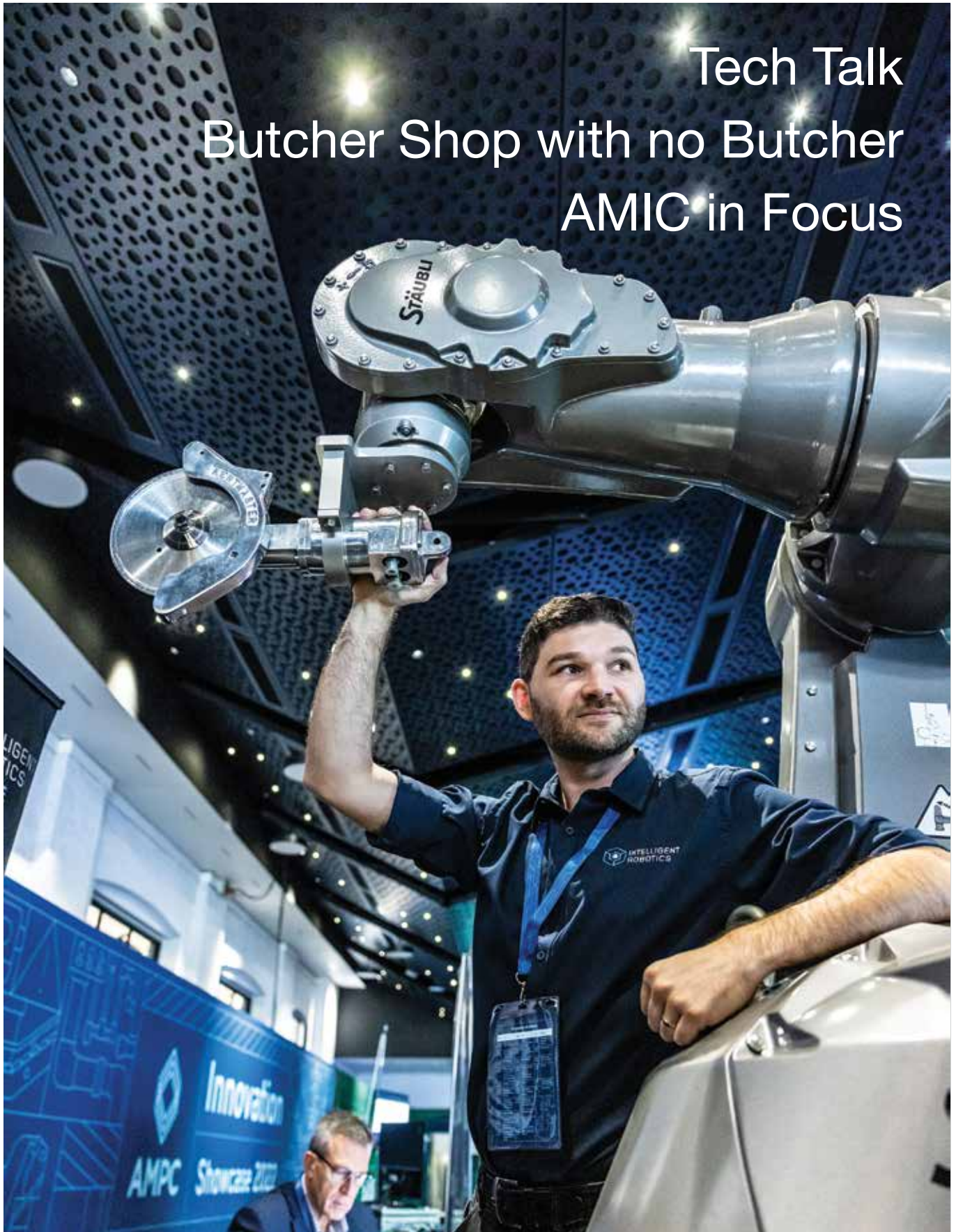


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AMIC in Focus





  
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Volume 21 • No. 2 • June 2023

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### TECH TALK

From research to retail, technology is making a major impact on the Australian meat industry.

In this edition we have taken a look at some of the emerging technologies across the industry and their applications as well as the benefits and challenges of embracing technology in the processing sector.

### COVER

A Queensland processor is trialling a beef scribing system driven by Artificial Intelligence. See page 19

### Giveaway

Win a copy of *The Butchers Cook Book Volume Two*. See pages 26-31



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Gourmet butcher shop just for pets p10



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AUSTRALIAN  
**meatnews**

www.ausmeatnews.com.au

**PUBLISHED BY OPTIMAL MEDIA**

**PO Box 415, Richmond 3121**

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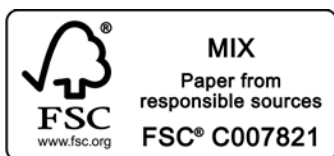
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## UK Trade Deal Ratified

Royal Assent was given to legislation in the United Kingdom in March to bring the Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (A-UKFTA) into effect.

The Australian parliament ratified the A-UKFTA in December last year and it has been awaiting the legislative processes in the UK before the Agreement could enter into force.

The Agreement has now entered into force with effect from 31 May this year.

Australian beef and sheep meat exports to the United Kingdom have faced duties as high as 12 percent but, under the new Agreement, exports for both proteins will have immediate access to duty-free transitional quotas with eventual tariff elimination.

Under the A-UKFTA, upon entry into force, Australia's beef exports will have immediate access to a duty-free quota of 35,000 tonnes rising in equal instalments to 110,000 tonnes in year 10, while for sheep meat the immediate duty-free quota will be 25,000 tonnes rising to 75,000 tonnes in year 10.

In the subsequent five years, that is years 11 to 15 from entry into force, a product specific safeguard will be applied by the UK on beef and sheep meat imports from Australia which exceed a further volume threshold rising in equal instalments to 170,000 tonnes for beef and 125,000 tonnes for sheep meat.

A safeguard duty of 20 percent will then be applied for both beef and sheep meat products in this safeguard classification for the remainder of the calendar year in which the volume threshold is exceeded.

Out-of-quota tariffs will remain at 'most favoured nation' rates until year 10 and will then be eliminated for both beef and sheep meat products that do not fall into the safeguard classification. ■

## Industry Takes a Stand on Mandatory CCTV

The meat industry has taken a stand on the call for mandatory CCTV installations in the nation's processing facilities.

While acknowledging calls by animal rights organisations for mandatory CCTV, the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) has issued a statement supporting voluntary, not mandatory, installations as a plant management tool to monitor animal welfare practices.

According to AMIC, good animal welfare outcomes are sustained via the implementation of well-defined Standard Operating Procedures, undertaken by highly trained staff in processing facilities.

Such procedures and assurances of staff competency form the foundation of AMIC's independently audited and widely adopted Industry Animal Welfare Certification System, the implementation of CCTV will never replace these important competency and procedural principles.

Whilst AMIC supports the voluntary installation of CCTV systems as a management tool, it does not support it as a mandatory requirement.

According to the statement, AMIC does not support mandatory CCTV due to a wide array of concerns, including privacy, cyber security, potential misrepresentation, misuse of footage in case of a data breach, and added cost imposed on industry and regulators.

AMIC's statement was a response to an open letter issued by the Australian Alliance for Animals addressed to Australian Pork Limited and AMIC calling on meat industry leaders to support the mandatory use of CCTV in abattoirs, as part of the ongoing review of the national Standards for processors. ■

## Kilcoy Global Takes Out Wagyu Gold

By Deborah Hill

The award winners for the best Wagyu brands in Australia were celebrated at the Wagyu sector's industry dinner in April, in front of 600 leading producers, experts and brands.

This was the 12th year of the Wagyu Branded Beef Competition (WBBC), with a total of 58 world-class entries judged by a panel of 36 food and beef industry experts to crown the very best Australian Wagyu.

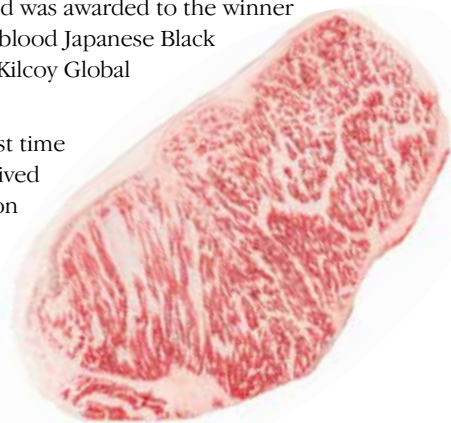
Judged across five classes – Fullblood Japanese Black Steak, Purebred Wagyu Steak, Open Crossbred Wagyu Steak, Open F1 Wagyu Steak, Commercial Wagyu Steak Marble Score five to seven – judges scored against visual appeal (raw and cooked), juiciness, flavour, aroma and the physical sensation in the mouth.

### Grand Champion and Class 1 Fullblood Wagyu Champion

The 2023 Wagyu Branded Beef Competition, Grand Champion brand was awarded to the winner of Class 1 – Fullblood Japanese Black – JADE Wagyu, Kilcoy Global Foods.

This was the first time Kilcoy had received Grand Champion in the WBBC.

*Kilcoy Global  
Foods' JADE  
Wagyu*



*Kilcoy Global Foods' team with breeders of their champion entry and supply chain partners, Laird and Sonia Morgan, Arubial Wagyu, alongside AWA CEO, Dr Matt McDonagh.*

This remarkable fullblood entry, bred by Arubial Wagyu, had a very impressive 58 percent marbling, with marbling fineness of 8.8, an eye muscle area of 109cm and a very high 59 percent unsaturated fats.

The judges remarked that this was the ultimate experience of rich caramelised flavour and roasted aroma with silky smooth tenderness and long-lasting juiciness, deliciously balanced and succulent.

Upon receiving the award, Mr Bede McAlpin, Regional Manager South East Asia and Middle East, Kilcoy Global Foods said that the company was extremely humbled to be selected Grand Champion Wagyu Brand for the 2023 Competition for its JADE Wagyu Brand.

"The investments in our processing assets at Kilcoy, Hardwicks and Lance Creek have enabled the maximising of our high-end premium programmes to supplement our growing global customer base," Mr McAlpin said.

"Our supply chain partners work tirelessly to provide a product that is truly world class and our investment in our processing, people and route-to-market strategies enable the full potential of our Wagyu programmes of Carrara and JADE to exceed all the expectations of our customers," he said. ■

## Upcoming Events Calendar

EVENT	DATES	VENUE	CONTACT
Intercollegiate Meat Judges	4-8 July 2023	Wagga Wagga	<a href="https://icmj.au/our-events">https://icmj.au/our-events</a>
FoodPro	23-26 July 2023	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre	<a href="https://foodproexh.com">https://foodproexh.com</a>
AMIC Meat Processing and Export Conference 2023	31 October - 1 November 2023	Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast Queensland	<a href="https://amic.org.au">https://amic.org.au</a>
AusPack	12-15 March 2024	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre	<a href="https://www.auspack.com.au">https://www.auspack.com.au</a>
Beef Week	5-11 May 2024	Rockhampton, Queensland	<a href="https://beefaustralia.com.au">https://beefaustralia.com.au</a>

## Sensor Tool Tech Trial a Success

Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC) is investing in research that is looking at a non-invasive, automated sensor tool to accurately measure intramuscular fat (IMF) in lamb carcasses.

The new sensor tool can determine the IMF percentage, a key trait of the Meat Standards Australian eating quality grading system for lamb.

Developed by inMR Measure, the Marbl technology tool uses a single-sided nuclear magnetic resonance sensor alongside the longissimus muscle to capture IMF measurements.

The sensor tool can be installed into existing carcass handling equipment to measure hot carcasses.

Before AMPC and industry investment into measurement technologies and tools, there was a lack of some information when trading across the livestock value chain.

AMPC's Manager for the research programme, Mr Stuart Shaw, said automating and accurately measuring IMF on hot carcasses can help processors respond to market demands and improve production efficiencies.

"Measuring hot lamb carcasses, at the end of the harvest floor will provide processors the opportunity to sort carcasses into chillers followed by batch manufacture of similarly graded product using IMF percentage measurements," Mr Shaw said.

"The Marbl technology will also provide processors with the tools to provide feedback to producers that influence the value of their livestock, improve decisions on breeding and compliance to market specifications," he said.



*The automated sensor tool can accurately measure intramuscular fat in lamb carcasses.*

InMR Measure co-founder and Director, Dr Barbara Webster, said over the course of the project, the Marbl technology tool advanced from a sensor used on a workshop bench to a fully functional automated measurement tool that was successfully trialled on site. ■

---

## Induction Training Launched

An induction programme for new entrants into the meat industry has been launched by the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC), offering both non-accredited and accredited training.

The training programme, designed to support new entrants develop the skills and experience required to thrive in the meat industry, is open only to AMIC members.

While the programme is specifically aimed at young people, long-term unemployed or those requiring extra support in the workplace, it can also be adapted and utilised for any new hires.

The programme commences with the majority of hours delivered in person in the classroom and moves to increased hours in the workplace over the four weeks of the induction training.

The non-accredited training focuses on soft skills such as communication, time management, problem solving and decision making, all of which are skills that will enable new entrants to succeed in the meat industry.

The accredited training encompasses one unit of competency from the Australian Meat Processing Training Package, AMPCOR206, a core unit of the AMP training package which is often the first unit to be delivered in any traineeship or apprenticeship programme within the industry.

This unit provides an overview of all sectors of the Australian meat industry and supply chain and also introduces important workplace policies including workplace health and safety, hygiene and sanitation.

Access to the programme is available on the AMIC website via the member portal at <https://amic.org.au/member-login/>. ■

## Trials Underway on Cobotic Devices

Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC) is investing in a project exploring uses of Cobotic and exoskeletal devices.

The research is looking at various technologies available to support Australian red meat processor workers complete manual labour tasks and determining their suitability for the industry.

So far, the project has focused on trialling 20 active (requires a power supply) and passive (use own body weight, springs or simple levers) devices in different working environments, using a range of motions.

These devices include the PAXEO Back, BionicBack, Evo Vest, Leg X, PAXEO Thumb, and Bioservo Iron Hand.

Manager for the research programme, Ms Amanda Carter, said AMPC has a strategic objective of improving safety for red meat processing workers.

“Manual handling related injuries are one of the biggest safety concerns for the red meat processing industry,” Ms Carter said.

“We are working with Risk and Injury Management Services and industry to determine which manual labour jobs will



*Trials are underway on a range of robotic devices to improve workers' safety including an Iron Hand to assist with grip.*

benefit from Cobotic and exoskeletal devices and trialling these devices in-plant,” she said.

According to Ms Carter these technologies are showing promising signs.

The Bioservo Iron Hand, which assists with grip, is supporting workers to use 15 to 18 percent less force when performing tasks that require high grip including consistent knife use for skinning, trimming, and vertical and table boning. ■

## Culinary Olympics Awaits

A Darwin student who traded a job as a roofer to study cooking has been chosen for the Australian team which will represent the nation at the 2024 Culinary Olympics in Germany.



*Mr Stellio Ginis (right) with CDU Senior VET Lecturer in Culinary Arts, Mr Jason Wilkes.*

Stellio Ginis, 23, is studying a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery at Charles Darwin University (CDU) and, along with studying and undertaking his chef apprenticeship, is also part of the Australian Culinary Federation's Youth Culinary Squad.

Prior to entering the hospitality industry Mr Ginis worked in the construction industry as a roofer but soon realised it was not for him.

“When I was working as a roofer, I wasn't motivated or enjoying life, so I decided to leave the industry and take some time to find my passion,” Mr Ginis said.

“I grew up in a big Greek household where my grandmother did a lot of cooking, so I was always around the amazing smells and sounds of a kitchen and that inspired me to try cooking,” he said.

CDU Senior Vocational Education and Training (VET) Lecturer in Culinary Arts, Mr Jason Wilkes, said Mr Ginis was an incredibly hard worker and should be proud of his achievements.

“Stellio is a wonderful student who constantly wants to learn, he is incredibly driven and passionate about cooking, and I look forward to seeing what he achieves in the future,” Mr Wilkes said. ■

# Staff-Free Butcher Shop – a Reality

By Susan Webster

In just under three years Jake Wolki has gone from running an Albury bicycle shop to becoming a regenerative farmer, a transformational meat retailer and global social media sensation.

Customers across Australia have been ordering from the 100-plus product lines that Jake now stocks in his staff-less retail shop in the NSW regional town.

The fridges are filled with vacuum-packed cuts of beef, chicken, pork, lamb, wild-harvested venison and mince, much of it sourced from his 120ha farm, as well as eggs and several types of honey.

His staff-less store is a huge walk-in vending machine.

Shoppers register for a door code that allows them into the shop, they select and pay for their goods with a QR code that debits their credit card and he also accepts payment in Bitcoin.

His Wolki Farm – run with wife Ann – is a tourist drawcard offering farm visits and wellness retreats.

Customers at his Lavington butcher shop have to visit the farm before they can register to buy his offerings.



*Jake Wolki has established a vending-machine butcher shop in Albury, New South Wales.*

“Subscription for these ‘members’ is free and helps keep them bonded to the business,” said Jake. “They become part of our tribe, it’s got almost a cult following,” he said.

He has 300 members and makes between \$5000 and \$7000 a week in turnover, with no front-of-house staff.

The investment in the technology to make the whole thing tick cost \$8000.

Driven by a passion for paddock-to-plate regenerative farming, Jake realised he needed somewhere to sell his turn-off livestock.

“The reason was to fix my supply – I was trying to take supply direct to customer,” Jake said.

“The local butchers were flat-out and I needed a boning room, no one else in town could handle the volume and quality of the meat I produce,” he said.

To buy a butcher shop he applied for a bank loan, but the bank didn’t believe his financials that showed his sustainably farmed enterprise was operating at 26-times the earnings multiples of his neighbours.

“They said go back and do my financial estimates again, so I did and it showed I was doing \$450,000 and our projections showed almost \$1 million off 100 acres by running cattle, hens and pigs using sustainable and ethical practices, we got the loan,” Jake said.

“We purchased and renovated the butchery and we hired some butchers to start processing our own meat out the front.

“Then we had to shut down the retail space because that year my farm was only going to generate about \$450,000 of revenue, to put somebody on full-time out the front on minimum wage to sell meat just did not make any sense.

“I’d be tipping out all my net profit, plus a bit more, just to pay someone to sit there in a quiet little butchery because we weren’t producing the volume to make it viable.

“I realised I didn’t have the volume to justify front-of-house sales staff, so I had to try to work out how I could do it as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible,” he said.

The answer came in a blinding moment.

“I’ve travelled quite a lot and seen these types of food vending set-ups in China and Japan, using shipping



*The store has over 100 product lines.*





*Wolki staff-less butcher shop is stocked with produce processed on Jake's farm.*

containers – but this is on a different scale,” Jake said.

He could not find a single turn-key technology platform but created a hybrid.

“I don’t have a system that does it all for me but I have a blended system, I scratched around the internet and put a few different apps and systems together,” Jake said.

“The door security system is essentially the same as you’d find as in a 24-hour gym.

“And then for the retail sales technology, I found a piece of software in US that allowed people to self-serve called Express Checkout, but there’s still a need for someone to register the purchases, so I worked with the company and they adjusted a few things with their app,” he said.

There has been no theft in two years.

“I think it works so well, but I think other people – up until now – have been too scared to give something like this a go,” Jake said.

He also sells online and accepts Bitcoin payment.

“I believe in Bitcoin, I love receiving Bitcoin and I’m getting a surprising number of transactions done through Bitcoin, it’s following and finding me,” Jake said.

“I think our fiscal system in the West

needs major reform, Western governments are operating in deficits and just keep printing money, which devalues our currency.

“We’re operating an economy with 1970s knowledge when we should be using 2030 technology.

“After all, what are you doing, if you’re not being a part of the solution?” he said.

The enterprise is a digital media hit – attracting more than one million views and attracting customers nationally.

It’s been a big step for someone who’d never used social media before a friend persuaded him to make a video about his business model.

“It’s nice to have the attention,” Jake said.

“It’s good to have a platform like this on which you can talk about animal welfare and farming and valuing the environment, rather than just having activists talk about such subjects and it’s great that a farmer can talk about these and champion causes and have a voice,” he said.

But online commentators question if Jake’s model erodes employment for retail butchers.

As he tells his TikTok audience, he is passionate about jobs.

“I am passionate about highly skilled labour improving systems on the farm

but I am not passionate about a ‘nice’ shopping experience for my consumers,” Jake said.

“My consumers can buy online, they can order through an email form, they can come and self-serve.

“We are trying to free up our time so that we can get back on the fields and steward our animals and our environment the way we want to do it.

“We want more jobs, we just don’t want them inside, we want to be doing things outside, that’s why we’re farmers,” he said.

The store is open 24/7 and one thing holding him back is a shortage of product.

“If my stock levels were better I could turn over \$10,000 a week, but I’m running out each week,” Jake said.

He sources some products from similarly focussed producers and does further processing, such as rendering tallow and lard, in his restaurant kitchen.

The other challenge is freight cost; he is charging \$35 for a box delivered to greater Melbourne.

His target is palletising loads of 20-plus boxes that will cut that cost by \$10 a box.

Overcoming challenges is clearly in his DNA. ■

# Love of Pets Spawns Pet Butcher

By Susan Webster

Initially, the menu seems normal: mini-roasts, home-made sausages, sliced rare roast beef and prepared meals.

But scroll a little further and things get weird ... smoked chicken feet, smoked turkey necks, wild boar ears and 'roo-filled cow toenails'.

Welcome to the world of the Pet Butcher – where patrons lick the dish clean.

The Adelaide-based boutique pet meat retail business opened its second store in April in the upmarket suburb of Henley Beach.

Owner, Nick Martin, is the proud furdad of a five-year-old Bull Mastiff and a two-year-old French Bulldog – surely the luckiest pooches on four paws.

“We love our pets, which is why we wanted to create healthy, high-quality food that they love to eat,” Nick said.

“We offer just good old-fashioned fresh and home-cooked food with lots of variety which leaves our pets feeling and looking great and living their best lives,” he said.

The business only started last year after finding a home with a proud 100-year history in suburban Ethelton and in four intense weeks Nick and his team converted it into the Pet Butcher.



Nick Martin and his fiancée, Eliza Brabyn, with satisfied customer, Archie, the French Bulldog.

“When we came across a traditional old butcher shop with character frontage that had been trading as a butcher for nearly 100 years, we knew the time had arrived for us to bring our concept to life,” Nick said.

“The Pet Butcher was born, and the response blew us away,” he said.

The second store has just opened, this time in a 99-year butcher shop.

“There’s a bit of a pattern happening here,” Nick admits.

“Opening a second location was the natural next step, there’s lots of demand along the coast, so when this place came up in Henley Beach we took it straight away,” he said.

The business started with two people and now employs 15, including two qualified butchers and two qualified chefs turning meat, poultry, fish, grains and vegetables into prepared meals, loaves and pet treats.

“Customers love the smells of the fresh-baked meat loaves, there’s nothing better than handing a customer a fresh turkey loaf that’s still-warm from the oven,” Nick said.

The food is prepared in small batches daily, processed without preservatives and uses only Australian produce, much of it locally sourced.

The business distributes shelf-stable products nationally and also supplies a select number of wholesalers but the bulk of its business is retail sales.

Nick spent 30 years building-up experience in Brisbane’s food service industry before shifting back to Adelaide.

“So, I’ve learned a lot about food service and presentation,” Nick said.

“Customers can see the food being prepared in the store, they can see the staff mincing the meat and creating the products.

“We’re very customer focussed, very big on service, we open doors for them and help them carry their purchases to their cars,” he said.

No wonder the customers, both two- and four-legged, are wagging their tails! ■

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# Aussie Lamb Deli Lines – a Hit in the US

By Susan Webster

Australian lamb charcuterie products have been nominated among the top nine food trends in the US.

The Aussie Select line of lamb-based deli hams was nominated by the New York-based Specialty Food Association's 'Trendspotter' panel, comprising representatives from shopping data giant Mintel, food editors and chefs.

The success follows two major US industry wins last year, both the Prepared Foods' Spirit of Innovation Award and Editor's Pick: Best New Product and a brand launch featured in multiple national US publications.

Aussie Select sells pre-cooked 'pasture-raised' Australian lamb, as whole muscle pieces, ready-to-slice or pre-sliced, shrink wrapped and halal-certified, for both retail and foodservice customers.

After two years of product development, it now markets lamb ham in three flavours: An agave rosemary lamb ham that features 100 percent pure agave syrup and rosemary with notes of nutmeg, fennel and garlic; a lamb pastrami seasoned with coarse ground black pepper, coriander and brown sugar, which is then smoked with hickory and mesquite and a tikka masala lamb ham featuring cumin, cardamom, coriander, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg.

US-based, Aussie Select comprises principals with extensive backgrounds in the Australian and US meat industries, including Dirk Geleit, an Ausmeat-accredited butcher, Shirley Bastian of Meat Tender Pty Ltd, foodservice marketer, Jaclyn Glatzer, and Larry Oliphant, founder of the World Food Championships.

*“US consumers spend over  
\$US7 billion annually on deli meats”*

Traditionally, lamb has not been a favoured meat in the US, appearing on about 50 percent of menus in target US foodservice segments, compared to over 95 percent for beef, chicken, or pork.

Aussie Select is currently the only ready-to-eat lamb on the US retail market and, according to Jaclyn Glatzer, the company is expecting to ride a rising tide of consumer acceptance.

“With lamb making a strong showing on menus nationwide and becoming a more familiar protein in American homes, we anticipate growth opportunities for lamb in the ready-to-heat, ready-to-eat and snack-kit categories,” Ms Glatzer said.



*Australian Lamb charcuterie products are in the top nine trends in the US.*

Underpinning that growth is increasing familiarity of lamb among US consumers.

Ms Glatzer is of the view that while lamb is loved by Americans, there was an unexplored opportunity to drive better access.

“There exists an ‘I don’t know how to cook it’ fear that is overcome with a prepared item and also people traditionally associate lamb with special occasions,” Ms Glatzer said.

“An ‘ah ha’ moment at the deli made us wonder why lamb is not present behind the deli counter like other proteins – turkey, beef, pork, chicken – we asked ourselves if we could do for lamb what turkey deli meat does for turkey, providing access and sandwich relevance to drive an all-year consumption of lamb in the home,” she said.

Aussie Select conducted consumer testing which showed that despite lamb not being part of most consumer meal rotations, 27 percent eat it once a month or more, 89 percent said they ‘probably would buy’.

When sampled by consumers, 86 percent responded that the products fulfilled expectations extremely or very well.

Interest was highest among fine dining and accommodation consumers, as well as casual dining locations offering charcuterie or special event catering.

The positive response to taste testing tempered price sensitivity the company reported and providing a price frame of reference like prosciutto and duck seemed to make them less price sensitive overall.

An MLA-backed study into the US deli lamb market reported earlier this year that American consumers spend \$US7.7 billion a year on deli meat sales, with over 80 percent of grocery leaders anticipating additional growth.

In the past three years, weekly purchases of ready-to-eat or ready-to-heat foods have increased 154 percent. ■

# Bromance Celebrates Meat and Mateship

By Susan Webster

**M**any retail butchers lock the door and share a Friday afternoon frothy with staff, but Sunshine Coast's Brenton Harris does the opposite.

He opens up the BBQ and some non-alcoholic beers ... and invites people ... anyone... to share the meat and the mateship.

The footpath in front of his Forest Glen shop becomes a meat-loving men's shed.

The chin-waggers usually number between 25 and 30, with new faces coming along all the time.

The bromance is Brenton's way of boosting social connectivity and mental wellness for men.

Each week's cook-up is supported by representatives of men's health charity, Grab Life by the balls (<https://www.grablifeytheballs.com.au/>), and support from the men's virtual chat room, blokesadvice.com (<https://www.blokesadvice.com>).

"It's a safe space for blokes to come down and have a chat with other like-minded fellas," Brenton said.

"We're building something really special, I think, and the whole community is getting behind us.

"We are getting more people who come down, and then more people who tell their friends – it just keeps growing," he said.

Brenton and his wife, Mel, bought the shop in Forest Glen on the Sunshine Coast last July.

The following month, former Queensland State of Origin coach and rugby league star, Paul Green, committed suicide at age 49.

"When we heard the news of Paul Green passing, it hit me pretty hard, and then I started hearing about everybody that suicide has affected," Brenton said.

Including himself. Mt Isa-born Brenton had two cousins who also took their own lives.

"I wanted to get the message out ... so blokes know that there's places that they can come and have a chat about their feelings and stuff and make it a bit more normal," Brenton said.

"I think young blokes were raised to be the man of the house, and the man of the house is supposed to be sort of the tough guy and can't show your feelings, your emotions or whatnot, and I think that's a thing of the past.



*Mel and Brenton Harris*

"And it's not just blokes, we try to help as many people as we can, we like to give back to the community," he said.

And the community is thankful.

A typical online comment is: "Brent is a legend who goes out of his way to help the community and bring attention to men's health. Great business, excellent produce".

The word 'legend' keeps popping-up in the online posts about the business.

And then there was the post from a Victorian, impressed by Brenton's initiative: "Not all heroes wear capes," they wrote.

Mel is just as committed to the business; in January she gave up her job as enrolment officer at a school to become Brenton's apprentice.

The couple, who have been together for 10 years, are running the business themselves.

"Mel used to do a bit of counter work but then she said she wanted to do a bit more in the shop," Brenton said.

"And she's killing it, she's better than any other apprentice I've had," he said.

And what does Mel think of her boss?

"Brenton is not only my boss and mentor, but he is also my best mate and it is a pleasure to be working alongside of someone of great significance to me," Mel said.

"He is a wealth of knowledge.

"I have a great love for the community that he has created here at our shop, he is the most caring person and he will do what he needs to achieve his goal," she said. ■

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# The Changing Role of AMIC

The complexity of the global market place and the confronting issues that are arising, be it from consumer-led movements or Government imposed regulations, are having a major impact on the role played by industry bodies.

As a consequence of this web of complexity, the protein industry's key industry body, the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC), has had to expand its activities and role to account for the myriad of impacts on the industry and the significant issues that it currently faces as well as those that sit on the horizon.

AMIC's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Patrick Hutchinson, spoke with *Australian Meat News* on the role the organisation has been playing, its achievements and the key issues that the protein industries face in the time ahead.

**By Stephanie Flynn**

**T**here are arguably few peak industry bodies that represent such a broad array of sector participants as AMIC does.

A voice and services provider for the 1,250 small businesses in the meat retailing sector, to promoter of the interests of Australia's four-billion-dollar smallgoods sector, through to representing the diverse needs of the nation's meat processors and exporters across the protein spectrum, AMIC's remit is broad by any standard.

Employing a team of 18 people as well as specialist consultants, AMIC has made great strides over recent times in putting the industry 'on the map' with significant issues, like the biosecurity threat posed by Indonesia's outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease and Lumpy Skin Disease last year and the challenge posed by plant-based protein labelling.

Under the stewardship of Mr Hutchinson, the organisation has also played a significant role in the establishment of recent Free-Trade Agreements and their technical implementation.

AMIC has also ensured the recovery of the industry from the impacts of COVID and the reinstatement of its flagship retail competitions including the now global World Butchers' Challenge and Meat Business Women, a programme designed to increase the participation and role of women in the industry.

"On the domestic retail scene, we now have our national retail competitions up and running again after the considerable interruption caused by COVID and have introduced our Apprentice of the Year awards in association with the Sausage King competition," Mr Hutchinson said.

"We have also been successful in instigating our inaugural Charcuterie



*AMIC's Chief Executive Officer,  
Mr Patrick Hutchinson.*

competition with 167 gold medals being awarded to both artisan and corporate smallgoods companies and that has now evolved into an international programme.

"The work we have done over the last 12 months on plant-based protein labelling has involved advocating for all of our members, of any size, to ensure that their terminology and businesses are protected now and into the future.

"Another area of considerable activity for us in recent times in terms of domestic policy has been the implementation of an Electronic Identification System for small stock," he said.

According to Mr Hutchinson, AMIC's advocacy role on issues that impact the meat industry supply chain in its entirety, from the smallest to the largest participants and across the protein spectrum, has expanded dramatically to not only include major global issues such as sustainability and the movement toward carbon neutrality by 2030 but also includes direct participation in broader Australian Federal Government policy initiatives impacting the agricultural sector as a whole.



*The instigation of retail competitions including the now global World Butchers' Challenge is an important part of AMIC's role.*



*“Under this new Government we see more intervention...”*

AMIC is one of only four agricultural-based groups to have been invited to be part of the Albanese Government's Agricultural Workforce Working Group, chaired by Agricultural Minister, Senator Murray Watt.

Established last October, the Group is charged with the task of creating a single agricultural workforce white paper addressing workforce solutions for the agricultural and processing sectors and is due to complete its tenure in October this year when its recommendations will be incorporated into the Federal Government's broader Employment White Paper.

“Under this new Government there are principles that it holds dear, and we see more intervention in a lot of key areas, so we are working more with Government than we have ever done before on things, like wages and conditions,” Mr Hutchinson said.

“We are doing a lot of work around issues that are in alignment with our

Meat Industry Award and some of those specific issues can relate to the individual or the operation of a business overall.

“It is a rapidly changing environment around workforce, and we have bolstered our team in order to ensure we can perform against that necessary remit including industrial relations, human resources, work health and safety.

“While a number of these projects can be quite specific, lot of them are not individual projects on their own but are ones where we are having to become part of committees or provide submissions to Government on changes in legislation, both State and Federal, which have increased dramatically,” he said.

A key role played by AMIC in relation to the nation's meat exports is its participation in the formation and implementation of Free Trade Agreements (FTA's).

It has been heavily involved in the establishment of the recent Australia India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, which heralded the

tariff-free export of Australian lamb and sheep meat from January this year, and the Australia United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement which has just been ratified.

AMIC is also involved in the FTA's currently under negotiation with the European Union and a more comprehensive agreement with India.

“While there is much discussion and a lot of publicity around negotiation and acceptance of FTA's there is little exposure around implementation of those agreements,” Mr Hutchinson said.

“It is up to AMIC and its members to address implementation and it is not as easy as it first appears, a lot of the challenge is around the technical aspects, not just around the agreements but the issues involved in exporting to those countries.

“Those technical issues are very broad, they include considerations around religious aspects of consumption of red meat, documentation and other administrative areas and now areas of sustainability coming into the FTA's,” he said.

*continued on page 18*

continued from page 17

*“Many issues driving AMIC’s expanding advocacy role...”*

The road ahead for the role AMIC plays is not paved with gold but littered with even more challenges and issues facing the industry.

In 2020, the Federal Government provided \$2.5 million to the National Health and Medical Research Council to review the 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines which is currently underway and includes the acceptance of stakeholder submissions.

The draft Guidelines are due for release for public comment in the second quarter of 2025 with the final revised Guidelines anticipated to be released by the end of 2025.

According to Mr Hutchinson, this review is a major issue for the meat industry alongside that of future workforce, these are two of many issues that are driving the increasing advocacy role which AMIC needs to fulfil going forward and it is this role which has motivated its recent establishment of a permanent office in Canberra.

“We have a huge issue coming upon us with the Dietary Guidelines review in this country and the discussions around whether perceived environmental concerns dictate dietary intake of product,” Mr Hutchinson said.

“There are interest groups which are taking the concerns around the production of beef and telling people that the consumption of beef leads to those environmental concerns, but the two are not related.

“Workforce continues to hover over us like a very dark cloud, there will be a lot of livestock on the market over the next few years as a result of the good seasons we have had, and we are now looking down the barrel of whether we have enough workers to be able to reap the rewards of the good seasons.

“We need to make sure that we are taking all of these issues exceptionally



AMIC’s inaugural Charcuterie competition for the smallgoods sector saw 167 gold medals awarded.

seriously, we are doing our own research, we work with our stakeholders on a broad scale, and we provide the necessary input into policy settings via our advocacy and lobbying,” he said.

In order to prepare for future workforce needs and address succession planning for the next generation, AMIC is dynamically and actively involved in preparing and implementing educational and training programmes.

*“AMIC’s new strategic plan will address all the issues...”*

AMIC is working in concert with Australian Meat Processor Corporation in its Meat the Future programme and with other industry partners in an effort by the industry to enter the educational system to attract young people into the agricultural industries.

AMIC’s new strategic plan, addressing all these issues and its ongoing role in providing service to the entire range of industry players from retail to processing and export across the

protein spectrum, is now in its final stages of preparation.

Due for release in July, the new strategic plan not only looks at the next five years but also the medium term to 2030.

According to Mr Hutchinson, the strategic plan is broad in nature, but it links with AMIC’s stakeholders and partners in the industry, service providers like Ausmeat as well as the plans of Federal and State Governments.

“We have reviewed our organisational structure, the plan centres on services, about what the members need not who the member is specifically,” Mr Hutchinson said.

“Those needs may be around the tangible services like the range of discounts and offers on insurance, energy or EFTPOS finance or our very well patroned industrial relations/human resources hotline services.

“For larger companies, they need an industry group taking up the fight on broader issues like traceability, sustainability, biosecurity and all the other major issues facing the industry,” he said. ■

# AI Installed for Beef Scribing



*Lead Vision Engineer for Intelligent Robotics, Mr Andrew Martchenko, with a beef scribing robot.*

Investment into advanced manufacturing by Australian Meat Processing Corporation (AMPC) has resulted in an automated beef scribing system, driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI), being installed at Kilcoy Pastoral Company's processing plant in Kilcoy, Queensland.

The system has a small footprint, operates on AI, and was installed in March this year.

The system works by first stabilising the carcass, the AI system then analyses an image of the carcass and instructs a robotic cutting saw on where to make the appropriate cuts.

According to AMPC's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Chris Taylor, it is one of the first AI-driven automated beef scribing systems in Australia and offers a range of benefits to processors.

"The benefits include improving yields, greater consistency in scribing operations and, most importantly, assisting worker safety," Mr Taylor said.

"It will be trialled over a 12-month period to determine whether the technology can achieve the necessary performance benchmarks.

"We are upbeat about this investment which could deliver significant returns to the processing industry and look forward to seeing the results," he said.

The investment involves the design and manufacture of the system which is able to perform the four scribing cuts required for their operation.

The project also includes testing and installation.

The system is heavily focussed on the principles of AI technology which relies on building data to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the operation of the equipment.

Accurate scribing cuts are extremely important due to the high-value primals located within the rib structure.

The industry has trialled other beef scribing applications in the past.

Kilcoy Global Foods President, Mr Jiah Falcke, said the installation of the new AI beef scribing system is an example of the modern practices being adopted in the industry to improve efficiency, safety and yield.

"We are thrilled to have this technology at our Kilcoy plant, its implementation

has been driven by our leadership team for a number of years and its successful adoption reinforces our position as a leader in the beef industry," Mr Falcke said.

"Prior to automation this was a skilled manual task which required the use of a hazardous circular cutting saw.

"We will now be able to extract more value from the carcass while improving workplace safety and contribute to labour supply sustainability," he said.

AMPC is working together with Intelligent Robotics on this investment.

Intelligent Robotics Electrical Engineering Manager, Mr Jonathan Cook, said that the company was thrilled with the opportunity to develop and deliver this exciting technology to the Australian red meat industry.

"We are passionate about engineering novel solutions to add value and improve safety for our meat industry customers, and it's great to see all the hard work come together in bringing the IR-Scribe system to life at Kilcoy Pastoral Company's processing plant," Mr Cook said. ■

# Adopting Technology Will Bring Benefits

Australia's competitiveness on the global protein market is likely to benefit from the adoption and implementation of innovative technologies in the domestic meat processing sector but it will require the industry overcoming the perceived risks according to Rabobank's Australian Senior Protein Analyst.

Mr Angus Gidley-Baird believes that while there are a considerable number of challenges in the implementation of technological innovations, from robotics to Artificial Intelligence, there is a massive potential for exponential returns to the processing sector on that investment over the next decade.

While some technologies may require long term planning and large-scale plant refurbishments, there are software applications that are available now which will improve the connection between producers, processors and consumers, allowing big improvements and efficiencies in production.

In an interview with *Australian Meat News*, Mr Gidley-Baird overviews the range of technologies now available as well as the benefits and challenges that accompany their adoption.

By Stephanie Flynn

Technological applications, especially robotics, which allow processors to maximise returns on each carcass by standardising cutting placement as well as the wholesale adoption of block chain technology along the supply chain will enable the processing sector to become more competitive on global markets according to Mr Gidley-Baird.

"These technologies are what the industry really needs to look at, not because the industry is suffering, but from an Australian point of view especially, processing is one of the biggest cost components in our competitiveness on a global market," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

"Labour and regulatory costs are big costs for us in the processing sector and, while we are still very productive and efficient, it is the higher costs that affect our competitiveness globally.

"So, implementing the new technological developments in our processing sector would be very advantageous for our export competitiveness," he said.

Objective carcass grading and measurements systems are now available which can provide processors with accurate real-time data on carcass properties.

Using either X-ray or thermal imaging, the technologies can objectively score a carcass on qualities like marbling or fat content to a pre-programmed scale.

Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry (DEXA), first introduced for analysis in some of the nation's meat processing plants in 2017, is able to objectively measure the lean meat, bone and fat composition of each carcass.

A study conducted by Australian Meat Processor Corporation and Meat and Livestock Australia at the time found that full adoption of objective measurement technology would potentially benefit the Australian red meat industry by \$420 million a year.

New Zealand based technology company, Scott Engineering, has recently developed an X-ray Primal system which creates a 3D map of the bones within a carcass, providing correct height and angle measurements for each cut with the data then guiding an interconnected robotic system with automated cutting blades.

Robotic systems have also been developed for beef rib cutting, scribing as well as boning which can either replace the actions previously undertaken by operators or enhance the operator's role.



*Rabobank's Senior Protein Analyst, Mr Angus Gidley-Baird, says that harnessing the available software technology in the processing sector can bring benefits to the industry on global markets.*

According to Mr Gidley-Baird, robotic systems have a range of benefits including the increase in return on individual carcasses as well as a potential future contribution to the resolution of the workforce difficulties facing the industry.

“There are more incentives to robotics than simply replacing labour, but obviously given the difficulties the industry has in procuring labour, a problem that will always be an issue for the industry, robotics does give a benefit in solving the issues of attracting workers going forward,” Mr Gidley-Baird said.

“While the technology is now available, there are also greater challenges with the application of robotics for the beef side of the industry than there is for the implementation in sheep meat processing, which is already well into the adoption phase of robotics in its operations.

“There is a lot more variability in the beef carcass than with the sheep or lamb carcass, which is smaller in size, there are less cuts and also it is a more consistent carcass too, with most lamb carcasses weighing 22 to 26kg.

“Whereas a beef processing plant could be killing 200kg cows one day and 400kg heavy grain-fed steers the next, so the size difference, the whole conformity of the carcass makes it a lot harder for the robots to adjust,” he said.

Retrofitting an existing plant for robotics is also a major drawback with either a particular station having to be removed while the technology is installed or a whole reconfiguring of the plant which would require it to be shut down during the process.

Mr Gidley-Baird says that it is understandable that the industry perceives risk in the adoption of robotics and other technologies given the difficulties around retrofitting plants and also the concern around ongoing servicing of technology during breakdowns, most notably in regional areas where specialist services are not generally available.

But there are now software programmes available which can be harnessed without the need for major plant refurbishments, and which can offer a fully connected two-way tracking system from producer to consumer using block chain technology.

Block chain technology is a computer programme that serves as a shared unchangeable ledger, with each block containing information about the previous block, forming a chain of information.

It is completely transparent, highly secure and viewable only by those on a permitted network such as a supply chain.

Mr Gidley-Baird is of the view that the biggest gap in the technological chain in Australia is between the producer and the processor.

Information can now be obtained, via technology, which can be fed back to producers to enable changes in feeding regimes and breeding genetics to maximise the profitability of a carcass.

He sees no point in having objective carcass measurement if no systems are in place to provide this information back to the producer from the processor.

“We have to figure out how to tailor our products to what a particular customer wants on the global market and the answer to that is using the objective carcass measurements and some of the Artificial Intelligence on block chain to enable us to know and pick-up what is happening at the consumer end of the supply chain,” Mr Gidley-Baird said.

“Implementing the software systems will enable us to know where it is being sold by the retailer, where it is being consumed by the customer and translating that information back through the abattoirs to how the carcass was hung and cut and then back to the producer to know where it came from, what its breed was, its feeding regime and its genetics.

“If we can get all those things to line-up through software technology then there will be a better outcome and we will be producing a better quality and type of product.

“I believe that at the moment, without lining-up this information through technology, we are ‘shooting ourselves in the foot’ in terms of our ability to actually operate on the global market, we have to have a point of difference and, in my view, that is our ability to be agile and produce a product that the consumer wants,” he said. ■

# Combatting Salmonella with Water

By Susan Webster

**W**orld-first research led by Sydney scientists has found a new way of combatting the growth of dangerous Salmonella on meat surfaces.

The researchers were able to achieve around 80 percent inactivation of pathogens in only 30 seconds, while preserving most of the quality attributes of the beef by using a modified form of water.

The modified water was plasma-activated water (PAW), which is made by injecting air into water using electricity.

Like lightning hitting the surface of a lake, the electricity dissolves reactive oxygen and nitrogen into the water, the resulting PAW kills pathogens by rupturing the membrane of bacterial cells.

Salmonella is a dominant cause of foodborne illness outbreaks in Australia and often found in fresh raw meat and meat products.

Typically, decontamination of meat carcasses relies on washing with high-pressure potable water or chemicals.

Conventional water spraying uses too much water and could actually spread bacteria.

Alternatively, spraying with hot water or steam effectively curbs microorganisms, but can reduce the meat's nutritional value and sensory quality.

The research, undertaken by scientists from UNSW's School of Chemical Engineering and the University of Sydney's School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, was supported by the Australian Meat Processor Corporation.

According to lead researcher, senior lecturer Dr Francisco Trujillo, for the first time, PAW has been successfully demonstrated to inactivate pathogens on beef in very short contact times while preserving most of the quality attributes of the meat.

The researchers inoculated fresh grass-fed beef rump within a week of slaughter with Salmonella before chilling the samples at 4°C for 24 hours, the samples were then exposed individually to either PAW or sterile water at 55°C either by spraying or immersion.

Immersion is more economical for small-scale meat producers, but spraying is more economical for larger-scale operations.

The scientists reported that meat washing with PAW improved inactivation of Salmonella but reduced the meat's redness, however, an additional water washing at 25°C for 60 seconds overcame that problem.



*Dr Francisco Trujillo, Lead Researcher on the PAW project.*

PAW has been studied as an antimicrobial agent to disinfect fruits and vegetables.

“To our best knowledge, there are only three previous studies on the use of PAW for beef, but these studies used only a little PAW in small lab-scale experimentation,” Dr Trujillo said.

“They required long contact times, up to days, which is ineffective for industrial implementation.

“In addition, there are no studies on the effect of meat washing methods with PAW, such as spraying and immersion, on meat quality,” he said.

The Australian experiment treated meat with 101mls from a mist sprayer held 70mm away from the meat or immersed it in a similar volume in a container that was placed in a water bath at 55°C for 30 minutes.

Bacterial growth on the two treated samples was compared with untreated meat samples.

The researchers found that the treatment was more effective on free-moving Salmonella cells than those stuck as a self-protective film on the meat surface

“Nevertheless, washing the beef samples with PAW for 30 seconds killed significantly more Salmonella than the control samples, with results similar for sprayed and immersed samples,” Dr Trujillo said.

“Overall, PAW spraying is a promising method for inactivating foodborne pathogens in meat washing,” he said.

Other researchers working on the project were Koentadi Hadinoto, Hanxia Yang, Tianqi Zhang, Patrick Cullen and Stuart Prescott. ■



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# Expansion Ahead for Remote Processor

Efficiency and productivity are key drivers for the operation of Australia's most remote independent processing facility, Kimberley Meat Company (KMC), located between Broome and Derby in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

The processor is now back in operation after devastating floods in the Kimberley Region in January wiped out the transport routes to the facility when the Fitzroy River experienced its highest flood levels in recorded history knocking out the major highway bridge and effectively splitting the region in two.

KMC is now looking to a bright and prosperous future with plans to expand its holding facilities and markets in the next two years.

By Stephanie Flynn

**M**ichael Rapattoni sits at the helm of KMC as Chief Executive Officer and, with two decades of experience in agribusiness both in Australia and South East Asia, he is leading KMC on a drive toward efficiency and profitability.

KMC is a purpose-built processing facility established in 2016 by the region's producers and shareholders in response to the 2011 Government-imposed live cattle export ban and was designed specifically to process the particular breeds of cattle in the Kimberley.

The COVID outbreak saw the facility placed into hibernation until May last year when it recommenced operations only to be plagued, once again, by disaster when January this year saw the region experience catastrophic flooding in the aftermath of Cyclone Ellie.

With the true grit and determination that are the hallmarks of Australia's northern meat industry, creative solutions were implemented to ensure KMC was able to recommence operations in March with cattle arriving at the facility by road from the south and live cattle imports from Darwin into Broome Port bringing cattle from the East Kimberley pastoral stations.

"We are now starting to see some cattle coming onboard from the west side of the Fitzroy River by road as the transition from the wet season to the dry season occurs, so it really is a matter of how quickly that happens so we can operate the plant at capacity," Mr Rapattoni said.

"Our plan is to be at full capacity by May at 250 bodies a day, we are now focused on supply by shipping from the East side or by land from the West side so the combination of both of those will enable us to achieve that operational capacity,



*Kimberley Meat Company's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Michael Rapattoni.*

there are challenges, but we are confident that we will be able to give it a good go," he said.

Employing around 70 staff during operations, KMC has holding yards for 2,000 head of cattle and is in the process of expanding its facilities to enable it to hold 6,000 head on feed, effectively an insurance against future wet season impacts.





*Kimberley Meat Company is based between Broome and Derby in WA's remote Kimberley Region.*

According to Mr Rapattoni, the expansion of holding facilities will allow KMC to retain cattle for pastoralists in the region and enable the plant to operate during the wet season thereby benefiting the industry as a whole when other markets such as live export are not running.

“An abattoir is a big investment and to have it idle for long periods of time becomes inefficient,” Mr Rapattoni said.

“We are putting plans in place to enable us to operate 12-months of the year and making improvements to the plant which will allow us to increase our capacity from 250 bodies a day to 400 bodies a day over the next 18 months to two years.

“The expansions we are embarking on will enable us to produce a product that will be more customised to markets in different regions providing the opportunities to expand and evolve our export markets,” he said.

KMC currently exports chilled and frozen boxed beef to a range of markets with the United States being the largest offshore destination for grinding beef, Japan and Indonesia for its offal exports and a range of cuts exported to Vietnam and other South East Asian markets.

The domestic market is considerable for KMC with product sent to suppliers in Perth and distributed nationally from there.

According to Mr Rapattoni, there is a global trend toward lean grass-fed beef which suits cattle types prevalent in the Kimberley, putting the region's product in high demand in the US and Asian markets.

“Future prospects are bright as we focus on gaining efficiencies throughout the plant, I think we form a very important part of the industry up here and complement the live export sector,” Mr Rapattoni said.



*Live cattle imports to Broome Port from Darwin have enabled Kimberley Meat company to recommence processing operations.*

“We play a significant role for pastoralists and the economy in providing the facility for processing locally, the alternative is sending the cattle over 2,500 kilometres to the south of Perth by road which is both expensive and inefficient.

“Importantly, the animal is not travelling those enormous distances to be processed which, from a welfare perspective, is also beneficial,” he said.

Mr Rapattoni is grateful to both Government and industry for the support the processor has received in overcoming what has been a very tough period in the region and is excited at the outlook for 2023 and beyond as KMC continues its drive to improvement and efficiency so it can continue to support the needs of the industry and local economy. ■

# Conveyor Vision Scanner Predicts Traits

By Susan Webster

Recent Australian-led research undertaken at Murdoch University and Marel Meat B.V. in The Netherlands used a Marel conveyor vision scanner to predict chemical IMF percentage and visual marbling traits in single-portion beef steaks.

The scientists reported that the conveyor vision scanner predicted chemical IMF percentage as well as MSA and AUS-MEAT marbling scores with good precision and accuracy.

Unlike the rib-eye grading technologies used on the carcass, the Marel vision scanner is designed to image single-portion steaks passing beneath it on a conveyor belt system.

The research studied steaks from 102 cattle graded to the AUS-MEAT chiller assessment and MSA grading standards at the loin eye muscle surface at the 12th/13th rib, amounting to an evaluation of 204 steaks.

Research lead, Dr Liselotte Pannier, said that within the Australian beef industry, there has been considerable interest in the development and commercialisation of automated vision systems to incorporate more objective grading.

“Carcass grading technologies are often trained against these human derived marbling scores, hence are susceptible to some imprecision and inaccuracy,” Dr Pannier said.

“Furthermore, factors such as different graders and varying environmental and processing conditions, will also contribute to the variation in visual marbling assessments.

“Therefore, if objective measurement technologies are calibrated against an objective measure of marbling, such as chemical intramuscular fat percentage, this will likely improve the precision and accuracy of trained technologies.

“The data also indicated that fresh-cut steaks produced vision scanner marbling values that were markedly different to the non-fresh-cut grading steak even when corrected for IMF percentage.

“This is likely due to the ageing/surface oxidation effect at this site.

“It is recommended, that non-fresh-cut single steaks should be turned over to expose a fresh surface for scanning, or that scanners be calibrated for surface differences,” she said.

Other researchers involved in the study were T.M. van de Weijer, F.T.H.J. van der Steen, R. Kranenbarg and G.E. Gardner. ■

# The Butcher's Cook Book

Volume Two

Published by Clickinc Trust

The concept of *The Butcher's Cook Book* is the brainchild of a collective of Australian meat industry notaries – Shannon Walker, Jay Beaumont, Deborah Andrich and Steve Foy – all of whom have a passion for the promotion of the centrality of the local butcher in the life of everyday Australians.



Following the publication of the highly successful first edition, *The Butcher's Cook Book Volume Two* presents 100 recipes from 50 butchers around the country.

This cookbook is one with a difference, it tells the story of each of the butchers who have contributed recipes and, through those tales and recipes, inherently tells the story of Australia itself as a multi-cultural nation.

The cuisines presented through the recipes hail from around the world including South East Asia, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, India, the Caribbean and Morocco.

The dishes cover a broad range of cooking styles from slow-cooker and smoking recipes to barbeque and roasting.

Quite naturally, meat – beef, lamb, pork, chicken, goat and kangaroo – is the hero (or heroine) of each dish.

The recipes each include spice mixes, marinades and serving suggestions as well as handy hints, cooking time and the number of people the dish will serve.

Beautifully presented, each recipe is accompanied by professional full-colour photographs of the ingredients and the completed dish.

The book is a story, first and foremost, about butchers and their passion for the industry to which they have dedicated their lives.

The Index at the back of the book is where you will find the recipes listed under the protein which each features.

It is not only a stylish full-colour cookbook but an enjoyable read, just don't get carried away with the stories and forget to cook.

*The Butcher's Cook Book Volume Two* is priced at \$35 and can be purchased by contacting the *Butcher's Cook Book* Facebook page.

See page 31 for details on how to win a copy. ■

# NZ Bobby Calves Headed for Meat Trade

By Susan Webster

**A** new rule across the Tasman about slaughtering male dairy calves offers early insights for Australia's meat industry.

From this June, New Zealand's dairy farmers supplying Fonterra will have to rear male (bobby) calves for the meat trade and not euthanise them on-farm.

While Fonterra Australia said there was no intention to mandate a similar ban, the NZ initiative is expected to create animal welfare waves among Australian shoppers.

Speaking at a Gippsland dairy discussion in late March, Greenham Dairy Beef and Animal Welfare Manager, Dr Sarah Bolton, said that what we need to see consistently is an ability to direct surplus calves into meat production.

"The challenge is how to balance economic viability and social acceptability of the way we manage surplus calves," Dr Bolton said.

The NZ experience could offer Australian meat processors and retail butchers information on how to handle this possible new meat product.

About 80 percent of Kiwi dairy farmers supply Fonterra and from June, their usual practice of euthanising around two million bobby calves annually on-farm about a week after birth will be banned, unless there is a humane reason for doing so.

The farmers will have to rear the animals to an older age or send them to an abattoir.

Both options will have implications for meatworks' throughput.

In NZ, around 70 percent of bobby calves are currently slaughtered on lamb chains, with the average weight being 16.3kg carcass weight.

Increased throughput and carcass

weight is likely to require considerable capital expense for meatworks.

Some meatworks have expressed concern that delayed bobby calf runs could cause back-ups and overlapping kill schedules.

According to Rabobank Agricultural Analyst, Ms Genevieve Steven, the meat industry was concerned about its ability to process more bobby calves because of a shortage of workers and the short timeframe in which bobby calves were born between August and October.

However, bobby calves provide additional employment for seasonal processing plants, such as those processing lambs.

NZ-based Agri-tech cooperative LIC's Genetics Business and Strategy Manager, Mr Greg Hamill, said the bobby calf industry supports thousands of jobs and communities.

"The financial implications of removing this industry and replacing it with growing calves out to a greater carcass weight is unclear," Mr Hamill said.

He warned that global veal sales are dominated by countries with more mature supply chains.

"It would be difficult, in my opinion, to set up a veal industry in New Zealand without creating an international market requirement, especially if we are going to compete internationally against companies who are already well-embedded in the veal space," he said.

He also warned that high shipping costs would hinder the development of an export industry, while a domestic industry would have to convince a population unused to eating veal.

NZ Beef and Lamb's Farming Excellence and Genetics General Manager, Mr Dan Brier, said about a third of NZ animals

currently slaughtered for meat were bobby calves.

In 2022 DairyNZ estimated that 1.3 million bobby calves were raised to maturity for beef at around 18 months.

In the 2019 season New Zealand exported 22,014 tonnes of bobby veal, with export earnings of NZ\$121 million, amounting to three percent of the total export earnings for beef production.

Dairy beef does not produce premium cuts and has typically been sold as mince or burgers.

Most of the extra animals will be destined for veal or pet food.

Bobby calves do not command high prices, a NZ pet food company was offering \$15 for a calf over 35kg, but only one dollar for a calf 17-24kg.

However, meat is not the only product from calves.

By-products can end up in products as diverse as perfume, paint, glue and cake mix.

Calf hides and skins are more pliable, with less defects than older hides.

Rennet comes from the fourth stomach, the Vell, of a calf and some select European cheese makers import NZ calf rennet because synthetic rennet must not be used under the European Union's Protected Geographical Status rules.

Calf blood serum is valuable in developing human vaccines and is also used in DNA testing as it contains few antibodies and is a higher quality product than serum generated from older animals.

Lipase, an enzyme extracted from the glands at the base of the calf's tongue, is used as an ingredient in baked products to help keep them fresher for longer. ■

# Wooing Eco-shoppers with Biodiversity

By Susan Webster

**M**ove over low-carbon meat, here comes the next sustainability selling-point ... biodiversity.

Meat marketers could attract green-focused shoppers by branding products as promoting biodiversity.

Australia's meat producers have the opportunity to grab an early start on biodiversity marketing, according to Mr Phil Tickle, whose firm has worked with MLA to create a national feed-base monitor.

Addressing a recent MLA breakfast in Brisbane, Mr Tickle said that there are massive opportunities for the livestock industry.

"The majority of Australia's biodiversity is outside the east coast, we've just got to get the cost down for verifying and monitoring," Mr Tickle said.

Biodiversity is already on Canberra's horizon.

The proposed Nature Repair Market Bill creates a legal framework for a national voluntary agriculture biodiversity stewardship market.



*Mr Phil Tickle says that there are massive opportunities for the livestock industry.*

It will create a biodiversity certificate, which will be tradeable, meaning biodiversity gains can be bought, transferred, claimed or used by businesses, organisations, Governments and individuals.

The Federal Government has also funded world-first pilot programmes measuring and rewarding landholders certified as being 'biodiversity-friendly'.

Science is also backing the development with the CSIRO working to develop environmental DNA (eDNA) to help monitor biodiversity.

eDNA methods capture, extract and analyse genetic material such as DNA shed by plants, animals and other organisms.

They provide a fast way to detect species without having to actually see or handle them.

They can detect single or multiple species across large areas and in remote places using quite simple equipment.

CSIRO postdoctoral researcher, Dr Maarten De Brauer, helped develop the new guidelines for working with eDNA.

According to Dr De Brauer eDNA has huge potential from detecting a single species to tracking the health of entire ecosystems over long periods of time.

Verification is only part of the challenge.

A survey conducted for MLA by the University of Queensland last year reported that while consumers are demanding beef producers look after biodiversity, there is no incentive to protect or enhance biodiversity and efforts on biodiversity stewardship are not generally valued by markets.

The survey also identified varying demand for eco-credentials among wholesalers, retailers and beef consumers and suggested an online platform sharing market intelligence, as well as product insights from a consumers' perspective.

Educating the shopper will be a hard task.

A German focus group study published last October found that meat shoppers were confused by biodiversity labelling.

Authors Ekaterina Stampa and Katrin Zander reported that consumers are overwhelmed by the sheer number and diversity of sustainability labels on the market, which they claim renders it difficult for them to select information that is personally relevant to them. ■

# Cellular Meat Technologies Attract Investment

The production of cultured meat still has significant obstacles to address before it can be truly commercialised and competitive in the protein market according to a recent article *'Cellular agriculture: current gaps between facts and claims regarding cell-based meat'* published in *Animal Frontiers*.

By Deborah Hill

**B**illions of dollars have been invested around the world to develop the technologies required for the production of cell-based meat products, with many start-ups coming – and going – to satisfy niche markets for meat products, often to consumers with ethical concerns on animal welfare and the impacts on the environment.

Creating cell-based meat products requires taking cells from animals to start a process of growing meat fibres and fats to recreate the muscle characteristic of animal cuts currently consumed.

Impossible Foods uses haemoglobin (a protein within red blood cells) to give burgers the look and smell of red meat when cooked, while Magic Valley utilises skin cells to start the process.

To date Magic Valley has created both lamb and pork products with this technique.

Most products are still unstructured, lacking the texture of a steak with the connective fibres and tissue, and fat.

Therefore, producing both meat fibres and fat to recreate a steak eating experience drives further research.

## How is cultivated meat produced?

Initially cells are collected from an animal and grown in bioreactors at high densities and volumes. Cells are fed an oxygen-rich cell medium to give the basic nutrients required for meat growth such as amino acids, glucose, vitamins and other proteins.

As the cells multiply, fibre structure develops to give the familiar texture of meat.

The process can take many weeks, depending on the meat product being produced.

Currently, the volumes produced are not likely to have an impact on the livestock industry.

In addition, regulatory classifications of cell-based meat are yet to be registered in many markets.

Labelling may also be in issue for consumers who are cautious of artificially produced products.

According to the article, cell-based meat products have not been commercialised due to the high production costs as well as the lack of regulatory frameworks.

According to the article, the cost of large-scale cell-based meat facilities has been estimated at U.S.\$600 million and the depreciation costs of these facilities will be a major component of the final cost of goods.

The challenges of scaling-up to be commercially viable include sourcing cells, the cell culture media (where the cells multiply), the bioreactors, developing the meat fibre structure and creating a product that meets consumer expectations.

## Regulatory Approval Underway with FSANZ

Earlier in 2023, Australian cell-based meat production company, Vow, began the process of regulatory approval with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to produce lab-grown quail by 2024.

The company secured U.S.\$49.2m in investment to produce novel meats such as rabbit, kangaroo, alpaca, goat and water buffalo.

According to Vow Chief Executive Officer, Mr George Peppou, Australia is one of the world leaders in forward-thinking for food regulations in the novel space.

"They (FSANZ) are publishing on their website the executive summary of what we're submitting for approval," Mr Peppou said.

"It's the first public discourse for cell cultured meat in Australia, and I'm sure it's going to lead to some interesting emails over the next few weeks," he said.

FSANZ said in a statement it would assess the chemical, nutritional, microbiological and dietary exposure of the quail meat, as well as Vow's production process.

According to a spokeswoman for FSANZ, the food sector is seeing rapid innovation and change in products and markets globally.

"FSANZ's primary role is to ensure a safe food supply so Australian and New Zealand consumers can be confident the foods they choose to buy are safe to eat," she said. ■



Enter the competition to win one Khabin 10-inch Cimetar Steak Knife & 12-inch Steel. And one of five Khabin 6-inch Granton-edge Boning Knives.



The words in the list below are all hidden in the grid. They may be found in straight lines running horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Some of the letters are shared by more than one word.

When you have found all the words in the list, there will be 26 letters remaining, these form the answer to the competition.



When complete, send your copy by mail or email. Include your name, address and phone number to go in the draw for another great prize from BUNZL.

Results will be published in the next issue of *Australian Meat News*. Entries close 30 June 2023.

For last issues' winners and answers, see page 31

R	U	R	A	L	R	O	A	D	S	T	R	I	H	S	L	E	N	N	A	L	F
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MUSIC FESTIVALS  
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SUPPLY  
TRADITIONS  
CHAINS  
DATES  
LAMB  
RURAL ROADS

SCALES  
FLANNEL SHIRTS  
RATES  
RETROSPECTIVE  
TAHINI  
INVESTMENTS  
OYSTERS  
COUNTRY SHOPS

FROSTS  
INSURANCES  
FOGGY  
AGAVE  
BRONCOS  
CITRUS  
TEQUILA  
FRUIT

NETTLES  
ROOSTER  
ALOE  
SESAME SEED  
FISHKILL  
EAR  
DOWNEY MILDEW  
ICEY

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## BOOK COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to Regan Goddard-Borger, who won a copy of *Squeal*, by Peter Booth.

Regan operates Swansea Street Family Butcher, in Victoria Park, a suburban area about five minutes from Perth CBD.

The shop has been in the family for 20 years.

Regan has worked there for the past 10 years and has now taken it over as his parents have retired.

The old-style market shopping precinct is about to undergo a redevelopment with residential apartments to be built above a new modern ground level shopping center.

All the best for this challenging transition, enjoy *Squeal* and thanks for entering our competition. ■



## AUSTRALIAN meatnews

*Australian Meat News* is published quarterly and issued to meat retailers, processors and industry regulators.

The magazine covers news and feature stories on the retail and processing sectors as well as broader industry issues.

The publication schedule for the remainder of 2023 is:

Issue	Advertising Booking Deadline
August	14 July
November	18 October

### INSERTS

*Australian Meat News* is direct mailed using our exclusive mailing list. Inserts in the magazine can be catalogues, brochures, DVD/USB, fridge magnets or samples and can be targeted by postcode and/or business category.



For information about advertising in *Australian Meat News* contact Shannon Walker on 0424 055 190 or visit [www.ausmeatnews.com.au](http://www.ausmeatnews.com.au).

## WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win: *The Butcher's Cook Book Volume Two*

Answer the question below.

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

*Australian Meat News* Book Competition

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

or by post: PO Box 415, Richmond VIC 3121

Question: *Which company won the 2023 Wagyu Branded Beef Grand Champion?*

**Entries close: 30 June, 2023** ■



## Winners April 2023 Find a Word

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



**Khabin 10-inch Cimetar Steak Knife and 12-inch Steel**  
Janet Pui, Richard's Quality Meats, Revesby, NSW

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Robyn Freeman, Barraba Beef, Barraba, NSW  
Mishek McDonald, Homebush Meats, Condell Park, NSW  
Amanda Davin, Marbled Meats, East Bentleigh, Vic  
Don Fulton, Cranbourne, Vic  
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