

AUSTRALIAN **Meat** **News**

VOLUME 14 | NUMBER 5 | NOVEMBER 2016

Duck – red meat or poultry?
Food truck – a mobile meat promo
ACCC reports on processors



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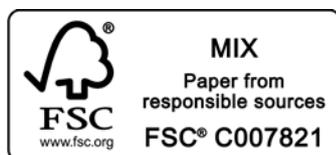
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Australian Steelers compete in international butchery battle



The Aussie Steelers team competed for the World Butchers Competition against New Zealand, England and newcomers, France. From L to R are Adam, Paul, Michael, Nick, Tom and Colin

In an impressive cutting showdown, France has taken out the World Butchers' Challenge for the first time.

Our national butchery team, the Australian Steelers, battled hard in an intense three hour test match against the best butchers from the UK, France and New Zealand however, France had the cutting edge on the day.

Despite the loss, Team Captain, Michael James says he is incredibly proud and overwhelmed by the effort put in by the team.

"Each and every member of our team worked extremely hard today and I know we have plenty to be proud of. We certainly stepped up our game and I'm positive the result was a close one," says James.

"We've shown the world, not to mention our own industry, just what we're capable of and I'm extremely proud of the guys."

Each team had three hours to turn a side of beef, pork and a whole lamb into value-added cuts which were displayed and judged against each other.

Australian judge, Trevor Saville said the Australian Steelers were unlucky on the day as the top spot was only narrowly missed out on. "The competition was extremely close, especially between the French and the Aussies. They were so close but the French proved themselves to show innovation and creativity above all others," says Saville.

The 2016 Australian Steelers, sponsored by Australian Pork, are:

- Tom Bouchier, Peter Bouchier Butchers of Distinction, VIC
- Paul Brady, Tender Gourmet Butchery Macquarie, NSW
- Nick Dagg, The Heights Boutique Butchery, QLD
- Colin Garrett, Colin's Butchery, NSW
- Adam Stratton, Tender Gourmet Butchery Hornsby, NSW
- Michael James, Carina North Quality Meats, QLD (Captain)

The competition began in 2011 as a Trans-Tasman Test Match with Australia taking home the title in the first two consecutive years. This is the first year France has competed in the World Butchers' Challenge. ■

Medico and estate agent win salami crown

Two friends who bonded over their love of salami-making were crowned the 2016 salami champions at the 5th Melbourne Salami Festa.

Michael Sanz, a real estate agent from West Footscray, and Josh Butt, a doctor from Brunswick, aka team Saddleback, won the 2016 Judge's Choice Award for the best homemade salami, chosen from a record field of 102 entries from across Australia. Josh and Michael made this year's salami in Inverloch with the help of family to showcase the flavour of their beautiful free range heritage breed pork.

Defending champions Team HomeGrown, led by team captain Barbara Marshall, a duck breeder from Doreen, finished second with a Hungarian style salami. This multicultural team, who met on Facebook, are dedicated to home grown produce, including meat, fish and poultry. They come from different traditions and have all been making their own versions of salami for many years.

Third place went to first-time entrants Forza Puglia, a husband and wife team who have been making salami on and off for more than 20 years, trying many different ingredients and techniques using recipes from the south and north of Italy.

The 2016 People's Choice Award, voted by Festa patrons – who tasted more than 30,000 slices of competition salami – went to 2013 winners and Festa veterans, the Palermo Family who has won a place in the competition for the fifth year running. Second place went to three-time People's Choice champions, the De Fazio Brothers.

The 2016 winner was chosen by a panel of 10 expert judges, including Rosa Mitchell (Rosa's Kitchen & Rosa's Canteen), Frank Camorra (Movida), Adrian Richardson (La Luna Bistro) Massimo Scalas (Salumi Australia), Sam Hurst (Savour & Grace) Tony Nicolini (D.O.C. Group) Cameron Smith (Triple R, Eat it), Leanne Clancey (Food writer), Emily Fuller (Darebin Homemade Food & Wine Festival) and guest nonna and head judge Rita Faranda.

More than 5500 people attended the two-day festival. The event, has helped spark a revival of interest in the art and tradition of salami creating a passionate new breed of foodies as well as traditional families who have been making salami for generations.

The Festa provides home salami makers a unique opportunity to share and compare their prized salami. This year's expanded Festa featured a new Farmer's market, as well as the Grand Salumi Hall showcasing the country's best artisan salumi, demonstrations, workshops and live music and entertainment.

"When we started this competition, we wanted to help celebrate and honour the migrants who brought the tradition here and keep this part of our culture alive. We are amazed



Winner of this year's Salami Festa, Michael Sans with his wife Catherine formed a partnership with a mate, Josh Butt for team Saddleback. Photo courtesy of Brown Shoes Productions.

and proud of how it has grown every year and evolved into this fantastic Melbourne food event," says Festa Founder and Co-Director Carlo Mazzarella.

"It's not just the older generations that are doing it, we have foodies and young people from all backgrounds getting into the tradition, like our winner today, who are doing workshops and experimenting with new flavours, meats and techniques." ■

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Meaty highlights at Fine Food



Fine Food Australia, held in mid September in Melbourne's Exhibition and Convention Centre, brought together more than 1,000 exhibitors – including 61 butchers and attracted more than 25,000 visitors from the food trades across four days. While focused on foods and food preparation systems, there was plenty of interest for those in the meat industry. While at Fine Food the following caught our eye.

LAMHAM

Lamham is a great example of value-adding. Lamham is cured, smoked and flavoured lamb. Merino breeders from Longreach, Queensland Andrew and Maree King, developed Lamham as an add-on to their online, gate-to-plate sheep meat business. On their website you can buy a 2.7kg boneless leg of Lambham for \$138.00 or \$51.00 per kg. Typically, sliced Lamham retails for about \$90/kg.

www.lamham.com.au

DRY AGED MUTTON

Another sheep meat value-add product is Dry Aged Merino Mutton from Moojepin Farm, near Katanning WA. During the last 20 years, David, Susan and Hamish Thompson through modern breeding techniques, have developed a robust, easy care, high fertility Merino sheep with a capacity to marble and lay down sub-cutaneous fat. Ewes aged three to five years (at least 1,000 days of age which is normally described as Hogget and Mutton) are used for their dry aged product. Whole carcasses are dry aged for 21 days are offered for sale whole or in cuts. A whole carcass typically retails for \$10/kg and Backstraps for \$40/kg.

www.moonjepin.com

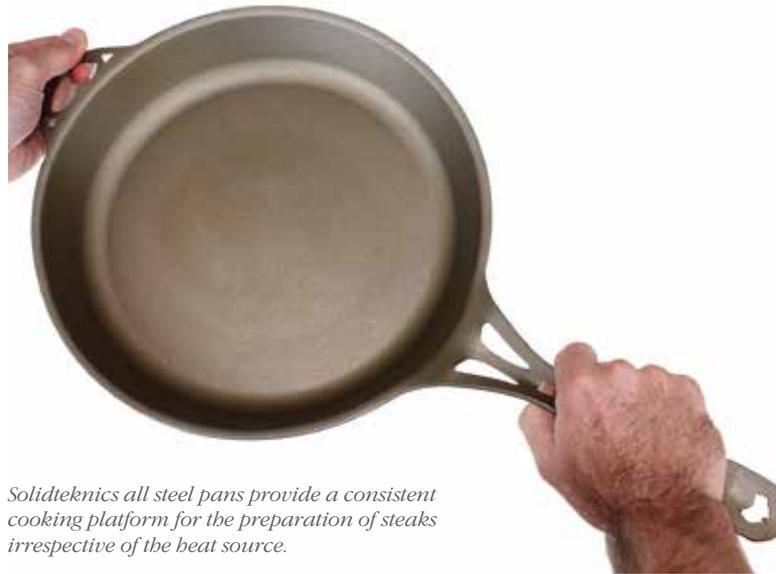
FAILSAFE FRY PAN

While you might be selling the best meat in the world, have you ever wondered if your customers have the cooking smarts to realise the potential of your steaks?

Unfortunately, a perfectly sensible set of cooking instructions does not always work given the multitude of pans, grillers and stoves that adorn suburban kitchens, not to mention peoples' understanding of temperatures, time and when it is rare, medium or well done.

But there is hope, Solidteknics have developed a pan that can help ensure your customers achieve quality outcomes and you and your steaks realise the credit you deserve.

Solidteknics have developed a range of one-piece, rivet free, formed-iron pans. While having the characteristics of a traditional cast iron pan, particularly the capacity to hold heat and season, Solidteknics pans are much lighter and the unique vented handle limits heat transfer.



Solidteknics all steel pans provide a consistent cooking platform for the preparation of steaks irrespective of the heat source.

They work equally well on induction, gas, ceramic, halogen and electric stoves – in the oven and on the barbeque or open fire.

Pans range in size from 16cm to 32cm diameter. The range includes skillets, dishes and slotted flaming skillet for open fire cooking. They are made in Australia from Australian materials. They will last at least one lifetime.

So how does this value add the meat you sell? If you know your customer is using a Solidteknics pan you know they have the gear to cook your steaks to perfection. Knowing the pan allows you and your customers to meaningfully compare notes and get the details right. Solidteknics pans are a value adding opportunity that will cost you little and your customers about \$140 or about \$2 per year during their lifetime and nothing for future generations!

www.solidteknics.com

DRY AGE FRIDGE

Dry aging is another value add opportunity for meat retailers. Traditionally beef has been dry aged to intensify flavour and improve tenderness, but it comes at a cost to yield and takes time and some investment in the right equipment. In the September edition of *Australian Meat News* and described above, sheep meat – specifically mutton – can be dry aged to produce a premium meat.



Dry Aging can value-add beef and mutton, but needs to be done properly to ensure flavor, food safety and to minimise loss of yield.

Viking Food Solutions had their Dry Ager DX 1000 cabinets on display at Fine Food Australia. The DX 1000 is purpose designed and built for dry aging meats. The fridge can be set up with two 80kg hangers or with shelves for smaller primals. The fridges feature humidity, air flow controls, air filters and a sterilisation system to maintain the perfect micro-climate for an optimal outcome and minimum weight loss. The glass doors are made with special glass to block potentially harmful UV light.

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COMBI OVENS

As butcher shops move closer to the kitchen a combi oven could be a useful investment. Unox combi ovens offer commercial cooks a huge range of cooking functions and precise interactive control. Unox ovens allow the operator to control the sequence and time for key cooking variables including; temperature, humidity and air-flow. The system can be set to change cooking process when sensors report critical temperatures – eg internal meat temperatures are achieved.

The modern operator interface provides easy control and access to existing cooking recipe programs and the creation of new ones. The oven can be monitored and operated remotely.

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The taste of native Australia



The use of Australian native herbs and spices is gaining popularity once more and is a great way to add a point of difference to seasonings, sauces and rubs.

Robins Foods foray into Australian Native Foods commenced in 1986, producing native food condiments and herbs out of their catering business in Toorak, Melbourne. In 2002 Robins Foods launched the Outback Spirit providing sauces, herbs, spices, rubs and chutneys for retail and food service.

The company was founded by Juleigh and Ian Robins who wanted to show consumers Australia's native foods, how to use them and to showcase the flavours. In addition, Juleigh and Ian have set up the Outback Spirit Foundation to support indigenous community groups in projects such as agronomy, farming projects, bores and irrigation to help the community become more self-sustaining.

Chris Wheelhouse, National Sales Manager for Robins Foods says that the recent ground swell of people wanting to understand where their food comes from has driven the resurgence of interest in the products.

"Outback Spirit is about provenance and sourcing ethically grown product, as well as providing a point of difference for flavour, particularly for value-add products.

"Many of the native herbs and spices have a strong depth of flavour and would suit many slow-cooked dishes such as pulled pork, brisket or shoulder."



The range of indigenous herbs and spices lend a point of difference to value-add products



The sale of Outback Spirit contributes to the Outback Spirit Foundation which aims to assist indigenous communities become more self-sustaining. These lovely hands belong to Ruth Emery, Rainbow Valley, Central Australia, holding Wild Limes.

The spices can be added to sausage and burger pre-mixes or added to breadcrumb or panko for extra flavour on schnitzels. Chris said that Robins Foods had worked with a supermarket chain to develop a range of sausages now sold nationally. A number of fast food chains have also incorporated Outback Spirit flavours, introducing the flavours to a wider audience and expanding the market. ■

Flavour profiles:

Lemon myrtle: is similar to lemongrass, giving the fresh, lemony taste without the high acid level of lemons. Ideal for use in Thai cooking where it can be substituted for lemongrass.

Anisata myrtle: A soft aniseed/licorice finish. Not too dissimilar to tarragon.

Mountain pepper: is not a peppercorn in the well known sense, it is actually a leaf, which means it imparts a herbaceous flavour with a strong peppery taste. It goes well with lamb and kangaroo.

Wattleseed: a nutty flavour with overtones of coffee and chicory, it is commonly used in baking – although it does affect the gluten in flour so it is recommended that it is added last. It can be used well with pasta dishes or as a seasoning.

The Outback Spirit Foundation

Proceeds from the sale of the Outback Spirit brand contribute toward the Outback Spirit Foundation which works to support indigenous communities. Projects have included the development of farming of the Bush Tomato, Kakadu Plums and Wild Limes.

The Foundation has also teamed up with the Essendon Football Club to support The Long Walk campaign inspired by indigenous footballer, Michael Long and his walk to Canberra to raise awareness of Aboriginal needs and racism in sport.

Meating the Pie Comp challenge



The *Australian Meat News* story on the Great Aussie Pie and Sausage Roll

Competition earlier in the year prompted one butcher to rise to the challenge to put his pies to the test.

Griffith Butchery in Canberra is well respected for top quality meat and well known for their pies.

Drawing on a long standing relationship of more than twenty five years with a local farmer for grass fed beef and lamb, owner Richard Odell is humble but proud of what he does.

Griffith Butchery is also home to a significant pie making enterprise. The bakery staff make more than 700 pies, quiches, sausage rolls and pasties in a range of flavours, from scratch, every week during the winter months. The pastry is made on-site by pastry chef, Patrick Lau.

Patrick has been with Griffith Butchery for six years. Patrick's pie cases have a short crust pastry on the bottom made with butter and the flaky top made with margarine. He does not use a foil case. The fillings are also made from scratch, using locally supplied meats and ingredients without the use of commercial premixes.

"We've been making pies for years and the pastry that Patrick does is excellent," said Richard. "I'm not one for entering competitions, I always knew our products were good, but I never felt the need to test them against anyone else."

"But when we saw the article, the boys encouraged me to have a go to see how ours stack up against a bakery-made one."

"With a silver medal for three out of four of our entries, I guess we proved that a butcher can make an excellent pie."

Three Silvers and a Bronze

This year's Official Great Aussie Pie and Sausage Roll Competition was held in conjunction with Fine Food 2017 in Melbourne. With more than 1650 entries from around the country, Richard and the team were up against some serious contenders.

The Griffith Butchery entries were tested for pastry, pie filling, gravy to meat ratio, pastry to filling ratio, appearance



Richard Odell left, owner of Griffith Butchery in Canberra and pastry chef, Patrick Lau took part in the recent Great Aussie Pie and Sausage Roll competition to bring home a silver award.

and taste and on Day 2, came away with a silver medal for their lamb curry, Mexican chilli beef and beef bacon cheese pies, while the traditional mince pie earned a bronze medal.

"I put our success down to Patrick's pastry and my secret ingredient – the beef stock that we make from scratch," said Richard. "We sell our stock in 500ml pouches to our customers and it is always a winner."

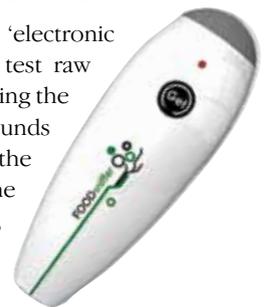
"Entering the competition was pretty easy, although I did worry about the timing of getting the pies to the competition. Now that I have done it once, I'm more comfortable with doing it again. In the mean time, we will go and sample the winning pies to see what the judges expectations are so we can win a gold medal next year." ■

Not on the Nose



The Food Sniffer – the 'electronic nose' – is designed to test raw meat freshness by assessing the volatile organic compounds present. Designed for the

home user, it indicates whether the beef, lamb, pork or seafood is fresh, starting to spoil, needs to be refrigerated or has gone off.



The Food Sniffer is waved over the meat and sends a bluetooth message to your smartphone, which then indicates the appropriate action.

Shane van de Vorstenbosch, CEO of OnSolution, the supplier of Food Sniffer says it is not designed to pick up bacteria like e.Coli or salmonella, but to alert the consumer of the progress of the natural decaying process of meat. People with poor smell or who are unsure of the state of the meat will find the product beneficial in assessing the safety of the product. Shane believes it not only reduces the risk of food poisoning but can also avoid unnecessary food wastage. ■

Food Truck for additional business and promotion

A passion for food and butchering has led to one enterprising butcher in Melbourne's inner suburbs to branch out into the on-trend food truck business.

Located in Northcote, on the northern fringe of Melbourne's CBD, The Gourmet Meat Rack has been providing the local community with high quality meat since 1989.

Owner Jim Hadji, immigrated with his family from Cyprus as a 15 year old with aspirations of becoming an engineer. The immigration laws at the time required him to be in the country for at least five years to be a permanent resident before going to university. In the meantime, he worked part time in the local butcher shop and his cousin's coffee shop to help the family out.

By the age of 21, Jim had completed a butcher's apprenticeship and opened his first store. Twelve years later he moved to the current location in Northcote Plaza. The shop continues to be a thriving business – one of the busiest stores in the complex.

Focusing principally on fresh cuts, sausages and value-add products, the store goes through a huge turnover of meats. In any one week, the store will use up to 44 quarters and 10 bodies of beef plus three pallets of cartons; 150 – 200 sides of lamb plus extra cartons; 20 – 30 pork carcasses; mountains of chicken plus a dozen goats. The shop operates two shifts, seven days a week, employing 12 butchers plus counter staff to a total of about 30 people in any given week. Jim's sons, Michael and David, partners in the business assist with the management of the businesses.

So where is it all going?

Jim has always had a love of cooked food and hospitality and in the past the shop offered a range of rotisserie



The Gourmet Meat Rack in Northcote, Melbourne is a thriving business with a massive turnover of meats owned by Jim Hadji.

items such as chickens, roasts and shanks. Increasing regulatory pressures led him to make the decision to stop providing the take-away products. Shutting down that operation had a negative impact on the business as fewer customers visited the shop to buy take-away and additional meat products to cook at home.

To counter the slight downturn, Jim opted to set up a food truck to Cypriot street food. His idea is that by promoting Cypriot food, people will want to buy the ingredients, thereby driving business back to the butcher shop.

Food trucks have evolved from selling ice cream and hot jam donuts. In many major cities, the food truck scene has born a range of unique food offerings – Mexican, burgers, sushi, Vietnamese, Israeli – or more unique ones like



Jim Hadji outside his food truck on a chilly Melbourne winter's night at a Food Truck Park in Preston.

cheeses or jaffles, plus the usual coffee vans.

Operating as a separate business entity to the butcher shop, Jim's food truck – From the Butcher to the Chef – is managed by business partner Marios Nicola. Its core menu items are mixed



And then there is the food, simple to prepare Cypriot fare at a reasonable price.

To increase turn over in the butcher shop, Jim has opened a food truck specialising in Cypriot food.

grill, souvlaki, koupe (Cypriot croquettes) and sheftalia (a sausage wrapped in caul fat), plus sides of chips, tzatziki and a salad of tomato, cucumber and parsley. The aim is to keep the menu simple. The food truck uses 120kg of lamb for souvlaki per week with similar amounts of beef, pork and chicken.

“I wanted to keep the hospitality side of the butcher shop going, but doing the rotisserie was just becoming too problematic,” said Jim. “We still offer the traditional spit for catering for private functions, but the food truck gives us much more promotion and business. The food truck can be used at Food Truck Parks or private functions and can cater to a much larger crowd.”

The truck has established a regular following in the six months since Jim opened. On a typical night, the truck churns through around 150 meals.

“We sear the kebabs and meats before we start and keep it warm. As the orders come in, we finish the kebabs and serve. That way we can keep ahead of the orders to minimise the time customers have to wait. Having Marios as our chef means that he knows how to be ready beforehand and how to keep up with orders.”

Given the volume and regulations surrounding a butcher shop, food preparation at this volume is not an

option in the truck. The solution Jim found was to rent a local restaurant which is accredited with local council as a commercial kitchen. The restaurant kitchen now supplies the truck, the shop and the restaurant itself, in what has turned out to be a win-win solution.

What's a Food Truck

Food trucks are essentially trucks that are equipped to prepare and sell food. They come in a variety of formats – converted vintage caravans, refurbished refrigerator vans or the latest state of the art, purpose built food trucks. All food trucks need to comply with hygiene and safety standards. Typically a truck must have suitable hand washing facilities, hot running water, refrigeration, extraction fans and ventilation and dish washing. An inspection by EnergySafe, to ensure that the electrics and gas are safe is advisable.

Food truck parks have been set-up to host food truck events. In addition to running events and promotion, park operators take care of amenities, rubbish removal and other council requirements. Many food truck park events feature entertainment and a licensed bar to generate a mini festival environment. Melbourne has a number of semi permanent and casual food truck event sites. Bookings need

to be made well in advance, often more than a month. The spot is usually all day. Jim's team set up at about 10am to prepare for the lunch crowd between 12 and 3pm, then a couple of hours down time before the dinner rush.

What's a food truck park?

Food truck parks are business that manages and operated food truck parks.

Food Truck Park™ website states:

“The Food Truck Park™ brings together your favourite food trucks in unique event spaces across Australia. These vibrant and edgy food havens serve up more than just your average street fare with modern settings, events and a stellar entertainment line-up – there's no better place to join the food truck movement. The Food Truck Park™ is an initiative to help grow the mobile food industry and is managed by the Australian Mobile Food Vendors Group (AMFVG).”

To find out more about food truck parks in major cities visit:

www.forkontheroad.com.au – Adelaide

<http://perthfoodtruckspots.com.au> – Perth

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<http://www.sydneyfoodtrucks.com.au/>
Sydney

<http://thefoodtruckpark.com.au/>
Melbourne

<http://www.downeyparkfoodtrucks.com/>
Brisbane

Buying a food truck

Jim's advice is to go for a new food truck unit to be sure that everything is reliable and functions well.

"We went for the top of the range; I don't want the truck malfunctioning, which would cause loss of business and reputation. If you aren't reliable it's all over. I know some operators have gone for second hand trucks, but they always end up having problems. We worked with the fit out company to make sure that the workflow around the truck allows us to cope with the rush. You don't want the money to end up in the grill or mixing up orders."

While expensive, Jim believes that the new truck will start to turn a respectable profit within about six months. During this time, he will be able to build a reputation and a loyal following during the peak season so he can ride out the quieter winter months.

Advice from a food truck operator

David Walsh, who operates *Digging for Fire BBQ*, has been doing the food truck scene for nearly four years. Initially he operated on private land such as petrol stations. More recently he has become a regular on the food truck park circuit. His specialty is grilled street foods with North African flavours.

When Dave first started he was the 10th food truck to be on the road; now there are about 90 in Melbourne alone. Many operate as a hobby weekend job, but many more use it as a full time job. The workload will require additional staff – Dave has an



Digging with Fire BBQ, owned and operated by David Walsh has been doing the food truck scene for four years.

assistant most nights; Jim has the capacity to hold seven staff members for peak periods should he need.

"Food trucks can be quite expensive to set up, a brand new one can be more than \$100k with all the bells and whistles. Second hand ones do come up from time to time, but are still quite pricey given the current popularity at the moment and that is before you have bought kitchen utensils, stock and paid staff. Be sure that this is what you want to do as it does take a lot of time and investment to make it work."

Dave has some key advice for anyone wanting to set up a food truck:

1. Do your research and understand how food truck parks and festivals operate. Go to a few different ones; see what is popular for that neighbourhood and who is a regular. What foods draw the most crowds and what makes them unique.
2. Differentiate yourself. Dave says the key to success and being able to push a large number of orders is to have two or three killer dishes that you can have partially prepared beforehand. A lot of operators like Jim use their heritage or food background to draw upon. Many of

them might be Mexican, American or Italian. Choose a food that people recognise but is different from what is already out there. If you are too obscure your customers won't understand what it is you do. In addition, Food Truck Parks will only allow a certain number of operators on any one night and they need to be different. Three burger vans won't get a spot.

3. Provide quality at a reasonable price. At a food truck park it is a night out, but it is still take away at its core, so price your meals and portion size accordingly. People won't pay restaurant prices to sit in the cold eating with a plastic fork.
4. Promote your food truck via social media – particularly Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Tell people where you will be week to week; share any promotions you are doing. Hash tag the Park or other operators to increase your chances of being shared. Many cities now have websites and apps for Food Truck Parks, make sure you are listed.
5. Be available for private functions, festivals and catering. You won't always get a spot at a Park and street traders permits for roadsides can be difficult to obtain from some councils. ■



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Aidan Mackinnon of Cut Throat Knives, is a bladesmith creating individually made and tested high quality artisan knives.



A knife is a thing of beauty

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in traditional trade skills. Amongst these artisan craftsmen are bladesmiths whose skill is making hand-crafted, fit-for-purpose knives.

Bladesmiths have been around for a long time, making knives for hunting and fishing, pocket knives and more ornate objects of art. More recently, bladesmiths are turning to making chef and butchers knives that are both practical and beautiful.

In Australia, there at least a dozen full time bladesmiths with many more that operate part time, plus those that make knives as a hobby. Aidan Mackinnon who trades as Cut Throat Knives has been operating full time for nearly two years, crafting as many as twenty knives a month.

“A chef or butcher’s knife is the hardest working knife. If you pride yourself on your workmanship, your products and how you are perceived by your customers – a hand crafted knife is an emotional investment and part of your identity,” Adrian said.

“Some butchers and chefs are happy to buy commercially made knives, but eventually those knives lose their edge and become difficult to sharpen and are thrown away.

“A handcrafted knife made from high quality steel, will last for generations.”

Aidan compares buying a good knife with investing in a top quality mincer or sausage filler – cheap, poor quality

equipment usually costs you in the end. A handcrafted knife may be more expensive than a commercial knife, but it is a once-off purchase. He said commercial knife manufacturers often cut costs by using cheaper grade steel. “I use the highest grade possible – powdered metallurgical steel. I test each knife for hardness to ensure that it is as hard as possible to keep its edge.

Most of Aidan’s knives use natural materials like wood and bone for the handle that can be individually carved to reflect the owners’ personality. Regulations mean that natural materials cannot be used for a butcher’s knife so Aidan uses a micarta composite material.

To care for his knives, Aidan recommends a steel be used for honing and a whetstone for sharpening. Constant use on bone and chopping boards can lead to slight bends in the knife which can be corrected with a steel, while the gentleness of a whetstone keeps it sharp without removing a large amount of material. Aidan doesn’t recommend the use of electric sharpeners as they tend to be too aggressive.

The art of bladesmith is continuing to grow. Aidan makes as many as five knives a week and orders reaching out to May next year and he will be employing a staff member to keep up with demand. ■

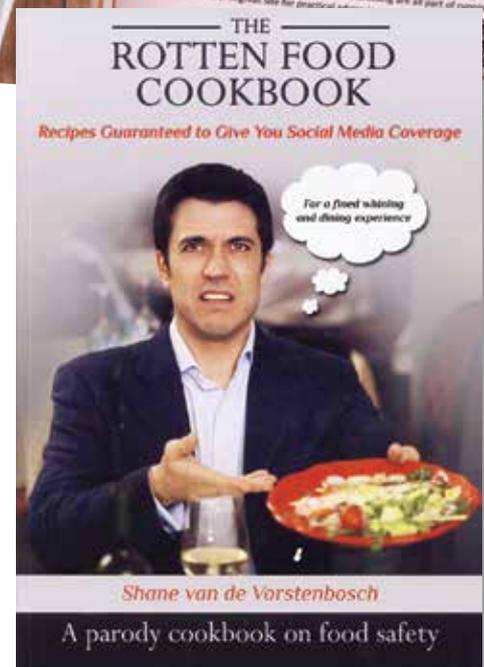
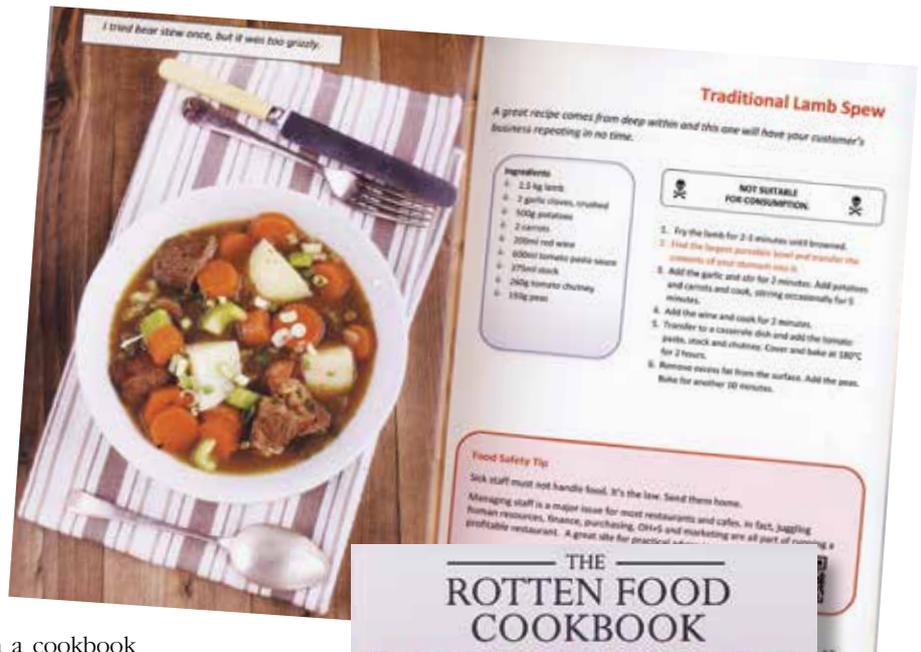
How to Make Your Customers Sick

OnSolution are suppliers of hygiene products such as temperature loggers, hand sanitation, spill kits and food testers to the hospitality industry and consumers. Shane van de Vorstenbosch, the CEO has written a somewhat unique take on a cookbook that highlights the necessity of safe food handling practices.

Titled *“The Rotten Food Cookbook”*, it provides a number of recipes that can make your customers sick. More importantly, it gives solid advice on how to avoid food poisoning with appropriate food safety techniques. Originally aimed at café’s and restaurant owners, the book is equally valid for anyone who sells food or the home cook.

Classic recipes include: Chuck Liver Pate, Puking Duck, Shepherd’s Die with e.ColiFlower Mash and Traditional Lamb Spew.

Published by OnSolution and retailing at \$9.90 from their website www.onsolution.com.au, it is a small paperback with a good sense of humour that conveys the message. We have five copies to give away. ■



How not to give your customer's food poisoning is the message behind "The Rotten Food Cookbook".

Book Competition winner

Congratulation to Ms Jill Coote, the lucky winner of a copy *BEEF and other Bovine Matters* by John Torode..

Jill correctly answered \$17 billion to the question: *What was Queensland's Agricultural Debt in 2011?*

Jill is the Education Manager, of the Food & Rural Science section of TAFE associated with Federation University, Ballarat, Victoria. Jill's department looks after apprentices in Meat Retail, Bakery and Food Processing as well as apprentices in Agriculture, Horticulture and Land Management. They currently oversee the on-the-job training of 35 butchery apprentices across rural Victoria.

Thanks for entering our competition Jill, and all the best to your students and your team of educators and trainers at Ballarat. ■



WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win a copy of: *The Rotten Food Cookbook* by Shane van de Vorstenbosch. We have three copies to give away.

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

Australian Meat News Book Competition

By post: PO Box 415 Richmond Vic 3121

Email: optimalnews@majestic.net.au

Question: *What is Woolworths share of retail meat sales?*

Entries close: February 12, 2017

Woolworths drop Manildra

Cootamundra based meat processor Manildra Meat Company has announced it will no longer be processing meat for Woolworths. At the same time, Woolworths has announced it has entered a new 10 year agreement with June Abattoir to supply lamb.

The termination of the supply agreement with Woolworth was linked in part to Manildra's inability to supply beef due to limited supply and sharply increased cattle prices.

A spokesman for Manildra said the company was committed to the long-term future of the plant and the local community. Manildra is Cootamundra's biggest employer and has the capacity to process 400 small stock and 600 cattle per day. Manildra is licensed for export including to North America. ■

New MLA manager for USA

Meat and Livestock Australia has appointed Rob Williams as its next International Business Manager for North America,

Based in Washington DC, Mr Williams will take over from David Pietsch.

MLA Managing Director Richard Norton said Mr Williams will play a key part in addressing trade issues including the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Brazil's entry to the US market and the development of a new Farm Bill in 2018.

Mr Williams, a professional bureaucrat, has served as Agriculture Counselor in Australia's Beijing and Washington DC embassies and as Trade Director of Technical Market Access at the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC).

Most recently he was Technical Counsel for Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) where he advised individual meat processors on market access issues. Mr Williams has also worked in management roles in biosecurity, export facilitation, animal health and emergency disease preparedness in the federal Department of Agriculture. ■

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CBS Foodtech have developed a test kitchen where customers equipment and ingredients can be put through their paces.

Advice, support, and testing affect your bottom-line

By Chris Green, CBS Foodtech

Running a food manufacturing business, purchasing machinery and developing new products can carry risk, but moreover it can be an unnecessary drain on both time and resources within a business. With the aim to help manufacturers and food innovators to significantly reduce this risk and equip them so that they can make good decisions that will improve their bottom line, CBS Foodtech created their innovative Test Kitchen Facility.

At their Head Office in Warriewood NSW CBS Foodtech have a dedicated and fully functioning refrigerated facility where customers can take the first steps in the decision-making process.

With a large spectrum of world-class machinery, capable of producing an array of food products CBS Foodtech can demonstrate machinery capabilities of throughputs, yields, product presentation and new product development.

With leading brands on hand such as Treif, Rex, Reich, Stephan and Sesotec, to slice, dice, cook, marinate, inject or inspect they will have a solution for you and your business.

Moreover, the Test Kitchen Facility allows businesses to test their ingredients prior to ordering, adding up to real-time production. Equipped with the latest technology, demonstrations of processing techniques, including yield optimisations, selection of ingredients, product and recipe creation are available as well as manufacturing training that is tailored and customised around your business.

As customers and their products evolve, CBS Foodtech play a key supportive role in helping them alter, redesign, or create new products for their product lines. With their extensive range of ingredients, functional additives, including E-free products, organic selections and clean labelling. Whether you're a butcher,

large food manufacturer or a chef looking for the next innovative product line, CBS Foodtech can facilitate the appraisal of the products with the guidance of their knowledgeable consultants.

Once the trials have been completed CBS Foodtech provide a copy of all the results with indicators of any yield and cost savings that were made in comparison to current performance, and upon request, a video and photographs of the trial can be supplied.

Taking this one step further, product findings can be turned into a solid business case that may enable capital expenditure approval for the project.

The consultants at CBS Foodtech are industry professionals with an impressive track record of knowledge and experience and have successfully led project business case approvals amounting to millions of dollars. ■

UK GCA – a platform for action against retail monopolies

This is a blog by Professor David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at Imperial College London, published in April 2016. It's a call to action to make submissions to the UK, Groceries Code Adjudicator, the independent authority that oversees the relationship between supermarkets and their suppliers. *Note – there are 10 major supermarkets in the UK. In Australia there are two!*

Ensuring “Fairer Play” in Grocery Supply Chains Servicing the Major UK Supermarkets

What did you do, Daddy, in the maelstrom that has been the UK grocery market environment so far this decade? Who'd have thought that we would have seen big retailers scrapping for their very survival, manufacturer margins being squeezed inexorably and farmers desperate as international food commodity prices plummet to decade year lows! When the going gets tough, the tough get going but they also get tetchy and even behave badly!

Yet, we all know and research consistently shows that collaborative and longer-term relationships in the supply chain are crucial to enhancing efficiency and encouraging innovation to the benefit of us all, not least, the final consumer.

Commercial tensions are intrinsic to most supply chains but, particularly so, in those which are characterised by great uncertainty – of climate, commodity booms and busts, political vicissitudes (e.g. Russian ban on EU food imports), tectonic shifts in the grocery competitive environment, etc).

Fifteen years ago, did you even conceive that the energetic Jack Ma and Alibaba would have three times the market cap of Walmart by the end of 2015? We didn't and Alibaba is no fairy tale! Perhaps we are in a watershed moment for the power of the “traditional” supermarkets?

In the UK and other countries, grocery supply chain partners have frequently grizzled at the disproportional market power of monolithic supermarkets.

Governments have struggled to develop appropriate policies to temper abuses of power and legislative initiatives have been more focused on protecting the consumer interest than the interests of farmers and other grocery supply chain members.

In the UK, however, we do have a Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) who is the first independent adjudicator to oversee

the relationships between the major supermarkets and their suppliers. Specifically, the GCA ensures that the 10 largest supermarkets treat their direct suppliers lawfully and fairly, and investigates complaints and arbitrates in disputes.

Hurrah, at last suppliers have an organisation in place to ensure fair play in their dealings with the big boys. So, what are the grumpy suppliers doing? Largely keeping shtum!

Whispering behind closed doors about despicable supermarket practices but failing to communicate directly and in confidence with the very organisation that was established to protect their interests.

Right NOW, the GCA is launching its 3rd annual survey of the groceries sector. It's a brilliant opportunity for you to voice your concerns (or even your plaudits) about dealing with the “Big 10” supermarkets.

But, in the parlance of the trade, act now to avoid disappointment! The survey closes on April 29th 2016. If you're dealing with UK supermarkets from home or abroad, just get on the GCA website and complete the survey. You know it makes sense!

Posted on April 21, 2016 by
Prof David Hughes &
Miguel Flavián
www.profdavidhughes.com ■



The implications of the recent US/ Brazil trade deal on Australian beef exports

By Dr Eddie Andriessen BVSc RCA, Meat Industry Consultant
safemeat1@bigpond.com

Recently the United States and Brazil agreed to permit the entry of Brazilian fresh meat into America. In a quid pro quo exercise, Brazil agreed to the entry of US beef into Brazil.

The main reasons that the US prohibited the import of Brazilian beef for at least the last 10 years were the outbreaks of Foot and Mouth disease (FMD) and BSE (Mad cow disease) at during that time in Brazil.

Brazilian animal health authorities have worked hard to control these diseases. The last FMD outbreak occurred in 2006 and the last BSE detection was in 2012. The OIE (The World Organization for animal health) now rates Brazil as a negligible risk country for BSE and there is strong evidence that the bulk of the Brazilian beef herd is also free of FMD with the whole country likely to be declared free within the next 12 months.

This has been achieved through an extensive vaccination process against foot and mouth disease.

There are more than one billion cattle in the world; two thirds of these cattle are in India, China and Brazil. China although having a large cattle population is a major importer second only to the United States and Russia.

About 9 billion tons of beef is traded around the world each year. The four main beef exporters are India (mainly buffalo), Brazil, Australia and the United States. These four countries account for about 75% of the world trade in beef.

Australia exports about 60% of its annual beef production of 2.5 million tonnes. This varies depending on seasonal issues such as drought.

Brazil on the other hand exports only 20% of its annual production of about 10 million tonnes. The remainder is consumed locally.

The freeing up of the beef trade with the United States means that other countries with similar animal health issues are also more likely to accept Brazilian beef. This is a potential threat to our trade or at least put a downward pressure on our prices.

Currently Brazilian beef production is hampered by inefficiencies right throughout the production chain from degraded pastures, poor genetics with a high emphasis on low producing Bos indicus cattle in the national breeding herd and a lack of feed and feedlots to produce high quality meat.

Therefore, Brazilian product is lower in quality than Australia's product and thus tends to compete with our

lower end markets such as trim to the US hamburger trade.

As these issues are addressed during the next few years it is anticipated that their exports will increase considerably.

Although Brazil now has access to the United States market it does not have any quotas for that market and needs to keep the export to the United States below the 65,000 tonne limit or incur a 26.5% tariff.

Australia has a quota of about 450,000 tonnes to the United States and has over the last few years largely filled this quota. The recent breaking of the droughts across much of Australia's beef production areas means that there will be fewer stock available for slaughter over the coming year as farmers rebuild their herds. This will open up opportunities for Brazil to compete in our traditional markets with a much cheaper product.

Over the last 10 years, Australia has increasingly developed markets in premium products that Brazil cannot compete with. But this will change as they improve not only the genetics of their livestock but also introduce more feedlots into their beef production systems.

Currently about 10% of Brazil's beef production comes from feedlots compared to Australia where it is about 35%. Brazilian feedlot numbers are increasing as the ability to produce corn and soybeans has virtually doubled over the last decade.

In summary, Brazil as a competitor to Australia on the world beef markets is rapidly growing particularly in the trim trade to the United States, but it is unlikely to be able to compete in the premium market for some time, if ever, as long as the beef industry in Australia remains innovative in the production of better value added products in the future. ■

Winners of the September 2016 Find a Word Competition

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to BUNZL our sponsor.



Winner of the Steak Knife & Steel

Mr Ronnie Owen, The Butcher Shop, Tinana Qld

Winners Boning Knives

Mr Brad Fuller, Murray Valley Beef Producers, Wingfield SA

Mr Brian Barbara, Mudgeeraba Butchery, Mudgeeraba Qld

Ms Nicole Downer, Vic's Premium Quality Meat, Laverton North Vic

Ms Adrienne Hartley, National Hide Processors, Hemmant Qld

Mr Ken Simpson, My Butcher, Gympie Qld

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Duck: red meat or poultry?

Duck was traditionally a meat for special occasions such as Christmas, but with a new focus on flavours and cooking techniques, it is a contender as an alternative to red meat and poultry.

The time has come for clarification of what duck is. Yes, it is a bird, but that is where it's similarity to chicken ends. It has a different bone structure, doesn't roost on a perch and its meat is red, not white. But don't think it is a game bird like pheasant or quail either – it is a bird all of its own.

Where chickens have a round ball-like carcass that allows for the bird to grow both breast and leg meat simultaneously, ducks grow their legs first to support their weight and then develop breast meat. Processed at around 36 days in the winter and 40 days in summer (ducks grow and eat more during the colder months), the dressed weight is anywhere from 1.6kg to 2.6kg.

Marketing manager at Luv-a-Duck, Jackie O'Connell, says "If the consumer is looking to feed an average family of four, a bird over 2.2kg is recommended as the bone to meat ratio of a duck is different to chicken.

"Cooking duck is different too – the breast needs to be treated like a steak – cooked to medium with just a little pink,

whereas the legs are best slow cooked and all the way through – almost like a lamb shank."

"The breast meat works well in lighter dishes; the legs are great in curries, ragus and casseroles. We have seen whole birds dry-aged, smoked breast meat and minces made into ravioli and burgers. The first joint of the wing (Nibbles) make a fantastic finger food. There have been innovations in smallgoods such as prosciutto, salamis, terrines and pates."

Most people would consider duck to be a fatty meat, with a rich flavour, usually cooked in an equally rich sauce and best consumed in cool weather and consequently only for special occasions. It turns out, that the fat on the breast meat is in the skin and doesn't penetrate through to the meat, which means it can actually be quite lean without the skin and lend itself to lighter meals such as salads, stir fries and wraps. Traditional favourites such as Peking Duck, Duck a l'Orange and confit duck will always be on the menu.

In recent years, Luv-a-Duck have learned that the top sellers of duck are: whole raw duck, ready portioned raw breast and



Jackie O'Connell (left), marketing manager for Luv-a-Duck and Joanne who is front of house for retail sales at head office.

legs or for convenience, Luv-a-Duck have legs that are slow cooked. The cooked portions can be found in a variety of flavours, including Peking, Roast and Smoked Duck Breast and Peking, Roast, Confit and Honey Soy Legs. Peking Duck Pancake Kits are also proving to be a success.

Frozen whole ducks will have a shelf life of two years, while portions will last up to 12 months. For fresh breast portions it needs to be turned around within nine days of processing. Legs need to be used within five days as the fat in the bone develop 'confinement odour' – meaning it gets a bit smelly.

Frozen whole ducks are supplied packaged in clipped bags or as portions. Fresh product is supplied in a new shrink wrap packaging that requires no gas flushing giving a 21 day shelf life. Retail MAP breast fillets will last about 35 days from production. Jackie recommends that for stores with slower turnover, it may be best for butchers to buy fresh whole birds and portion to sell or value add as required.

Nutritionally, duck stacks up well against beef and lamb, and with the current higher beef and lamb prices, it is comparable in price. Jackie says that if used in value-add products the butcher can make it more attractive to the consumer and more profitable for the business.

Comparison of nutrition of duck, beef and lamb per 100gm.

	Energy (kJ)	Fat (g)	Iron (mg)
Duck, raw with skin	2352	59.6	0.45
Beef, raw with separable fat	2478	61.4	1.3
Lamb, raw, with separable fat	2315	57.6	0.41

Source 2011 AHS Food Nutrient Database

The Luv-a-Duck story

Originally, Art Shoppee got his start one year in the late 1960s during duck hunting season, bagging more than he could eat. The following year he got nothing. With every intention of growing chickens for his family instead, a trip to market to buy day-old chicks ended up with 20 ducklings and the thriving duck business in Nhill, in the Wimmera region of Victoria was under way. Today the farms, hatchery and processing plant are still located in and around Nhill and the sales, warehouse and head office are located in Port Melbourne

The Luv-a-Duck bird is a result of a cross-breeding program of the Pekin and Aylesbury breeds to provide a duck with more meat and less fat and bone to suit the Western market. Over the years, Luv-a-Duck have worked to continue the development of the ducks to provide the market with a quality product.

Art and Luv-a-Duck staff spent many years travelling abroad to learn about ducks and the company is now considered best-in-class in many aspects of duck farming across the world. Biosecurity, like most bird farming enterprises is taken very seriously as one disease outbreak can wipe out an entire flock. While there is no specific Australian standard for duck welfare, the company believes that it is in their best interest to ensure that the highest standard of duck welfare is upheld at all times.

Art Shoppee passed away in 2009. His daughters Kim and Theresa continue to own the company. Theresa, who is Chairman of the Board while Kim is the National Sales Director are both still heavily involve in the day to day operations of the company.

The company has been successful in growing the business, which has seen an increase in its processing from around 50,000 birds a week eight years ago to around 100,000 today.

Luv-a-Duck are an Australian, family owned business that grows all of the ducks in the Wimmera District of Western Victoria. Animal welfare and biosecurity are of the utmost importance and Luv-a-Duck consider themselves to be best in class in many aspects of duck farming. For many years Luv-a-Duck travelled around the world to find out best practice in duck farming however, now the business find themselves hosting visitors from around the world who want to learn from Luv-a-Duck. The business is continually investing in all

continued on page 24

continued from page 23



Chef and showroom manager Adam, is on hand in the Luv-a-Duck test kitchen to de-mystify duck.

areas to ensure they continue to provide the very best quality and service to their customers and consumers.

“Our principle focus is to get back to our grass roots consumer and customers and to develop the products they expect. Part of that process will be to show how versatile duck can be and that it doesn’t have to be a heavy winter dish. The other aspect is to educate on how to prepare and cook duck given that most people would put it in the same category as chicken, which it clearly isn’t. It is an exciting phase in the Luv-a-Duck story and we are proud of our product and our history. ■



Thanks to all who have shown their ongoing support in 2016 and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and prosperous 2017.

from the ProAnd team



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Roasted Aromatic Asian Style Duck



Ingredients

- 1 whole duck
- ½ cup sweet soy sauce
- 8 cups water
- ½ cup char sui sauce
- Aromatics
- 2 star anise
- 1 lemongrass and ginger tea bag
- 2 tbspn char sui sauce
- 3 slices lemon

Method

Pre heat oven to 190 deg C

In a large stock pot combine the soy sauce, water and char sui sauce, bring to the boil over a medium heat

Plunge the duck into the simmering pot and blanch 3 – 4 mins. Remove the duck and drain well.

Pat the duck dry inside and out

Place duck onto a roasting rack and place the aromatics, char sui sauce and lemon inside the duck cavity

Tie the legs together loosely and turn wings under the duck

Roast the duck at 190 deg C for 35 – 40 minutes per kg or until juices run clear.

Remove the duck and allow to rest 10 – 15 minutes prior to slicing and serve with Asian greens and spiced plum sauce.



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Point of Sale for improved business management

One of Brisbane's most well known and popular butchers, Meat at Billy's has upgraded its' point of sale equipment to streamline business admin, customer service and to incorporate a second store.

Billy Gibney and his wife, Sarah have had the store, Meat at Billy's in Ashgrove, Brisbane since 2009 and have gone from strength to strength supplying customers with exceptional service and quality products using traditional butchering philosophies.

The business stocks the very best cuts of premium meats, locally sourced free range saltbush lamb and free range pecan fed pork and ready to cook lines including peking duck breasts, hickory glazed USA pork ribs, Italian meatballs, lamb shanks, chicken enchiladas, cutlets, beef wellington, ready-to-go stir-fries marinated kebabs. On average, the business would use 200 cartons of beef, up to 50 whole lambs and 12 – 14 pigs. Employing several ex- chefs, the store supports as many local businesses as it can to provide grocery items such as sauces, cheeses and dry goods.

“When we opened the shop at Ashgrove, I knew that the shop had the potential to show people that good old fashioned service and quality product still existed,” said Billy. “People went to the butcher for conversation, information and rapport and like the fact that you remember what they bought last time. After seven years, we find that we are getting busier and busier and that people come back for that service.”

Earlier this year, Billy opened a second store in Rosalie (part of Brisbane's suburb Paddington) to continue their philosophy of butchering and customer service. The Rosalie store is far enough away from Ashgrove to not directly compete, but close enough to



Bill Gibney, owner of Meat at Billy's in Brisbane has found that the Wedderburn management system for point of sale has made running two businesses a breeze.

manage. On top of that, the business operates an online service.

With all businesses comes administration and for retail, point of sale.

Billy learned early on, that going for the cheapest product – whether it be point of sale or butchering equipment is fraught with problems and limitations. The original point of sale (POS) system used in the Ashgrove store was adequate, but as marketing and administration manager Emma Daley says, was ‘clunky, had limited reporting and doing simple things like a new PLU (price look up) was difficult’.

In recent years, Billy and Emma upgraded the Ashgrove POS to a Wedderburn system that had greater flexibility, was easier to use and had greater reporting depth.

The true value of the Wedderburn

system was realised when the Rosalie store was opened as it enabled Billy and Emma to control pricing, reporting and admin from one central point – either at the Ashgrove store or at home.

The key to the system is the electronic cash registers (ECRs) weigh labelers, linking to the back office management system. Designed to be a multi-site management system, the Wedderburn solution allows Billy and Emma to manage pricing, new products, recipes, nutritional information and in-store promotions from one location.

The management system has the capability of updating information at both sites either independently of each other or in unison, so that if one store has a specific promotion, pricing and promotion information can be updated without affecting the other store. Equally, reporting can be done

for both stores or individually, based on product, cashier or any other variable.

The ECR weigh labellers provided to the Ashgrove store provide the cashiers with automatically updated PLUs, pricing specials, promotions, label printing and more without the need to perform time consuming searches. For the customer the rear display shows the price per kilo, price reductions, product name, promotions and recipe ideas.

When the Rosalie store came on board, the ECR weigh labellers were upgraded to be the same across both stores. Staff found the interfaces of the new scales similar to the previous ones, meaning retraining was kept to a minimum. Customer transactions are facilitated with the partnership Wedderburn has in place with Tyro.

“The old POS system Billy and Emma had was pretty limiting,” explained

Nigel Jelley, Retail Sales Executive with Wedderburn. “The Wedderburn system and the upgrade to incorporate the Rosalie store mean that management of both stores can be done from one location, saving Billy and Emma a lot of time that would have been spent traveling between the two.”

“The management system is really the ‘black box’ of the business. It handles pricing, stock and specials. It can liaise with programs like MYOB and provides a range of reports for analysis. It’s easy to use. It utilises cloud technology which means it can be accessed from any device including mobile phones and tablets.”

“With the old POS system we had, I used to have to cart a laptop to the shop and try and find space to plug it in, now I use an iPad,” said Emma. “If Billy wants to change a price per kilo, he can log in from his phone wherever

he is and change it and it is available to the shops instantly.”

“For Billy and Emma, the Wedderburn management system and ECRs mean that they can reinvest their time into improving the store, rather than spending time travelling between the two,” said Nigel. “It also means they haven’t employed a manager to run the Rosalie store. Aesthetically, the ECR weigh labellers fit well with the modern look of the stores, blending nicely with the overall design and the staff have found them very easy to use.”

“The Wedderburn POS equipment has lived up to its reputation,” said Billy. “The design of the management system was like it was built with butchers in mind. It has made it easier for us to continue to give our customers that service they want in both our stores.” ■

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Last butcher shop standing – Mclvor Meats thriving in Heathcote

Steve Shaddock remembers when four butcher shops in Heathcote, Victoria, embarked on a price war. Mclvor Meats has stood the test of time and now the supermarket is Steve's only local competitor.

By Tamara Whitsed

Steve Shaddock doesn't sell beef wellingtons at Mclvor Meats, but he does sell gumboots. "They're a clear gumboot with a coloured sole," Steve said. "I sell them for \$10 a pair with the socks."

They are not what customers expect to find in a butcher shop, but the gumboots are proving popular with bargain-hunting tourists strolling down the main street of Heathcote on the Mclvor Highway, Victoria. Steve once sold 55 pairs of gumboots in one day.

When someone walks into his store with an idea, Steve is inclined to say 'Yes'. That is how he came to sell the gumboots. It is also why he sells fresh and vacuum-sealed vegetables.

"We sell a small range of vegetables, like potatoes, pumpkins, onions, broccoli and cauliflower," Steve said. He introduced the vegetable range early last year when a local fruit shop closed down.

One customer suggested he should sell the vegetables already chopped up, ready for roasting. Since then Steve has been selling potatoes, carrots and pumpkins which have been peeled, sliced, tossed in olive oil and vacuum-sealed.

These are popular with campers and caravanners who can conveniently store the sealed packs in their Eskies until they roast the vegetables in their Webers. "When the caravan parks are open we'd probably sell 40 a week," Steve said. He has also been selling about 30 packs of vacuum-sealed soup vegetables each week.



Butchers Peter Frost and Steve Shaddock at Mclvor Meats Heathcote, have 82 years of experience between them.

In October he introduced a loose mix of sliced onions and capsicums anticipating that they would prove a hit at barbecues. He was right. He was soon selling about 7kg a week and expects this to increase throughout the summer.

He shares the eye-watering task of slicing the onions with butcher, Peter Frost, who has worked full-time at Mclvor Meats for three years.

"We get it over and done with as quick as we can," laughed Steve. "It's not too bad to start with." But after a few kilograms their eyes are teary.

Steve considers it essential to be open to opportunities that present themselves.

"It's got to be a never-give-up attitude. I've tried a lot of things that haven't worked, but you've got to keep coming up with something different.

"What I find works for a week, I'll give it another go. But if it doesn't work then it's out the door and you try something else."

Mclvor Meats is a family business. Steve and his parents Brian and Cathy bought it in 1991. Back then they were selling T-bone steak for \$7/kg. Twenty-five years later Steve is the sole owner. Brian helps Steve's wife, Suzie, with the bookkeeping. Steve's youngest son and niece work there part-time. Two part-time casuals are also on staff.

Today Heathcote is a vibrant community with a population of around 3000 people. The town is cashing in on its reputation as a wine and fine food region. But Steve remembers Heathcote before wineries brought tourists, jobs and wages to the region. He said back in the mid-1990s a significant percentage of his

customers were unemployed, and four butcher shops were competing for clients. Steve offered credit but slow payers were a problem. “They’d owe me money for two months and then they’d come back and pay me, and then they’d do the same again.”

Strong competition resulted in a price war in the mid-1990s. “We were selling sausages – two kilos for \$5; and mince – two kilos for \$5.” He was grateful for his father’s financial expertise during this period. “Dad was 14 when he first started in a butcher shop. He’s lived through the hard times.” Steve said Brian helped him understand the importance of every dollar and the need for a long-term financial approach. Watching costs helped the Shaddocks survive the price war. One by one the other butcher shops closed down.

McIvor Meats has been the only butcher shop in Heathcote for about

Survive and thrive

After 25 years at McIvor Meats, Steve has learned much about surviving and thriving in a small town. Here are his tips:

- Think carefully about your credit policy.
- Take a long-term approach to finances. Be aware that a weekly expense of \$50 adds up \$2600 in a year.
- Focus on affordable quality.
- Take pride in the presentation of the meat display cabinet.
- Listen to your customers’ ideas and be open to opportunities that present themselves.
- Assess new ranges on a weekly basis. Continue if it is working. Change if it is not.



A local fruit and vegetable shop closed down in 2015, so Steve introduced a small range of vegetables at McIvor Meats.

15 years. Steve said a supermarket still provides competition, and some residents buy meat 45km away at Bendigo.

Quality

As the town’s only butcher shop, McIvor Meats has changed its focus from surviving to thriving.

“Now it’s about quality,” Steve said. “For the size of the shop I’ve got, on Thursday and Friday the display that’s put in would be second to none.”

When *Australian Meat News* visited McIvor Meats recently the meat display cabinet was full of traditional cuts as well as crumbed meats, stir fries, diced meats, marinated steak, corned brisket, corned silverside and a variety of chicken products including chicken grill sticks.

Steve has enjoyed experimenting with products like vegetables and gumboots, but he has not lost sight of the core business – selling beef, lamb, pork, chicken and frozen fish to regular customers and tourists.

Steve’s beef and lamb is slaughtered at Hardwick’s in Kyneton. Pork is purchased from Riverside Meats in Echuca. The chicken is from Hazeldene’s Chicken Farm at Bendigo.

Sausage sales are picking up as the days grow longer. “In the summer time we probably do six different flavoured [sausages] a week. We

change them around. We have people come from Melbourne to buy them.

“The summertime’s really good for us if there’s water in the lake,” said Steve who was glad Lake Eppalock was overflowing in October.

Steve has fostered relationships with local wineries, hotels and restaurants which have become major clients. Large crowds attend Heathcote on Show in June and the Heathcote Wine and Food Festival in October. Orders from local eateries can be up to 66 percent higher during these festivals.

Year round, local farmers rely on McIvor Meats to cut and pack beef and sheep which have been slaughtered at Hardwick’s. “It’s nothing to have four or five private (beef) bodies hanging in the fridge and 40 private lambs.”

The shop will get busy as Christmas approaches. Steve is already receiving orders for Christmas hams which are sourced from Bertocchi Smallgoods.

“A lot of our customers ring up when they know it’s going to be busy – especially older people because they know how the main street is. It’s hard to get a park. There’s loads of caravans. So we do free home deliveries all year.”

In the lead up to the Christmas rush Steve has turned his attention to setting up a Facebook page and catching up with maintenance around the shop. And he expects to be slicing a lot of onion. ■

Meat processing sector under the microscope

The Australian Meat Processing Corporation (AMPC) has put its case for preserving the 'status quo' in the meat industry supply chain in a discussion paper and study released in August.

By Stephanie Flynn

The paper – *The Nature of Competition in the Meat Processing Industry* – commissioned by AMPC was prepared by noted Economics consultant, Dr Selwyn Heilbron, one-time Senior Economist for the Department of Trade in Canberra.

The document is a response to concerns regarding market concentration in the meat processing sector and its perceived effects on livestock pricing which is among the key issues raised at both a Senate Inquiry and in a study by the competition watch-dog, The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) this year.

The AMPC document argues the case against the introduction of Mandatory Price Reporting and any moves by Government to effectively freeze the level of consolidation in the industry.

It also argues against the introduction of any changes to competition laws which widen 'concerted action' offences or change 'market definitions' to make consolidation more difficult.

AMPC is the key organisation for the meat processing sector in Australia with a nine-member Board comprising representatives of the key processing companies including JBS Australia, Teys/Cargill, Sanger-Bindaree Beef Group, Northern Co-operative Meat Company and Kilcoy Pastoral Company.

In its evidence to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, which has been conducting an Inquiry into the industry since last year, AMPC said that its members operate 135 of the 150 processing facilities in Australia, accounting for 97% of the nation's meat processing capacity.

In March last year, a range of issues were referred to the Senate Committee for enquiry including:

- Potential for the misuse of power through buyer collusion in the industry and its impact on producer returns;
- The impact of red meat processor consolidation on market competition, creation of monopolies and farm-gate returns; and
- The regulatory environment covering livestock agents, buyers and processors.



ACCC Commissioner, Mr Mick Keogh, has been appointed to lead the newly formed 'Agriculture and Enforcement Unit'

Setting the scene for a 'battle royale' between producers and processors in the meat industry, the Senate Inquiry received 120 submissions before the double dissolution of Parliament forced an early Interim Report in May this year.

In its Interim Report the Senate Committee was clear in putting the industry on notice that its investigations would continue in the new Parliament particularly in relation to processor consolidation, loss of competition, creeping acquisition and the issue of price disclosure.

The report concluded that the Senate Committee's view is that there is a lack of transparency across the meat supply chain affecting prices for producers and was critical of the industry market structure saying it had become dysfunctional, unrepresentative and uncompetitive.

Among its key recommendations is the introduction of a transparent pricing mechanism at livestock saleyards and the establishment of a national price disclosure and reporting system.

The final Senate Committee report is due for release in December.

The ACCC has since taken up the mantle with the conduct, in recent months, of its Cattle and Beef Market Study - under the direction of its newly formed 'Agriculture and Enforcement Unit' - for which the ACCC Commissioner, Mick Keogh now has specific responsibility.

Among the key focal points of the ACCC study is an analysis of the markets for the sale and acquisition of cattle which has included the competitive impact of horizontal concentration and vertical integration of processors.

The study has investigated competition between processors and barriers to entry and expansion in processing markets.

The ACCC has also considered margins, costs, prices and the profitability of the production, processing and retailing sectors of the meat industry.

The final report on the ACCC's Cattle and Beef Market Study is due for release later this month (November).

Displaying the might of the sector, the market analysis conducted by Dr Heilbron for AMPC shows the considerable economic contribution to Australia of the beef processing industry which, in 2014/15, accounted for \$18.2 billion in value-added, \$6.7 billion and around 105,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

The AMPC paper argues that the current economic conditions have seen a reversal in processor fortunes and are unlike 2013/14 when there existed an exceptional set of

circumstances of high cattle turnoff and high prices for beef in the United States which resulted in high profits to processors and low farm-gate prices.

According to the paper, the spread between the price of livestock and beef sales is now sharply negative and well below long term trend.

Dr Heilbron concluded that it is likely, if these conditions continue, that less cost efficient processors will close their doors and cost efficient processors may consider taking intensive processing operations off-shore.

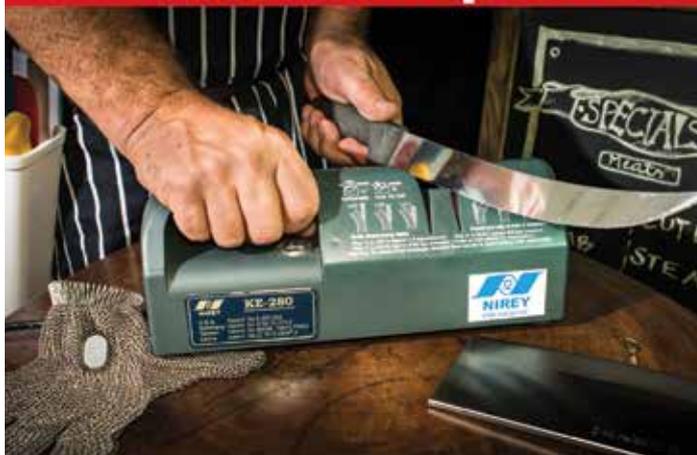
"Any cessation of meat processing activities would have a significant impact on regional communities and the national economy," Dr Heilbron said.

In arguing against Mandatory Price Reporting Dr Heilbron concludes that it should not be introduced claiming that there are many sources for information for producers on cattle prices including sales at auction at saleyards, price grid availability from processors and the comprehensive database on livestock prices at Meat and Livestock Australia.

The AMPC paper indicates that a possible outcome of Mandatory Price Reporting is that it can indicate price signalling by processors and prompt a race to the bottom pricing for meat exporters by such indication to buyers.

Dr Heilbron also concludes that any policy to advance the development of the industry should focus on minimising uneconomic regulatory costs that adversely affect investment and competitiveness. ■

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Buderim Butchers banter business conditions

It isn't hard to notice that tough economic conditions are making life difficult for both small business and consumers alike.

By Stephanie Flynn

Around the country retail spaces carry 'for lease' signs, insolvency figures have reached a record high, household mortgages are the highest on record as are prices for fresh food and there are increasing under-employment rates. Prices for fresh food are increasing and consumer spending is in decline along with changing buying habits.

Australian Meat News spoke with three butchers in the growing town of Buderim, just north of Brisbane, to discuss the challenges faced by retail butchers in the current climate and the strategies they are pursuing to keep their businesses profitable.

With 35 years in the industry and holding his shop in Buderim for 12 years Ian Spinks of Buderim Meat Hall says it is the toughest set of circumstances he has seen.

"We are doing it hard but the doors are still open. It is the same for all small businesses, we know this because in a small town everyone knows each other and we talk about these issues," Ian said. "In my view, it is a reflection of economic conditions which are not as good as the Government would have us believe," he said.

These are sentiments with which Rob Walker, owner of Walker's Gourmet Meats and Chicken in Buderim, agrees.

Celebrating 14 years since buying his butcher shop in Buderim, he has built it from scratch into the successful business it is today.

"It is all doom and gloom in butcher shops these days; economically things have changed dramatically in the last decade," Rob said. "Ten years ago it was easy. Costs for small business generally particularly power, and the coss of living personally for us and our customers were all much cheaper, so we did well," he said.

These observations are borne out in the latest Insolvency statistics released by the Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA).

Total business related personal insolvency rates for 2015/16 rose 44% on the preceding financial year, the highest since 2008/09. Debt agreements (an agreement between a debtor and creditor to pay what they can afford) in 2015/16 were the highest on record, with record debt agreements in all states except ACT, Victoria and Tasmania.



Ian Spinks (right) and son, Caleb, who has just commenced an apprenticeship with his father at Buderim Meat Hall.

Economic conditions were cited as the most common cause of business related personal insolvencies and bankruptcies according to AFSA.

Aside from the cost of running a business, both Ian and Rob have noted customer spending habits have changed dramatically in response to high mortgages and altered socialising patterns as a result of the technological revolution of the last few years.

"Buderim was once a town dominated by an elderly population, has seen younger families moving in at high housing prices and therefore they have high mortgages," Ian said. "Customers are not compromising on quality but they are buying less."

It is a sentiment echoed by Rob who says that the high housing prices and associated mortgages have dramatically affected the level of disposable income available for spending on food and other consumer goods.

"Also, the demographics of Buderim has changed; those that had children when I first opened the store used to entertain a lot at home, often spending \$200 on a Saturday morning," Rob said. "Now they are in their 50's, the kids have left home and the new technology means they socialise and entertain far less than they used to, if at all," he said.

According to Roy Morgan's latest 'State of the Nation-Spotlight on Finance Risk' report, a study which measures

mortgage stress, 17.4% of Australians who have a home mortgage are classified as 'at risk' based on an average 5.4% interest rate and a further 13.1% classified as 'extremely at risk'.

The research company says that some 34.8% are likely to be at risk due to unemployment of one dual income earner or the trend to increased levels of under-employment in Australia.

Buderim's newest entrant into the town's third butcher shop is Michael Marks.

Having completed a mature-aged apprenticeship, the purchase of Buderim Butchery marks his first entry into his own shop.

"It is a very stressful time in small business generally and, for our industry, the rising prices of meat is an added challenge," Michael said. "I shop around for my buying rather than use one supplier and, if I can secure quality product at a good price, I pass the savings on to my customers, it is something they notice," he said.

The latest release of "Agricultural Commodities" for the June quarter, collated by ABARES, signals still higher prices lie ahead.

After a 41% rise in the average saleyard price of beef cattle in 2015/16, prices are expected to rise a further 2% this financial year.

Supplies of cattle for slaughter are expected to be limited as the nation's inventory is the smallest in a decade after experiencing the largest contraction since the 1980's. Both cattle and lamb slaughter rates are expected to decline as herd rebuilding commences after good seasonal rains,



Michael Marks, Buderim Butchery, who is the town's newest entrant.



Rob Walker (right) and brother Matt, Walker's Gourmet Meats and Chicken, celebrating 14 years in business in Buderim.

heralding higher meat prices ahead for processors and retail butchers alike.

Both Ian and Rob believe that the media coverage of the drought has educated customers about the reasons for the rising meat prices and are seeing customers buying less quality meat per visit.

"I try to absorb the rises or do more value-added product which is a strategy that assists in keeping the business doing well," Rob said. "I discuss the issue with customers, explain the reasons behind the rises, the cost of the power bill and the like, it is a great benefit having had the shop a long time and knowing your customers very well," he said.

Both Ian and Rob have also involved their family members in their businesses which, while paid fair incomes, ensures the 'added mile' of effort which minimises costs.

Making sacrifices in their personal lives is also another key strategy these Buderim butchers are using to ride out the current set of circumstances.

Ian has installed solar power at home which has reduced his power bill substantially. Michael has moved home with his family in Brisbane and commutes to his Buderim shop. He has opened a market stall for meat at Ferny Grove Farmers' Markets on a Sunday giving him a seven day a week operation.

And the last words of advice from Buderim's longest serving butcher...

"Customer service is a vital ingredient to success, this ensures customers keep coming back, I still have the very first customer I served 14 years ago," Rob said.

"Involving family is critical. I have my brother working with me, my wife manages the administrative aspects of the business as well as doing the 'inspections' for the cleanliness and overall presentation of the shop.

"Most importantly, owning the business and not struggling to meet debt in these economic conditions is an imperative," he said. ■



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Real Risks to red meat's future

The Australian red meat industry faces critical strategic risks, according to *Strategic Risks Facing the Australian Red Meat Industry* report released by Australian Meat Processor Corporation in August.

The report describes a number of primary local and global mega trends and then focuses on how these will impact on the red meat industry and suggest how these risks can be addressed.

Global Trends

- Most of the world's economic growth is happening in Asia
- Australia's red meat industry is becoming increasingly reliant on exports
- Exclusive bi-lateral trade agreements facilitating competitors' access to traditional markets – often excluding Australia
- Changing and declining red meat consumption in developed countries
- Increasing focus on food quality and safety in developing countries

- A challenging global climate, social sensitivity and legislative and regulatory responses by Australian and foreign governments

Strategic Risks to Red Meat

In response to these wider trends the Report identified risks specific to the red meat industry:

Competition and Market Access: Australian exports will face increased competition from Brazil, India and the US, particularly in price sensitive Asian markets given Australian beef is more costly.

Changing Consumption Patterns: Per capita, red meat consumption has declined in recent decades in developed countries – replaced, in part, by pork and chicken. This decline has to some degree been driven by health and environmental concerns.

Climate Change: Climate variability is increasingly affecting the supply and quality of cattle produced in Australia. Ongoing variability will affect Australia's ability to supply on a reliable basis.

Social Licence to Operate: The red meat industry's social licence (an agreement between a business and its local community) is derived largely from the regional communities where it is located. The industry will come under a higher degree of external scrutiny from domestic, urban and international communities, that are its customers and increasingly scrutinise its operations.

Regulatory Environment: The level of environmental food safety and animal welfare regulation is predicted to increase. The red meat industry's capacity for effective advocacy is compromised due to its vertical and horizontally fragmented structure.

Fragmented Value chain: A high degree of fragmentation undermines the Australian red meat industry's capacity to respond to consumer demands and market effectively.

The report noted infectious livestock disease pose a major risk to food safety, production and market access. Price wars between the domestic supermarket duopoly have the potential to reduce prices below the cost of production and undermine production.

Recommendations

The report recommends the industry firstly identifies these risks and plans a coordinated response. The key element in the response is to expand and maintain closer horizontal and vertical working relationship within industry. The next step is to improve communication with government and to actively engage at the international level. At the same time, the report says, the industry needs to invest in operational efficiency to improve productivity and reduce costs. Marketing, monitoring the activities of competitive proteins and reducing its environmental impact are also priority activities.

The full report is available on the AMPC website: www.ampc.com.au ■

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Be sure to write your name, address and phone number and ANSWER clearly.

Last issues winners see page 19

“ _____ ”

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N	S	Q	U	A	R	E	M	E	A	T	E	R	S	B	R	E	E	P	Y	I
G	D	H	L	M	N	D	K	R	A	P	E	L	K	C	E	P	S	I	A	G
U	R	E	O	I	A	O	B	E	L	G	I	A	N	B	L	U	E	N	W	H
S	O	E	X	R	N	I	V	S	I	A	L	O	R	A	H	C	B	Z	O	L
D	U	I	D	T	T	C	N	E	L	I	M	O	U	S	I	N	A	G	L	A
H	G	L	B	P	E	H	O	E	D	W	E	L	S	H	B	L	Z	A	L	N
E	H	A	R	P	O	R	O	L	A	H	B	W	V	E	L	O	A	U	A	D
I	T	T	A	R	O	L	S	R	N	N	T	U	O	S	A	P	D	E	G	I
V	M	N	N	T	Y	L	L	T	N	R	J	U	L	C	C	E	A	R	D	A
K	A	E	G	S	N	A	L	P	U	F	E	O	O	L	K	N	I	O	E	I
C	S	M	U	S	R	E	L	A	S	D	R	D	U	S	A	E	S	L	T	N
E	T	M	S	A	N	T	A	G	E	R	T	R	U	D	I	S	E	L	L	A
L	E	I	D	E	V	O	N	T	Y	E	R	G	Y	A	R	R	U	M	E	M
F	R	S	A	E	N	I	A	T	I	U	Q	A	D	E	D	N	O	L	B	E
G	E	L	B	V	I	E	H	S	T	C	H	I	A	N	I	N	A	E	S	T

Find the hidden words TO WIN

one of SIX SWIBO KNIVES

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| HIGHLAND | BRANGUS |
| ANGUS | PINZGAUER |
| BULL | BRITISH WHITE |
| SHORTHORN | MURRAY GREY |
| PLANS | CHIANINA |
| CHAROLAIS | MAINE ANJOU |
| STUD | DEVON |
| LIMOUSIN | LINCOLN RED |
| TE MANIA | DROUGHTMASTER |
| BAZADAISE | WELSH BLACK |
| POLL | FLECKVEIH |
| LOWLINE | SQUARE MEATERS |
| SENEPOL | COW |
| BELGIAN BLUE | SPECKLE PARK |
| SALERS | SIMMENTAL |
| BELTED GALLOWAY | SOUTH DEVON |
| SANTA GERTRUDIS | DEXTER |
| BLONDE D'AQUITAINE | GELBIEH |
| RED POLL | |

YOUR NAME: _____

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THANK YOU to all the entrants

Don't forget to try your hand at this month's puzzle (above) and make sure you include your contact details when you send your entry to:

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