

AUSTRALIAN MeatNews

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World Steak Challenge
foodpro wrap-up
EKKA celebrates 140th





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The recently completed Royal International Convention Centre has transformed the old Industrial Pavillion for EKKAs 140th. Photo Courtesy RNA

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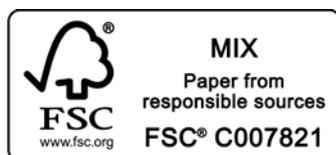
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AIRAH's essential Refrigeration event for 2018



The must-attend event on the industry calendar – AIRAH's Refrigeration 2018 Conference – will be held in Sydney next March. The conference committee is now calling for abstracts.

The two-day conference will take place over March 26–27 next year.

“We're always conscious of the “R” in AIRAH,” says AIRAH CEO Tony Gleeson, M.AIRAH. “Since 1920 when the Institute was first established, the issues surrounding refrigeration have been of critical importance to the organisation. And this remains the case today. The Refrigeration 2018 Conference will see discussion of the most important issues facing the industry: everything from the HFC phase-down and low-GWP synthetic refrigerants, to energy-performance benchmarking and heat pumps. “I strongly encourage anyone with a story to tell to contribute to Refrigeration 2018 and be part of the bigger narrative.”

The conference committee is now calling for abstracts on an array of subjects, including but not limited to:

The Australian and international HFC phase-down

- Future thinking – the path towards carbon neutrality by 2050
- Low-GWP synthetic refrigerants
- Energy efficiency and sustainability
- Energy efficiency of low-GWP synthetic refrigerants
- Energy-performance benchmarking
- Transcritical CO₂ systems and the Australian climate
- Refrigerant inventory reduction
- Legislation/standards/licencing/training – developments in Australia and internationally
- Environmental impacts of synthetic, low-GWP refrigerants
- Risk management associated with the use of flammable refrigerants
- Project case studies
- Re-use and recycling of refrigerants – environmental benefits/the importance of meeting standards
- Heat pumps.

The conference organisers are also looking for site visit locations for the conference. When submitting an abstract, speakers are agreeing to submit a technical paper and PowerPoint presentation should their application to present be successful. The conference committee has the final say on accepted presentations. All submissions must include a 300-word abstract, a 100-word condensed abstract,

100-word biography and high-resolution author photo. Abstracts should be emailed to conferences@airah.org.au by Friday, 22 September 2017. ■

MSA online benchmark checker

The new MSA online benchmarking tool is available through www.mymssa.com.au and provides producers with the opportunity to benchmark their cattle's compliance and index results against other producers in their region, state or across the country. MSA Program Manager Sarah Strachan said the new tool provides producers with a more complete picture, beyond feedback on their own individual business performance.

"Benchmarking allows producers to see if they are matching, lagging or exceeding industry averages for MSA performance," Ms Strachan said. "The ability for producers to localise their performance and measure their compliance against data from their own region is a significant feature of the new tool. "We know that there is considerable variation between regions for the type of cattle and feedbase which can make it difficult to get an effective localised comparison.

"In the event that a consignment has a high level of non-compliance, a producer will be able to see whether this was an individual problem or potentially a broader issue in their area. This could assist in identifying potential causes and solutions."

The MSA benchmarking feature is an extension of the 2015 Australian Beef Eating Quality Audit, which established for the first time in Australian history a baseline for beef eating quality, based on MSA grading results for more than 3.2 million cattle from the 2014-15 financial year.

Producers can access the new benchmarking tool through their myMSA account.

For more information contact MSA: msaenquiries@mla.com.au ■

Food packaging company Krehalon enters the Oceania market

Krehalon Australia Pty was opened in November 2015 following a recent global expansion to offer maximum flexibility in servicing Oceania markets.

The newly built site is based in Truganina, Melbourne and offers local packaging print options and conversion of packaging films into ready bags based on customer requirements as well as national temperature controlled warehousing infrastructure in both Australia and New Zealand.

This expansion is closely linked to the sales growth of Krehalon's high barrier and secondary seal (SSL™) materials which help to maximise shelf life and visual appeal of fresh meats, making them ideal for extended shelf life beef exports. In addition, Krehalon's puncture resistant packaging solutions are well-suited for the most demanding bone-in

applications and address the need for technically strong, leaker proof packaging.

Over the last decade Krehalon have focused on developing automated Shrink Bag Replacement (SBR™) solutions that challenge traditional thinking and offer superior operational efficiency through cost reduction and pack differentiation. The patented structures and innovation differentiation of Krehalon's products is what promises to bring the company quick sales expansion within Oceania and to challenge competitors' offerings within the region.

Krehalon Australia Pty is BRC, ISO and HACCP certified to meet the highest food safety and hygiene standards.

Krehalon is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kureha Corporation, a Japanese specialty chemicals and plastics manufacturer with annual revenues exceeding 1.2 billion. Krehalon have direct access into most Western European countries, USA and have a well-established worldwide distribution network. The opening of Krehalon Australia follows Kureha's growth strategy to expand business presence in markets with growth potential. ■

Price Shock for Pork Industry

In a recent industry presentation, CEO of Australian Pork, Andrew Spencer assured that the 'Australian pork industry remains sound, despite the significant challenges facing the sector'.

The industry is suffering price shock as a result of an unprecedented downturn brought on by increases in imported processed pork products, particularly in ribs, bellies and value-add products that compete directly with local product into the hospitality sector.

The industry has invested in a renewed advertising campaign, market assessment and reviewing strategies to help producers meet the challenges that are leaving some in the red.

"We have started weekly processed pig number updates to provide producers with a timely view of national pork volumes and we are working with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to improve import statistics so we can better understand newer pork import volumes."

"We have invested an extra \$1 million in advertising to drive Australian fresh pork sales and launched advertisements promoting Australian ribs. We are also collaborating with restaurant chains to negotiate supply arrangements that benefit the sector such as the agreement with Hog's Breath Café, who exclusively offer Australian pork on their menu," he said.

Mr Spencer said despite the challenges facing the Australian pork industry, pork remains the second most consumed meat in Australia and its future is bright. "The path to growth is rarely smooth and APL will work to cultivate global export markets and support continued cost reduction and productivity through effective RD&E so the industry can prosper into the future." ■

The Global rollercoaster of meat prices and affordability

A survey of global meat prices and affordability identifies commercial opportunities, social disadvantage and challenges for producers, processors and exporters in the management of global food chains.

A survey of meat prices, by UK based catering management company Caterwings, found meat prices by country and specie vary significantly across the world. For example, beef mince costs US\$20.81 per kilo in Switzerland and US\$2.33 in India. Looks like India gets a bargain till you consider wages. Swiss can earn enough to buy a kilo of mince in less than three hours while an India has to work for more than 20 hours.

The Caterwings index reports prices and cost indices from 52 countries. It can be viewed at: www.caterwings.co.uk/caterers/2017-meat-price-index-usd/

An extract of the table, listing the price and affordability data for selected countries that have cultural and trade links with the Australian meat industry, asks more questions than it answers, and suggests we might need more social and market research.

About Caterwings

Caterwings is a B2B catering market platform. Founded in 2015, the company helps people looking for a catering service to find the caterer most suited to their needs. It matches customers to caterers, and at the same time promotes the services of its handpicked suppliers. Caterwings is currently active in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. More information is available at: www.caterwings.co.uk

About the Caterwings Meat Price Index 2017

Caterwings commissioned a survey into the relative price of foods to assist with its understanding of food prices and consumption patterns to assist with its business expansion. Initial results showed that meat prices were highly variable between specie and country and further investigation showed that, irrespective of the absolute price, affordability was equally or even more variable between countries and species. This led to a more detailed analysis and the publication of the Index.

The table can be viewed in many ways. For a beef exporter, on first inspection the South Korean market may have some potential with beef being much more expensive, in dollar terms, than in Japan and China. But how sensitive is the Korean market if quality is compromised? How sensitive is the market to a price increase, given beef is expensive already? Will they just buy more chicken that is about a quarter of the price of beef?

The domestic price, in dollar terms, of beef, in potential global competitors; Brazil and Argentina is about half the price in Australia. And in terms of work it takes locals three to four times as long to buy a kilo of beef as in Australia. If these countries got their export act together, what would be the impact on the global beef trade, given their low meat prices and wages?

Beef is relatively cheap in live export destinations such as Vietnam and Indonesia. What is the price upside in Indonesia when a local has to work two and a half days to buy a kilo of beef? But on the other hand, with a population of 260 million, the richest 10% represent a population as big as Australia's. What's the potential there? Again, the rest can eat chicken that is about the a third the price of beef.

European meat prices in dollar terms and labour time are similar to those in Australia. Is there any upside for exports to the UK and EU given their meat consumption is already 70-90kg/head/year – probably the upper limit for a healthy diet?

Subsidised US pork in the US sells for about the same price as unsubsidised pork produced in Australia. What are the implications for Australian producers when the US government lobbies Australian politicians to allow fresh pork imports to Australia from the US?

What is the upside for Russia, with its population of 143 million and its relatively poor economic position?

The data can be interpreted to suggest that the demand for meat exported to many countries is underpinned by social and economic inequality in the importing country – demand generated by the rich as opposed to the middle class. How vulnerable are these market segments in volatile economic and political times? ■

INTERNATIONAL RETAIL MEAT PRICES AND AFFORDABILITY

COUNTRY	PER CAPITA GDP 2016 (A)	BEEF					LAMB					PORK					CHICKEN			TOTAL MEAT CONSUMPTION (D) kg/person/year
		ROUND \$/kg (B)	LOIN \$/kg (B)	MINCE \$/kg (B)	Hours Work to buy 1kg (C)	Diff to Global Average Cost % (E)	CHOP \$/kg (B)	Hours Work to buy 1kg (C)	Diff to Global Average Cost % (E)	CHOP \$/kg (B)	SAUSAGE \$/kg (B)	HAM \$/kg (B)	Hours Work to buy 1kg (C)	Diff to Global Average Cost % (E)	BREAST \$/kg (B)	LEG \$/kg (B)	Hours Work to buy 1kg (C)	Diff to Global Average Cost % (E)		
Australia	\$48,899	\$12.01	\$40.60	\$8.21	1.5	13.5	\$23.04	1.7	28.8	\$9.19	\$10.39	\$26.92	1.2	20.2	\$11.22	\$5.99	0.6	44.2	111.5	
United States	\$57,436	\$11.92	\$38.48	\$7.59	2.6	8.2	\$22.93	3.1	28.2	\$9.27	\$10.87	\$25.36	2.1	17.6	\$8.82	\$4.70	0.9	13.3	84.2	
Japan	\$41,275	\$17.18	\$56.18	\$11.93	4.3	59.1	\$31.39	4.7	75.6	\$14.65	\$11.96	\$29.01	2.8	43.7	\$8.13	\$4.91	1	9.2	45.9	
South Korea	\$37,740	\$21.65	\$57.72	\$17.77	5.7	81.2	\$17.58	3.1	-1.7	\$8.87	\$5.99	\$39.55	3.2	40.6	\$8.14	\$7.98	1.4	35.1	58.6	
China	\$15,399	\$10.96	\$33.60	\$5.53	18.9	-6.6	\$21.39	24.3	19.6	\$14.83	\$7.42	\$24.46	17.7	20.7	\$2.77	\$3.81	3.7	-44.9	58.2	
New Zealand	\$37,294	\$11.22	\$43.33	\$9.70	1.9	19.9	\$12.45	1.1	-30.4	\$9.00	\$10.71	\$35.05	1.6	41.5	\$10.12	\$8.21	0.8	53.5	106.4	
Argentina	\$20,047	\$8.20	\$23.37	\$4.29	4.2	-33.1	\$11.89	4.1	-33.5	\$8.13	\$9.49	\$24.82	4.9	9.7	\$5.19	\$4.33	1.7	-20.3	98.3	
Brazil	\$15,242	\$7.60	\$13.93	\$4.11	5.5	-52.2	\$8.37	5.4	-53.2	\$4.39	\$5.66	\$5.03	3.2	-61	\$3.59	\$2.80	2.1	-46.5	85.3	
Canada	\$46,437	\$10.45	\$40.25	\$9.60	2.5	12.5	\$29.90	3.6	67.2	\$10.10	\$8.36	\$20.50	1.6	0.7	\$9.97	\$8.34	1.1	53.3	94.3	
India	\$6,616	\$4.73	\$13.69	\$2.33	22.8	-61.3	\$9.71	32	-45.7	\$5.17	\$6.26	\$24.47	39.4	-7.2	\$3.26	\$3.13	10.5	-46.5	4.4	
Indonesia	\$11,720	\$9.01	\$21.11	\$4.31	23.6	-35.8	\$9.26	19.1	-48.2	-	-	-	-	-	\$3.33	\$3.79	7.3	-40.3	11.6	
Vietnam	\$6,429	\$10.58	\$23.44	\$4.81	20	-27.6	\$10.19	15.7	-4.3	\$3.90	\$8.90	\$11.36	12.4	-37.6	\$3.99	\$2.86	5.3	-42.6	49.9	
Switzerland	\$59,561	\$49.68	\$63.13	\$20.81	3.1	149.3	\$48.91	3.4	173.5	\$20.39	\$20.95	\$41.92	2	115.1	\$27.14	\$11.32	1.4	222.1	74.7	
United Kingdom	\$42,481	\$10.46	\$40.55	\$7.24	1.9	8.7	\$15.19	1.5	-15	\$6.56	\$6.54	\$19.09	1	-16.8	\$8.85	\$3.05	0.6	-0.4	84.2	
Germany	\$48,111	\$11.26	\$45.99	\$9.18	2.2	23.9	\$24.11	2.4	34.8	\$8.04	\$8.20	\$19.79	1.2	-6.9	\$8.47	\$3.16	0.6	-2.6	88.1	
Italy	\$36,833	\$17.41	\$45.01	\$8.14	4.1	31.6	\$17.69	3.1	-1.1	\$8.01	\$8.10	\$15.85	1.8	-17.4	\$8.20	\$4.06	1.1	2.7	90.7	
Russia	\$26,490	7.65	\$23.63	\$3.82	21.8	-34.5	\$16.60	30.9	-7.1	\$6.94	\$7.62	\$14.41	18	-25.1	\$3.96	\$3.45	6.9	-37.9	69.2	

A Per capita GDP: IMF data 2016 Units are International dollars. This figure provides an indication of individual incomes. Note this figure takes no account of income distribution

B Retail price: US\$ converted from local currency July 2017

C Based on minimum wage/hourly rates specified by each country

D Per capita consumption all meats combined (including fish) in kg carcase weight. Note this unit tends to over state meat consumption in absolute terms but provides a fair measure for comparison.

E This ratio provides a ranking for the price of each meat. The "average" is 0. Australian retail beef prices are on average 13.5% above the global average

The world steaks are high

The recent World Steak Challenge, now in its third year, once again has shown that quality meat is a winner.

Hosted by William Reed Media in the UK, the idea behind the World Steak Challenge is for the world's best steak producers and suppliers to compare themselves to other nations.

To achieve the highest score for a steak, the entries are judged on appearance, aroma, colour and marbling in its raw form. The second stage is the eating qualities, where the steaks are cooked to 'medium' with a core temperature between 50-55 degrees Celsius and rested for five minutes. A second score is given based on appearance, aroma, tenderness, flavour and succulence.

Two sub-categories are offered – grain fed and grass fed beef. The choice of cut submitted is up to the entrant, with rib-eye, fillet and sirloin the principle choices.

In its first year, the event attracted entries from ten countries; the second year it grew to 17 countries. This year, it remained at 17 countries but the number of entries nearly doubled on last year to 150. To be eligible, the supplier needs to be EU accredited, so as a consequence many entries are European based, but the major beef exporting countries North America, Canada, Australia, Brazil and New Zealand are all represented.

Judges are from all over the world – many from the UK and Europe, but also South America and South Africa and Australia – including Sam Burke who is corporate chef and food service business manager with MLA.



The world's best in steak for the 3rd World Steak Challenge. Reproduced by permission of globalmeatnews.com. © William Reed Business Media Ltd 2017.



Patrick Warmoll, managing director Jack's Creek says the World Steak Challenge is a great way to measure yourself against the world's best.

This year, the overall winner was won by ABP Poland, with a rib-eye grain fed Limousin cross bred beef grown in Poland. In the taste test section, Australia's Jack's Creek wagyu took out the World's Best Fillet award, two gold medals, a silver and three bronze for their Black Angus.

"Interest in this unique event is really taking off, as competing countries square off against each other to claim the ultimate international accolade for steak, and the promotional benefits that go with that," said Rod Addy, editor of GlobalMeatNews and media partner for the event.

"Entrants recognise the benefits of receiving gold, silver and bronze medals, representing the seal of approval from an independent panel of leading experts, encompassing award journalists, chefs and master butchers."

The team at Jack's Creek is no stranger to the World Steak Challenge, having taken out the main title win for the past two years.

Since the 1940s, Jack's Creek has been a farming operation of mostly Angus cattle, but in 1991, the Warmoll family began a breeding program for grain fed Wagyu, processing the first product at Northern Co-operative Meat Company at Casino in 1996 when the Jack's Creek brand was born. Since then, the business has developed two Wagyu and two Black Angus programs, two of which are EU accredited. The company exports around the world, including Europe.

"In 2015, our German distributor, Albers GmbH, mentioned that the competition was on, and suggested we give it a go," said managing director of Jack's Creek, Patrick Warmoll. "We knew that William Reed Media had done the World's 50 Best Restaurants, so we had nothing to lose by entering.

"We entered a 450 day Wagyu with a marble score of 8-9 on a striploin and a Black Angus with a marble score of 3+ on



The judging panel tasted around 150 steaks to find a winner. Reproduced by permission of globalmeatnews.com. © William Reed Business Media Ltd 2017.

150 days with another distributor, Zandbergen. And we won overall. In the second year, we won a silver for a striploin Angus and achieved a gold and silver plus another overall winner.

“This year, the competition was extended to include two new cuts – tenderloin (fillet) and rib-eye (scotch), plus the original striploin. We won two gold, a silver and three bronze. It was the most medals won by an Australian entrant.”

For Jack’s Creek, the awards and medals have taken the company from recognition by suppliers in Europe to a household name for the consumer. Where once the Jack’s Creek beef was listed on menus as Australian Black Angus or Wagyu, it is now openly advertised as Jack’s Creek.

The Warmoll family knew that their product was good and were happy to advertise it as a premium product, but with the awards it is validation that they are producing quality Australian beef.

Patrick says that Jack’s Creek will enter again next year, to support the competition as well as to compare their product against the world’s best. However, he does acknowledge, that as the competition gets higher, the odds of such success again may be tougher.

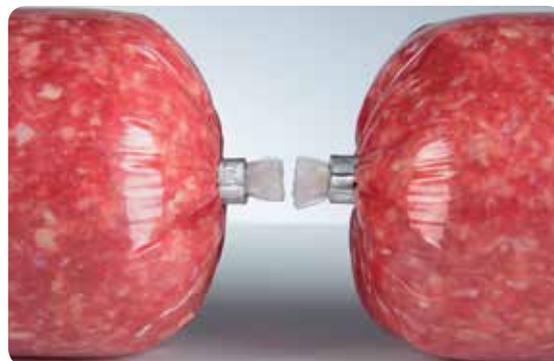
What it does give Jack’s Creek and Australian beef as a whole is recognition of what this country is capable of producing. Once viewed as the underdog, Patrick sees that Australia is now achieving high recognition around the world at a consumer level.

“In the end we are a flavour business,” says Patrick. “As we continue to grow from a boutique supplier to a commercial level, we want to ensure that every steak has the same consistent flavour, every time. Through flavour we can connect with the customer and they start to talk about their experience with our wagyu and angus. We have to be able to deliver on those accolades in a variety of markets.”

continued on page 10



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World's Best Steak/Producer 2017							
SCE Code	Entrant Company Name	Producer Company Name	Country of Origin	Steak Cut	Breed	Feed Regime	Age at time of Slaughter
SCE-0056	ABP Poland	ABP Poland	Poland	Sirloin	Limousin Cross	Grain-fed	29 months

SCE Code	Category Name	Entrant Company Name	Producer Company Name	Country of origin	Steak Cut	Breed	Feed Regime	Age at Time of Slaughter
SCE-0102	World's Best Fillet Steak	Albers GmbH	Jack's Creek	Australia	Fillet	Wagyu 75% Angus 25%	Grain-fed	30 months
SCE-0055	World's Best Rib eye Steak	ABP Poland	ABP Poland	Poland	Rib Eye	Limousin Cross	Grain-fed	29 months
SCE-0056	World's Best Sirloin Steak	ABP Poland	ABP Poland	Poland	Sirloin	Limousin Cross	Grain-fed	29 months
SCE-0056	World's Best Grain-fed Steak	ABP Poland	ABP Poland	Poland	Sirloin	Limousin Cross	Grain-fed	29 months
SCE-0087	World's Best Grass-fed Steak	Martins Meats	Martins Meats	England	Rib Eye	Longhorn x	Grass-fed	29 months

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May the Smoke be with you

“Barbecue is the enlightened application of heat, smoke, spices and ingenuity to protein, fruit and vegetables ... out of doors,” so says the author of *Heat and Smoke*, Bob Hart.

Hart, a Melbourne-based barbecue expert, says that most Australians have no real concept of what it is to barbecue, declaring that ‘the output from the average Aussie Barbie, more often than not, appalling.’

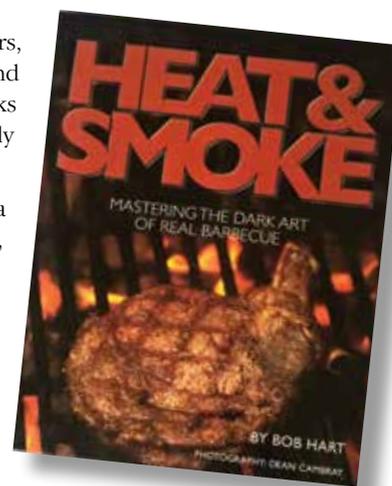
The Australian form of barbecue is more akin to grilling, while the word originated from the Caribbean meaning ‘sacred fire pit’ where the sacrificial meat is cooked at a slow heat with plenty of smoke. The type of barbecue technique that has made its way to our shores by many ex-pat Americans.

The book is aimed at the basics, there is no ‘101 ways to grill tedious stuff on sticks’, just an explanation of equipment, rubs and marinades, coal and wood chips. And meats – seafood including oysters, mussels and salmon, moving onto beef cuts like T-bone, brisket, ribs; pork – pulled of course. Lamb as a butterflied leg and ribs, finishing with a classic roast chook. Or maybe try duck.

If you don’t make friends with salad, try some barbecued veggies – corn and asparagus work well, mushrooms are terrific, then whack in some apples, pears or pineapple

for the Queenslanders, for dessert. And marshmallows on sticks for the kids – the only concession to sticks.

Each recipe is given a full page photograph, clear, no-nonsense instructions and the appropriate sauce and marinade to go with the cut, as well as how to set up the smoker (and which one is best to use).



First published in 2011 by Heartbeat Media, *Heat & Smoke* is a great introduction for the butcher and home-based barbecue cook (and not the charcoaled sausage variety). It is readily available at around \$20-\$25 depending where you go.

Bob Hart has also developed the Australian Barbecue Academy, to give master classes in the dark art. Go to <http://www.australianbarbecueacademy.com> for more information. (see competition details on page 39) ■

Christmas Carols? Not this year, it's all about ennio's Butchers' 'Wrap'...

...Christmas is coming and ennio has the wrap, don't worry about choices, we've taken care of that.

A festive pack with compact sizes for your hams, make them stand out and the rest'll look like spam.

Talk to your distributor, they'll know what it's about, your Christmas display will soon sell your hams out.

The ennio Festive Pack is filled with variety galore
Your hams will be so fancy, definitely not a bore...

In usual ennio-style, this year brings you something a little bit different. This Christmas is no exception, with a unique line up of festive finishes ensuring your bone-in, boneless and rolled roast hams will stand out from the rest with a range of Christmas colours and decorative designs, enriching your customers' festive feast with memorable flair.

Introducing ennio's Festive Variety Pack; a box designed specifically for butchers and small ham producers. With a selection of compact sizes of each Christmas variety, your hams will be flying out the door in a flash of fancy festive colour. The range of small rolls allowing you to sample the various varieties ennio offers for Christmas, rather than requiring the choice of one item due to large format minimum orders.

Included in the Variety Pack*:

Tinsel-Net – 25m roll

Spring-Net – 50m roll

Diamond-Net – 3 ready to apply units

Smoke-Net – 25 ready to apply units

Spolette – 1 unit

Rigid / Elastic String – 1 cone

Information booklet for each product

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Don't delay your enquiries/pre-orders with your local distributor; you don't want to miss out on seeing your ham's flying out the door. Go ahead, Ham it up this Christmas!

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The EKKA commemorates 140th anniversary

By Stephanie Flynn

The 140th anniversary of Queensland's Royal Show, colloquially known as the EKKA, was commemorated last month at a gala launch highlighting the broad array of agriculturally-connected events offered to nearly half a million visitors for 10 days in August annually.

Owned and operated by the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland (RNA), today's EKKA includes thousands of exhibits, 10,000 animals, entertainment and celebrates Queensland's fibre, food and wine produce with major competitions.

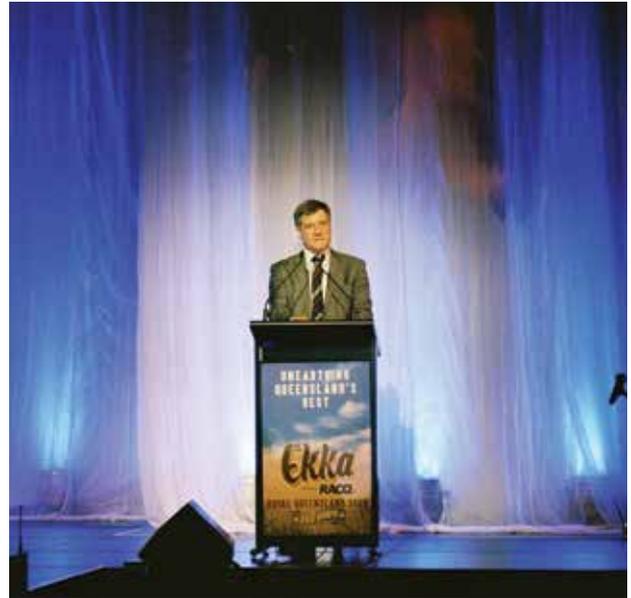
It's central charter – to celebrate and champion the essential role played by agriculture in the state – is as relevant today as it was in 1876 when the first show, then known as the Intercolonial Exhibition, was held at Bowen Park, a 68-hectare site still in use today.

The Intercolonial Exhibition of 1876 attracted 17,000 of Brisbane's then 22,000 population who attended in the finest garments and suits and received the first showbag – a bag of coal – at no charge.

The exhibition received a warrant from His Majesty King George V to change its name to the Royal show in 1921.

The EKKA has been held every year since inception except for 1919, when Brisbane suffered an epidemic of the Spanish Influenza, and in 1942 when the showgrounds were used as a staging depot for troops heading north during World War II.

Speaking at the anniversary launch, David Thomas, Chief Executive Officer of the modern EKKA said that it is the collective spirit of the community of Queensland that has made the event stand the test of time.



David Thomas, CEO of the EKKA

“Bringing the country to the city has been and will always be what the EKKA is about,” Mr Thomas said.

“It is an event based entirely on community spirit because it is an event in which everyday people dedicate their time and expertise, it connects Queenslanders from all regions and of all ages and from all walks of life.

“It has been a mainstay constant in the lives of countless generations because, in a world of everchanging disruption, the EKKA maintains is heritage and traditions,” he said.

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The official party, including Sir John and Lady Goodwin at the 1929 Royal Show
Photo Courtesy Queensland State Archives



Judging Brahmans at the 1972 Royal Show
Photo Courtesy Queensland State Archives



An aerial view of the Grand Parade of Livestock at the 1958 Royal Show
Photo Courtesy Queensland State Archives

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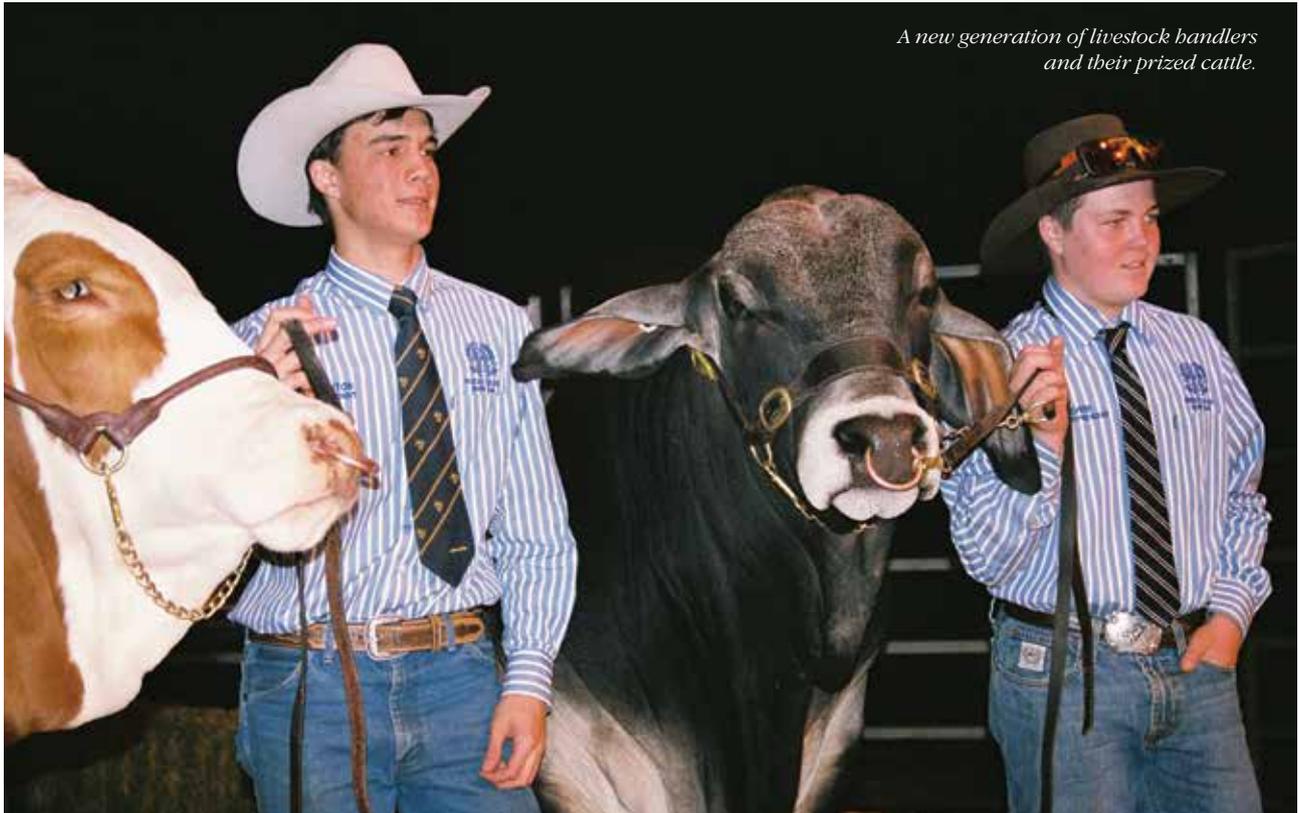
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A new generation of livestock handlers and their prized cattle.

Over 30 million people have attended the EKKA since 1876 and have seen some notable highlights and participated in unique competitions during the nearly century and a half, many of which indicate how social norms have changed.

A key event in 1876 was a competition for the best sample of five tonne manure, deodorised and prepared in the most economical form of use.

During the Great Depression, new entertainment introduced included goat races that attracted 100 competitors in one show.

In 1966, the expanding entertainment line-up include the Zachini family 'human cannon ball' act with the father coordinating and the mother firing their children across the ring into a net.

The EKKA is of such importance to the agricultural industries and people of Queensland that the RNA is keenly aware of the need to remain both relevant and economically sustainable.

The RNA is in the process of undertaking a major upgrade of the showgrounds and a redevelopment of a portion of its prime real estate site, located 1.5km from Brisbane's CBD.

The Showground upgrade includes the now completed state-of-the-art Royal International Convention Centre which has transformed the old Industrial Pavilion.

The 15-year regeneration project spanning 22 hectares of the site also includes residential apartments, a commercial zone



Food is an integral Part of the modern EKKA.

and the creation of 'King Street' a new restaurant, hotel and entertainment precinct.

The redevelopment, funded by Lend Lease in association with the RNA, has an estimated project value of \$2.9 billion. ■



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Winners at foodpro 2017

This year's foodpro, held in Sydney in July has given exhibitors and visitors an insight into where the food manufacturing business is headed.

Plenty of the regular exhibitors from previous years were on hand, plus some interesting new additions. Multivac and Sealed Air were a tie for the best overall stand, while Columbit Foods won the award for best stand under 100m2.

Diversified Communciations event director Peter Petherick was exceptionally happy with the outcome, "foodpro 2017 was the best we've had, absolutely," he said, "It was marvellous seeing the show floors so busy with visitors so engaged in what was on offer.

"From demonstrations of the larger equipment to ingredients exhibitors showing new additives – there was no shortage of interesting and valuable opportunities available. I can't wait to see what advancements, partnerships and products come from this show."

Athol Economou and Deb Andrich attended the event on behalf of *Australian Meat News*.

continued on page 18



Argus introduced the new Australian team to visitors.



Daniel Wagstaff (R), heads up the team at Austmont, that merges Smo-King and HT Barnes.



Chris and Brad Lawson continue to provide quality products to the meat industry.



Located on two floors, Columbit equipment focused on equipment and the new dealership with Polyclip, while downstairs Columbit Foods gave visitors a taste of ingredients – and took out an award for best stand under 100m².

continued from page 17

The general feeling from exhibitors was positive.

The highlights were:

Equipment: from the enormous for processors, to the smaller retail versions. Investment in the right equipment is still a mainstay for improving quality, productivity and lowering costs.

Traceability and monitoring: continuing drives into automation and more accurate control and measurement of processes.

Coolroom doors: with energy costs set to increase, keeping the cool room and cold chain well sealed will definitely impact on refrigeration costs.

Flavours and casings: competition is spicing up for the warmer months to give butchers the very best range in marinades, rubs and brines. Increasing competition in the casing industry has seen some that are pre-smoked to enhance the flavour of the basic banger. ■



Devro took a different approach to their stand, providing a stylish private meeting room out the back with a few product samples out front.



Using a wall position, Interfood gave excellent access to their information and staff.



Athol Economou (L) and Neil Holmgren talk shop on Bunzl products.



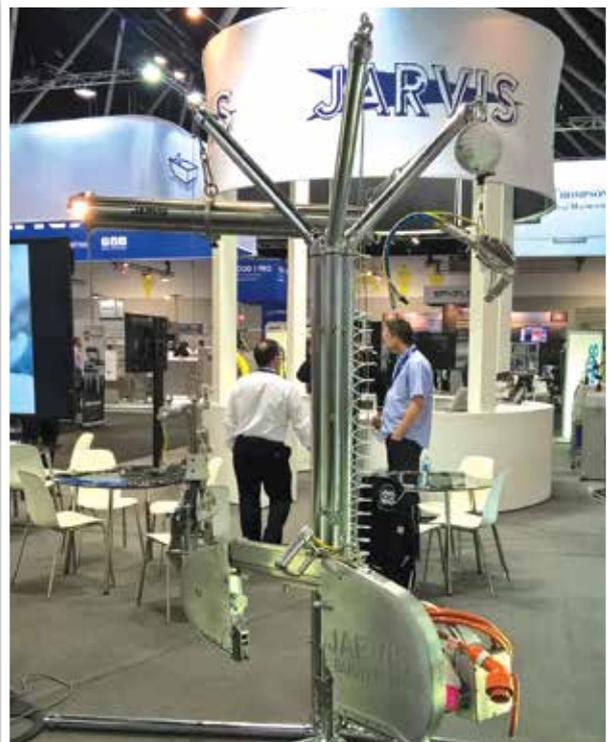
Ennio have new products to showcase in casings and nettings.



Multivac had an enormous stand this year with a huge range of products and services – and a joint win for the best stand overall with Sealed Air.



The fully automated knife sharpening machine was impressive at the Highgate stand.



Known for their processor and abattoir equipment, Jarvis presented tools in what looks like a macabre wind vane arrangement!

continued on page 20



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SSL™ is well-suited for automated packing, particularly Flovac and Form Shrink automated Shrink Bag Replacement (SBR™) applications.

Combining SSL™ with SBR™ will provide a 'step change' in pack presentation whilst driving down real pack costs.

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Flovac films utilising flowrap technology for Shrink Bag Replacement (SBR™).

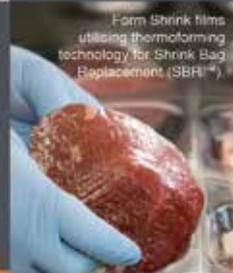
Flovac SSL™ Pack Format

...whilst enjoying all the benefits of packaging automation:

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- ◀ Improved production flow and output
- ◀ Clean hermetically sealed packs
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- ◀ Superior 'skin tight' presentation with no post-shrink relaxation
- ◀ Reduced drip in bag and vac-pack odour
- ◀ Product shelf life extension enhancing the benefits of spray chilling
- ◀ Potential to remove drip pad
- ◀ Potential commercial gains from preserved product weight



Form Shrink films utilising thermoforming technology for Shrink Bag Replacement (SBR™).

Form Shrink SSL™ Pack Format



ML40 SSL™ Shrink Bag Format (right) Without SSL™ (left)

SSL™ is available in combination with all of the below pack formats:

- ◀ ML40 Shrink Bags
- ◀ Form Shrink Films
- ◀ Flovac Films

continued from page 19



Newly Weds were focused on flavours and ingredients for butchers – the stand gave the feel of a butcher shop.



In the land of the giants, Pacific Meats presented some of the biggest equipment available.



Temperature Tech, Kirsten and Katrina (R) continue to provide quality temperature logger devices.



Michael Bellstedt of Minus40 gives expertise in refrigeration systems.

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Bimbella Beef: a story of challenges, opportunities, adaptability and growth

The Weir Family are farmers by trade, who sold some of their beef and lamb, to the locals. They successfully increased their income from their livestock operation. But then, to meet demand and facilitate boning, packaging and the production of value added products they bought a butcher shop. But the butcher shop needed product 24/7 - and the whole supply chain, including the farm, had to be reorganised accordingly.

By Tamara Whitsed

Joe and Sue Weir celebrated the first birthday of their award-winning butcher shop, Bimbella Beef, in August 2017. The business is located in Deniliquin, New South Wales, and sources 100% of its beef and lamb from the Weir's

But for many customers, a side of beef was simply too much meat. In 2011 the Weirs began selling at local farmers markets and eventually at markets as far away as Rutherglen and Bendigo in Victoria. Farmers markets allowed them to sell specific cuts and smaller quantities. But they still had the challenge of dealing with the less popular cuts.

The solution was again value adding. Their market stand had a small BBQ where customers could sample products and then buy them to take home. "That's when the Riverina Rissoles came into action," Sue said. Her popular recipe included beef mince, fresh carrot, parsley and onion. These were a hit with customers, as were their lamb rissoles.

"Farmers markets kept our head above water and it kept cash flow going and it justified stocking the property. But it also forced us into a very regimented livestock growth and finishing program," Sue said. "It meant changing the way we did things on the farm."

Farm production had been geared-up and specialised in response to the need to service their farmers market



Joab Weir, David Bridge, Sue Weir and John Allitt with the Deniliquin Business Chamber 2017 Outstanding New Business Award.

demands. Cattle and sheep were initially trucked and processed at Gathercoles, 150km away at Wangaratta. Carcasses were boned out and packaged at several butcher shops in Deniliquin.

By 2016 the Weirs' reliance on spare processing and storing capacity in local butcher shops was making it difficult to satisfy their customers' demand for products. "We wanted to be able to increase our sales without that restriction," Sue said. At about the same time, the opportunity arose to take over a recently closed butcher shop in Deniliquin

The Weirs' experience with farmers' markets gave them the confidence to take this step. "It gave us the confidence to open the shop knowing we had a range of meats and value add products that we knew we could sell," Sue said.

Supply and Consistent Quality

Joe Weir is a fifth generation farmer. He has turned his farm into a dedicated cattle growing and finishing operation. Throughout the year he buys cattle at around 150-200kg live weight through AuctionsPlus, saleyards and direct from

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farms. He prefers Angus, Herefords and Murray Greys because of their temperament and maturity pattern.

The farm provided about 50 lambs and 25 head of cattle a month. "We need to be able to get consistent quality 365 days a year," Sue said.

These young cattle go onto a controlled grazing program, on perennial pastures at their Blighty property, which has more than 50 paddocks. At about 300kg live-weight, Joe carefully introduces them to grain to maintain growth rates in the off-season and to finish them to the required fat cover. Joe typically achieves 2.5kg daily weight gain and aims to finish cattle at 370-400kg live-weight. He finishes about 15 or 20 cattle each week. The best four to eight are processed for the shop and the balance sold.

The Weirs breed their own sheep. To meet the weekly demands for the shop they lamb twice a year. They buy-in store lambs to grow-out and finish to ensure year-round supply.

Every week Joe loads four to eight head of cattle and around a dozen sheep into his truck. He also collects three or four pigs from Donaldson Pork near Deniliquin and takes this mixed load to either Gathercoles at Wangaratta or Riverside Meats at Echuca.

The carcasses are returned to the Deniliquin shop and broken down by butcher David Bridge and apprentices Joab Weir and John Allitt. Sue values David's experience and ability. "It's very important when you get someone who is highly skilled like David that he's actually passing on the



All beef sold at the Bimbella Beef butcher shop has been sourced from the owners' farm at nearby Blighty.



Butcher, David Bridge, was impressed by the Weir family's vision and eagerly joined the Bimbella Beef team.

trade," says Sue who is impressed David can break down a body of beef in less than 10 minutes. Chicken from Hazeldenes at Bendigo completes the meat range with kiev and schnitzels providing popular easy meal options.

Local Produce

David says one of the most satisfying aspects of his job is the focus on local produce. As well as the local beef, lamb and pork, the shop sells local vegetables, fruit, eggs, raisins and olive oil. Sue uses local products in her ready-made meals that are prepared in the shop's kitchen and sold frozen. The most popular ready-made meals are butter chicken, lasagne and shepherd's pie.

All trim is packed and sold as pet mince – another value adding opportunity.

Sue believes their "can-do" attitude and her determination to say 'Yes' to every request has helped build relationships and contributed to the growth of the business. "Many of our customers are adventurous with their food, so they're looking for a butcher who is adventurous with them," Sue said.

Bimbella Beef also offers catering and Sue says demand for this service is growing. She has catered for weddings, engagements and birthday parties for up to 150 people. Her customers usually ask for roasts in the winter and cold meat platters in summer.

Sue is grateful for the support Bimbella Beef has received from the Deniliquin community, and proud that they won the Deniliquin Business Chamber, 2017 Outstanding New Business Award.

She is not daunted by the challenges Bimbella Beef might face in the future because she believes problems lead to new opportunities. "Change is a really good thing," Sue said. ■

Milmeq and Nolan Meats collaborate for plant expansion

An enduring partnership between companies in the meat processing sector has resulted in a large-scale project built to a completely unique brief.

Food processing plant equipment provider Milmeq and Gympie-based meat processor Nolan Meats have continued their 18-year relationship in development of their new post-slaughter facility, to allow the company to chill, freeze and sort their product on site for distribution.

Milmeq assisted with the design and layout of the new facility and installation of the plate freezing component.

The project is the culmination of two years of work, from conceptual design to completion, where both parties were actively involved in every part of the process.

Milmeq product manager Roy Robinson said both Milmeq and Nolan Meats were very hands-on with their approach to the concept design.

“This was a very collaborative process, and we really enjoyed working with Nolan to ensure they were happy with the outcome,” he said.

“It’s not often we have the design completely finalised before installation, but Nolan recognised the importance of considering the project from all aspects and this attention to detail at the design stage allowed for a very smooth project delivery.”

The collaboration meant the project was completely unique to the client, built to fulfil their specifications.

Milmeq draftsperson Carin Mitchell, who worked on the beef slaughter plant design in 1999, said it was great to partner with Nolan again after 18 years.

“I really enjoyed working with Mike Nolan and the team; it’s great to have



all of that input and another set of eyes going across the design,” she said.

“It really highlights Milmeq’s commitment to our clients and how important it is to us to ensure we have ongoing communication, even after several years.”

In line with current export requirements, Nolan Meats required a post-slaughter chilling and freezing facility to be built, in order for all parts of their meat processing operation to remain on one site.

Milmeq provided a plate freezing facility, which has the capacity to freeze 3840 cartons daily.

Unlike other plate freezers, these ones open progressively, allowing cartons of product to be placed in contact with the plates more quickly, optimising the chilling and freezing process.

The plate freezers are fully automated, and the design includes a SCADA system and CCTV, and associated refrigeration infrastructure.

They give 24 hours of guaranteed freeze time – half of the time that the more traditional method of blast freezing would require.

Other benefits that the plate freezers offer Nolan Meats include a compact physical footprint, industry-leading energy efficiency and consistent presentation of flat cartons, which provides a flow-on effect of space saving in shipping containers.

The plate freezers were tailored to meet not only the current demands of the plant, but also designed to allow for future upgrades and increases in the throughput of the plant. ■

Organic has a place in the market

Separating cattle in the saleyards, specialised hay, uncontaminated abattoir washdown water... obeying organic meat supply chain rules demands vigilance.

But is it worth it?

In 2015, an MLA study found that the price premium for organic beef producers was 25%. The study didn't evaluate the premium post-farmgate but a comparison of online supermarket beef prices (see below) reveals an average 12.6% premium on prime cuts at the time of writing this article.

Cut	Non-organic (grass-fed)/kg	Organic/kg	% difference
Porterhouse	\$38	\$44	13.7%
Eye fillet	\$50	\$57	12.3%
Rump	\$30	\$34	11.8%
Mince	\$7-15	\$20-24	65% - 37.5%

Source: Coles online 5pm 10/08/17

The recent stratospheric rise of red meat prices has left the organic premium trailing.

Dalene Wray of OBE Organic Beef said: "The price for conventional high-quality beef is relatively high at the moment, so the price differential is not as high as it might have been in the past." The Brisbane-based MD of a smart-tech marketer of Channel Country beef said: "One of the reasons for this could be that consumers in Australia consider all beef from cattle raised here to be 'clean and green'.

"Consumers in America perceive a significant difference in the quality of organic beef, compared to beef from livestock raised in conventional farming systems in the USA," she said.

Organic meat sales have been gradually on the rise in Australia. Between 2014 and 2016, the percentage of shoppers indicating they buy organic red meat rose 6%, according to the Australian Organic Market Report 2017. The survey found the 5% of shoppers buying organic meat from a butcher shop shifted from 'never' to 'often'.

Between 2010 and 2016 the number of shoppers reporting to have bought organic meat in the past 12 months rose from 33% to 42% although there was a trend to less-frequent buying. And the study found people are buying more broadly. "Supermarkets lead but (are) under pressure from



Dalene Wray of OBE Organic Beef says that organic meat is still competitive in a high beef price environment.

butchers, organic stores and home delivery," the study reported.

An estimated 30% of organic producers are beef/veal, although the market has seen a recent rise in organic sheepmeat production. Lamb and sheepmeat producers went from 4% of Australian organic food production in 2015 to 12% the following year. Proportions representing organic pig, goat and poultry meats were relatively stable over the same period.

Almost half of Australia's organic meat producers are in Queensland (45%), with NSW next (22%).

The predominance of rangeland cattle for organic supply is explained by Tom Ryan, executive officer of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association. "The way we've been running for a number of years is basically been an organic operation anyway," he said. "The entire central Australian production system is very low input. A lot of producers would naturally fall into that organic category."

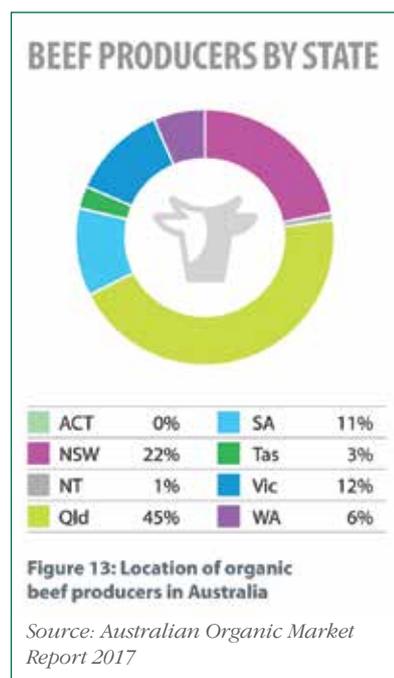
It is no coincidence, therefore, that the Bohning cattle yards near Alice Springs was Australia's first to be certified under both the National Certified Organic (NCO) and USDA National Organic programs (NOP). The yards have NOP and NCO hay on hand, allowing organic cattle producers to spell stock they are shifting south.

Mid-2017 saw Australia's second organic-certified saleyards, at Blackall in central-west Queensland. The process required an audit including a soil test and assessment of operating procedures to ensure segregation of organic cattle. Once out of the saleyards and into the abattoirs, the segregation issue becomes more focussed. The organic beasts are penned separately and typically are the first through the lines for the day.

Blackall grazer James Pearson, said: "One of the biggest things holding organics back is possibly supply. It's very hard to build a market. It is a slow process, but it certainly pays off for us and we think it's a great thing."

His sentiment is shared across the country, from WA's Warren Pensini from Blackwood Valley Beef to Australia's biggest organics meat supplier, Arcadian Organic & Natural Meat Co.

Warren Pensini said organic certification was an opportunity to value-add its beef with products such as certified sausages and hamburgers.



Why do people shop for organic meat?

According to the 2017 Organics survey, personal health for the buyer and their family is the strongest driver, with five of the top 10 perceived benefits of organic food are 'free from' aspects – i.e. 'chemical free', 'additive free', 'non-GMO', 'hormone and antibiotic-free', and 'cruelty free'. Two-thirds of all shoppers in 2016 believed organic products have general environmental benefits. Other key benefits identified by shoppers include product quality, taste and flavour, animal welfare, and providing fair prices and wages for farmers.

Queensland and NSW vertical-supply operations make Arcadian the nation's largest certified organic livestock producer network, with 130 producers. They joined with Cleaver's organic meat in 2012 and the Arcadian range is stocked through Coles.

Chef executive Alister Ferguson traced margins for suppliers and retailers back to global supply/demand. Last year he warned: "Australia needs to be careful it does not price itself out of the global organic beef market. If prices simply keep rising, the organic beef industry will lose business as it hits consumer resistance. It's happening to some extent already."

Ms Wray said retailers and butchers have a role to play in ensuring a robust sales platform for organic meats. "Retailers and butchers should not be afraid to ask for detailed information about the provenance of the organic meat that they are buying," she said. "We recommend that they also follow the supplier on social media to get to know the brand and the people behind the brand."

Social media is a common tool for these specialised lines. Butchers blog these days, offering recipes and well-styled food photography on Instagram, Facebook and websites.

Ongoing engagement with customers is an important tool in selling premium meats. Some butchers use the organic platform to educate buyers. Hagen's Organic Meats sells through inner-suburban Melbourne stores and online. It runs butcher masterclasses

as well as 'meet-the-grower' sessions. Royce Hagen established the business in 1999 and is a veteran of the marketplace "We know the best farmers and we work closely with them to guarantee the highest-quality product."

Some butchers broaden the offering yet further. Port Macquarie couple Greg and Kerry Gleeson run a gym and organic butcher shop, a business that has morphed into a fitness/café/lifestyle coaching business. Their Organic Butchery operates alongside Organic Fitness, which incorporates 'forensic healing'.

Organic meat rules present a challenge for smallgoods makers, most notably the ban on nitrates and nitrites as preservatives. Some use traditional preservatives such as salt, sugar or honey and spices, some are using alternatives such as ascorbic acid or even celery extract which contains naturally occurring nitrites. Near Adelaide, P and A Organic Meats smokes its own fritz, chicken roll and hotdogs.

Once a retailer or butcher has decided to stock organic beef, most suppliers are keen to support them with marketing and promotions. "Suppliers may provide traditional support which may include access to point of sale materials and stickers for retail packs," Ms Wray said. "More sophisticated companies may be in a position to support the retailer through targeting marketing campaigns on social media." ■

The slippery world of meat processing floors

The world of meat processing is known to have a lot of hazards – the ones that come to mind quickly usually involve knives and machinery. However, the surface you walk on has the potential to be very dangerous when wet or covered in water, fats or grease.

Australian regulations require that the floor be hygienic and slip resistant. What is slip resistance? And what is the difference between a slip, trip or fall?

Slips occur when your foot loses traction with the ground – it could be due to the surface or your footwear. Trips occur when your foot catches on an object on the surface. Falls, not to be confused with falls from heights like ladders and scaffolding, arise from low changes in height such as stairs, steps or curbs.

In a meat processing environment, ensuring that the floor reduces the risk of a slip requires specialist floor surfaces. Worksafe Queensland recommends the installation of slip-resistant flooring and surfaces.

Andrews Meat Industries is one of

Australia's most well-known and respected meat companies, producing meat portions and value-add products, turning over more than eight million kilograms of meat products per year.

In recent years, Andrews Meat Industries have undergone substantial upgrades that included new processing equipment and a new coating for the floor.

The coating, provided by Roxset was an epoxy coating, which is known for its longevity, durability and non slip properties – rated to P5. In fact, the new floor replaced the same type of floor that was laid 17 years ago.

In another example, Roxset installed another epoxy based floor to replace a 15 year old installation at smallgoods producer, Blackforest Smoke House in Sydney. The smokehouse endures many corrosive by-products such as brine, oil, salt and fats. Again the slip resistance was rated to P5.

So what does P5 mean?

The 'P' value of the floor indicates the slip-resistance the floor achieves when

tested for slip resistance performed by an accredited facility under the specifications of the Australian Standards – AS4586-2013 prior to installation and AS4663-2013 once installed.

There are two main methodologies for testing floors – the wet pendulum test and the dry friction test.

“The pendulum represents the action of a foot striking a surface, while the dry friction test uses a calibrated rubber ‘foot’ to drag across the surface to measure the friction coefficient,” said Nasser Cura, lab/field technician with SafeEnvironments, a NATA approved slip resistance testing facility.

“It is interesting to note, that the original test resistance specifications were developed in Germany and outline the requirements for slaughtering and meat processing industries including meat sectioning, a sausage kitchen, boiled and raw sausage departments, sausage drying rooms and smokehouses.”

The pendulum test is conducted with one of two rubber sliders, to represent a standard shoe type and a softer rubber version. The latter is used to characterise barefoot areas such as pool surrounds. These values are given a 'P' rating increasing a particularly slippery surface (P0) to a 'grippy' surface (P5). The friction coefficient is ideally above 0.40.

According to Bruce Willan, managing director at Roxset, it is important that the right floor makes the difference between a safe environment for workers and a particularly risky one.

“In a meat processing environment, there is often knives and dangerous equipment – a slip with a knife in your hand may cause a serious accident. In deboning rooms, it is particularly risky with water, fats and oils and animal



Slip resistance of the floor is an important consideration for the safety of workers in the meat industry



Testing of floors is performed by independent qualified laboratories using a 'pendulum' that replicates the foot-fall onto a surface.

byproducts – beef is notorious for it. Production processes and washdown where water is used to clean the surface can be very slippery.”

The material used by Roxset is a silica composite, laid down in layers up to 6mm thick. The thickness will be determined by the application. Higher traffic areas or floors that are exposed to higher levels of contaminants will be given the thicker flooring.

“Using this composite material gives the floor longevity,” says Bruce. “In high traffic areas or where there are trolleys moved around, the floor won’t compress or become smooth. It has a rough textured surface which means that fluid sits into the floor rather than sitting on top forming a film, which makes it safer. All our flooring material is tested using the pendulum method prior to installation to ensure they meet the required slip resistance specifications.”

Ultimately, the flooring chosen is dependent on the application – a tougher floor for very wet or corrosive surfaces, a less tough floor for low traffic areas. Bruce says the best way to clean the floor is with a high pressure water hose or scrubber vacuum.

“The floors we installed at Andrew Meats and Blackforest Smallgoods were based on their individual production needs. The end result was increased productivity and improved worker safety while complying with the HACCP and FSANZ regulations. Those floors should be there for another 15 years.” ■

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ACC's road to success

It is nearly 20 years since David Foote took up his role as Group Managing Director for Australian Country Choice (ACC), Queensland's largest locally owned meat processing company and, in that time, he has overseen a major expansion in the company's operations.

When he took up the role in 1999, ACC had two farms, 8,000 cattle on feed and 120 staff.

Today, ACC is one of the world's leading vertically integrated cattle farming and meat processing companies, with more than five million acres of land, 270,000 head of cattle, 50,000 cattle on three feed lots and directly employs around 1,450 people across its business divisions.

It has taken a great deal of foresight, the courage to buck normal business growth strategies and be open to novel business streams for the company to reach its current market position.

By Stephanie Flynn

ACC traces its history to 1958 when its processing operations first commenced as H.J. Lee and Sons in Brisbane and its expansion to rural activities in the Roma district, in south west Queensland, in 1967 where the company developed one of the nation's first commercial beef cattle feedlots by the 1970's.

The Lee family's association with Coles supermarket chain started in 1974 and was cemented by a long-term contract in 1995 and remains one of the principle suppliers to Coles with 75 percent of its throughput hitting the domestic market.

Mr Foote explains that while the ACC strategy of supplying one major customer goes against the normal 'Harvard Business School' advice for company success, it has stood the company in good stead for decades and continues to do so.

"The Lee family decided it was prudent to establish the company based on an association with a retailer that had the ability to pull-through product given its market dominance," Mr Foote said.

"We see ourselves as a demand driven chain because if you attempt to push-product through your operations it doesn't work well, you get bumps and mountains in your operations and that creates major issues.

"Strategically, while there may be some business risk in having one major customer, it does allow for tremendous business surety because operations can be focused on delivering to that customer's expectation. With a long-term customer, it is easier to raise investment funds from banks as it gives them some security as well," he said.

On the basis of this strategy, ACC has now invested over \$700 million in its operations which, currently, has a capacity to process 300,000 head of cattle five days a week to supply Coles home brand, 'Coles Finest' and 'Drover's Pride' brands.

The remaining 25 percent of the company's product is destined for export markets with 85% of this finding its way to customers in the four key markets of Japan, Korea,

Taiwan and China. A chance meeting while on a trade mission to China between Mr Foote and a budding young Chinese entrepreneur has enabled the growth into China.

"I believe we need to work out a way to tap into this resource as Australian businesses"

"Ming had studied at the University of Queensland and asked me if he could access Australian beef for his plans to open butcher stores in China," Mr Foote said

"I agreed to supply what was then just an idea as long as he did it 'my way', but he has ended up doing it better than 'my way' but has used 'my way' fundamentals of finding a customer first, creating a niche and a point of difference," he said.

Today, Ming and his partner have a chain of around 16 butcher shops in China as well as restaurants which, combined, have annual sales in excess of \$25 million.



David Foote, Group Managing director, Australian Country Choice.

Mr Foote believes that this example highlights the value of international students who study at Australian universities and then return to their home countries all over the world potentially offering an immense array of opportunities to develop relationships with the next generation of global business leaders.

“I believe we need to work out a way to tap into this resource as Australian businesses,” Mr Foote said.

“What my experience with Ming has shown is that all his customers are in the 25 to 35-year age group; they interact with each other in a whole new way by working together as opposed to competitively and it is a new and different approach to business than what has been the hallmark of previous generations,” he said.

Mr Foote believes that China will remain a growing market for Australian beef despite the increased competition from the U.S. now being able to supply its beef directly into that market, which he says will now attract tariffs and create more of a level playing field than was the case when its beef exports were accessing indirectly.

He says it is important for Australian exporters to realise that China is a country of many markets and, while it may be so that the capital city consumers have had access to foreign products for some years, consumers in second and third tier cities such as Shanghai are only now beginning to

have that same level of access, heralding a continuation of consumer-led demand.

Another chance meeting has been the catalyst for the development of a medical supply business stream within ACC's operations.

When BSE hit the United States, the global customers of California based Edwards Life Science, which supplies medical pericardia – heart valve

replacements for humans sourced from cattle – were unwilling to accept the pericardia sourced from cattle with BSE.

Given Australia's global reputation as a BSE-free nation, the sourcing agent ventured to Brisbane and knocked on the door of ACC's premises thinking it was still the Government-owned abattoir he had visited some 20 years earlier.

continued on page 32

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ADVANCING
FOOD PROCESSING

continued from page 31

That chance meeting has spurred a whole new division within ACC's business which is now of such magnitude that it requires its own management process and structure.

"The only reason why it worked is because they have to have complete supply chain traceability back through to the animal which ACC is able to offer because we breed the cattle, grow them, feed them and, at the time, we were probably, at

these volumes, quite advanced in terms of complete vertical integration compared to other processors," Mr Foote said.

"It was the first time that we experienced the fact that traceability had a point of value," he said.

ACC has had to slowly add other producers, who have the same level of traceability in their herds, into the supply chain to meet the growing demand. The whole system is

closely audited twice a year by the customer.

The valve can only be harvested from those cattle approved under the system and the process involves special handling, sanitation, temperature control and packing before travelling by air daily in medical eskies to California where the pericardium must arrive within 96 hours from harvest.

Mr Foote sees opportunity for Australian processors to maximise their investment by looking with an open mind at business opportunities but as an 'elder statesman' of the industry he also sees the challenges.

The problem with politics

Looking outward to potential export markets Mr Foote sees enormous potential with Indonesia, but believes there are some key issues of which he is keenly aware having been a leading member of industry taskforces focusing on South Asian development since the 1980's.

"It was the first time that we experienced the fact that traceability had a point of value"

"There are 235 million people in Indonesia, who can't eat pork, who have a preference for beef and for cattle that come from the north of Australia, where 40 per cent of our herd is based, so they are a 'natural fit' for us as an exporting nation, if we can get it right," Mr Foote said.

"It is only the politics on both sides that is getting in the way of business.

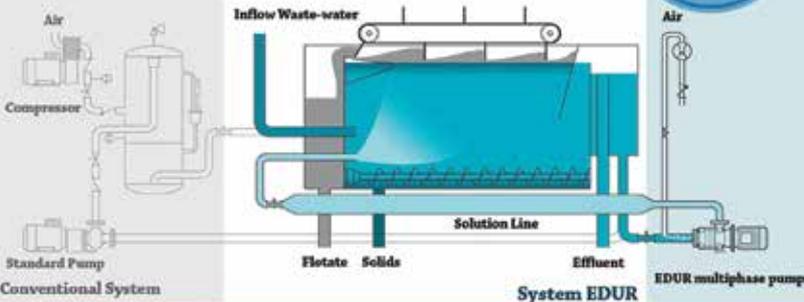
"Our nation's reaction to the live export issue has, in turn resulted in their becoming quite restrictive on how we are expected to deal with them which is exacerbating the problems of supply and price.

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“Indonesia has the view that we have not been very fair toward them in terms of supply and price, not recognising that we supply a global market so they have to compete for Australian product along with every other country on earth.

“But the reality is that it is the global surge in prices, due to supply and demand, that are the reasons behind our inability to supply Indonesia at the price they require, we are not suited to be a low-cost, volume producer.

“If we can overcome these issues at a political level, then Indonesia will be a valuable market for us,” he said.

Speaking of issues a little closer to home, Mr Foote says that the major disappointment he has in the industry is the continuing divide in Australia between producers and processors and it is a disappointment he believes

he is likely to still have when he retires.

He believes that the lack of trust of processors by producers is at the heart of the issue and would like to see the two sectors come to understand each other’s position so that the problem can be resolved.

“I struggle with the common notion that processors are the ‘dark side’ of industry when, in reality, they are the customers of the beef production sector and, in my view, need to be seen as such by the suppliers,” Mr Foote said.

“The issue can be readily resolved, if this viewpoint is taken, by producers sitting down with their customer, in the same way ACC does with its customers, and discussing how both parties meet each other’s needs and expectations and coming to an understanding.

“The true value in the carcass, is not at the point of slaughter but the day after when it is boned-out and the quality of the cuts is determined.

“While the introduction of new technologies such as the dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), a dual x-ray system of measuring yield, may well be a contributor to resolving the problems between the two sectors it will not be the ultimate solution as it will not measure quality, only muscle, fat and bone content of the animal,” he said.

Mr Foote is keen to encourage the industry to continue to invest in further research and development of new technologies that aid objective measurement to assist producers and processors to overcome the longstanding divide. ■

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Optimising abattoirs and meat processing plants

In the meat industry, demands on greater profit come with increasing focus on reducing costs, improving product throughput and production efficiencies. With that comes improvements in hygiene, safety and improved product outcomes.

Recently, a large international meat processing group based in North America, saved US\$120,000 per week by optimising its production facility.

The plant was generally in good shape, with good working spirits amongst staff but management had a clear wish by to improve productivity.

The company contracted Niras, a specialist meat industry consultancy company, to assess the operation and determine where improvements and optimisation could be gained. A team of Niras experts was convened from around the world to review the current operating systems and devised a set of recommendations.

“The company was keen to achieve a more efficient operation with the staff and facilities they already had,” says Glenn Jacobsen, senior consultant with Niras Australia. “The thought was that increased throughput could only be achieved by introducing a two-shift model. Our study and observations showed that that was not necessarily the case.”

As part of any review of a meat processing facility, the Niras team looks for opportunities for both short and long term time frames and assesses the likely outcomes from the recommendations offered based on management desired outcomes.

Typical points to assess are based on new production lines, profitability, product quality, animal welfare and worker environments.

The natural assumption is that doubling the shifts would increase throughput. It was found that many of the lines would be under-utilised in a two-shift model for significant periods of time. By improving utilisation of staff and production facilities, higher volumes can be achieved – offsetting the higher labour costs of introducing two shifts.

Other avenues for increased productivity and optimisation included animal reception and welfare. By improving how animals were treated and processed on arrival, the animals’ stress levels are reduced, making animal handling easier which in turn provides better quality meat.

Meat quality, efficiencies and yields could also be improved with attention paid to slaughter lines and automated carcass handling, and cooling and refrigeration technologies. The review found that the return on investment in these areas

would be financially beneficial and therefore were recommended for short term implementation.

For longer term opportunities, Niras identified that cutting, deboning, further processing and packaging would require further investigation before a final decision on the way forward could be recommended. The team chose a conservative estimate of savings that could be achieved, until final analysis could be verified.

In terms of yield, improvements were assessed in two ways – by optimising standards and operating procedures.

“The thought was that increased throughput could only be achieved by introducing a two-shift model. Our study and observations showed that that was not necessarily the case.”

“What we found is that, as an example, too much meat might be left on the ribs, which is later removed at the trimming point further down the line,” said Glenn. “By doing that, the company is double-handling the ribs and loses the potential to sell more meat at a higher price – instead it is sold as trim.”

Niras also found examples in the cutting and deboning processes deviations in the weights of primary cuts, meaning that lost volumes were not being sold at a premium rate, but as lower value secondary cuts, or lower.

Glenn does note however, that some of these deviations may have been for a good reason, such as selling the meat on the bone for a specific customer which attracts a higher price. To assess the benchmark meat pricing, Niras assumed that a large proportion of those deviation volumes were sold as trim.

Adherence to standard operating procedures was clearly an issue. Worker efficiency was calculated at a rate of 77% at the plant compared to a modern European facility. By changing production methods and introducing new technologies such as automated splitting and handling systems, Niras estimated that efficiencies could be improve by 10% - an equivalent of 87% efficiency by European standards. With the extensive knowledge of meat processing, Niras have a large database of operating efficiency models to calculate throughput rates and earnings compared to weight, enabling accurate comparisons to be made.

Training and motivating staff in better production operations and standards is a key element to overall business improvements. So while raw materials, wages and energy costs may remain unchanged, significant profit forecasts can be achieved.

“We have seen evidence in other processing facilities where cutting and deboning of pigs and cattle can lead to 1% profit increases per carcass. That doesn’t sound significant but it translates to an extra 0.85kg per pig and 2.7kg for cattle.”

The reports composed by Niras provide a critical overview of the current situation. Based on those findings a series of recommendations are put forward along with an action plan to ensure that the suggestions for optimisation are implemented to give the best possible opportunity to achieve increased profits and efficiencies.

“In many cases, we see secondary benefits of such an approach – improvements in operational health and safety

and plant hygiene are common. By involving the company in the assessment process, workers are more engaged and more mindful of animal welfare and attentive to operating procedures. This in turn creates better rates of productivity, yield and quality.”

“I have been in the industry for more than 30 years and I am still amazed at the level of experience Niras has and how we are able to apply this knowledge to achieve tangible savings around the world. This presents a unique opportunity for the Australian market, not seen before,” said Glenn. ■

NIRAS are a Scandinavian consulting firm specialised in Food & Fibre industries globally. Originally founded in 1912 in Denmark they now have over 2300 employees located in 34 offices around the world. Active in Australia since 2008, NIRAS bring industry advisory to the Meat, Brewing, Distilling, Beverage, Dairy, FMCG and Pharmaceuticals and Life-science Industries.

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Cedar Meats go with Innovative DAF solution

Cedar Meats is a state-of-the-art meat exporter in Victoria, with a continual improvement philosophy. They needed to upgrade their DAF system, but did not want to just go for the “standard” system. They wanted a more energy efficient system, and one that could deliver low running costs for the life of the system.

The “conventional” system consists of a centrifugal pump that pulls clean effluent from the DAF tank and feeds it into a pressurised air saturation vessel. A compressor also feeds compressed air into the same vessel and the air saturates into the effluent water. The water is then fed back into the bottom of the DAF tank where the air comes out of solution to form tiny bubbles, which attach to fats and grease in the system and float it to the top of the tank where it is scraped away. The system requires a control system to combine air and water needs, and it requires regular certification of the pressure vessel.

There is also maintenance of the pump, compressor and pressure vessel to consider, along with energy consumption of both pump and compressor. Capital costs and running costs are not cheap for this “standard” system.

Chief Engineer at Cedar Meats, Mr Yogesh Mistry went looking for a solution that did not involve intricate and delicate control systems and did not need ongoing Worksafe certification for pressure vessels. He contacted Hydro Innovations to get information on the EDUR DAF pump he had read about.

EDUR, a German Pump manufacturer since 1927, has developed a multi-stage “multiphase” pump capable of handling a gas/water mixture, making it ideal as a DAF pump. The pump draws clean effluent from the DAF



Cedar Meats used an EDUR DAF pump from Hydro Innovations to lower energy consumption and operator controls.



tank, and at the same time, draws in atmospheric air on the suction side of the pump. The pump shears and mixes the air with the water, and under pressure from the multi-stage pump, air saturates into the effluent water. The water is then pumped into the bottom of the tank, where the air comes out of solution, as in conventional systems. No compressor or air saturation pressure vessel is needed.

Mr Mistry was impressed with the simplicity of the system and promptly arranged the purchase of an EDUR DAF pump. He has been pleased with the positive results, which include: A higher rate of solids removed; less power used for the job [reducing power costs]; less complicated controls and he has a low maintenance future ahead for the system. ■

Cook and get Cool Alarm

For manufacturers of items such as hams, soups and sauces, controlling the temperature for cooling down is critical to hold bacteria growth at bay. The Food Safety Standards require businesses that cook and store potentially hazardous food to observe in the following rules to cooling down food:

- From 60°C to 21°C it needs to be cooled in a maximum of 2 hours, then
- From 21°C to 5°C needs to be cooled in a maximum of 4 hours
- Total cooling maximum time from 60°C to 5°C is 6 hours

Testing the produce to check the temperature can easily be achieved by inserting a data logger probe into the product immediately after it is pulled out of the cooker. At that point the core temperature should still be high. The data logger will record the actual temperature and display it on the screen.

The cooling down is the critical phase. The data logger must be with the product with the probe still in place while it is transferred into the fridge or freezer.

A wireless T-TEC Data logger can send temperature updates to your PC, via radio frequencies or WiFi, so that it is possible to track the rate of cooling as it happens. After the 6 hours, if all goes well, the proof of correct cooling is available in the data logger memory, in the database of the local PC or server and even (optional) in a remote server such as a cloud environment. The file showing temperature versus time may be printed and kept for quality control audits.



But often the cooling happens unattended, when everyone is busy, or overnight. What if the temperature has not dropped quickly enough?

Action must be taken. The wireless T-TEC Data logger can be set up to send alarms if the requirements are not met.

A unique feature of the T-Tec Data logger is that the user can set two max alarms and set grace periods to two hours for the first alarm and six hours for the next alarm. Alarm notification can be displayed on your PC or can trigger SMS to mobile phones or email. With a relay output on the gateway, alarms can activate a monitored alarm system.

For more information contact: Temperature Technology,

Tel: 08-8231 1266 www.t-tec.com.au, sales@t-tec.com.au ■

Butchers-only Christmas Puddings

First Settlers has been making Christmas Puddings for more than 30 years. The company was established by bakers Kerry and Norman Harris, in 1984 and traded as Goldbank Foods from its premises in Queanbeyan, ACT.

The Christmas Puddings were only supplied to independent butchers for retail sale.

In 2017, Nick Levy and Peter Cohn of Grandma's Table Pty Ltd acquired the First Settlers business. Kerry and Norma are now busy teaching the team to make puddings using the exact same recipe at the Grandma's Table facility in Robertson NSW.

Traditional, – 1kg and 1.4kg – First Settler Christmas Puddings wrapped in traditional calico with point of sale material will be available from: Vadals, Corona, Neild & Co and MBL in early October. ■



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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 32 letters remaining: these form the answer to the competition.

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

Last issues winners see page 39

S	P	R	A	Y	I	N	G	P	A	S	T	U	R	E	S	U
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Book Comp Winner

Congratulations to Rob Ashton from Ashton's Butchery, Pittsworth, Queensland who has won a copy of *Chef's Guide to Charcuterie* by Jacques Brevery.

Rob correctly answered the question: What is HFC short for? The answer: Hydrofluorocarbon

Rob established Ashton's Butchery in 1977 when he bought the shop from his employer Tom Aldridge. Over 40 years, the business has expanded from four butchers to now employ 30 staff. A new shop was built in Pittsworth in 2001 and an additional shop has been opened in Dalby.

Value added products including ready to cook and heat convenience meals prepared in their kitchen are a major feature and attract customers from as far away as Toowoomba and Brisbane. Ashton's also offer a home delivery service for customers up to 60km away.

Most beef, lamb and pork is purchased locally. A large proportion of their beef comes from their own property near Pittsworth.

WIN WIN

To enter our competition to win a copy of: *Heat and Smoke* by Bob Hart.

Send your answer and 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 anniversary did EKKA celebrate this year?*

Entries close 15 October 2017

Winners of the July 2017 Find a Word Competition

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



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Raeleen Simmons, Murray Valley Meat Co, Morningside Qld

Victory Narrow Curved Boning Knife

Peter Malone, Malone's Quality Meats, Success WA

Sam Gee, Norfolk Butcher, Warrnambool Vic

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R Hopkins, Palm Island Quality Meats, Palm Island Qld

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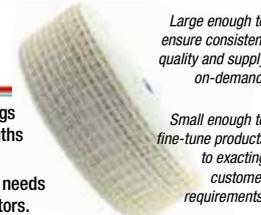


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