

ALL AUSSIE PORK IS GREAT, BUT BORROWDALE FREE RANGE PORK TAKES THE STEAK

Australians are increasingly putting pork on their forks and today the nation's best pork was announced.

Borrowdale Free Range Pork, Queensland, took out top honours in the Australian Pork Limited Steak Your Claim competition.

"Australians' appetite for pork continues to grow and our farmers are continually looking to improve their already product, which is already high quality," said Australian Pork Limited General Manager of Marketing, Peter Haydon.

"This competition seeks to find a really special product and producers have responded by looking at different breeds and feeds to deliver a stunning pork steak."

A highly qualified chef judging panel assessed pork loin steaks against a range of criteria, including the colour, visual appeal and marbling of the raw product, as well as the aroma, flavour, tenderness, juiciness and texture of the cooked.

Today Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, Mark Furner, made presentations to the winners at the Pan Pacific Pork Expo on the Gold Coast.

Borrowdale Free Range Pork in Toowoomba was celebrated by the judges for excellent raw appearance, with good colour and marbling, plus their terrific flavour, tenderness, juiciness in the cooked product.

"Borrowdale comes from a family of free range farming pioneers near Goondiwindi on Queensland's fertile Darling Downs," said Paul da Silva, Marketing Manager for Borrowdale Free Range Pork's parent company, Arcadian Organic and Natural Meat Co.

"The winning entry was just part of Borrowdale's regular weekly production. It's great that it reflects the brand's mission to let consumers rediscover the real taste of pork. Borrowdale's everyday customers are enjoying the best pork on offer.

"We entered Borrowdale Free Range in the Steak Your Claim competition because of our confidence in the product. We have had so much feedback from our customers, including some exceptional restaurants, that we thought Borrowdale deserved the chance to be officially recognised for its quality."

For the first time, all three winning steaks came from Large White Landrace crosses. Second place was awarded to Westpork, Western Australia, while St Bernard's Free Range Pork, New South Wales, placed third.

The competition attracted significant prize money for the first three places, but also marketing opportunities for the winning pork.

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RESULTS AND WINNER BACKGROUND

1. Borrowdale Free Range Pork, Toowoomba, Queensland

Launched in late 2014, Borrowdale Free Range Pork is the result of a partnership between Arcadian Organic and natural Meat Co. and Gooralie Farm.

Borrowdale is a modern take on the pork of yesteryear. The Borrowdale goal has always been to combine the highest standards of ethical production with the superior flavour and tenderness of pork that is perfectly natural.

All Borrowdale animals are produced by family farmers Mark and Charisse Ladner from Gooralie Farm, to the Borrowdale specification. Gooralie is an APIQ certified Free Range farm and a pioneer of commercial free range pig production. Borrowdale pigs have unfettered access to the outdoors but are still protected from the elements by open sided insulated huts filled with comfortable deep straw bedding.

Situated near Goondiwindi on Queensland's fertile darling downs, the 10,000 acre mixed farming property produces cereal grain and cattle as well as raising free range pigs. Much of the grain used in the pig's diet is grown on the same property. Holistic management practices enrich the soil of the cropping land using manure and used bedding from the pig production. Low stress animal husbandry practices underpin superior pork which is succulent, tender and all natural.

Borrowdale Free Range Pork is supplied to leading butchers and restaurants in Australia, including 'Dinner by Heston' in Melbourne and 'Quay' in Sydney. Borrowdale is also exported to Singapore and Hong Kong. The winning entry was part of Borrowdale's regular weekly production and reflects the brand's mission to let consumers rediscover the real taste of pork.

2. Westpork, Maylands, Western Australia

Westpork Pty Ltd produces more than 35 per cent of Western Australia's pigs. Incorporated in 1985, Westpork started from a small single farm at Gingin, to now having more than 14,000 sows spread across 10 company farms and five contract growers.

Westpork prides itself on producing consistent, high-quality pork to its valued customers. Animals are cared for by an experienced, highly trained and dedicated team of people, who focus on the wellbeing of the pig. The company engages and consults with industry experts in the fields of health, genetics and nutrition to maximise the efficiency of the whole production system.

Committed to animal welfare benchmarking, Westpork creates a low-stress environment to optimise the growth potential of its pigs, thereby ensuring a high integrity quality assured end product.

Westpork believes that all of these factors go into producing the best tasting pork available.

3. St Bernard's Free Range Pork, Corowa, New South Wales

St. Bernard's certified free range pork is grown on two farms, one in the Northern Grampians in Victoria and the other near Corowa, New South Wales in the Southern Riverina. The main farm in Corowa and the brand's namesake property, runs approximately 390 sows, while over the border there are approximately 475.

Both properties' herds are fed locally sourced grains, predominantly wheat and canola, which is made up at the business' own feed milling site.

The pigs are a Large White Landrace cross and the winning pig came from the St. Bernard's farm, in Corowa, where the farm manager Chris and his small team take great pride in their work and development of this industry leading, APIQ certified free range farm. Chris and his team have a huge focus on attention to detail and believe this translates into superior quality of the end product – "watching the animals behaviour, we changed our practice to suit their needs and that made a big, big difference".