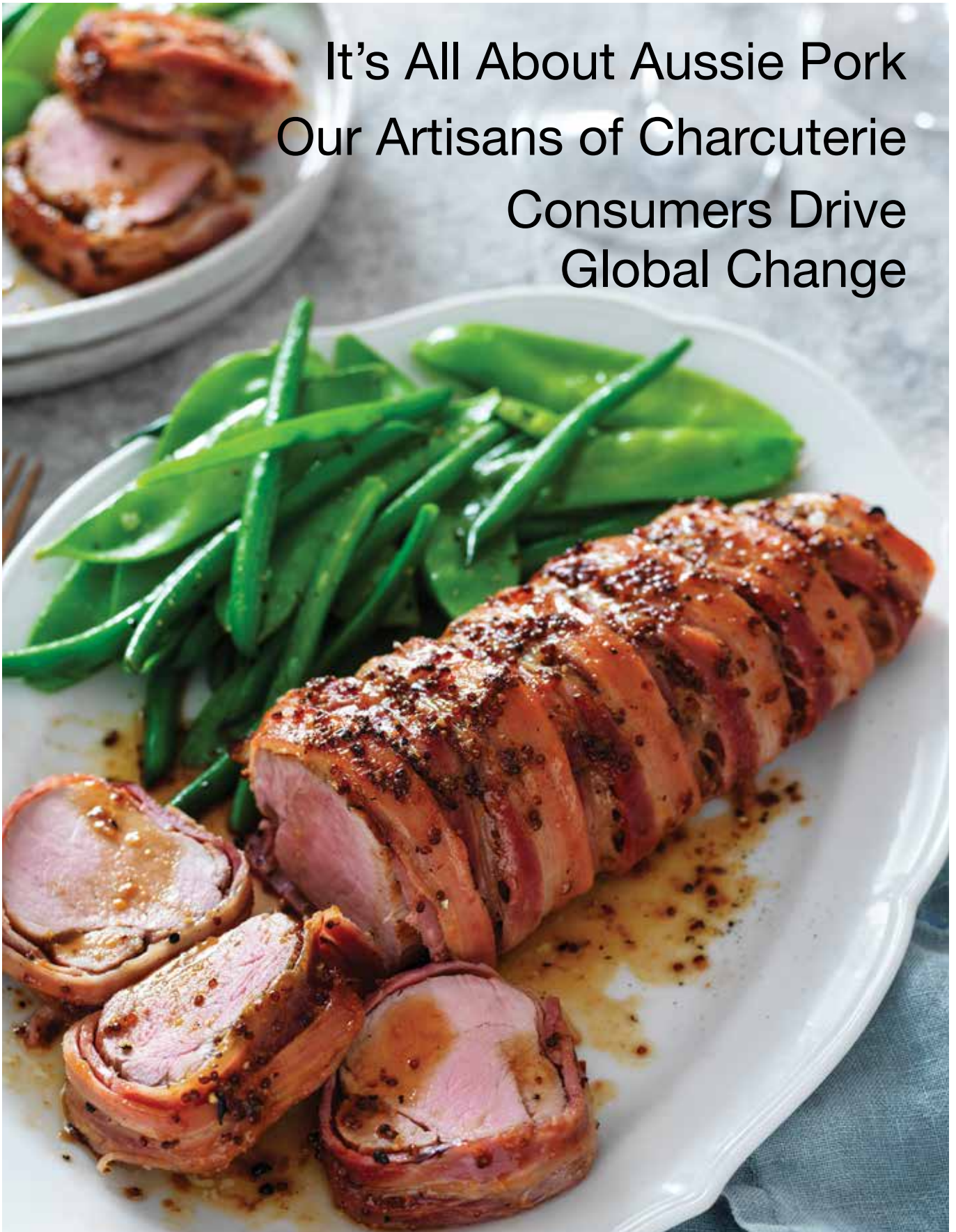


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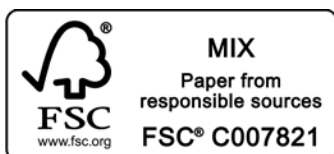
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Gold Ignites Hope for Apprentice

TAFE NSW Granville student and local butchery apprentice, Zane Cunico, was awarded a gold medal in front of hundreds of his peers from across the country, at the WorldSkills Australia 2023 National Championships.

Gold medal winners are eligible for consideration for the Australian ‘Skillaroos’ team which will compete with the world’s best at the WorldSkills International Competition finals to be held in France in 2024.

Zane, 20, took out the prestigious award after competing in the Retail Butchery category of what is Australia’s largest skills competition.

“I put in countless hours of practice after work and at TAFE NSW to prepare for the competition, so I’m very relieved that it’s paid off, now I just need to get used to the feeling of being a national champion,” Zane said.

The Cecil Hills local is completing an apprenticeship at Joe Papandrea Quality Meats in Wetherill Park, where he’s lucky enough to be trained by previous WorldSkills champions and TAFE NSW Granville graduates: 2012 gold medallist, Matt Papandrea and Zane’s brother, 2016 silver medallist, Josh Cunico. ■



Zane Cunico shows his precision on lamb at the WorldSkills Australia Competition

AMN Launches ‘Point of View’

Australian Meat News will be introducing a *Letters to the Editor* section in 2024.

Your views on any industry issues are invited for publication in the newly introduced ‘Point of View’ section which will commence in the March 2024 edition.

Although authors can request that their details not be published, all letters to the editor must include your name, business name, address and telephone contact number.

If you have an issue on which you would like to express your views, write your letter to the editor and email to the publisher athol@ausmeatnews.com.au.

Deadline for letters in the March 2024 edition is January 25. ■

Industry Demand Sparks Inaugural ICMJ Contest

By Susan Webster

Signature Beef's Megan Bauman top-scored in the inaugural industry section of this year's Inter-Collegiate Meat Judging (ICMJ) national conference.

Emily Lavis from Mort and Co finished runner-up in the overall industry category.

In a special one-off initiative, industry-based participants were invited to take part in the national competition.

Traditionally, the event has delivered training for university students from across Australia and overseas, with industry participants limited to attending selected seminars and workshops.

However, conference organisers responded to growing demand from industry for professional development opportunities by opening this year's competition to young professionals already in the workforce.

ICMJ President, Dr Peter McGilchrist, said the move followed on from the overwhelming success of the ICMJ Northern Conference in Rockhampton earlier this year which attracted almost 50 young industry professionals from a range of professions, seeking to improve their knowledge, expand their skills and grow their networks.

"The goal of ICMJ is to inspire and develop the future red meat industry workforce and, while university students are a core part of that future workforce, it's important to continue to develop the skills of young people after they enter the workforce as well," Dr McGilchrist said.



(L to R) Emily Lavis, Megan Bauman with ICMJ's Kiri Broad

"With delegates from international universities still below pre-COVID levels, we have a unique opportunity this year to trial the inclusion of industry participants in the national competition and we encourage young professionals to make the most of this opportunity," he said.

The conference ran in July at Charles Sturt University and Teys Australia in Wagga Wagga, NSW.

Processors presenting at the event included Tom Maguire, Greenham; Madison Campbell, Kilcoy Global Foods; Jake Phillips, Angus Australia; and Garry Edwards, AAM. ■



The JBS Plant at Dinmore in Queensland is the largest processing plant in the southern hemisphere

JBS to Add 500 Jobs at Dinmore Plant

JBS Australia (JBS) will create more than 500 new jobs at its Dinmore processing facility in Ipswich, Queensland to support local employment and to meet increased demand for Aussie beef.

JBS is the largest single employer in the City of Ipswich.

The Dinmore plant will implement a 'second shift' that will commence in the first half of 2024.

This will take the total number of people employed at the site to over 1,800.

The move will support increased market demand for red meat as herd sizes and availability of livestock improves.

JBS is commencing a recruitment drive to encourage locals to apply.

This includes the offer of new flexible work initiatives and establishment of a new programme working with Brisbane and Ipswich High Schools to provide school-based traineeships and a pathway to employment for school leavers.

JBS has recently made a \$77 million investment in the plant.

The investment was made across technology and capital works that support improved safety outcomes as well as increasing capacity and productivity.

The second shift will commence in the first half of 2024 and allow JBS Dinmore to gradually ramp up its daily processing capacity. ■

Reviews Probe Pricing

By Susan Webster

The mismatch between saleyard and shelf pricing for meat is coming under the scrutiny of two Federal Government reviews.

Meat retailers – mostly supermarkets – are being accused of price gouging for not passing on plunging beef and lamb prices.

Canberra is directing a second review of the Food and Grocery Code, aimed at improving the treatment of suppliers by wholesalers and retailers.

Concurrently, State and Territory agriculture ministers have sought consideration of livestock pricings in the Treasury's Commonwealth Competition Review.

Federal Agriculture Minister, Mr Murray Watt, said the reviews would consider if farmers were being paid fairly.

"We are seeing supply and demand pressures which are impacting sheep and cattle prices at the moment, partly due to slowing restocking demand and increasing turn-off," Minister Watt said.

"While a more affordable lamb roast is appealing to relieve cost-of-living pressure, it's important that producers are getting a fair price and that profits are getting passed on.

"But importantly, supermarkets don't have to wait until that review is finalised to do the right thing," he said.

Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) Chief Executive Officer, Mr Patrick Hutchinson, said that there was no evidence of price gouging.

"Everyone needs to provide evidence in regard to profiteering, we are not seeing that," Mr Hutchinson said.

"Labour shortages in the meat processing industry were compounding the problem.

"While processor margins had improved with the increased availability of livestock, processors faced other operating costs, profitability is cyclical for processors," he said.

Sydney's, Mr Stephen Kelly, owner of the Sutcliffe Meats chain said the more rigid supply chain model of national supermarkets meant they were unable to cut prices quickly.

"Independent butchers have stolen a march on the major supermarkets because independents are more flexible and reactive to market conditions," he said.

He predicted supermarket prices will better-reflect lower prices in three to four months. ■

Expansion into Qld for TQM

Tasmanian Quality Meats (TQM) has strengthened its mainland presence with a new venture in Ipswich, Queensland.

The Cressy-based export abattoir has secured council permission to use a former Polar ice-works in suburban Churchill for a breaking-down and packing facility for its carcasses, mostly lamb.

The new enterprise fits into the company's current operations.

Chilled carcasses are road-freighted from Tasmania and stored in the cold storage facility prior to distribution to local butchers, restaurants and food outlets.

The company will now be breaking down the carcasses, up to a tonne per week, using the existing 880sq m premises.

The development will employ six staff, two of them being truck drivers.

While the operations are 24/7, most activity will happen during daylight hours, the company told the Ipswich City Council.

A family-run business founded in 1997 by Brian Oliver and John Talbot, TQM has the capacity to process 15,000 bodies per week at its Cressy abattoir.

It has Halal Certification and its product range includes lamb, mutton, veal, offal and skins. ■

KPCA Welcomes New CEO

The Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association (KPCA) is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Bron Christensen as its new Chief Executive Officer, following the two-year tenure of Mr Mick Sheehy.

Ms Christensen brings more than 25 years' experience across a wide range of industries and will start in the role on a part-time basis from September 2023 progressing to undertaking the role full-time in January 2024.



*KPCA's new CEO,
Ms Bron Christensen*

"We are excited to welcome Bron to the KPCA team and believe her style of leadership will continue to build on the outstanding contribution from retiring CEO, Mick Sheehy," said KPCA Chairperson, Mr Jak Andrews.

"She brings extensive experience in leadership and project management for the betterment of the Australian agricultural industry and we are confident that her 'can-do' attitude and outcome focus will enable the KPCA to continue to grow in the support we provide to our members," he said.

Ms Christensen has served in key leadership roles and also served on various boards and advisory groups. ■

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Members of the international delegation who visited Queensland



‘Taste of Queensland’ hosts International Visit

An international spotlight shone on Queensland beef in October as ambassadors from around the world delved into Queensland beef and cattle production from paddock to plate.

These ambassadors were part of the Aussie Beef Mates programme, with 25 delegates embarking on the Australian beef journey, making it the largest delegation of this kind.

The Aussie Beef Mates programme was organised by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) in strategic partnership with Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ).

The delegation comprised globally acclaimed chefs and food professionals representing 15 nations, with the group being treated to a showcase of unique beef production spanning

from the Atherton Tablelands, through to Charters Towers and Southeast Queensland.

The group visited beef properties, feedlots, state-of-the-art processing facilities and top-tier restaurants.

Additionally, they engaged in an Australian beef masterclass session where they delved into an array of topics such as Meat Standards Australia programme, food safety programmes and integrity systems as well as a plethora of beef cooking inspiration and product showcases.

Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon. Cameron Dick, said that as the State’s largest agricultural export, beef was a cornerstone of the Queensland economy. ■

EU Trade Deal Must be Right

The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) has called on the Australian Government to only sign up to a free trade agreement with the European Union (EU) if it delivers meaningful access for Australian red meat processors and exporters without built-in barriers to trade, otherwise, it should keep negotiating.

According to AMIC, Australian meat quota holders and exporters to the EU have invested significantly over decades to establish their trade with the EU and developed important relationships with their European customers.

Despite this, the restrictive conditions such as outdated, inequitable and restrictive quotas as well as high tariffs mean that the volumes traded are so small that most Europeans will not get the opportunity to eat Australian meat.

In a statement, Mr Patrick Hutchinson, AMIC’s Chief Executive Officer said that the EU FTA is Australia’s one shot to correct a uniquely unfair system faced by Australian meat exporters.

“The Government must make sure that it does not agree to a deal which locks in restricted access that effectively sends us backwards and doesn’t allow for future growth,” Mr Hutchinson said.

“Any deal must improve the tariff and quota access, while also not establishing new restrictions and barriers to trade,” he said. ■



AMIC’s Chief Executive Officer,
Mr Patrick Hutchinson

Goodness Defies ‘Doneness’

By Susan Webster

Butchers can assure lamb-buying customers that the level of cooking ‘doneness’ will not impair the meat’s nutritional value and healthiness.

New Australian research suggests that even well-done grilled lamb retains concentrations of health-boosting minerals and fatty acids.

Scientists from the NSW Department of Primary Industries’ (DPI) Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute found that while uncooked lamb meat held the highest levels of the healthy components, their loss was minimal and uniform, regardless of the end-point temperature to which lamb was cooked.

The researchers grilled the lamb to an internal end-point temperature of 60 °C (rare), 71 °C (medium), or 77 °C (well done).

They reported that the proportion of most major fatty acids was not altered by cooking.

Compared to raw samples, calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, and sodium were marginally reduced by any level of cooking doneness while zinc, iron and selenium were retained.

Lead researcher, Dr Benjamin Holman of NSW DPI said this is a positive, considering lamb meat is a rich dietary source of these minerals.

“These findings show that consumer preference for a level of cooking ‘doneness’ will have only minor effects on the concentration of minerals and fatty acids in lamb meat and will not compromise its nutritional value,” Dr Holman said.

“Lamb meat is recognised as a source of many fatty acids, minerals, and macronutrients which are necessary for a balanced diet.

“Innovation has facilitated the enhancement of healthy fatty acids and mineral concentrations within cuts of lamb meat.

“Primarily, this has been achieved by providing lambs with feed types or supplements that support the nutritional enrichment of their muscle tissue,” he said.

Other DPI researchers involved in the study were Stephanie Fowler, Kristy Bailes, Richard Meyer, David Hopkins and Edward Clayton. ■

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Above left: Winners of the Australian Ham Category

Above right: Jim's Jerky took out Gold for both Jerky and Biltong categories L to R Cathie Tanner, Jim Tanner, Emily Pullen

Below: Collecting the Fabbri Smallgoods awards L to R Monica Fabbri, David Fabbri, Dino Fabbri

Charcuterie Awards Highlight Local Talent



The 2023 Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards (ACEA) attracted over 725 entries across ten classes and 40 categories with the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) presenting medals at a gala dinner at Rydges Melbourne in late August.

First introduced last year by AMIC, the Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards stand at the pinnacle of recognition of the nation's smallgoods industry, celebrating exceptional products and encourage the elevation of industry standards.

According to AMIC's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Patrick Hutchinson, this year's ACEA saw double the entries compared to the inaugural competition last year.

"This shows how important the awards programme is in recognising excellence within the flourishing smallgoods industry," Mr Hutchinson said.

"Congratulations to all ACEA winners for their remarkable accomplishments which are a testament to the dedication and masterful craftsmanship exhibited by each participant," he said.

A recognition of Service to the Smallgoods Industry award was also presented to Mr Bradley Thomason.

Currently a non-executive director for WA-based smallgoods manufacturer, D'Orsogna Limited, Mr Thomason was the company's Managing Director for 20 years.

He has spent 40 years managing and directing companies in the industry and has been a keen advocate on the national stage for the highest possible industry ethics.

This year's ACEA saw the awarding of 328 Gold, 187 Silver and 96 Bronze medals as well as the crowning of 36 Category Champions.

A panel of Fleischmeisters, celebrity chefs as well as award-winning artisans and industry legends judge the Awards based on a meticulous points-based criteria.

According to Mr Franz Knoll, Chairperson of the National Smallgoods Council and Head Judge for the ACEA, this year's panel included highly regarded industry technical experts as well as renowned celebrity chefs including Adrian Richardson and Colin Fassnidge.



Above: Collecting the awards won by Melbourne-based butchers, Peter Bouchier, L to R Peter, Sue, Tom and Danielle Bouchier

*Left: Category Champions, TAFE NSW Gourmet Meats
Below: Bradley Thomason, (Left), D'Orsogna Limited, was honoured for his service to the industry*



“Judges work through five days of gruelling tasting to vigorously appraise each product,” Mr Knoll said.

“Through the ACEA we are preparing our smallgoods masters for the first entry into the German 2025 IFFA competition, respected as the highest recognition for the art of smallgoods making.

“We will be bringing our unique Australian process for judging including cooking of products and, for the first time, fresh sausages will be judged by the German panel of Fleischmeisters,” he said.

Fabbris Smallgoods cleaned-up in this year’s ACEA winning Category Champion for Prosciutto and Lombo as well as a host of Gold and Silver medals for a range of its products including salamis, pancetta, chorizo, mortadella and bacon.

Melbourne-based butchers, Peter Bouchier, won Category Champion for Dried Cured Bacon as well as a several Gold and Silver medals for its free-range hams, bacons, Frankfurts and Kransky products.

TAFE NSW Gourmet Meats took out the Category Champion Award for Australian Bacon.

Gold medals for both Jerky and Biltong went to Queensland-based, Jim’s Jerky. ■

A Man Who Never Gave Up, Makes Good



Samadhi Ami and Malcolm Batt

By Susan Webster

When customers order a five-kilogram pack of lamb forequarter from Denmark Grassfed Meats they are not just purchasing local meat – they are buying into a personal saga of a man who never gave up.

Last February, WA farmers, Malcolm Batt and his partner Samadhi Ami, opened their one and a half day-a-week butchery business, stocking it with grass-fed lamb from their 220-acre regenerative-ag property about 20 minutes out of town.

The basis of the new enterprise was Samadhi's five-year catering business – mostly lamb curries – and Malcolm's experience – 43 years – as a butcher.

It is Malcolm's second stint at butchery.

He started as a youngster.

"Dad died when I was 12, I had to go to work on holidays and weekends on farms, and, as soon as I was able to leave school, I had to go and get a job," Malcolm said.

He started work with a butcher at 14, two weeks into the job with no training, he was working a mincer that had no guard.

"I was doing my thing, being careful, the butcher came in and started yelling at me to hurry up, I panicked and I just felt a flutter on the end of my fingers," Malcolm recalled.

He lost his left arm.

The accident kick-started new laws that saw guards fitted to every mincing machine.

The effect on Malcolm was also profound.

"It really made me strive and have a go, and to not worry about what people say," Malcolm said.

"You feel like a bloody sideshow because you are different, I guess it's that way with all disabilities, but you've just got to ignore it and get on with your life," he said.

While he found the hardest part was coping with fiddly

things such as doing up shoelaces and fastening buttons, he finished his butchery apprenticeship at 18 and went upcountry breaking horses and working at a mustering camp, followed by a stint catching scrub bulls.

He moved onto commercial fishing before he returned to start farming in his mid-20s.

He had learned the fundamentals of farming from a man who was like a foster father after his dad died.

From him Malcolm learned horsemanship, cattle and sheep handling, wool classing, driving tractors and how to class an animal before it is on the hook.

The training, however, did not include vegetable growing and yet that is what he and Samadhi had to turn to when the farm hit hard times.

"It has grown from vegetables to lamb to catering..."

"Our farm is very small and it's hard to really make it work through the mainstream because there's so many variables and nothing's guaranteed, your margins are not stable," Samadhi said.

"We started off 13 years ago growing some vegetables because we were broke, so we started growing vegetables and supplying local restaurants," Malcolm added.

"We set ourselves a goal to grow \$100 worth of vegetables a week, we succeeded in doing that and it's grown from vegetables to lamb to catering to the butcher shop," he said.

Samadhi started cooking commercially, winning clientele with her curries using the home-grown meats, all sold through farmers' markets and a commercial food truck.

She has diversified into lamb-and-gravy rolls, cheesecakes and brownies and outside catering.

Canadian-born Samadhi is a dab hand at pivoting.

Holding a Degree in Fine Arts and also studying criminology, she had come to Australia to attend a WA university.

She found her happy place – and the bloke to share it with.

“She’ll have a go at anything, I don’t think any of this would have happened without her,” Malcolm said.

For the past 12 years he has been running Lowline Dexter cattle.

“I think it’s the perfect meat because the animals don’t grow too big and you can mature them, the end result is a lot of marbling and it’s mature-tasting beef,” Malcolm said.

However, the animal that has really made the business hum is the sheep, the merino that gives some wool income, along with cross-breeds for meat.

The couple is committed to regenerative farming and are proud of their grass-fed animals.

“Once people have tasted grass-fed meat they appreciate the difference,” said Malcolm.

About five years ago, the pair went into meat supply, getting the animals custom-killed at their closest available abattoir, Dardanup Butchering Company in Picton, and then processing the bodies themselves.

“When this shop came up I grabbed it...”

“It went along pretty well until COVID hit, that stopped us processing and put us in a hiatus for two years,” said Malcolm.

“We moved back to the butcher, but they had a labour shortage so then we were blocked there as well,” he said.

“When the border opened and things went a bit haywire, we were in a situation where the butcher couldn’t take the work anymore and nobody else in the area could do it for us,” Samadhi added.

“It wasn’t just labour shortages, it was also skills shortages, there weren’t people trained-up to fill the jobs.

“After a few months we thought ‘we’re going to have to take some action here’,” she said.

A former café with a small commercial kitchen came up for lease in Denmark.

“I said I really need a commercial kitchen and Malcolm said ‘what are you going to do with the rest of the shop? There’s a lot of space’,” Samadhi recalled.

After deciding he could put in a cool room, the pair took up the shop lease and fitted it out with a small processing room, installing a cool room, a band saw, mincer and Cryovac.

“When this shop came up I grabbed it because it’s the last link in the chain to take it from farm to fork,” Malcolm said.

“It feels really good, I think that’s one piece of the puzzle that I never got to achieve, to have my own shop,” he said.



Opening a retail outlet completed the ‘farm to fork’ operation

The business operates as a click-and-collect model with customers ordering and paying online.

Running the farm left little time for a full-time retail shop, Samadhi runs the shop as a retail outlet on Fridays and Saturday mornings only.

“This way we can start whenever we want and we can knock off earlier for me to get out to the farm and to attend to things out there,” Malcolm said.

They are doing 10 to 15 lambs and two bodies of beef a week.

They deliver to Albany once a fortnight and also send orders to Perth.

“Because we’re not open all the time people have trouble adjusting, we’re not full retail and so the thing works a little differently,” Samadhi said.

“We try to get people to pre-order because then we know where we’re at and what the flow is,” she said.

“Don’t be rigid, go with the flow...”

The pair plans to offer processing services to other farmers in the future.

But, for now, they have branched out from bulk packs to smaller packages and a range of sausages and by-products such as bones and even tallow for skin cream.

“So, we’ve been able to stretch it out a bit more and value-add and also make better use of the full carcass,” Samadhi said.

“It’s been really amazing for Malcolm because of all those years of farming, he’d never had any feedback about his product, then, all of a sudden, people were ringing him up and saying ‘Nice, I don’t know what you’re doing, but keep doing it, best lamb we’ve ever eaten’.

“It was really beautiful for him to receive that gratification and we thought ‘maybe this does work’,” she said.

Malcolm Batt, a man who never gives up, has a few tips: “Don’t be too rigid. Just go with the flow.”

And he might like to also suggest – get yourself a Samadhi.

“She knows how to push me in a certain way, she just knows how to get the best out of me,” Malcolm said. ■

APL Looks to the Future

Four years since coming to the top job at Australian Pork Limited (APL), Chief Executive Officer, Ms Margo Andrae, has overseen the pork sector's response in successfully overcoming major challenges in recent times, most notably, with biosecurity and animal welfare issues coming to the fore.

But, for one of the nation's only protein industry female CEO's, the role has not always been about overcoming the challenges with some major strides forward having been accomplished in terms of pork marketing including an overall increase in consumption of pork and a successful drive to have more pork featured on menus in the food service arena.

According to Ms Andrae, the current and future focus of the team at APL and the pork industry includes an expanded view on sustainability through exploring uses for components of the pork carcass in both pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals.

APL is also actively pursuing programmes to secure an expansion in the use of Australian pork in smallgoods manufacturing, a fresh marketing campaign to emphasise pork's versatility as well as the extension of its animal welfare training along the supply chain.

By Stephanie Flynn

A \$24 million organisation, APL is, in the main, an industry funded organisation through slaughter levies with a \$5 million contribution from Government toward its research and development activities.

The pork industry has led the charge on more than a few sustainability and animal welfare accomplishments in recent years having reduced its emissions by 69 percent, its water usage by 80 percent and has been capturing its methane emissions and using it as an energy source on-farm for close to a decade.

The industry's Australian Pig Industry Quality Assurance Program (APIQ®), which includes animal welfare, biosecurity, food safety and traceability governance, covers 90 percent of the pork sector and the Australian pork industry is recognised globally as a world leader in animal welfare standards.

In contrast to other protein industries, the Australian pork industry is almost entirely domestically focused with only 10 percent of its produce exported and 90 percent of its output made available for consumption by Australian consumers.

As African Swine Fever (ASF) spread around the globe and reached Australia's northern-border neighbours, the Australian pork industry went into over-drive and developed stringent biosecurity systems to protect the nation's industry from encroachment from the deadly porcine disease.

APL's efforts in biosecurity have been successful in keeping Australia ASF-free.



*Australian Pork Limited's Chief Executive Officer, Ms Margo Andrae
Photo: Tina Nikolovski*



Pork now features on two out of three menus across the hospitality sector Photo: Frank Yang



A new vaccine to prevent Japanese Encephalitis Virus has been developed and is currently awaiting Government approval

Despite these impressive achievements, the industry found itself a target earlier this year of a campaign by animal rights activists and, last year, was hit hard by an outbreak of Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV) which, according to the official figures from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, devastated some 80 pig producers across four states.

“Extreme behaviour needs to be called out...”

Being on the receiving end of death threats and abuse is not on the job description for any commercial role, but it is exactly what the team at APL and pork producers endured in the recent high-profile campaign by a group of animal rights activists.

Addressing the issue, Ms Andrae said that it was time for the industry to ‘call out’ extreme behaviour particularly when that behaviour crosses a line into personally threatening activities.

“The activists we saw recently, whose ideology is not to have livestock industries in this country, did get very personal, they attacked our farmers, they attacked our team at APL breaking into our offices, they put death threats on social media, they went into abattoirs and attacked the staff in those facilities and put their own lives in danger,” Ms Andrae said.

“I am always the first to say that people have a right to an opinion and what they choose to eat but they do not have a right to bully and intimidate people who are doing the right thing, are in the privileged position of providing people with food and who are genuinely going about doing the best they can do for their people and their animals.

“These activists have no right to do what they did and that behaviour needs to be called out, we need our Governments to recognise that the ideology of these people is actually flawed to the basic principles of providing safe protein to Australians at the highest standards, which is what we are doing,” she said.

But Ms Andrae says the industry has turned its collective mind away from the activists who only comprise some four percent of the population to the 96 percent of Australians who value the agricultural sector and to the important task of keeping the pork industry safe from the considerable biosecurity risks it and other livestock industries face.

“A new JEV vaccine awaits Government approval...”

APL and the pork industry sit in the almost unique position of having experience in both the implementation of biosecurity prevention programmes with ASF and also managing the response to a biosecurity encroachment with last year’s JEV outbreak.

“We have managed to keep ASF out of the country, it has been a unique opportunity to prepare for a biosecurity threat rather than having to respond,” Ms Andrae said.

The experience with ASF allowed APL and the pork industry to respond swiftly when a biosecurity threat did eventuate with the outbreak of JEV in pork production facilities in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

APL, in conjunction with the University of Queensland, has since developed a vaccine for pigs to prevent further outbreaks of JEV and that vaccine is now awaiting Government approval before being rolled out to the industry.

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APL's remit also includes the marketing of pork to Australian consumers and its efforts have resulted in the protein maintaining a modest growth in consumption over the last 12 months.

"We recognised very early on that we have a huge opportunity to reframe how people see the pork industry and its products and we have really focused on how people see the individual cuts, on educating people how to cook pork and to understand the versatility of pork as an ingredient," Ms Andrae said.

"We have seen more and more restaurants, cafes, pubs and clubs using pork across their menus so pork is currently on two out of three menus across the country, which is a big win in terms of the actual consumption of the product," she said.

"Use of Aussie pork in smallgoods is on the rise..."

According to Ms Andrae, there has also been a real shift in the use of Australian pork in smallgoods manufacturing in Australia.

While all fresh pork is Australian grown, imported pork is often used in smallgoods with Australian pork having a much smaller representation.

"Over the last 12 months we have seen that (proportion) grow so we have seen more of these companies actually choosing Australian ingredients in the manufacture of smallgoods, it is a small gain but it is a gain," Ms Andrae said.

Ms Andrae estimates that the use of Australian pork in the manufacture of ham and bacon has seen a four percent growth, up from 20 percent to around 24 percent market share.



Aussie pork is increasingly being used in the manufacture of smallgoods in Australia

APL has been conducting trials to determine the forces driving this shift and, while it has noted that in the geographical areas in which promotion of the use of Australian pork has occurred there has been a direct response of an increase in sales, Ms Andrae says that the trend to use Australian produce is also a contributing factor.

"People are starting to understand the true costs of imported pork and the reliance on cut pork coming from countries that have disease risks, I do hope that it is a genuine move by these companies to invest in Australian pork producers in the longer term," Ms Andrae said.

"Research underway for use of pork's 'fifth quarter'..."

As APL and the pork industry look toward the future, the whole notion of sustainability and the reduction of waste is driving innovation in the use of what Ms Andrae calls 'the fifth quarter', that part of the pig carcass which is currently not utilised.

Opportunities are under development through APL research on the use of pork collagen in nutraceuticals – dietary supplements – as well as in beauty products like face creams and also in applications for the pharmaceutical industry.

While this research and development is in the very early stages, according to Ms Andrae it offers exciting possibilities ahead for the industry.

"We have been working on processes and trials for the extraction of the pure collagen or the pure protein as well as the pure water from our 'fifth quarter', and so far the trials have shown really good results," Ms Andrae said.

"While we do recognise that there would be quite an investment by the industry to implement the infrastructure that would be required for this step, there could be a huge opportunity in the move to whole of carcass utilisation so that there is absolutely no wastage," she said.

Over the next 12 months, APL will be working closely with industry to see what implementation could look like and what infrastructure and scale could be for these extensions.

"New pork advertising campaign on the way..."

Half-way through its five-year plan under which a goal has been to grow the industry at farmgate sustainably by \$1 billion, Ms Andrae says the pork sector is on target to achieve that growth.

APL is currently working on a new public advertising and marketing campaign that is

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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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scheduled to be released into the public domain around March next year.

While its 'Get Some Pork on Your Fork' campaign has become iconic and proven to be highly successful, Ms Andrae says that the new campaign will transition away from the underlying innuendos in response to a change in society's perspective.

"We will still have a 'cheeky' aspect in the campaign but will be moving more toward consumers understanding our product, its nutritional value and the versatility of pork, whether it is having pork mince as an ingredient in dishes like San Choy Bow, or as a roast or chops," Ms Andrae said.

Also for the public domain is APL's future plan to conduct an education campaign to raise consumer awareness around the provenance of smallgoods in respect of Country-of-Origin labelling.

More specifically, to encourage consumers to take extra time to read the labelling more closely in respect of the percentage of Australian ingredients in smallgoods.

APL's early research results from trials in Adelaide show that consumers will look more closely at labelling once they are encouraged to do so.

"Industry careers portal seeks to attract people..."

According to Ms Andrae, animal welfare and handling programmes will continue to be a major focus for the industry over the next 12 months with on-farm training in the care of pigs to be rolled out nationally.

Uptake of welfare and handling training in both export and domestic abattoirs over the last 12 months has been improving and training modules will now be extended through the supply chain to also include those who transport the industry's animals.

As with other protein industry sectors, the pork industry continues to find attracting workers into the industry a major challenge.

APL launched a career portal on its website last year which helps people map out the direction a career might take in the industry or the training needed to reach a particular role.

"We have seen an improvement, particularly through a migration pathway, but we would like to encourage people to see the pork industry as a wonderful opportunity for a career," Ms Andrae said.

"Attracting people to work in rural and regional Australia is a challenge but they are wonderful communities to live in and are located in some wonderful areas of our country.

"There are also a many opportunities in the cities in our industry and a lot of people who live in cities who contribute a great deal to the agricultural sector," Ms Andrae said. ■

Study Unveils Factors for Pork Colour

By Susan Webster

A University of Melbourne researcher is part of an international team that has developed the first proteomics-driven index of pork colour factors.

"The research offers 'significant' potential to ensure consistent and appealing pork colour," said Professor Peter Purslow.

He said the work provides valuable insights into the biochemical processes that determine pork colour.

Collaborating with researchers from France and the US, he said the team created the first repertoire of pork colour biomarkers identified by proteomics – the large-scale study of proteins to understand an organism.

The proteomics insights offer valuable guidance to the pork industry in meeting consumer demands and developing strategies to ensure consistent and visually appealing pork colour.

According to the researchers, the colour of fresh pork is a paramount meat quality attribute and exerts a profound influence on consumer perception.

A pale colour of pork results in a lower intention to purchase by consumers who strongly depend on raw pork meat colour to make purchase choices.

Colour defects in meat are often seen by consumers as indications of spoilage and unwholesomeness.

Understanding the factors that contribute to the variation in pork colour and, according to the research, is of utmost importance to ensure consumer satisfaction.

The study examined different phases of pork production, from breed to gender, diet and age/weight at slaughter as well as the animals' housing and rearing conditions.

Pre-slaughter handling was found to have a strong effect on eventual colour as well as the type of meat cut.

A study of ageing and storage found that packaging/coating had a high impact on eventual meat colour.

The study identified that 83 percent protein biomarkers are related to lightness compared to redness, 37 percent, and yellowness, 28 percent.

The researchers also found that myoglobin, an oxygen-binding protein that gives meat its redness, is not a pivotal player in pork colour stability compared to other species such as beef and lamb.

When it came to retail display, the researchers noted that pork colour has been described to be more desirable when presented under incandescent light in comparison with either cool white or warm white fluorescent. ■

Big Efforts Behind our Aussie Pork

Few realise the extensive efforts that sit behind the production of high-quality Australian pork and the considerable challenges faced by producers. The implementation of state-of-the-art welfare and sustainability systems, on-farm biosecurity procedures as well as the drive to find efficiency gains to keep the price of that 'pork on the fork' affordable for consumers whilst maintaining a high nutritional and quality protein, despite rises in costs of production, are major achievements in anyone's language.

Australian Meat News spoke with the head of one of Victoria's leading outdoor and free-range pork production companies about the systems in place to provide Australians with quality fresh pork, the challenges facing the industry and the opportunities ahead.

By Stephanie Flynn

Mr Cameron Hall assumed the role as Chief Executive Officer of Pastoral Pork Company in May last year bringing with him extensive experience in agri-business services and the red meat industry covering production, international trading, feedlots and live exports.

Pastoral Pork Company has a long history of sustainable pork production and, in the 30 years since its inception, has expanded to encompass four breeding farms and seven locations where its pigs are grown across Victoria for its Otway Pork brand.

The company has two production streams for its Otway brand, one is a full free-range system and the other an outdoor-bred system under which its breeding sows have full access to the outdoors and piglets, once weaned, are raised in large eco shelters with no indoor dividers.

In addition to supplying pigs for its own brand, processed under contract in Victoria, Pastoral Pork Company also sells carcasses on an over-the-hooks basis to a range of wholesalers and other meat companies.

Pastoral Pork Company's key focus moving forward is to continue to expand the level of sales, through the brand, both in Victoria and into other states.

The company has also vertically integrated its product range to manufacture its Otway brand of smallgoods and exports fresh pork into the Singaporean market.

“Caught between rising costs and retail price constraints...”

According to Mr Hall, the industry is currently facing a number of challenges the rising costs of production being chief among them given that there is a constraint in the ability to raise retail prices for consumers and at the same time increase the consumption levels of pork.



*Mr Cameron Hall, Chief Executive Officer, The Pastoral Pork Company
Photo: Anthony Webster*

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Breeding Sows have full access to the outdoors Photo: Anthony Webster

“I think the costs of production issue is a really interesting one because we have seen costs go up globally through COVID-19 and post, the challenge is always going to be how do producers share that increase in costs with consumers,” Mr Hall said.

“There are always opportunities for research and development and always opportunities to increase our efficiency so it should not be all to the consumer.

“Right through the chain everyone has to work smarter and more effectively together to try and limit how much everyone’s costs continue to increase but, the cost increases cannot always fall solely at the feet of producers.

“As an industry, there probably is room for an increase in the retail price of pork but the challenge is ensuring both affordability and trying to increase levels of consumption at the same time.

“There is a clear price differential that we see through our brand compared to a commodity product and we know our customers are willing to pay a higher price for a high-quality branded product.

“Consumers still do not consider pork really as an every day meal, I think there is a price sensitive retail point,” Mr Hall said.

“Consumer interest in how food is produced is growing...”

Mr Hall is of the view that the general community and consumers have a far greater interest now than they ever have before around how their food is produced and the integrity of the systems under which their food is produced, a trend he sees as growing.

His view is supported by the latest global agricultural outlook released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in which it is projected that

consumers’ environmental and animal welfare concerns are expected to change the face of global meat trade over the next decade.

Pastoral Pork’s production systems have been developed to encompass both the welfare of its animals and also a broad view of what sustainability means.

The company has chosen to raise animals for its outdoor production system on slightly poorer and sandy soil types which are then improved over a number of years with the pigs’ manure adding nitrogen and phosphorous.

A three-year rotation system has been adopted whereby the pigs are removed to an alternative location and the country is remediated then entered into a cropping and pasture phase for at least six years which draws out the additional nutrients.

The straw from the Farrowing huts and shelters is also utilised in the soil remediation as a compost adding to the water-holding capacity of the soil.

Pastoral Pork then purchases grain grown on the land for its production system to be used as feed.

“Everyone is focused on zero carbon but zero carbon in a livestock sense looks very different to zero carbon in a manufacturing or community sense,” Mr Hall said.

“We, as part of the agricultural industry, have a vital part to play in reducing emissions by growing crops, pastures and trees that use and sequester carbon whilst also producing food for consumption.

“Reducing carbon and methane levels are important, equally important, however, is the sustainability of the land that we use, the water that we use and the environment in which we grow our food source.

“So, to me it is not one or the other, it has to be a balance around leaving the soils in a better way than we found them and being able to significantly reduce the levels of synthetic

fertilisers that we use through our production systems, these all contribute to the total picture,” he said.

In addition to animal welfare and sustainability practices, on-farm biosecurity systems are also a major focus of our pork producers on a day-to-day basis and, while adding additional costs to production, are seen as vital given the potential impact of a disease incursion as we have seen in recent times with the outbreak of Japanese Encephalitis across four states.

Pastoral Pork’s biosecurity systems are extensive and cover anyone and everything entering its farms as well as its own staff members who are required to quarantine before returning to work if they have travelled overseas to at risk locations.

“Industry awaits details of new biosecurity levy...”

According to Mr Hall, all livestock producers including pork producers are waiting to see the details of the Government’s latest move to impose a biosecurity levy on the sector.

The proposed levy, announced in this year’s Federal Budget, is intended to be imposed on producers as of 1 July next year to collect \$50 million annually as a cost recovery mechanism toward the \$1.03 billion in funding allocated to the nation’s biosecurity surveillance system over the next four years.

“We are looking with keen interest at how the rates will be set across the various parts of agriculture but also around how people travelling to high-risk countries are also going to contribute to cover some of that risk,” Mr Hall said.

“I think industry does have a role to play, however, within the pork production sector there are no pigs imported into Australia, we cannot import live genetics, the biggest risk of introducing a significant disease into the pork production sector, or for that matter into agriculture in general, comes with people and, generally, with inbound or outbound tourists,” he said.

While overcoming these challenges are an integral part of the day-to-day life of our pork producers, Mr Hall also sees opportunities ahead for the sector including increasing its exports of fresh pork, most notably, to markets in south east and central Asia.

Mr Hall says that while, historically, the industry has operated within a tight window of production, if it were to see strong market signals from both the domestic market, through consumption patterns, and through demand for export markets the industry is well placed increase production.

“We are seeing some increase in these signals, the issues that we saw in the Singaporean market with ASF have created some additional opportunities for Australian pork producers and marketers of pork to be able to supply more tonnages into Singapore,” Mr Hall said.



Animal welfare and sustainability are cornerstones of the company’s operations Photo: Anthony Webster

“The greatest opportunity for Australian fresh pork is certainly into south east and central Asia but both North American and European producers see those regions as significant opportunities as well.

“While our costs of production in Australia have created an impediment to exports in terms of cost competitiveness compared to Europe in the past, there are changes in many European countries now that are impacting agricultural and food production.

“The significant water around Australia acts as a natural barrier and benefits agriculture, but that distance does have a cost in terms of being able to freight our products competitively and economically into the importing countries,” he said.

According to Mr Hall, Australia’s Free Trade Agreements are important in that they provide the underlying strength of trading relationships that allow the development of commercial partnerships by the nation’s pork producers to export their products. ■

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Consumer Concerns Drive Global Change

Consumer concerns about human health, environmental impacts and animal welfare are expected to become the major determinants of changes in meat consumption over the coming decade according to the latest Global Agricultural Trends and Prospects Outlook 2022 to 2032 released in July.

The Outlook, a collaborative effort by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), looks ahead to project key changes in global meat consumption trends, trade and demand.

According to the Outlook, disposable income is no longer the major determinant of changes in meat consumption globally, instead, concerns around health, environment and animal welfare are and will continue to be the major motivations prompting consumers to shift demand among meat products and reductions in overall demand for meat.

Poultry is expected to be the big winner from the growing global trend in consumer concerns around these issues and, by 2032, is projected to grow by 15 percent and account for 41 percent of the protein consumed from all meat sources.

Recognised by consumers as having the least carbon footprint, poultry meat is expected to continue to be substituted for beef and pork most notably in the European Union where per capita meat consumption has been shrinking for some time.

Poultry is expected to be the main driver of the expected per capita increase in global meat consumption which is projected to rise two percent over the decade.

Growing concerns about the environmental impact of beef production in terms of perceived Greenhouse Gas emissions and deforestation caused by land-use are expected to drive a reduction in per capita beef consumption in most regions around the world with North America and Oceania (Australasia/Pacific Islands) regions projected to see the most significant decrease over the decade.

But per capita consumption of beef in the Asia Pacific region is expected to record an increase of 0.4kg per year retail weight and be the major driver of the worldwide growth of 10 percent in consumption of beef over the decade.

Beef consumption in China, the world's second largest beef consumer, is also expected to increase by 0.8 percent per year retail weight due, in part, to a growing middle class which has increased its demand for meat including beef.

Global pork consumption is expected to grow by 11 percent over the decade and be the second largest contributor to total growth in meat consumption.



The OECD/FAO Outlook expects consumer concerns to drive major changes in meat consumption globally over the decade ahead

The contribution of sheep meat consumption to total protein from meat is projected to remain stable and, worldwide, consumption is expected to grow 15 percent over the decade.

While the structure of global meat markets in recent years was affected by a significant decline in the consumption of pork as a consequence of the outbreak of African Swine Fever in China, the Outlook projects its per capita consumption to return to pre-outbreak levels.

The OECD/FAO projections foresee slower growth in global meat trade as domestic supplies rise in importing countries and, most notably for Australian exporters, the decade will see an ongoing reduction in China's meat imports.

Rising domestic production in Vietnam and Latin American countries will also result in a dampening of growth in imports in the medium-term.

According to the Outlook, Australia and Türkiye are expected to record the most significant increase in world meat exports globally.

In terms of demand, the OECD/FAO anticipate downward pressure on the growth of meat demand in the early years of the projection period as a consequence of the dampening effect of inflation.

High and rising consumer costs and weak income growth are expected to see consumers shift spending to limit the overall purchase of meat instigating a shift toward cheaper meats and cuts as well as reduced out-of-home food expenditures. ■

Headline Results Show Progress

A recently released report on the red meat industry's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, based on a study conducted in 2020 by the CSIRO, has given the industry feedback on its progress toward reducing its GHG footprint.

While the report clearly shows that the red meat industry has reduced its GHG emissions by 64.9 percent compared to the reference year of 2005, according to the CSIRO the exclusion of a range of factors in the supply chain from the calculations needs to be rectified to give a more accurate account of the industry's emissions.

The CSIRO has made some key recommendations for future calculations that would provide the industry with a clearer picture on progress toward its target of Carbon Neutral by 2030 (CN30).

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) released the CSIRO study 'Greenhouse Gas Footprint of the Australian Meat Production and Processing Sectors 2020' in June this year.

The study provides an updated account of GHG emissions for beef cattle, sheep meat and goats based on the 2020 Australian National GHG Inventory, which represents the Australian Government's submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Under the study, emissions were attributed to the industry based on animal numbers, feed intake, livestock processed and resource use.

Some of the headline results show the red meat industry has made headway since 2005 when it contributed 23.5 percent of national emissions, by 2020, that contribution had fallen to 10.3 percent.

Further, the rate of reductions in emissions achieved by the red meat industry has surpassed the rate achieved by the overall Australian economy.

The majority of the industry's GHG emissions reduction, however, was achieved by vegetation management.

According to the study, production system GHG emissions such as those related to enteric fermentation, agricultural soils and manure management now dominate the emissions profile of the industry.

The single largest source of emissions at 78.8 percent of total emissions is enteric fermentation, the digestive processes of ruminants, the by-product of which is methane.

GHG emissions emitted by the industry include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, all of which contribute to climate change.

In 2020, the total GHG emissions attributed to the red meat industry were 51.25 Mega tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and represented a 6.4 percent decrease on emissions in 2019 which, according to the study, was in the main attributable to reductions in livestock numbers at that time.

Grazing and land management accounted for more than 90 percent of these emissions while feedlot production contributed 5.8 percent of total emissions and processing 2.1 percent.

The CSIRO report has provided a clear breakdown of what it is at the core of the emissions attributed to the industry:

- Enteric fermentation;
- Manure Management;
- Agricultural soils both direct and indirect soil emissions from grasslands and the fraction of croplands used to support the production of feedlot rations;
- Field burning of agricultural (crop) residues;
- Liming and urea applications;
- Electricity and fuel use on farms, in feedlots and in processing; and
- Land use and land use change (LULUCF) relating to cropland, grassland and forest land available for grazing.

It has also clearly noted that key activities, which are considerable contributors of GHG emissions in the industry, have been excluded from the calculations including those associated with the domestic transport of livestock as well as the export of live animals and meat products.

Also excluded from the calculations are the production of crops used to feed animals outside feedlots as well as the manufacture and transport of fertilisers and other farming inputs. ■

New Tech Predicting Pre-slaughter Characteristics

By Susan Webster

Ultrasound and microwave measurements are proving reliable indicators of carcase characteristics in cattle as early as 168 days.

Australian scientists are reporting that ultrasound-scanning long-fed, feedlot cattle early in their lives offers good accuracy at predicting marbling while those using microwave are reporting good accuracy measuring rump fat and tissue depth.

A research team from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, University of New England and Massey University has been using ultrasound to measure carcase intramuscular fat (IMF), subcutaneous fat and eye muscle area in northern-type steers.

“Prediction of marbling in the carcase was stronger by using ultrasound measurement of IMF in younger, post-weaned cattle than in older, post-weaned cattle,” the researchers reported.

The study took ultrasound measurements at six stages of growth and carcase measurements at five stages from weaning to long-feedlotting.

The researchers reported that IMF ultrasound scans 168 days post-weaning were more strongly correlated with marbling than scans at any other stage of development.

They found that rump fat depth was the trait offering the best and most consistent accuracy across all stages of life for both ultrasound and carcase measurements.

“Earlier in life, ultrasound predictions have potential for significant improvements in compliance with market specifications and overall efficiency of beef production systems,” said, lead Investigator, Dr Tharcilla Alvarenga.

Other researchers involved in the study were Amelia Almeida, Malcolm McPhee, Jason P. Siddell, Brad Walmsley, Paul Greenwood and Matt Wolcott.

Meanwhile, a Murdoch University study is using microwave to measure carcase composition of live feeder cattle.

Supported by Meat and Livestock Australia, the study undertaken by Murdoch University’s Advanced Livestock Measurement (ALM) Technologies programme is undergoing accreditation trials in an NSW feedlot to measure fat on the rump area.

“The aim is to streamline costs and better-meet market specifications,” said ALM Tech’s chief investigator, Dr Graham Gardner.

“Using this device to measure fat and tissue depth is far more

accurate than relying on the human-provided score.

“While it was ‘slightly less accurate’ than dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), it was significantly cheaper.

“And, it doesn’t require the space needed for DEXA, which is often limited in processing plants,” he said.

The microwave system measures fat depth at a single point in live animals and carcasses to predict carcase composition and lean meat yield.

Fat depth helps determine time for slaughter and is currently based on subjective measurement by visual or palpated estimate.

Ultra-wide band microwave measurement is instantaneous and requires no specific operator training.

It is non-invasive, unlike DEXA, the low power frequency poses no health risk to living or dead tissues.

NSW Angus feedlot operator, Michael Hughes, hopes processors will also reap the benefits of the handheld technology.

“If we’re not sending animals over that ideal 10–15mm fat measurement, processors will minimise the waste they create in the boning room through trimming,” Mr Hughes said.

“Not only will this mean it takes less time to process the carcase, but they will also get more premium product,” he said.

He is trialling the device on his feeder cows in an effort to boost feed efficiency and carcase performance.

“At the moment, we’re mainly using it to measure fat on the P8 (rump) of our feeder cows,” Mr Hughes said.

“Our feedlot is unique in that we’re putting older cows on feed for 60 days before turning them off, so we get cows coming into the feedlot in various conditions, from store condition to quite fat.

“We want to use the system to work out what body fat the animal is carrying at the time of entry, so we can tailor their feed ration.

“The system itself is very quick and simple – we just touch the device on the animal’s body when they come into the crush and pull the trigger to take the fat measurement,” he said.

Having this measure of carcase composition ahead of time could prove the key to streamlining costs and helping meet market specifications. ■

Castle Estate Abattoir Primed for New Owners

Ten years after Camperdown's boutique abattoir was commissioned on farmland in Koallah, Victoria, the service-based meat processor has officially gone on the market.

A commitment to continual diversification over the past decade has seen the family-owned facility grow from beef, lamb, goat and pork processing, to buffalo, alpaca and llamas and, more recently, wild game including kangaroo, venison and rabbit.

Managing Director, Mr Steven Castle, said the accreditation and licensing required had been a mammoth undertaking which culminated with the business recently celebrating Tier 2 Export status for both human and pet food.

Castle Estate is one of Victoria's three abattoirs licensed to process organically certified beef and lamb and the state's only organic certified pork processor.

"Our abattoir now processes Australia's widest range of species, so the flexibility that offers along with the plant's

capabilities means the opportunities are wide ranging," Mr Castle said.

"Castle Estate is vertically integrated from paddock to plate and is supported by a modern e-commerce platform, as well as petfood production and pet treat manufacturing capabilities.

"The decision to offer the abattoir to potential buyers comes with a sense of pride, the hard work is done and our family is ready to see the fruit of that labour continue under new ownership," he said.

Mr Castle said the family was vested in finding a buyer who would benefit from the opportunities the facility offered that larger abattoirs could not.

Castle Estate is located on the banks of Lake Purrumbete and consists of both the abattoir processing facility and 700 acres of prime agricultural land with an active dairy operation. ■

A Mountain of Supply

Australia's sheep, cattle and goat markets are being impacted by exceedingly high production numbers, compounded by already large volumes of meat in congested supply chains, according to agricultural analysts at Rabobank.

"For the sheep sector particularly, there is effectively a mountain of supply at the moment following two extremely good seasons where plentiful rainfall and strong prices had seen a large rebuild of the national flock," RaboResearch Associate Analyst, Mr Edward McGeoch, said.

According to Mr McGeoch, this supply is now flooding the market, with near-record volumes of lamb and sheep being turned-off for slaughter as drier seasonal conditions impact parts of the country.

It's a similar story with goat, where historically-high numbers are also hitting the market.

Mr Angus Gidley-Baird, Rabobank's Senior Animal Proteins Analyst, noted that while cattle slaughter numbers have not reached the same near-record highs as sheep and goat, they had tracked 16 percent up year-on-year for quarter two.

At the same time, there are already high inventories of meat in the system, which still need to be cleared from the supply chain.

Two Key Factors

Two key factors are impacting the livestock markets at the moment.

"The first is the numbers of livestock that are out there – in particular, we think the number of sheep has been underestimated – and what that means in terms of the volumes that we've got coming into the market," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

"The second is the volumes of stock already in the system.

"A lot of markets – particularly Asian markets – had bought up big through the end of last year and early this year, in the expectation of coming out of COVID-19 and the recovery of food services and increased consumer expenditure, but a lot of those stocks have not been moved.

"The consumption recovery hasn't eventuated due to poor economic growth, cost-of-living pressures leading to subdued consumer demand and lower-than-expected export growth.

"So, processors at the moment have got this mountain of livestock coming at them, which is trying to be forced into a very congested supply chain," he said. ■

Food Waste Recycling Enabled

An Australian company has developed technology to remove untreated food waste from the environment, converting it into high-value animal feed and, at the same time, incentivising businesses to run recycling facilities at a profit.

Based in New South Wales, Food Recycle, has developed a process to divert food waste away from landfill and compost sites with its biosecurity process step and production facility process protocols designed by biosecurity specialist, Dr Ron Glanville.

Dr Glanville was the recipient of David Banks Biosecurity Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020 after a career of over four decades working in animal health in Australia, including the positions of Chief Biosecurity Officer, Chief Veterinary Officer and Chief Inspector of Stock for Queensland.

“The reasons I am involved as a consultant at Food Recycle is to address the huge amount of food waste in our culture and, importantly, the project reduces the risk of disease

by ensuring that food waste is treated properly,” Dr Glanville said.

Feral pigs, numbers of which have been estimated at up to 30 million in Australia, inhabit 45 percent of the nation’s land mass.

The animals are hazardous to livestock and the natural environment with common food sources being food at landfill dump sites and food waste that is being composted.

Food waste can contain contaminated animal products that may not be safe for feeding to domestic or feral livestock and can spread diseases even if the food has been cooked or frozen.

The biggest risk is that feral pigs may get infected with Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) or African Swine Fever (ASF).

Animal food that contains or has been in contact with meat products or meat by-products is known as swill and swill feeding is prohibited in Australia.

“Given the difficulties in enforcing swill feeding regulations and maintaining barriers around potential

waste food sources for feral pigs, any mechanism that removes this untreated waste food from the environment, will bring significant improvements to Australia’s biosecurity,” Dr Glanville said.

According to Mr Nathan Boyle, Chief Operating Officer for Food Recycle, the food waste is treated for all major biosecurity threats as part of the patented recycling process developed by the company.

“Food Recycle processes each food waste stream separately and stores them as ingredients,” Mr Boyle said.

“We measure the nutritional and amino acid profile of each ingredient and then mix them together to make complete feeds for both livestock and aquaculture.

“Animal feed is serious business and we use exacting science and reputable institutions to vet everything we do,” he said.

One of the studies was managed by the University of New England in collaboration with Poultry Hub.

The 40-week feed trial on layer hens was conducted using a high food waste-based diet with feed provided by Food Recycle.

Egg quality and hen health were monitored with the study demonstrating the advantages of waste-based feed for laying hens.

Performance was improved with the food waste-based diets while egg production and quality remained largely unchanged.

Food Recycle has been heavily focused on research and development since its inception, with its technology now being implemented in Australia and New Zealand, the company is currently focused on licensing opportunities in the international market. ■



Feral pigs inhabit 45 percent of Australia’s land mass and are a biosecurity risk for the entry of animal diseases

An Issue of Trust

Food fraud is a lucrative industry selling fake or misleading food products to consumers and it's on the rise – from meat and seafood to dairy – not even herbs are safe from food fraud.

Food fraud costs the Australian economy \$3 billion every year, according to a report from AgriFutures Australia.

As the food and beverage supply chain become increasingly globalised, geopolitical and environmental factors put increasing pressure on the availability of raw ingredients – creating more opportunities for fraudsters to get away with it.

Food microbiologist, Associate Professor Julian Cox from University of NSW (UNSW) School of Chemical Engineering, says the practice not only tarnishes consumer trust but it can pose as a food safety risk too.

“Consumers are left in the dark when producers substitute ingredients that could potentially cause adverse health reactions,” Associate Professor Cox said.

“Whether it’s buying honey or olive oil at the supermarket or going to a high-end restaurant and ordering expensive Wagyu steak, consumers expect to get what we pay for,” he said.

According to Associate Professor Cox, it’s hard, or even impossible, for the consumer to know what is real and what is fake.

“Typically, we don’t question the product we’re buying because we put trust in something as fundamental as the food supply chain,” Associate Professor Cox said.

According to Associate Professor Cox, there are six types of food fraud practices that are prevalent in the food industry: mislabelling, adulteration, substitution, counterfeiting, dilution and concealment.

Adulteration occurs when fraudsters contaminate food by adding other substances to it, for example, adding sugar syrup to honey to lower cost.

An example of concealment is when products are marketed as ‘organic’ or ‘halal’ but are not, yet more is charged for it.

Other incidents of food fraud also involve making claims about the product’s country of origin, making false claims about how the product was made, misrepresenting the product’s nutritional qualities, and misrepresenting the weight of the food.

“You can pick almost any commodity, any food or beverage, and you can almost guarantee that products within that category have been tampered with somewhere along the supply chain – even if it’s in the labelling and claiming to be from a specific region of the world,” said Associate Professor Cox.

“Currently, the vast majority of food recalls in Australia are due to issues with allergens,” he said. ■

Time to Apply for 2024

Applications are open for 2024 for students wanting to study culinary arts and hospitality at Charles Darwin University’s (CDU) Palmerston campus.

The Culinary Arts and Hospitality course offerings include Certificate Level qualifications in meat processing and butchery as well as commercial cookery, baking and hospitality management.

Students studying the Certificate courses are able to upskill to a Diploma of Hospitality Management which requires the completion of 11 core and 17 elective subjects and takes two years to complete on a full-time basis.

According to Mr Rajimoh Sabod, Lecturer and Work Assessor for the course at CDU, the Diploma studies provide a combination of on-campus and work experience training.

“The Diploma studies provide the technical skills and knowledge for students to become competent in skilled operations and team leading in the sector,” Mr Sabod said.

“The on-campus training includes practical activities in a simulated work environment at our Karawa Training Restaurant where course participants prepare the food, cook and run the front-of-house operations and this forms an integral part of their assessment,” he said.

The Karawa Training restaurant is open to the public during each semester and offers three course a la carte meals as well as buffets.

So popular is the restaurant that there is a waiting list for each night that it operates.

The course components are also offered in remote regions such as the Tiwi Islands and Jabiru where Indigenous students are brought into a central commercial operation for training modules.

The delivery of course components in regional Northern Territory is providing commercial operations with the ability to source staff in their local regions. ■



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NOVEMBER
2023

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

When you have found all the words in the list, there will be 13 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 1 March 2024.

For last issue's winners, see page 31

R	S	L	R	S	N	O	I	T	A	T	N	A	L	P	T
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|---------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------|
| TEST KITCHENS | LION SHEEP | POLLEN | OYSTERS | NEW YEAR |
| LIBERATED | HALAL | PINES | SUSTAINABILITY | DEN |
| YES OR NO | FLAXSEED | STARS | SPRING CLEAN | SUN |
| PLUM PUDDING | HUMAN TOUCH | IMAGINED | RIDE THE WAVES | TENTS |
| SMILE | RUSTIC | PLANTATIONS | TREATS | HAY |
| INSECTS | MIDDLE PATHWAY | GOOD OR BAD | REUSE | BONUS |
| SWINGS & ROUNDABOUT | FLOWERS | HORSERADISH | HAPPY | SHARES |
| | REAL | SINGING | DICE | |

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‘Charcuterie’

Author: Ferrandi School of Culinary Arts, Paris

Publisher: Flammarion

If you are thinking of entering next year’s Australian Charcuterie Awards, then this comprehensive cookbook, *Charcuterie*, by the famed French school of culinary arts, Ferrandi Paris, is just the book needed to learn the skills of the art.

Ferrandi Paris was created a Century ago as a hospitality school and, today, boasts 40 technical kitchens and four training restaurants over five campuses.

It is recognised globally for its level of excellence in culinary arts and has been the training ground for many distinguished chefs in the industry today.

This book by Ferrandi provides a complete cooking course in Charcuterie and includes sausages, pâtés, terrines, savory pies, and much, much more.

The book is a great resource for anyone who wants to learn the essential kitchen skills for 35 culinary techniques such as making sausages, tying a roast with twine, deboning fish, creating puff pastry, pickling vegetables and more.

It contains more than 200 step-by-step instructions that explain these techniques in detail.

Opening with a chapter covering the essentials of Charcuterie, the book then covers the equipment needed for the journey before heading into the detailed techniques.

The book also contains 70 traditional to innovative recipes that are organised by category: pies, tarts, pâtés and terrines, rillettes and pulled meats and fish, stuffed dishes and cooked Charcuterie.

Some of the recipes include Beef Wellington, Pork Rillettes using pork belly, Blood Sausages, Serrano Ham Croquettes, Braised Ham, and Chicken Ballotine as well as Duck and Mushroom Terrine and Rabbit Terrine with Dried Fruit Chutney.

Overall, *Charcuterie* by Ferrandi is an excellent cookbook that provides all the technical and gourmet expertise around the art of Charcuterie.

The book is well-organised with clear instructions that are easy to follow.

The recipes are delicious and range from traditional to innovative and is highly recommend to anyone who wants to learn how to prepare Charcuterie dishes like a pro.

This stylish, quality hard cover book is available through major book sellers online at a recommended retail price of \$49.99. ■

WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win ‘Charcuterie’ by Ferrandi School of Culinary Arts, Paris (\$49.99).

Answer the question below.

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

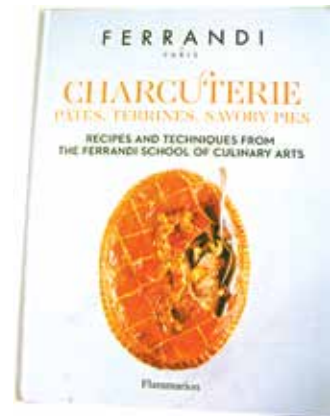
Australian Meat News Book Competition

Email: athol@ausmeatnews.com.au (preferred)

Or by post: PO Box 415, Richmond VIC 3121

Question: *Who was recognised for his service to the smallgoods industry in this year’s Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards?*

Entries Close: 1 March, 2024



Book Competition Winner

Congratulations to Greg Behrendt, who won the copy of *GUGA, Breaking the Barbecue Rules* by Gustavo Tosta. Greg operated Gregs Tender Joint, located in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne but has retired since reading the August edition of AMN!

Thanks for entering our competition, enjoy the book and enjoy your retirement.



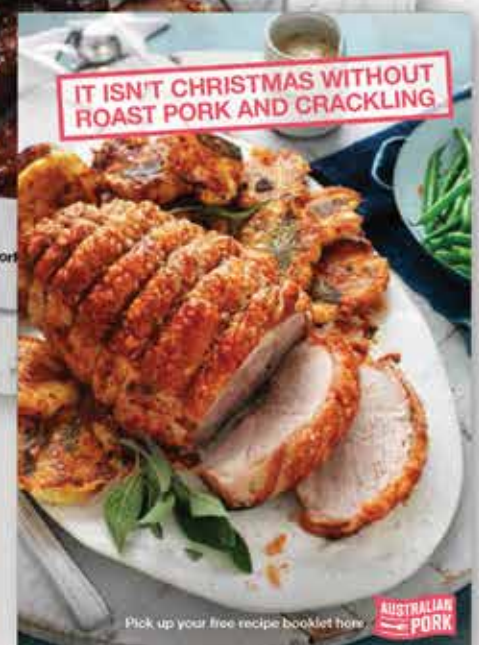
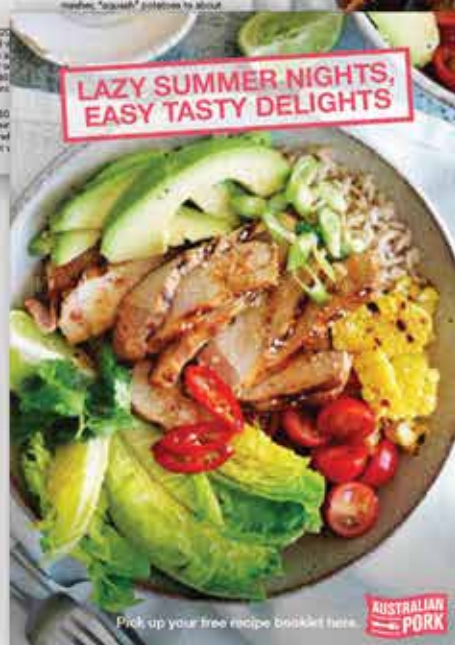
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