of the live export supply chain, the research uncovered that the areas of most concern to the community are the welfare of animals during

the voyage to overseas destinations and well as in-market transport and wet market retail areas.

Australians remain very concerned about animal welfare with the area of most concern being when animals are perceived to be outside Australia's custody and they are least concerned about conditions on Australian farms and in quarantine feedlots.

Highlighting the need for communication by the live export sector, the survey showed a decrease in the proportion of respondents who believe the industry is prepared to listen to community concerns but an improvement in measures of trust in the industry.

A key measure borne out in the research showed that trust in farmers who do not supply animals for live export was only marginally higher than trust in those that do.

Interestingly, ratings of trust in and acceptance of the live export industry were higher in metropolitan areas than by those in regional areas and there was a higher level of trust recorded among those who knew at least one person who works in the industry.

According to responses, it is important that Governance and penalties for non-compliance are real, and the majority have confidence in the Government being able to hold the industry accountable. ■

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Live exports – exploring the drivers of trust

MARCH 2022

The live export industry has commissioned national surveys, two years apart, to identify the issues that matter to the Australian community and start a fresh conversation about how it is responding to those concerns.

The value of live exports

There is even greater recognition among Australians that

Live exports make an important economic contribution to Australia.



Live exports help overseas countries ensure their citizens have access to safe sources of meat.



Pathways to trust in live exports

The key drivers of the community's trust in live exports are:



Key findings of community attitudes to the live export industry show marked improvement since the qualitative research was first conducted in 2019

Mutton makes its move

While the market is focussed on lamb price movement, the Cinderella of the sheep meat business has also been quietly making moves of its own.

Mutton prices were up 59% on the 10-year average in 2022, peaking the previous year at more than 700c/kg cwt, according to the National Mutton Saleyard Indicator.

While the market has since settled back, there are indications of industry change that could soon affect the supply and price of older sheep meats.

Ongoing labour shortages at abattoirs are seeing more sheep retained on-farm, according to agribusiness guru David Williams from Kidder Williams. “In southern NSW and Victoria alone, there would be more than 100,000 lambs that haven’t been killed,” he said.

And the Labor Government platform of banning live exports after 2025 could see these older animals diverted onto kill floors around the country.

The 2018 WA experience when the live sheep export trade temporarily stopped saw a 30-50% reduction in saleyard prices, with a further 15%-30% drop with the unexpected extension of the moratorium period in August 2019.

And, as the national flock rebuilds from the drought, farmers are preparing to offload older ewes previously retained for breeding. 2021 saw 1.1 million head more breeding ewes – numbers that were 3% up year-on-year, MLA reported. “This indicates that there will be increased activity in the mutton market.”

MLA is predicting a 63% lift in mutton carcass weight production in 2024 compared to 2021 totals, and compared to a 9% increase in lamb.

More and possibly cheaper mutton ... but it’s unlikely to make it to our plates unless there is a consumer taste shift, and at a price which will hinge on foreign exchange rates.

Traditional cheap Australian fare, mutton now mostly heads overseas where it commands a better price than domestic sales.

Matthew Dagleish, Manager, Commodity Market Insights at Thomas Elder Markets said: “I expect, unless there is a change to consumer behaviour in Australia, most mutton will continue to be exported. That is where the best return can be achieved by processors/exporters.”

Australia exported 140,000 tonnes of mutton in 2021, overall remaining steady from 2020 and accounted for 34.7% of Australia’s total sheep meat exports.

Last year, China’s mutton imports were 30% higher year-on-year compared with 2020 volumes. And while lamb continues to dominate the export mix into the US, but mutton sales increased Stateside by 27%, to make up 24% of the total export mix.

There is an established market for frozen Australian mutton into the UK – particularly for the ??? trade. The new FTA with that country could see volumes increase.

But in the traditional markets of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, 2021 mutton imports were 15,000 tonnes, a 33% drop, driven by higher air freight costs due to the pandemic, shipping holdups and record high sheep prices in Australia.

All sheepmeats have seen a decline in Australian sales. In the early 2000s we each ate about 6kg mutton and 12 kg lamb a year. Nowadays its is about 6kg lamb and mutton is less than 350 g a year, according to MLA.

Mr Dagleish noted: “ In recent years with the mutton price remaining strong, the discount between lamb and mutton has narrowed significantly. We saw a similar narrowing in 2010/11 – the last time we saw a strong flock rebuild. So producers are getting a better return on mutton, but I suspect that farm returns on lamb still out performs mutton.”

The average Eastern States Trade Lamb Indicator/National Mutton Indicator spread (the price difference between young and old animals) for 2022 has been 225c/kg cwt.

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Angus Taylor from Mercado reported: “Over the past seven years it has been rare for mutton to be much closer than 150¢. The ESTLI/NMI spread widened in July last year, but we can see that it was due to lambs taking off, rather than mutton weakening.”

Meanwhile, new Australian/New Zealand research has reported that consumers are willing to pay matching retail prices for lamb as for mutton. The study also reported that consumer-rated mutton eating quality was higher than expected.

The research collated results from 540 untrained tasters testing bone-in leg and loin primals from 81 merino cull ewes. The taste testers ranked for tenderness, juiciness, liking of flavour and overall liking.

Their responses suggested that they most often graded mutton longissimus and semi-membranosus quality as “better than everyday” and “good everyday” respectively, and flagged a willingness to pay \$A26.90/kg and \$A18.80/kg respectively.

Additionally, the researchers examine the effects of wet and dry-ageing of the mutton by testing for tenderness in meats aged between 14 and 56 days.

They reported that ageing beyond 14 days improved tenderness, but found that dry ageing did not enhance mutton eating quality compared to wet ageing.

The researchers included Melindee Hastie Minh Ha, Robyn Warner and Graham Hepworth from the University of Melbourne, Robin Jacob from the former WA former Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Damir Torrico from Lincoln University in New Zealand.

What is Mutton?

Mutton is meat from a sheep that is older than one year, ideally three years old. Aged ewes and wethers, the non-breeding stock, are mostly channelled into hogget or mutton.

It was long considered cheap fare. The traditional Scottish dish of broiled mutton shoulder served cold is called ‘poor man of mutton’.

As a meat, mutton is an intense red colour and contains a considerable amount of fat. Its flavour is very strong, bordering on game-like, the texture coarser and the meat fattier than lamb.

Mr Dalglish said: “I don’t think there is a noticeable difference in mutton across cast for age ewe or wethers. Mutton holds up better to the slow cooking hot pot style that is popular in Asia. Higher fat and more flavour is also present in mutton when compared to lamb, which some offshore consumers prefer.”

Whether the live export shipment animals can be diverted into abattoirs will also require reset by the processors. The live trade usually incorporates aged wethers unable to reach target weight once pasture quality declines in spring, especially in more marginal regions. It is also an outlet for lambs unable to meet domestic slaughter specifications. ■



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Branded meat to get the premiums over enviro claims?

Branded meat will claim price premiums ahead of product with animal welfare or eco-cred, according to a senior Meat and Livestock Australia manager.

Michael Crowley, MLA's general manager research development and adoption, doubts that improving meat's environmental and animal welfare standards will automatically earn higher price tags.

Exemplary animal welfare and sustainability practices will be expected by shoppers, and might be needed to access markets, he told a late-June MLA industry breakfast.

"If it's really premium products that connect with a certain consumer who is willing to pay more, then there's opportunities. But I think in the longer-term, depending on what level you're at, environmental sustainability along with welfare may just be market requirement, entry requirements," he said.

He doubted that consumers would be prepared to pay a premium for animal welfare because it will become expected behaviour, and because the alternative presented too great a risk to the industry. "It's just going to be one of those factors that we can't have an exposure (to), it's a big risk for our industry. We've seen that over the years," he said.

His warnings differ from the findings of CSIRO's National Protein Roadmap released last March reporting that future shoppers will pay a premium of between 3% and 7.5% for Australian meat that carries guaranteed nutrition, fair trade and sustainability labelling. MLA partnered in that report.

Addressing the Brisbane breakfast meeting, Mr Crowley said: "Premiums come with brands – in my view – but I'm not sure that, as Australia Inc, whether we will receive a premium.



Michael Crowley, MLA's general manager research development and adoption.

"In saying that, we're a high-cost producer and we're still competitive globally. So I think when we add all these things up – welfare, environment, quality, shelf life and food safety – it paints a pretty bright picture about how we can position ourselves globally.

"Whether you determine that to be a premium or whether we're just a high-cost option, there'll be enough consumers globally willing to pay for our product," he said.

Questioned about the premium commanded by free-range eggs, Mr Crowley replied: "Everyone is selling eggs and there's a baseline for eggs and there's different offerings to a customer. And that's how the beef industry has evolved.

"We are no longer just selling what we have, we're selling what the consumers want.

"We're getting better at brand marketing. We're getting better at connecting with a customer and a

consumer need. We're seeing brands doing well going through to the point-of-sale retail, and I think that will continue. It will continue to be more targeted. We know who our target customer is and which consumers we're trying to attract.

"I think there's the big opportunity here in unlocking value is by looking at our consumer insights, by understanding the specifications of what our customers want." ■

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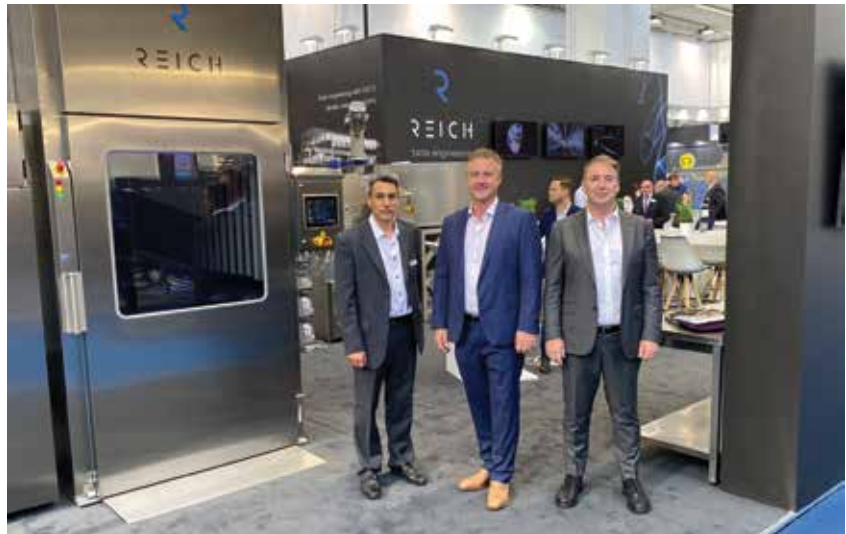
IFFA brings back confidence for industry

The IFFA industry trade show held in May has concluded and has met many expectations, and reinvigorated business again around the world. The IFFA exhibition was lucky in that the previous event was 2019 – just before Covid struck – and was on again once borders had begun to lift.

Around 50,000 trade visitors were more than satisfied with ‘their’ industry meeting, which took place following its usual three-year cycle, which corresponds to the industry’s innovation cycle.

Wolfgang Marzin, President and CEO of Messe Frankfurt, also expressed his enthusiasm: “It was a pleasure to walk through the halls and meet industry participants again. An almost euphoric mood dominated IFFA. You could clearly feel how relieved everyone was to finally be able to meet in person again. The industry was open to new topics and impressively demonstrated its innovative strength. The global family reunion once again set the trends for the coming years – not least due to the expansion to include alternative proteins.”

Automation and digitalisation are the driving topics in meat and protein processing and were at the centre of the innovations. The exhibiting industry also showed solutions and ideas for increasing energy efficiency and resource-saving. Richard Clemens, Managing Director of the VDMA Food Processing and Packaging Machinery Association, is more than satisfied with the course of the trade fair and emphasised: “Finally, the industry can meet again. The mood at IFFA 2022 is exceptionally good. The national and international visitors are very interested in the innovations and, in numerous cases, have very concrete projects in the pipelines. The joy of finally meeting in person again is apparent everywhere.”



CBS Foodtech: Mark Ireland, Andy Schurger, Chris Attwood.

As for the packaging industry, the innovations were entirely in line with the slogan: “As much as necessary, as little as possible”. In addition to recyclability, manufacturers focused on renewable raw materials: bio-based packaging as an alternative to plastic made from fossil raw materials points the way to a more environmentally friendly future.

CBS Foodtech – Andy Schurger

A regular at IFFA, CBS Foodtech are the Australian representatives for many European brands, and participate on the stands of their suppliers to encourage business here in Australia.

According to Andy, the mood was buoyant with many companies simply relieved to be able to re-engage and network with suppliers and start moving forward again after the pandemic. For CBS Foodtech it was really about networking, connecting with suppliers, understanding what is coming through in the way of product development and supply chain issues which is the same for everybody.

“There was definitely plenty of people attending, but was certainly lower

than previous years – the absence of Asia with their current lockdowns and the politics in Ukraine has had an impact.

“There is plenty of activity around alternative proteins and that machinery can process plant-based food – which we can. Product innovation was limited, as the past two years have been about keeping going, not developing new ones.

“For sustainability, packaging is certainly high on the agenda for those guys who produce it to meet their commitments. One of the biggest things to come out of the pandemic, is that we have had to work smarter due to being short-staffed. People are now understanding that simple equipment for the butcher shop can make a huge difference when you don’t have someone to make hamburgers or the sausages – you can get a machine for that. Automating processes does not mean massive equipment lines, but can mean simple tools to help with productivity, so we are definitely seeing more of that.

“Now that I have had an opportunity to catch up with potential suppliers, we will be looking to bring new products into Australia from Spain and Germany in the coming year.”

Krehalon releases new sustainable packaging

During IFFA, Krehalon demonstrated to visitors how its portfolio contributes to a more sustainable world alongside maintaining its focus of preserving the quality of fresh food whilst maximising shelf life and presentation appeal. Not only does Krehalon contribute to reducing food waste, and the associated carbon footprint, but can also now do so with sustainable flexible packaging solutions.

The most recent development Krehalon was excited to share was its news of having received the ISCC+ certification at the Krehalon headquarters in Deventer, Netherlands in May 2022. This is fast becoming the globally recognized standard for the recovery of waste and residues that provide the feedstocks for circular plastics, chemical intermediates, and therefore a wide variety of consumer facing products like packaging.

Other developments included the company's continued efforts to design and develop materials that adhere to Design for a Circular Economy guidelines supporting the global efforts to generate a circular economy. For some of these developments, Krehalon is working closely with its mother company, Kureha Corporation located in Japan. One such ongoing project is investigating the use of PGA, a unique barrier material, as alternatives to PVDC and EVOH barrier materials.

For some processed meat applications, Krehalon is now trialling new materials

that adhere to CEFLEX guidelines. The future goal of the company is to get all its materials adhering to the guidelines as well as projects within the company to make all its facilities more sustainable such as reduction of energy and water, replacing fossil energy consumption with greener energy solutions, thereby also reducing the carbon footprint of the company as well as its products.

To date the company has had long-proven flexible packaging material solutions, some already in the market for more than 30 years like its ML40 shrink bag range, which can be up to 23% thinner – so less plastic, than comparable offerings. Also, Krehalon's high abuse range has been recognised for its sealing strength meaning there is less wastage at production sites.

More recently, the automation solutions, Formshrink® and Flovac™ offer attractive potential for reduction of both commercial costs and material wastage. At IFFA, Krehalon demonstrated this with its successful Formshrink® film running demonstrations on the booth so visitors could see for themselves the superior print on pack, ideal for retail applications and the excellent hermetically sealed packs.

Although footfall during the exhibition was lower than in previous years due to the economic and political circumstances the world is facing, the quality of the conversations for Krehalon were fantastic and the exhibition gave us the opportunity to reconnect with existing customers as well as initiate exciting new opportunities.

Barnco - Brad Lawson

IFFA returned to Frankfurt this year as planned and I had the great fortune to attend. I had big boots to fill, standing in for my dad, Chris, who up till this year had been to every IFFA since 1978. It was a huge privilege to represent the Barnco team and to see all our international partners in the same place once again. As Australian representatives of the likes of Speco, Edge, Foodlogistik, Mainca, and Cretel, it is a pleasure to sit down in-person with people we are dealing with nearly every day.

IFFA is known as the place where innovations in the industry are first presented, but innovation is by no means restricted to the big companies or the big machines. Skilled labour shortages and the growing costs of doing business mean there is a need for everyone, including butcher shops and small processors, to automate aspects of their work. But not everyone wants to move into a bigger facility to accommodate larger and more expensive equipment, so there is a market for compact and affordable solutions. If those solutions will be anywhere, they will be presented at IFFA, and the opportunity to bring those solutions to the Australian market is why the trip is always worth it.

Here are a few things we're looking forward to – (1) We are pleased to introduce KFT sausage peelers and separators, perfect for those who are producing skinless sausages or who want to offer de-linked sausages. (2) Foodlogistik has redesigned their entry-level DicR classic models to make them even easier to clean, with more rounded edges and fewer crevices. (3) Mainca has introduced a safety system on their bandsaw with a braked motor and sensors to detect hands that are too close to the blade. (4) Andher, who are manufacturers of sausage string-tying machines, released their SF – Smart Filling system which creates a vacuum at the nozzle of a sausage filler, allowing hands-free filling even with natural casings. ■



Spicy read to whet the appetite

In the spice world there are tried and true combinations that just work. Understanding how those spices work together allows the spice blender to create a whole new flavour sensation by following a few basic principles.

Some are classified as warming such as nutmeg, others are earthy (cumin), some have fruity (sumac) or citrus notes (lemongrass). The flavour can be derived from the bark, the leaf, roots or flowers depending on the end result desired.

So where does the novice spice blender begin to appreciate the science of the spice world? *The Science of Spice* by Dr Stuart Farrimond provides a beginner's guide to the complexities of spices. The book explores the chemistry of the plant and how it affects the flavour compounds.



A description of myriad spices is provided, plus their geographical origins, with regional and cultural classic recipes to illustrate the flavour profile and combinations of the spices. For example, the northern Indian garam masala

blend is based on cumin, turmeric, chilli, ginger and garlic, while a west Indian vindaloo utilises kokum, chilli, cumin, turmeric, mustard, ginger and garlic, with a hint of fenugreek.

Each spice is organised into a stylised periodic table, grouping them into 12 categories from sweet warming through to sweet-sour acids, while others such as saffron are a unique profile of their own.

For each spice, a succinct history is given along with a description of the plant and region of cultivation. The science of blending is then described along with recommendations of how to release the flavour, what spice combinations to try, and also what to cook it with – meats, vegetables, fruits. A collection of recipes are also provided to showcase classic spice combinations from a west African peanut curry through to sweet and spicy apple pastries.

It is an interesting read, to learn about the science of spice plants, but will also whet the appetite and enthusiasm of any spice blender to try a new combination or spice.

Published by Penguin Random House *The Science of Spice* is available from Books for Cooks for \$45.00

See page 39 for details on how to win a copy. ■

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Last issues winners and answers, see page 28



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BOOK COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to Ben Freeman from Barraba Beef who won the copy of: *Fire to Fork* by Harry Fisher.

Ben correctly answered the question: *Who won the Young Butcher Award at Meatstock in both Melbourne and Toowoomba.*

Answer: Lochie Waters

Ben operates Barraba Beef, located in Barraba in the New England region of NSW. On completing his apprenticeship, about 10 years ago, he bought the business and now operates it with the assistance of his "retired" parents.

Ben, thanks for entering the competition and enjoy the book. ■



WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win: *The Science of Spice* by Dr Stuart Farrimond (RRP \$45.00)

Answer the question below.

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Question: *What do the initials FMD and LSD stand for?* ■

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BULL'S EYE PORK SWIRL

BY BRETT LAWS (LAWSY)

SERVES 4-6 | PREP 30 MINS | COOK TIME 90 MINS

- 2kg whole pork neck (collar butt)
- 6 slices of pineapple
- 6 Australian streaky bacon rashers
- 12 fresh basil leaves
- Bull's Eye Original BBQ Sauce**
- 100g coconut flakes
- 50g brown sugar
- Twine string or food elastics
- Edible flowers (optional)

PREP

1. Make a cut length ways (wider side) 1cm from the base of the pork neck until you reach approx. 1cm to the other side. Folder back pork neck and make the same cut but this time on the thicker piece of pork neck and again fold back. You should now have one long piece of butterflied pork
2. Lay out flat the butterflied pork neck, brush on a light layer of **Bull's Eye Original BBQ Sauce**.
3. Place on the Australian streaky bacon rashers and fresh basil leaves.
4. Sprinkle the brown sugar over the slices pineapple pieces and then place them on top of the pork.

5. From one end of the pork begin to roll until you reach the other end.
6. Use a twine string or food elastic to hold the pork together. Start by placing one in the middle, followed by the ends and then in between the ends and the middle.
7. Place on the streaky bacon rashers and fresh basil leaves.
8. Sprinkle over coconut flakes and edible flowers.

COOKING METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 170°C.
2. Place pork in the oven and roast for 1 hour 30 minutes, brushing occasionally with remaining **Bull's Eye Original BBQ Sauce**.



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ESTD

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