

AUSTRALIAN **Meat** **News**

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World Butchers Challenge champions
NT brings home the buffalo
Q fever on the rise



Season's Greetings



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The Makani Australian Butchers team meet on a number of occasions to hone their skills in preparation for the World Butchers Challenge. Photo courtesy Chris Geach.

Giveaway

Win a copy of *Jerky Everything*. See pages 32 & 35

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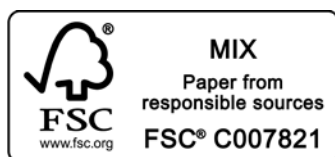
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APL releases inspiring POS kits for Christmas and summer

Recent consumer research has highlighted the importance of in-store advertising for increasing pork sales. Shoppers are commonly switching to pork when browsing in store if they are inspired to do so. Point-of-sale (POS) material can not only inspire ways to use pork but also help the shopper with the how – what cut to use and how to cook it (APL U&A Study, 2022).

With this in mind, APL have developed a POS kit with both Christmas and summer material, which is designed to inspire customers through the warmer months. The Christmas material features celebrity chef Colin Fassnidge and his recipe to create a roast pork with the ultimate crackling, as well as a recipe for a delicious burnt honey, whisky and orange glazed ham.

The summer recipes are designed to showcase how customers can enjoy pork as part of their everyday meals. The recipes highlight the versatility of pork with the recipes including a list of alternative cuts which can be used.

The kits include:

- 2 summer themed posters and 1 Christmas themed poster
- 2 summer themed glass decal stickers and 1 Christmas themed glass decal sticker
- 100 eight-page summer recipe leaflets (with a BBQ cuts guide)
- 100 double-sided Christmas recipe pamphlets

For more recipes and insights join the Pork Butchers Program for free by signing up on the APL website or joining the Australian Pork Butchers Facebook group.

australianporkbutchers.com ■

Summer & Christmas POS kits combined



A2 Posters



A2 Poster



Decals

Decal



A5 8 page recipe leaflet



A6 recipe flyer

ICMJ partners with Mort & Co to train future meat leaders

Australia's next generation of red meat industry talent met in south-east Queensland for an intensive program of professional development and industry training.

The ICMJ Mort & Co Intensive Education and Development Week brought together university students selected from the talented pool of participants at the ICMJ National Conference and Competition, held in Wagga Wagga earlier this year

As part of the six-day program, students visited Australia's largest feedlot, Mort & Co's Grassdale Feedlot at Dalby.

The state-of-the-art facility provided students with an in-depth look at trade and short-fed programs, its integrated vertical supply chain model and the infrastructure required for modern feedlotting operations.

Mort & Co Transport Manager and ICMJ alumni Brad Robinson said as a leading producer of premium Australian beef, Mort & Co sees great synergy in promoting the diverse career opportunities and pathways within the red meat industry.

"Partnering with ICMJ supports the development of emerging industry leaders and exposes them to Mort & Co's fully integrated and ever evolving agricultural supply chain," he said.

"The ICMJ program is unique in bringing interested students together to educate and enhance their career development, and Mort & Co has experienced first-hand the positive contributions of ICMJ alumni, within and across all levels of company operations."

The development week program exposed students to new technologies and capabilities within the meat industry during site visits to some of Australia's major processors including NH Foods Oakey Beef Exports, Australian Country Choice and SunPork Group's state-of-the-art pork processing facility, Swickers Kingaroy.

University of New England rural science student Callum Melton said the ICMJ program was a unique opportunity to gain exposure to all aspects of the meat industry.

"I'm from a primary production background and I had only ever seen that part of the supply chain so being able to see the whole process is just so interesting," he said.

"ICMJ has opened my eyes to every single part of the industry and given me an understanding of how what you do as a producer affects the final product."

Students were given the opportunity to immerse themselves in the innovative paddock to plate virtual reality experience at the Kilcoy Global Food innovation hub on the Sunshine Coast and take part in several professional development sessions designed to kick-start their careers in the red meat industry.

At Meat and Livestock Australia's Brisbane headquarters, students met with managing director Jason Strong and were briefed on the latest issues affecting the Australian industry

and introduced to the grading systems used in the United States.

On the final day of the event, five students will be selected to the Australian ICMJ team.

Australian ICMJ Team Coach Melanie Smith said the Intensive Education and Development week was designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the red meat supply chain, the innovation efforts that support it, and the career pathways it offers.

"Our mission is to inspire and develop the next generation of leaders in the red meat industry and a big part of that is understanding Australia's position within the global supply chain," she said.

"We want students to understand consumer demands, both here in Australia and overseas."

Five university students have been selected to tour the United States.

Austin Smith (Murdoch University), Lawton Elliott (University of Queensland), Jasmine Wholton (Charles Sturt University), Rachel Franklin (University of Sydney), and Samuel Turner (University of Queensland) were chosen to take part in the tour.

Australian ICMJ Coaches Melanie Smith and Nick van den Berg will lead the group of five students on a three-week industry tour of the US in January where they will also compete at several events on the US meat judging circuit.

Nick van den Berg said the US tour was an incredible opportunity for students to learn about the red meat industry in one of the largest red meat producing countries in the world.

"ICMJ's mission is to inspire and develop the next generation of leaders in the global red meat industry and this tour is a key component of our annual program," he said.

"We want students to understand where Australia fits in the global red meat industry and how the industry operates in other countries."

ICMJ's Intensive Education and Development Week is sponsored by Mort & Co. ICMJ is supported by foundation partners, Meat and Livestock Australia and Australian Meat Processor Corporation as well as a range of industry sponsors. ■



The Festive Season is Coming

Get Your Orders in Now!



With summer and the festive season around the corner, some things don't change - people visiting their favourite local butcher, and family and friends getting together to celebrate the year that has been.

Make sure you're ready to help your customers furnish their festivities with food during the busiest time of year. That's where we're here to support you - stocking everything needed to complement your meat and poultry offering, so you're prepared and ready to go.

Thanks to you, your customers can spend less time prepping the plump roast turkeys and glistening hams, and more time soaking up the fun.

What's on Your Christmas List?

Product Category	Description
Cures	Ham, Bacon, Pork, Corned Beef
Netting & Twine	White, Red & White
Vacuum Bags	All Sizes to Suit
Salt	Flossy, Fine, Coarse
Twine	Polyester & Cotton
Naily Tubs & Crates	All Sizes & Colours
Stuffing Mix	Plain & Flavoured



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Q Fever reminder – are you up to date?

Queensland recorded a spike in Q fever infections in September, prompting a reminder to all meatworkers to check their immunity.

Particularly at-risk are workers in abattoirs, retail butchers who raise livestock or those undertaking home kills.

An audit discovered that 11 Wide Bay residents were found to have the disease in 2022 – almost double the average for the same period over the past five years.

Q fever can be carried by animals including cattle, sheep, goats, kangaroos and other wild animals. Rabbits have been identified as a major reservoir of Q fever in Europe, where a large outbreak in The Netherlands in 2007-2010 saw 4000 confirmed cases and more than 30 deaths.

Symptoms include fever and chills, severe sweats, severe headache (especially behind the eyes), muscle pain, tiredness and significant weight loss.

There is an effective vaccine available since 1989 and people working closely with animals are recommended to wear P2 masks and practice strict hand-washing.

Australia has some of the world's highest rates of human Q fever infection, and a range of factors including conducive climate conditions and a growing livestock industry makes us susceptible to outbreaks. Also, under most state regulations, infection in animals is not a notifiable disease.

Q fever is caused by the bacteria *Coxiella burnetii* found in the birth products (i.e. placenta, amniotic fluid), urine, faeces and milk of infected animals. It can be transmitted by breathing in contaminated dust or by direct contact.

The organism can endure harsh conditions for many months in a dried state; either in the ground or attached to buildings, machinery, straw, wool, hides or clothing. Infected materials can be blown (possibly for a kilometre or more) in dry and windy weather. Moving animals and stock transport trucks can also raise infective dusts.

Rarely, Q fever has been spread through blood transfusion, from a pregnant woman to her foetus or through sex.

It is estimated that very small numbers (possibly between one to ten organisms) are sufficient to cause Q Fever in humans. About 50% of people infected will get sick. Illness typically develops after 2-3 weeks.

A very small percentage of people (less than 5 out of 100) who become infected develop chronic Q fever months or years following initial infection. People with chronic Q fever often develop an infection of one or more heart valves.

Chronic Q fever is serious, even deadly if not treated correctly and requires months of antibiotic treatment. Chronic Q fever is more likely to occur in people with heart valve disease, blood vessel abnormalities, or in people with weakened immune systems. Women infected during pregnancy might also be at risk for developing chronic Q fever.

Even suffering from symptoms might not alert doctors to a diagnosis. It might be up to sufferers to suggest the infection.

Earlier this year Australian researchers released a wide-ranging report that found that only half of Q fever diagnoses were made by general medical practitioners.

The survey was part of a national project, 'Taking the "Query" out of Q Fever' which showed the need for greater awareness among veterinarians and health professionals. <https://agrifutures.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/22-086.pdf>

Around 200 people took part in an online survey. "Many patients reported a prolonged time to diagnosis (months to years) and that the pathway to diagnosis was not straightforward," the scientists reported. They also noted that respondents said that their diagnosis was influenced by the diagnosis of others in a cluster.

Medical professionals interviewed in the study said: "It's a really clunky system because we're only going to find out about the ones that the doctors think 'How about we try a Q fever test here?'," said one.

"Some GPs have a good understanding of the epidemiology of Q fever, and some have no understanding at all," another reported.

"Clusters aren't always obvious because of the system that's in place with the notification based on postcode of residence, not acquisition."

The 'Taking the "Query" out of Q Fever' project was supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment as part of its Rural Research and Development for Profit program, through AgriFutures Australia.

Have you been immunised?

The Australian Q Fever Register stores information on people's Q Fever immune status. You can search for your own Q Fever immune status via the register <https://www.qfever.org/>

The register began in 2002 and is owned and funded by the Australian Meat Processor Corporation.

Why is it called Q Fever? The condition was first recognised in Australia during the 1930's when workers at a Brisbane meat processor became ill with a fever. As the cause of the illness was unknown, the workers were diagnosed with 'Query' fever. This was eventually abbreviated to Q Fever. ■

Carbon Neutral Beef gains traction

With the push to be carbon neutral by 2030, the red meat industry is starting to see some producers announce methodologies to be 'no net emissions released' in products and supply chains.

This year, Coles supermarkets is the most recent to get on board with the release of its Coles Finest Certified Carbon Neutral beef for seven cuts in its beef range to consumers.

Others in the industry to have taken up the mantle of carbon-neutral beef are Five founders from the Northern Australian Pastoral Company and Cleavers Organic. In New Zealand, Silver Fern Farms has also taken up the concept.

Explaining the idea of carbon neutral beef

MLA has set a target for the red meat industry to be 'carbon neutral by 2030, while doubling the value of red meat. While the idea seems incompatible, CSIRO research released in August suggests that the industry is already on-track, with emissions falling by 59% in just a few years.

Becoming carbon-neutral requires a farming enterprise to offset emissions from paddock to plate. Fertiliser, grazing, feedlotting, transport of animals, feed and other farm inputs, as well as methane emitted by the cattle are included. Further along the supply chain, emissions from the abattoir, distribution channels, packaging, food waste add to the carbon footprint of the humble steak.

According to Agriculture Victoria, the more a cow belches out methane, the more likely it is that the feed is less palatable. It is not too dissimilar to having a tummy ache that gives you gas! By improving livestock feed, the cattle are better able to digest it, lowering the methane emission. In addition, selecting cattle that are more feed efficient (less intake for the same weight gain) means less time spent consuming food and therefore belching. Most recently, seaweed additives and methane inhibitors have been leading the push for reduced emissions in cattle diets.

Other on-farm emission mitigation strategies include planting more trees, reducing land clearing and planting pastures that utilise more nitrogen.

Purchasing carbon credits invests into projects that aim to reduce carbon emissions and do not have to be onsite. In some instances, buyers are located overseas, and are typically corporates seeking to offset their own emissions.

Calculation of the amount of emissions on-farm is based on the number of livestock across a year, their liveweight at



slaughter (or age), the amount of feed or crop that is used to feed them and, for sheep, the amount of wool produced per animal per year. The calculations include the amount of fertilisers and herbicides that are used for pasture. For mixed farming businesses (cropping and livestock), the calculations are not quite as straightforward. In recent months, the methodologies for calculating carbon emissions (and consequently the 'credit') have been placed under review to ensure the seasonality of carbon emissions and other factors are considered more accurately.

Once a baseline measure has been established, farmers then can seek accreditation of their efforts to track and monitor ongoing carbon emission reductions.

Coles Certified Carbon-Neutral Beef

Released in stores initially in Victoria in April 2022, the Coles carbon-neutral beef has been calculated to reduce participating farmers' emissions to 19% less than the national average.

Coles has made a commitment to work with its farmers to identify emission points on farm and strategies to improve the outcomes through renewable energy, improved genetic selection and herd health.

Tree planting is also a significant part of the Coles corporate strategy, where the trees take up the carbon in the soil that otherwise might have been lost to the atmosphere through a system referred to as 'insetting'.

Off-farm, transport and processing emissions are offset through the purchase of carbon credit units from the Armoobilla Regeneration project which sets about restoring native forests in south west Queensland.

Accreditation for Coles is achieved through the Climate Active certification company.

Five Founders Natural Australian Beef

First launched in 2019, the brand offered by North Australian Pastoral Co (NAPCo) is carbon-neutral certified. By evaluating the carbon footprint throughout the full life cycle of its livestock, NAPCo has offset its emissions through a continuous strategy to improve productivity that focuses on reducing emissions.

Improved genetics of livestock and feed sources have reduced methane emissions, while renewable energy and improvements in water management have mitigated production emission levels. Cattle are grazed extensively, requiring management that increases the store of soil-based carbon.

According to NAPCo general manager for intensive production and sales, James Carson, the company has been proactive since 2019 to reduce emissions, including a transition from fossil fuels to renewables, as well as planting legumes for soil carbon capture.

“Through continuous research and deeply embedded innovative trials, we identified the greatest potential to reduce livestock emissions is through dietary supplements,” he said.

Accreditation: Climate Active certification.

Cleavers Organic

As a certified organic producer, animal welfare and grass-fed cattle are part of the company’s ethos. According to the company, being carbon neutral means there is compensation for all activities between farming and the finished product.

Cleaver’s Organic has chosen to compensate for emissions through carbon offsets using carbon credits through a third party, which ‘reduces greenhouse gases on our behalf, through a carbon offset project’.

Accreditation: Carbon Reduction Institute.

Silver Fern Farms, New Zealand

Recently, the New Zealand government announced that it would be introducing a tax on agricultural emissions, including those relative to the burps, urine and dung from livestock, aiming to meet climate change goals, which come into force in 2025.

Setting the baseline in 2018, Silver Fern Farms used satellite technology and measurement tools to establish current on-farm vegetation to map future strategies at an individual farm level.

In a bid to reduce its own carbon emissions, Silver Fern Farm has released USA-approved Net Carbon Zero Beef for 100 per cent grass-fed products, is already on sale in New York, the Midwest and California.

Using a ‘whole-of-farm’ approach, Silver Fern farmers ‘reimagine the traditionally unproductive land into something beneficial’ through restoration and addition of native and bush plantings to better-capture carbon.

According to Silver Fern Farm’s CEO Simon Limmer, outsourcing emissions is not the way forward; incentivising groups of farmers for their efforts to create improved farm environments is the preferred method.

Certification is via Toitu Envirocare ■

Meat Business Women Australia Conference a huge success

Professionals from across the Australian meat industry came together for the 2022 Meat Business Women Conference in Sydney on Wednesday 26 October. Hosted by the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) as the Australian Territory Partner, the conference was back after a three-year hiatus due to COVID, with virtual events having replaced the in-person networking events.

Aptly, the theme of the conference was ‘Reconnect’. This year’s Meat Business Women’s Conference was facilitated by Giaan Rooney, OAM and Olympian, and delegates heard from Dr Temple Grandin, Distinguished Professor of Animal Science, Colorado State University; Natalie Sommerville, President Australian Women in Agriculture; Robyn Verrall, 2022 SA AgriFutures Rural Women’s Award Winner; Harriet Mellish, Head of Strategy and Transformation, Coles, with a global update from MBW Founder and Global Chair Laura Ryan; along with other industry speakers, panellists and facilitated networking events.

Meat Business Women Australia Chair, Stacey Mckenna was thrilled the event was such a success.

“Our committee works hard to assist in delivering these events and it was fantastic to see it all come together.

“We had 200 attendees from across the supply chain at our sold-out event and the room was just buzzing with excitement.

“The theme for this year’s conference was “Reconnect” and we certainly achieved that.

“Events like this are just so important to promote and celebrate the women within the meat industry, but also to build strong networks and develop the image, culture and landscape of the meat industry to make it more attractive to female talent. As we know, a diverse industry is a healthy and prosperous industry.

“All of our speakers were excellent, Dr Temple Grandin joined us via video link live from Colorado and conducted a fantastic Q&A where she really engaged with the audience on a personal level. The interview and Q&A really highlighted her expertise as an industry leader as she shared her insights and candid thoughts on being a woman in a male dominated industry.

“The Meat Business Women committee and the Australian Meat Industry Council are looking forward to hosting more Meat Business Women events next year.” Ms Mckenna said. ■



Australian champions meet the World Butchers Challenge

The World Butcher Challenge 2022, held in Sacramento, California hosted a record 13 countries vying for the crown of the world's best butchers.

The Makani Australian Butcher Team are proud to come home with silver overall for the competition, with team captain Luke Leyson saying, "To be a part of the most prestigious butchery event in the world is an amazing experience in itself; but to walk away from the event with the success we had is an absolute testament to the standard of butchery in Australia."

To recognise the skill and passion of the Australian team, Matt Tyquin was announced as the World Champion Butcher Apprentice, while Gareth Hunt triumphed with a second place for the World Champion Young Butcher, ensuring that Australia was the only country to place in all three competitions. Tom Bouchier was selected an All Star for his outstanding contribution to his team's display and garnishing.

The best six butchers, selected from all nations competing, were named as the All Star Team – setting themselves apart as the 'elite' amongst close to 100 other butchers.

Tom Bouchier said, "I'm still pinching myself. Being selected as one of the six best butchers on the day is an honour. I've been honing my skills in display and garnishing for years now, so it's a real feather in my cap to make the team based on what I delivered in the competition."

The Butcher Wolf Pack from Germany were awarded gold in the headline event – the World Butchers' Challenge – and received the coveted Friedr. Dick Golden Knife Trophy at an awards ceremony held at Memorial Auditorium in Sacramento on Sunday 4 September. The Hellers Sharp Blacks of New Zealand were given bronze.

Each team had just over three hours to turn a side of beef, a side of pork, a whole lamb and five chickens into a themed display of value-added cuts, requiring superior carving, boning and finishing skills; whilst injecting their own creativity and innovation into their final lineup.

The Makani Australian Butcher Team is sponsored by: Makani Meats, Meat Livestock Australia, Australian Pork, Greenhams, Breakout River Meats, Riverlea, The Butchers Cellar, Victorinox, MBL Food Service, The Food Prep Group, Ace Butcher Supplies.



The Makani Australian Butchers team headed to Sacramento, California for the World Butchers Challenge. L-R Gary Thompson, Gareth Gorridge, Brett Laws, Luke Leyson, Shannon Walker, Craig Munro, Tom Bouchier, Gabriel Maboney. Not present on the day: Matt Tyquin, Gareth Hunt, Joe Maberley. Photography courtesy Chris Geach.

Diary of a Winning Team

Craig Munro, NSW, is no stranger to competition, having competed in many Meatstock Butcher Wars and shares his personal journey of the World Butcher Challenge.

Day 1

Most of the team flew into Sacramento a few days before the event, after a gruelling 25 hours of airports, plane rides and public transport.

By the time we had checked in, it was almost midnight. A few of us found a bar and some food, I found my bed.

A day of sightseeing and a birthday celebration meant an extremely full day, filled with excitement for the week ahead for the World Butchers Challenge.

Day 2

Today we made the trip from San Francisco to Sacramento. On arrival we settled into our home for the next week. We met with the guys at Taylor's Market to organise our fresh produce boxes for the competition.

After an afternoon team meeting we met up for dinner at a local BBQ restaurant. A beautiful meal, great atmosphere. ...Thanks again for all the support coming from home. The videos, messages and comments are helping us all from a distance, I know that the whole team can feel the love. Ready for bed after another day of travel, prep and team building exercises.

Day 4

After Day 3, the focus for the day was to finalise equipment and packing the pallet for delivery to the event, Day 4 was dedicated to a formal photoshoot and competition registration. Craig says 'it was great to see all the butchers converge in one place for the competition and he felt proud to be among them.

Day 5

Today was the biggest day for us so far. Both the senior team and junior team went into the bowels of Golden 1 Center to set up our displays. Walking the halls that some of the greatest athletes and musicians have walked was quite surreal. A hectic 3 hours was followed by a media session on the competition floor.

Once the mornings official proceedings had finished we had 2 hours free time. We made a quick stroll to the State Capitol building. Built in 1860, this heritage building had housed the offices of some influential politicians and actors including Arnold Schwarzenegger and Ronald Reagan. Lunch at a small diner was delicious, Japanese inspired fried chicken burger. Then back up to our room for a shower and a wardrobe change.

The junior team had official photos before joining us for safety briefings, locker room allocations and dress rehearsals. This ran late forcing us to run back to our rooms for yet

continued on page 12



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continued from page 11



another wardrobe change as we went out for dinner to a beautiful Italian restaurant. We were presented with our aprons that we will wear on “game day”.

Good luck to Matt Tyquin, Gareth Hunt, Gabriel Mahoney and Joe Maberley tomorrow competing in the World Butchers’ Best Apprentice and World Butcher’s Young Butcher.

Day 6

The day of competition for the junior team, with the seniors lending a hand to set up and give support and cheer the butchers on.

The anticipation was high and Gabriel Mahoney and Matt Tyquin performed out of their skin. The pressure of being the first competitors out there must have been high, but the guys showed the world how talented they are.

Next up was the World’s Best Young Butcher competition. Australia’s representatives in this category were Gareth Hunt and Joe Maberley. These are two guys that I have shared the Meatstock Butcher Wars stage with and have seen their skills grow. It was amazing to see what they did in only 2 and a half hours. I am so impressed by what these four wonderful butchers produced, their tenacity and drive for the trade.

It’s our turn tomorrow and we just can’t wait.

Day 7 – Competition Day

A day of nerves and pre-competition rituals, Craig and the team arrived early to dress in team uniforms and prepare the team workstation. “I closed my eyes and visualised how I wanted the next 3 and a half hours to go in my head, before I knew it, the announcer called us in to the arena.”

Craig’s role was to break down the pork and pass it onto Brett Laws to work his magic with it. Once he had completed that task Craig moved on to the minced products. After producing numerous products, he started the sausages. Using an unfamiliar new machine was a challenge, but overcome.

The final few minutes consisted of cleaning the workstations and final touches on the display. What the team achieved in just 3 and a half hours is remarkable.



“Full credit to our manager, Shannon Walker, mentors George Abourizk, Stuart Lout and captain Luke Leyson and my teammates, Brett Law, Thomas, Gary, Garreth in just a few months.

Win, lose or draw I am grateful to have had this opportunity.”

Day 8

This morning I woke up very sore, tight hamstrings, aching back, sore shoulders, throbbing headache, but I wouldn’t trade the experience for the world. After a day to reflect I realise how much it really means to me to be on this stage. The feeling when the final bell sounded was relief, like a giant weight had been taken off my shoulders.

My legs went weak, my hands started shaking and tears welled up in my eyes. This was the first time I let the emotions come through, before that, I was focused on the job I had to.

Tonight we had the gala dinner at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium. The night started well with Matt Tyquin taking out 1st place in the apprentice competition. Our night continued to get better with Gareth Hunt taking 2nd in the Young Butcher competition and Tom Bouchier making the Senior Allstar team.

As the announcer read out the teams the anticipation grew, when Australia was called out in 2nd place, I actually didn’t hear it. I looked around and could see my teammates jumping and hugging. That’s when I realised that we are 2nd in the world! We made our way onstage to collect our trophies.

None of this would have been possible without the support of everyone at home. Thank you to you all. ■

Winners of the Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards announced

The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) launched the inaugural Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards this year. These awards have been positioned as the premier awards for the Australian smallgoods industry, recognising products of quality and excellence, while promoting industry recognition and standards. The awards are delivered in partnership with Australian Pork Limited, Cold Xpress, and William Angliss Institute.

Open to manufacturers of Australian smallgoods products, over 350 entries were received, in a short entry open period, across the awards categories of Bacon; Ham; Fermented Salami; Dry / Cured; and Other Charcuterie General Smallgoods.

Judging week was held at William Angliss Institute in Melbourne mid-July, with an impressive line-up of judges include fleischmeisters, award-winning and celebrity chefs, artisan smallgoods makers, and industry legends.

Gold, Silver and Bronze medals were awarded in line with set judging criteria, which is points-based, with the highest award, as adjudicated by the judges, being the Category Champion.

Winners were announced at a gala Awards Dinner last Wednesday 31 August, with the 2022 category champions being named (see below).

The full list of winners can be found on AMIC's website here amic.org.au/australian-charcuterie-excellence-winners/

“The purpose of these awards is recognition for outstanding individual manufacturers and what they can produce, while providing feedback to entrants on how they can improve their product for a higher medal next time around, said Chief Judge and AMIC National Smallgoods Council Chair, Franz Knoll.

“These are annual smallgoods industry awards, so the aim is for entrants to take on the scoring feedback from

the judges and enter product next year with the aim of a higher medal result.

“These awards define a great Australian product, that is both domestic and internationally recognised as an Australian product of excellence, providing superior charcuterie products to the consumer. We look forward to the growth and profile of these awards year-on-year,” said Mr Knoll.

“These awards are the result of a huge amount of planning from AMIC's National Smallgoods Council and the AMIC team and I am so pleased with the volume of entries and success of its first year,” said AMIC CEO Patrick Hutchinson.

“The Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards are THE awards for the smallgoods industry, and in partnership with Australian Pork, will highlight the fantastic small, medium and large smallgoods manufacturers across Australia, who make up a \$4B industry.”

“Australian Pork is thrilled to partner with the Australian Meat Industry Council's inaugural Charcuterie Excellence Awards, said APL CEO Margo Andrae.

“These awards shine light on a group of hard-working smallgoods makers across the country celebrating Aussie pork in the innovative products they create. We can't wait to see these winning products on shelves and in delis, medal adorned and ready, attract a new wave of customers that seek out locally grown and made.” ■

Category	Business	Product
Bacon: Australian Pork	Peter Bouchier	Free Range Dry Cured Streak Bacon
Ham: Bone-In	Bargara Meats	Maple Infused Leg Ham
Ham: Semi-Boneless	Primo Foods	Signature Ham
Ham: Boneless	Andrew's Choice	Boneless Leg Ham
Uncooked Fermented Meat	P. Princi Berkshire	Fennel Salami
Cooked Fermented Meat	DON Smallgoods	Pepperoni Chub
Dry / Cured: Cured Meat	Salt Kitchen Charcuterie	Fiocco
Dry / Cured: Jerky / Biltong	Bucasia Meats	Outback Biltong
Other General Charcuterie	Andrew's Choice	Smoked Greek Sausage

What do Australian pork eaters want?

Western Australian researchers asked consumers to rank 46 attributes to see which matter most. They found that taste, succulence and no smell of boar taint were considered the key indicators of eating quality.

Beyond the eating experience, the respondents value fresh pork meat that had high levels of animal welfare and 'naturalness'.

Research leader Chien Duong said the researchers were surprised to discover that Australian pork eaters do not place much importance on marbling, wetness on the surface of the meat and breed types.

Nor are they concerned with the type of packaging (e.g., MAP, vacuum packaging, or store wrap), food awards or cooking and serving tips on the packaging, he said. "These are more likely to be ignored by consumers."

The survey by Curtin University researchers was able to define consumers into four eating-quality groups: (boar taint haters, lean meat eaters, colour lovers and cuts/size matters) and four other-attribute groups (animal/environment lovers, naturalness lovers, demanding buyers and utilitarian buyers).

Mr Duong explained: "Demanding buyers refer to those who emphasise a wide range of value-added attributes, including animal welfare, farming practices (for example, farming environment and environmental impact) and the naturalness of the products.

"Utilitarian buyers are the most common consumers who care about the most basic functional utilities such as price, best before date and promotion," he said.

A total of 196 people participated in the survey which recruited various



Chien Duong

Australian consumers to represent the overall population according to Census data. To increase the robustness of the study, all selected respondents were fresh pork consumers who purchased fresh pork at least once seven days prior to the study.

The study did not contain any taste-testing component but required respondents to review and determine the importance of attributes.

Included in the attributes were taste, odour, meat colour and marbling along with 'extrinsic' attributes such as price, best-before and weight and value-added elements (e.g., animal welfare, organic, environmentally friendly).

Mr Duong said: "Constant competition and changing consumer preferences prompts the need to improve the competitiveness of the Australian pork industry. This study examines the heterogeneity of Australian consumer preferences related to fresh pork cues.

"Our study is an online choice experiment that attempts to not only determine the most important attributes of fresh pork but also identify the optimal communication of those attributes.

"This study serves as a foundation for future research in determining the more optimal communication and combination of attributes for various marketing collaterals (e.g., packaging, TV commercials and posters).

"This study contributes significantly to the industry by offering granular insights with respect to Australian consumer demands and optimal communication of cues."

The research, involving Curtin's Consumer Research Lab at the School of Management and Marketing and the School of Molecular and Life Sciences was assisted by Billy Sung, Sean Lee and Julia Easton. Supporting partners of the research were Food Agility CRC and Linley Valley Pork.

Chien Duong
Patrick.duong@curtin.edu.au ■

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Who's behind a sausage judging competition?

Meet two men behind the scenes at the AMIC Sausage King judging.

Julian Waghorn's company has sponsored the event for 15 years and has seen changes over that time. "The quality of the sausages has improved immensely and also the variety of flavours that are being put together," he said.

The most surprising flavour combo? "White chocolate and blueberry," he said. "It was actually really good – but then again, I've got a sweet tooth."

He said the sponsorship is "a good way to interact with butchers. We try to take the customers from the supermarket to the butcher and get them to interact."

Waghorn's regard retail butchers as business partners and seek to supply them with product that is consistent and good quality. He added: "I think the sausage making is getting better to put the product together – and they have to, especially with the pressure of meat prices."

And what does an expert look for in a sausage? Graeme Lister, Queensland business manager for Rivalea Australia – known as Murray Valley Pork – said a good sausage is just that, regardless of the type of meat or its designated thickness. "The rules apply across them all."

"For me it's making sure they are true to type, so that what it says on the label is what it is. It's making sure they are consistent, so that they're all the same size and all the same thickness. And then, when you cut them open, they're all a uniform consistency inside and then obviously the taste – whatever taste takes your fancy. And those rules apply for both uncooked and cooked product."



Harry Hallan, winner of Apprentice of the Year, Queensland.



Triumphant Loveday's Quality Meats – multiple winners on the night.



Retailer of the Year, Budd's Butchers, Coolum Beach.

"If they're all the same size obviously they are all going to cook the same but if you have fat ones and thin ones in the same batch well you're going to have great dramas cooking. But then when they're cooked, if they split or crack open you'll lose a few points even though they might taste delicious; they haven't quite got that visual appeal when they're cooked."

He admits he's not a fan of fennel – even though pork and fennel sausages are a classic. "If I'm judging and it's got fennel in it, I have to make allowances," he laughed. "And I don't like coriander either." ■

Buffalo Industry set for success

By Stephanie Flynn

As demand grows in the food service and retail sectors for alternatives to traditional red meats in the face of soaring prices, buffalo meat is becoming a sought-after commodity.

The Northern Territory has been focused on developing the buffalo industry from paddock to plate for several decades but, according to the President of the NT Buffalo Council, it is only now that significant progress has been made, in terms of genetics and infrastructure, to enable the industry to consistently supply nationally and internationally.

The next decade could well include supply of buffalo to feedlots on the east coast for finishing and processing to overcome the significant issue of the wet season's impact on supply chains in the north as well as the export of boxed meat to international markets from Darwin.



There are some 40,000 buffalo now 'behind wire' on Northern Territory stations.

Butcher breeds buffalo for meat

The Asian water buffalo was introduced into Australia in the late 1800s and has since multiplied in numbers in the wilds of the Northern Territory which comprises significant wetland areas to which the species is naturally accustomed.

It is estimated that up to 200,000 rangeland buffalo now roam the Top End, the majority concentrated in Arnhem Land, and their harvesting provides a valuable economic opportunity for Indigenous people in the north.

A further 30,000 to 40,000 buffalo are now managed on pastoral properties including crossbreeds with the Asian water buffalo and the Riverine breed, originally developed with Italian genetics and buffalo from the United States in Australia for the establishment of the boutique dairy industry.

A butcher by trade, Adrian Phillips has been breeding Riverine buffalo in the Top End for 20 years and is President of the NT Buffalo Council.

He is of the view that the NT industry now has good animals and stock 'behind wire' which can consistently supply paddock to plate.

"I believe that consistency of supply is the first thing to concentrate our efforts on because without that, developing customers and markets is difficult and we can now achieve that," Mr Phillips said.

"Our genetics and breeding have come off the back of what Beatrice Hill Research Station did for years with the Riverine buffalo herd for the dairy industry, but I look at the meat side, having been a butcher, and those animals yield really well and do very well.

"The Riverine produces a great carcass, we are still tweaking a few things with the feed and so on, but they grow around 30 percent faster than the Asian water buffalo and they have a better eye on them, with a really nice colour and good white fat," he said.



Adrian Phillips, butcher turned breeder, is President of the Northern Territory Buffalo Industry Council.

According to Mr Phillips, there is also now massive demand for the free-range Asian water buffalo, which are mustered by helicopter during the dry season. The younger male animals are live export to Indonesia and Malaysia and the older animals now being processed for boxed meat at Rum Jungle abattoir on the outskirts of Darwin at Batchelor.

Owned and operated by Central Agri Group, Rum Jungle is now processing 500 buffalo a week which creates work not only in the abattoir and export sector but also real jobs for the Indigenous communities around the Arnhem Land region.

A keen advocate of the concept of value-adding, Mr Phillips sees the whole buffalo industry complementing the development of high-value meat markets for Riverine buffalo males with Riverine females remaining in demand for southern buffalo dairy farms.

He also views the industry as a major contributor to environmental management in that it reduces numbers of the Asian water buffalo, an introduced species, in the wild and redirects the resource into a productive use instead of simply culling and wasting that resource.

Mr Phillips sees a future ahead for buffalo processing facilities across Australia but, in the immediate term, the crucial focus is on the development of quality systems.

“The big thing to address first is quality not quantity because if you do not get that right at the outset of an industry’s

development then either from breeding, transport, the slaughtering process, the butchering or the cooking process, the customer may not find the meat appealing,” Mr Phillips said.

“I am a big believer in getting the quality in the breeding and production side including the nutrition and handling aspects right first, so in the decade ahead we will be concentrating on continually improving these aspects and the marketing,” he said.

Mr Phillips is keen to see markets open for buffalo meat domestically and internationally with its use in the manufacture of smallgoods being, as yet, untapped.

“The whole animal can be used in many different ways, it is just up to the imagination, you can have a scotch fillet on a sandwich or you can leave the rib bone in there and sell it as a ‘tomahawk’ steak or you can use the topside prepared with a teriyaki marinade, peppercorns and hot English mustard and sell it as a ‘Black Russian’ roast,” Mr Phillips said.

“Buffalo meat, particularly the trim, lends itself well to smallgoods including salamis and kranisky sausage as it absorbs moisture very well and buffalo jerky is a wonderful example of value-adding.

“There is ample buffalo in the supply chain now to ensure consistency in supply, even though we are seasonal up here and we have live export competing, with the right contacts in the supply chain wholesalers and manufacturers can be guaranteed supply of buffalo meat,” he said. ■

The making of an Industry

By Stephanie Flynn

Building supply chains in a rugged and unforgiving landscape for a new Australian industry has not been an easy road for the Northern Territory buffalo industry but after decades of investment and effort it is now reaping the benefits and on precipice of major rewards for its efforts.

Roaming wild on flood plains of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory since their importation into Australia from Indonesia in the 1880s as a draught animal, the Asian Water buffalo has prospered with free-range herds now estimated at 200,000.

Wild buffalo have been harvested and exported from Australia since the 1950s but interruptions in the supply chain, most notably in continued and reliable processing facilities, have often hampered the industry's growth trajectory. Access to animals for harvesting is also hampered by the considerable wet seasons that limits access of wild herds for several months.

The need to cull herds of this introduced species was the catalyst for the industry which is, today, underpinned by export of young male buffalo 'back home' to Indonesia as a major live export market providing a sustainable basis for further investment and growth.

Live export numbers from Darwin hit a record 10,000 head in 2020, the highest number in the industry's history.

"It is probably comparable to where the goat industry has been, with a significant number of wild rangeland animals that can be brought into a supply chain, there are other rangeland animals that can be brought into a managed or semi-managed setting on a pastoral property, we have seen that wild population captured more and more and developed



Buffalo are now being transported to feedlots in South Australia for finishing and processing.



Tom Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Territory Buffalo Industry Council.

into a supply chain to enable more reliable supply," said Tom Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer for the Northern Territory Buffalo Council.

"Just to build those supply chains there has to be genuine demand and appetite for the product at the consumer end, whether that is domestically or overseas, and you need a lot of things to make that work.

"If you have some uncertainties in that supply chain, that might be lack of guaranteed seasonal supply, there will be reluctance or lack of confidence to invest in things like processing and we have had to overcome, particularly in the Top End, challenges of cold chain logistics, labour, roads, distances and investment in processing facilities," he said.

The Territory's only major processor, Rum Jungle, licensed for buffalo has been processing on a six-month seasonal basis for the past three years.

As Mr Dawkins explained while herds are mustered by helicopter considerable land access is required for the contract musters who are only able to get on-country in the middle of the year when the dry season occurs.

"You have to have road access, track access for trucks and single deck stock crates and you have to get in there, often with an excavator to rebuild those roads for catching machines, so there is a need for the country to be dry enough for all of that," Mr Dawkins said.

The growing number of buffalo held 'behind wire', however, and the increasing production of the Riverine breed of buffalo on several major stations is opening up the possibilities for feedlots and processors around the nation to move in to buffalo processing alongside their cattle operations.



Buffalo at Coomalie Yards awaiting live export to Indonesia. Photo: Jess Wright

According to Mr Dawkins, a feedlot in South Australia has undertaken transport of buffalo from the Northern Territory for finishing and then sent to local a plant which has geared-up for buffalo processing.

While a specific buffalo license is required, there are few impediments to using existing transport and facilities to process buffalo in addition to cattle.

“There are some economic challenges in trucking buffalo, they need extra space and to be managed with shade as well as needing to be hosed down to keep them cool in order to minimise stress,” Mr Dawkins said.

“Existing processing plants might need to revisit some of the infrastructure in terms of yards and space and buffalo need to be segregated from cattle. Many abattoirs overseas process animals interchangeably so it can be done,” he said.

Live export is currently underpinning the entire industry’s development and investment with strong overseas demand for young males for finishing in Indonesia and, in Vietnam and Malaysia, for slaughter weight buffalo.

The future of the industry lies not only in the export of live buffalo but also in the development of markets for the export of boxed meat, most notably in South East Asia, and there is a sizeable market for buffalo meat.

According to online global food and agriculture trading platform and data analysis company, Tridge, the United States was the global leader in buffalo exports, valued at US\$4.7 billion in 2021, accounting for just over 16 percent of the market. India’s Livestock Statistics for 2020 puts its share of world buffalo meat production at 43 percent making it a global leader in the production sector.

“We are very keen to obtain market access for Rum Jungle meat exports to trade in boxed buffalo meat into Indonesia because South East Asian nations have a genuine appetite for buffalo meat,” Mr Dawkins said.

“What is turned off out of India on its own is a massive part of the supply of meat that feeds into beef consumption in the



Road Transport utilised for cattle can also be used for buffalo land movements. Photo: Jess Wright

world. In Australia we do not often think of buffalo meat as being beef but a lot of markets around the world have no such distinction. In Asia and other parts of the world, frozen buffalo meat from India has a significant market presence.

“A lot of those markets do not consume red meat as we do, it is added in smaller rations to a curry or stew, so they do not often chase the prime cuts in the same way we do here in Australia.

“Nepalese people are keen on buffalo meat and as we get more and more migration from Asian nations it will provide a growing domestic market for buffalo meat,” he said.

Ongoing research for the buffalo industry is funded by a levy on all buffalo slaughtered or exported and is conducted through the Commonwealth ‘AgriFutures Australia’ based in Wagga Wagga in New South Wales.

It’s five-year plan, released last year, sets the near-term R&D objectives for continued development of the industry. Research will be prioritised to measure the feed conversion efficiency and growth in the different breeds of buffalo to ascertain as to why buffalo, under certain conditions, grow faster than cattle.

There will also be a focus on the development of further systems for the handling and welfare of buffalo throughout the supply chain including processes to reduce mortality rates in live export of the animals.

One of the major priorities is the development of a pathway to commercialisation equipment that will allow newly harvested wild buffalo to be ear-tagged, required by regulation before an animal leaves its property of origin, and emphasis on animal welfare and operator safety for dehorning in the field.

“With the wild buffalo, in particular, you would struggle to find a more healthy, cleaner, greener rangeland type of meat. It is a protein source that is comparatively affordable compared to alternative red meat options,” Mr Dawkins said. ■

NT jerky manufacturer set for national supply

By Stephanie Flynn

An interest in value-adding drove Nigel Nielsen to introduce beef jerky, with a domestic hydrator, into his range of products at a small butcher shop in Humpty Doo, 40km south of Darwin.

It was not long before he developed the range of jerky products further which became so successful Nigel sold the butcher shop and progressively built a commercial facility to manufacture crocodile, buffalo and beef jerky.

Some 14 years later, Nigel Nielsen's Humpty Doo Jerky supplies Puma Service Stations and Coles supermarkets as well as smaller supermarkets and tourist facilities across the Northern Territory and is looking to expand his product distribution nationally.

"We started with 12 small dehydrators and have since made considerable investment in commercial equipment including two big commercial hydrators, a hydraulic presser and a commercial slicer all of which allow us to produce up to 2,000 packets a day," Nigel said.

"This investment has now allowed us the capacity to guarantee supply for national distribution, so we have the facility in production throughout the year and we are now open to discussions for that next step in expansion," he said.

Developing the range of products has taken many years of trial and error to perfect with Nigel now focusing on a range of flavours for both beef and crocodile jerky.

Buffalo jerky was discontinued from the range due to difficulties in consistency of supply and goat became too expensive to make value-adding a viable proposition.



Nigel built his jerky manufacturing facility at Humpty Doo, 40km south of Darwin.



Nigel Nielsen and Marina Angerer process both crocodile and beef at the Humpty Doo Jerky manufacturing facility 40km south of Darwin.

Humpty Doo Jerky's beef range includes spicy, chilli and original while there are four flavours – lemon pepper, peri peri, tandoori and Moroccan – for crocodile jerky.

While the process for beef and buffalo jerky is the same, the crocodile meat needs to be pressed first, to around three or four millimetres in thickness, before marinating in herbs and spices for 24 hours and then placed in the driers for 16 to 18 hours.

The topside cut is used for the beef jerky. The backstrap, the equivalent cut to a scotch fillet, is used for the crocodile jerky. But, for butchers interested in producing their own jerky lines, Nigel has some cautions which need to be noted.

"Whichever cut of meat that is used needs to be totally devoid of fat because it will bubble during the processing and will go mouldy or rancid when packaged," Nigel said.

"Crocodile is a lean meat anyway with the inner tail fillet, the backstrap and the cheeks all being good cuts for jerky, but the tail fillet has too much intramuscular fat.

"When experimenting with recipes it is important to note that it is not only the types of sauces and spices used but also the way in which the ingredients are added that leads to success," he said.

There is also a difference in the end product with beef jerky having a coating on the outside whereas with crocodile jerky the flavours get absorbed into the meat.



The range of beef and crocodile jerky manufactured by Humpty Doo Jerky.

Nigel has found that the market for crocodile jerky is growing for online sales, as a result of his marketing by offering tastings at markets, and also in supermarkets although beef jerky still makes up the majority of sales in the latter.

He believes the difference lies in the offering of tastings of crocodile jerky at markets where customers can try before they buy which is not the case in supermarkets.

As well, Humpty Doo Jerky's online sales, which total around \$1,000 a week are, in the majority, crocodile jerky purchases

from interstate, where tourists have tasted the product at the markets in Darwin and continue to purchase the product when they return to their home state.

"We have had such success with promotion through our market stalls that we are now planning to expand into Queensland and taking up stall at the Brisbane EKKA, its Royal Agricultural Show, promoting the range with tastings there," Nigel said.

Interested distributors can contact Nigel through his website www.humptydoojerky.com.au

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Shopping Centres prove a boon for Malone's

By Stephanie Flynn

Operating a butcher shop in Gateway shopping centre has been so successful for Malone's Butchery in the Palmerston region that work is now underway to open its second store at Darwin's major centre, Casuarina Square in the city's northern suburbs.

Contrary to the popular view that major supermarkets are a major competition for independent butchers, Teo Campbell, Malone's Butchery's manager, is adamant that being located outside the doors of a major supermarket together with active internet and social media promotion is, in his experience, a boon for a butcher located in a shopping centre.

Having arrived in Australia eight years ago from New Zealand, Teo took up an apprenticeship at a butcher shop in Alice Springs where he quickly rose to management level income while still completing his training.

He is encouraging young people entering the trade to consider working in regional and remote areas where there are opportunities to fast track their careers and income levels due to high demand for staff.

Today, Teo manages a team of 14 qualified butchers at Malone's Butchery and is soon to take on the additional role of managing the company's new store at Casuarina Square when it opens, scheduled to do so in six months.

"The build on the new store has started, it takes six months or longer to do the fit out of a new store in a shopping centre



Manager of Malone's Butchery, Teo Campbell.

than it does in a stand-alone shop because the drains, the wet floor and, particularly, the smoking facilities have to be done to specifications, smoke for example cannot escape and set off fire alarms," Teo said.

"The positive aspect is that the shopping centre pays a percentage of the costs of the build, if not most of it which they end up getting back from you, firstly, in terms of the rent and then, if you earn more than your estimated base income, they receive a percentage of the turnover.

"In our view it is a win/win situation essentially as the foot traffic a butcher shops gets in a major centre is worth it," he said.

Malone's Butchery's experience at Gateway Shopping Centre located at Yarrowonga in the growing region of Palmerston, southside of Darwin city, where they most often have queues of customers several rows deep has spurred their continued expansion.

According to Teo, despite the cost-of-living challenges, the store has never been busier than they have been over the last year which he credits to a combination of factors including being located right outside the front of a major supermarket, to their practice of buying of the highest quality meat in the country and to their intense focus on their social media and internet presence.

Although a change in consumer buying habits is yet to be recorded in official economic data which tend to lag behind reality, Teo believes that people are now changing their behaviour in response to rising costs and choosing to buy quality product to cook at home and dining out less.



L to R: Amos Kingdom, Zachary Watts and Tablia Gass, three of Malone's Butchery's 14-strong team at Gateway shopping centre.



Malone's butchery is constantly monitoring its store presentation and cabinet displays.

“We get more trade by being located right outside the supermarket’s doors than we would at another location in the shopping centre and we do not compete with them at all, we do not even scout their pricing,” Teo said.

“Customers keep returning because of the quality of our produce, we do not buy cheap product and sell it expensively, we buy the most expensive meat with the majority sourced from Tasmania not through the Adelaide supply routes which the majority of Darwin butchers use.

“We use technology and social media a lot in our business, being a younger generation, we have grown-up with it and how to use it is second nature to us, we care about the online reviews of our products and are very active through Instagram and Facebook because we know customers use online platforms too,” he said.

But despite the younger generation’s affinity with technology and online platforms, according to Teo, there is always more to learn in order to maximise the potential for business promotion.

A recent meeting with Google highlighted this fact and the platform offers training in how to improve online search engine marketing and maximisation of Street View marketing, a component of Google, which Teo is planning to undertake.

“People, including us, do not realise that anyone can take a photo of your store and upload it to Google which cannot ever be removed so this highlights the importance of being on top of store presentation constantly,” Teo said.

Teo is keen to train the next generation of butchers and has five or six in training including two Indigenous apprentices from the Daly River region in the Northern Territory.

“It is sad if people shy away from hiring young Indigenous people because the development of skills in these young people is very important in the community,” Teo said.

“We give everyone a fair go and it is vitally important to not only train these young ones in butchering skills but also in communication and customer service,” he said. ■



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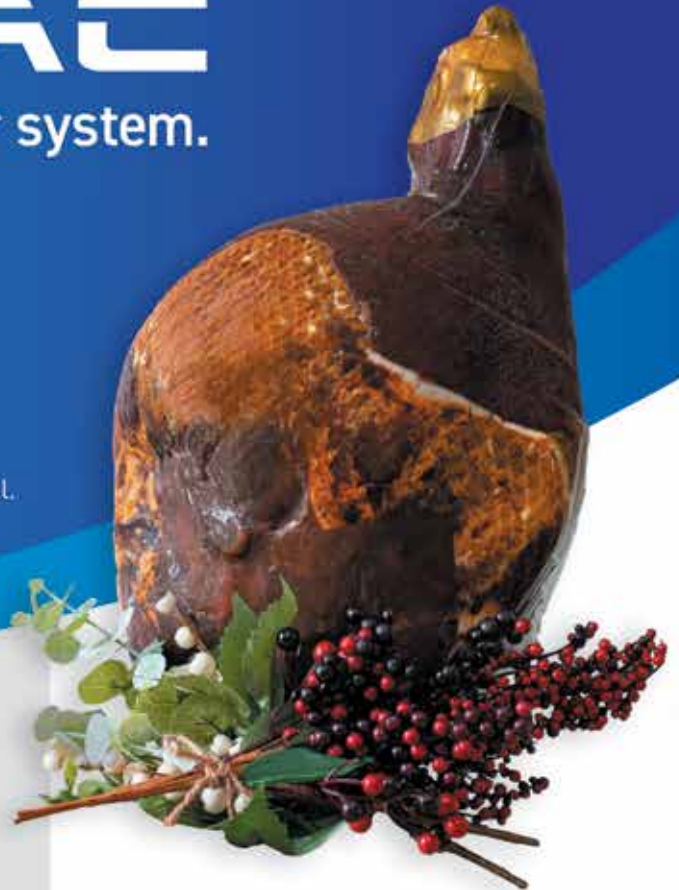
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AMPC CEO Chris Taylor and GM of R&D Nick Pagett.

Innovation Showcase highlights the future for red meat processing in Australia

The Australian Meat Processor Corporation's (AMPC) first-ever Innovation Showcase has unveiled the technology that will transform the meat processing industry – from robot dogs to virtual reality glasses that can take you inside a processing plant from anywhere, and much more.

Red meat processors and industry participants from across Australia were given the chance to see, feel, try and test more than 40 examples of emerging technology at the inaugural event, *The future of red meat processing*. All of the innovation on display was developed and funded through investment from AMPC, the processing industry's research and development corporation.

The Showcase was more than a highlight reel of cool tech, though, as it looked at some of the key challenges for the industry. This includes the need for new funding resources including global partnerships, and understanding how novel approaches to drive sustainability outcomes may also deliver improved bottom lines for processors.

AMPC Chief Executive Officer, Chris Taylor, says the Innovation Showcase was an immersive and interactive event, allowing red meat processors to see how R&D solutions could be used in their own businesses.

"The Innovation Showcase was about equipping Australian red meat processors to continue delivering world-class products and creating jobs in the communities where they operate," he says.

"The showcase proved the future of the red meat processing industry is exciting, and regional communities together with R&D providers will continue to power this industry. Most of our member processors are aware of or involved in a handful of our activities, but we actually have about 300 R&D activities underway. We wanted to give processors a chance not only to understand the breadth of what we are doing, but to understand what is coming for the industry and what might be relevant in their own business so they can make confident decisions around where to invest.

continued on page 28

continued from page 27

The event featured 11 panel discussions and presentations from innovators and futurists, over three days. Topics ranged from the use of artificial intelligence in processing plants to the evolution of the circular economy. AMPC General Manager of R&D and Adoption, Nick Pagett, says the circular economy offers opportunity beyond achieving sustainability goals.

“The circular economy is about optimising the use of resources, and of course sustainability is an important outcome, but it’s also about how we get the absolute maximum value out of the products we create. That means utilising technology to transform waste into energy and other saleable products. All this sits alongside other sustainability goals like re-using water and managing energy usage,” he says.

One of the most valuable sessions on the agenda was a gathering of AMPC’s embedded innovation managers, who are based day-to-day within processing plants to help drive adoption of innovation.

Nick says it was the first networking opportunity for the innovation managers since their positions were established two years ago.

“By getting the group together we were able to start to find ways around the natural competitive tension within the industry and start looking at big picture opportunities that

could benefit everyone. For example, we’re looking at where virtual reality might help reduce the cost associated with compulsory site inspections by allowing them to happen remotely.”

The Innovation Showcase is part of AMPC’s efforts to demonstrate the value of red meat processing in Australia.

In August, AMPC launched its national More to Meat campaign which highlights the important role red meat processors are playing in regional communities, the national red meat supply chain, and the industry’s significant contribution to the national economy. Meat processing creates a world class product locally via an industry that supports the employment of 134,000 people in over 300 communities around Australia.

The AMPC Innovation Showcase was hosted at the Melbourne Showgrounds from 11th-13th October. There were 300 delegates and more than two dozen speakers, and it is believed to have been the industry’s first carbon-neutral conference.

For more information on the More to Meat campaign, visit moretomeat.com.au ■



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BeefBank teams up to bring BeefRelief

Slow-moving stock will become a sought-after meal for needy people through a new initiative of Rotary teaming with AMIC Queensland.

BeefRelief allows butchers to donate unsold meat which is repurposed as valuable protein in meals for Queenslanders doing it tough. Donors will receive a tax deduction to the value of the donated meats.

The no-waste project was launched in Brisbane by the Rotary Club of Brisbane Centenary, the group that has been running BeefBank for 15 years.

BeefBank chair Andrew Rodgers said BeefBank donated “well over” 100,000 meals each year via FoodBank and Fare Share.

“Now, all the butcher shops and processors can contact me with product or anything you’d like to donate and we can give you a tax-deductible receipt to the value of whatever the goods are.

“We handle the distribution to FairShare which makes it into quality meals. The other process is we give the food to FoodBank which supports about 200 charities a week.”

He explained: “The need for protein has never been bigger. We never get enough. Whatever we get donated, it’s gone within 24 hours.

“All I can say is please support the BeefRelief initiative. Your donations make such a difference. I get passionate about it because I see where the food goes and it’s just heartbreaking to see people who get the benefit of your donation – honestly, it brings a tear to your eye to see who gets this food. The people who receive these meals are normal people like you and I. They’ve got two jobs, they’ve got kids at school,



BeefBank chair Andrew Rodgers with the team.

they’re working hard, but by the time they get to the end of the week with their wages they’ll have such a small amount left that they won’t go to the butchers and buy meat. The only protein meat they’ll get is your donation.”

Fareshare Brisbane’s production manager James Fein detailed the repurposing of donated meats in the HACAP-certified kitchen. “You know when your product comes into our kitchen it is being looked-after and cared-for and the recipient at the other end is getting the meal that they deserve.”

He continued: “It is exactly true what Andrew says. We’ve noticed it in the last 18 months. We have two agencies that pick up from us directly each week, they’ve been with us for about three years. They started picking up enough food for 50, maybe 80. One of those agencies now picks up enough food to distribute to 800 people every Saturday over two sites.”

Peter Lavelle from Queensland Country Meats thanked the supporters, the independent retail butchers from Brisbane and across regional Queensland. “Foodbank was formed here in Queensland in 1995 to address the critical food relief needs affecting Queenslanders back then and if anything sadly, the need has become so much greater.”

All unused items from the judging of the Brisbane sausage king, best burger and smallgoods competitions, along with a tray of premium meats, were donated to BeefBank in its first official BeefRelief pickup.

To donate to BeefRelief, call Andrew Rodgers on 0411 708 419. ■



Faresbare Brisbane's production manager James Fein.

Abattoirs preferred for FMD cull

Abattoirs would be the preferred disposal method if mass culls were needed to fight foot and mouth disease (FMD), according to a biosecurity expert.

David McNab, biosecurity officer at the Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries said: “It should be pointed out we will not be considered free of FMD until all the vaccinated animals are out of the system as well.

“Even if they’re vaccinated, they’ve still got to be destroyed at some point.”

He supported using abattoirs to turn off infected and vaccinated stock. “That would be a hell of a lot easier than having to destroy them in the field,” he said, admitting that the prospect of mass culling “is what keeps many of us tossing and turning at night. How we do that on the basis of tens of thousands of head at a time?

“We recognise one of the worst-case scenarios – let’s use one of the big feedlots, you know – 40 or 50,000 head. How do you ever get 40,000 to 50,000 rounds of ammunition out there? Honestly, it’s the thing of nightmares.

“So that’s why we changed our policy. Vaccinate that feedlot and suppress the disease and give us an opportunity to get them through to abattoirs.”

Subject to pathological tests, the carcasses could be directed to render or maybe pet food, he suggested.

He noted that, over the past seven years, policy has shifted away from culling, known as the ‘triple D’ response - destroy, dispose and decontamination.

“At one time we didn’t consider vaccination at all; we have changed that over the past five or six years.”

He was addressing an MLA biosecurity breakfast in Brisbane in mid-October. The same event heard how Australian livestock agencies including AMIC will undertake a desktop emergency exercise in November to test a national response to a potential lumpy skin disease (LSD) outbreak.

Dr Peter Dagg, Animal Health Australia’s head of AUSVETPLAN said all players in the supply chain will be involved in the two-week-plus exercise to thoroughly test Australia’s preparedness and reveal any gaps.

“We’re still in the process of working it out but basically what we’re looking at is four different scenarios that we’re looking at, four entries into Australia,” he said.

“We’re trying to involve absolutely as many people in the whole supply chain as we can so we’re going through our primary contacts at the Australian Meat Industry Council,



Cattle Australia, Australian Lot Feeders’ Association, Dairy Australia, Australian Dairy Farmers etc.

“We are trying to challenge the whole system, if we can. It will have as many government and industry people there as we can,” he said.

“It will go for two weeks at least. There will be breakout groups and each group will be given their scenario to work on and will be given two weeks to address their scenario and at the end of that we’ll have a full exercise where we’ll bring everyone together virtually again to see what the actions were and any gaps that have been identified throughout the system.” ■

Winners August 2022 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.

Khabin 10inch Cimetar Steak Knife and 12inch Steel
Mark Sengstock, Fairfield Butchery, Maryborough Qld

Khabin 6inch Graton-edged Boning Knife

Robin Freeman, Barraba Beef, NSW

Scott Clarke, TAFE Queensland (Meat Processing), Shailer Qld

Susan Polzin, Cam & Sue’s Quality Meats, Gayndah Qld

Robert Minehan, Dural Village Chicken, Seaview Hills NSW

Wayne Barker, Barker’s Butchery, Oberon NSW

A new protein dicer provides ultimate versatility

The new M VersaPro™ dicer can take on the most challenging protein applications and is being described as a next generation protein powerhouse. Building on Urschel's M and M6 models – the new MVP dicer is built with a purposefully sanitary design and provides ultimate versatility for processors of proteins.

An Urschel representative says the MVP is a result of years of R&D and thanked the processors who shared must-have wish lists and allowing in-house testing of the dicer. A 2-D dicer, this equipment excels at processing of meat, poultry, and alternative proteins. It is ideal for cutting frozen-tempered or fresh-chilled products; and products like hot-cooked beef, pork, protein alternatives, and poultry.

Urschel's new model dicer has wider belts, optimised cutting, and increased horsepower – and a 33% increased feeding capacity over their standard M6 model. MVP is belt-fed, and capable of 2-dimensional dices, strips, or shreds (from a product of a predetermined thickness) and has been designed for continuous operation and uninterrupted production.

Dice Cuts

Many sizes of cuts are possible when combining various selections of circular knife spacings with different crosscut knife spindles.

Circular range: 4.8 to 38.1 mm Crosscut range: 3.2 to 76.2 mm standard sizes, fully adjustable up to 152 mm, available with variable speed crosscut motor.

Strip Cuts

Strip cuts in a variety of widths can be made by removing either the crosscut knife spindle assembly or the circular knife spindle assembly. The final thickness of a strip will be the same thickness as the original product.

Shred Cuts

To produce shreds from meat products, the crosscut knife spindle is replaced by a shredding spindle. The length of the shred can be controlled by orientation of the meat fibres of the incoming product and by the use of a circular knife spindle.

For more information visit: www.heatandcontrol.com



Raw meat products - beef, poultry or pork

Cooked product such as poultry product

Vegan or Alternative meat products

Jerky Everything

Jerky has been around for hundreds of years as a way of preserving meats for the days on the road, or at sea or to maximise every cut from a carcass.

The expression 'boot leather' comes to mind for a lot of people when describing jerky, but as author of *Jerky Everything*, Pamela Braun says, jerky needn't be the tooth breaker we recall from home made efforts.

Jerky Everything takes the boot leather and creates something that is a flavourful and enjoyable way to eat preserved meat as a snack for anyone on a journey through to those following a paleo diet.

Making your own jerky with a simple dehydrator is possible, for a range of meats including beef, pork, lamb, poultry, game and fish. The key is to use a lean cut such as the loin, poultry breast or fish fillets. The higher fat content of other cuts risks the fats going rancid, shortening the shelf life of the jerky.

Jerky Everything takes the DIY jerky maker through the technique and equipment needed to make a successful batch, and how to safely store the end product.

Each protein is given several recipes based on homemade marinades that are typical in the US and designed for small batches.



For the butcher, there is opportunity to provide thinly sliced lean cuts ready to go in the dehydrator, with a range of rubs and marinades to suit pretty well any taste should the customer prefer to buy a flavour mix rather than make it from scratch.

Published by The Countryman Press, it retails from Books for Cooks at \$35.95

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

The advertisement for SmokeyQ Rubs & Sauces is set against a dark background. At the top left, the brand name 'SMOKEYQ' is written in a large, white, distressed font, with 'RUBS & SAUCES' underneath in a smaller, white font. To the right of the name is a small red silhouette of a cow. The main headline reads 'BECOME A STOCKIST TODAY!' in large, white, bold letters. Below this, a list of five bullet points in yellow text highlights the product's features: 'AWARD WINNING BBQ RUBS & SAUCES', 'MSG & GLUTEN FREE', 'AUSTRALIAN MADE', 'FOOD SERVICE SIZES', and 'COLLABS & BESPOKE BRANDING'. On the left side, contact information is provided in white text: 'CONTACT: smokeyq.com.au', '0416 267 245', and 'paul@smokeyq.com.au'. On the right side, there is a circular 'MADE IN AUSTRALIA' logo with a map of Australia. Below the logo, a QR code is visible. In the bottom right corner, there are icons for Instagram and Facebook. The background of the advertisement features images of a roasted chicken, a corn on the cob, and a bottle of SmokeyQ Original BBQ Rubs.

Minerva increases Australian presence

Brazilian/Saudi joint venture Minerva Foods Australia (MFA) has paid \$A400m for processor/exporter Australian Lamb Company (ALC), claiming MFA's total share of the nation's lamb kill at 15%.

The sale sees MFA – 65% owned by Brazil's Minerva SA and 35% by the Saudi Agricultural and Livestock Investment Company (SALIC) – expand its Australian operations into Victoria from its WA base.

Minerva SA will pay \$A260m for its share of the acquisition while SALIC (Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth agricultural fund) will commit \$A140m.

The latest deal, which is subject to regulatory approval and contractual conditions, incorporates a processing facility in Colac in south-west Victoria and a Melbourne-based boning room/sales office.

The transaction was scheduled to be completed by the start of November 2022, with operations continuing as normal and the ALC executive management team retained.

The sale includes all ALC issued shares. Under the terms of the contract, the investment will be made for the purpose of acquiring new assets and investments to improve production structures.

Sale documents detail that the amount paid includes \$A54.3m of working capital and an estimated value of \$A7m of net cash balance.

MFA entered the Australian industry last year with the purchase of two Western Australian sheepmeat processing plants; Shark Lake near Esperance, which has capacity for both sheep and beef processing, and Great Eastern Abattoir, a sheep-only facility near Tammin. Both are export licensed.

MFA said the ALC deal would lift its annual processing capacity from 3.7m head to more than 4.7m – or 15% of the sheep slaughter market in Australia.

ALC generated \$A624.9m in revenue in the year to 30 June and delivered \$A82.6m in adjusted EBITDA, according to MFA.

In Australia, Minerva also operates export trading business Independent Meat Traders, bought in 2016.

ALC general manager Darren Verrall welcomed the sale, saying it was a “very exciting time for both companies.

“To bring together the wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts that both businesses possess will be an excellent foundation for growth into the future,” he said.

MFA chief executive officer Iain Mars said: “Minerva Foods prides itself on its commitment to sustainability, community and its people and looks forward to engaging with the workforce and broader community.”

MFA issued a statement saying: “We believe that the consolidation of our operations in Australia and investments in facilities improvements and maximisation of operational and commercial structures will bring significant synergy in the coming months.

“The company hopes that with the acquisition it will improve its penetration in niche markets and expand its portfolio of products with greater added value, capturing opportunities both in exports and in markets with high income and consumption capacity, such as Australia.”

Operating for about 30 years, ALC supplies the retail and foodservice markets, with around 93% of sales exported to more than 70 international destinations. These are mostly the United States (40% of exports), Japan, South Korea and countries in Europe and the Middle East. ■

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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 January 2023**

Last issues winners and answers, see page 30



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BOOK COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to William Jago. William correctly answered the question: *What do the initials FMD and LSD stand for?* Answer Foot and Mouth Disease and Lumpy Skin Disease.



William is the Accounts Manager at Grange Meat Co, Alphington, a suburb west of the Melbourne CBD. Grange Meat Co is a family owned and operated, vertically integrated meat retailer and farm. The business breeds and finishes cattle and sheep on its property at Romsey, near Melbourne and sells it through

their shop in Alphington. The shop stocks ethically produced; free-range poultry, pork, duck and game meats with a complimentary Italian flavored deli section.

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



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WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win: *Jerky Everything*, by Pamela Braun (RRP \$35.95)

Answer the question below.

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

Australian Meat News Book Competition

Email: athol@ausmeatnews.com.au (preferred) or by post: PO Box 415, Richmond Vic 3121

Question: *What is the estimated number of free range herds in Arnhem Land?* ■

Entries close: 15 January 2023




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