

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE BACON!

The sizzling smell of success ...

Homer Simpson may have been the first to come up with Bacon Day but Australian Pork Limited (APL) has gone one better, surpassing Homer's wildest dreams with Bacon Week, a (delicious) initiative to highlight the pink square PorkMark – the only guaranteed way you can choose 100 per cent pure home grown Australian bacon.

Heralding Australian Bacon Week (18–25 March) will be the announcement of the winners of Australia's Best Bacon on Tuesday 13 March by Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Not just a celebration of everyone's favourite breakfast food, Australian Bacon Week is more importantly a show of support for the local pork farmers as well as bacon, ham and smallgoods manufacturers that are committed to using and selling products made with 100 per cent Australian pork. It is the celebration of true blue Australian bacon.

Countries like Denmark and the US have highly subsidised agricultural industries and as such are able to export frozen product in enormous amounts, destined for smallgood manufacturing. **Over 2.6 million kilograms of foreign pig meat – \$8.5 million worth – arrives in Australia every week. This translates into 65 per cent of bacon, ham and smallgoods sold in Australia is made from imported pork.**

APL CEO Andrew Spencer says: "Our consumer research has shown 95 per cent of Australians would prefer to buy Australian. But they find the current labeling for bacon very confusing and at times misleading. For example 'Made in Australia' does not mean the product is made from Australian grown pork, only that it has been manufactured here. This pork is imported frozen, thawed out and then manufactured into bacon in Australia. The only way to be really sure you're buying bacon or indeed any type of smallgoods product made using Australian pork is to look for the pink Australian PorkMark as your guarantee of Australian origin".

This year, 115 bacons were registered as part of the National Bacon Awards for Excellence. Entries were then judged by two chefs and a Fleishmeister on a variety of criteria including appearance, aroma, texture, shrinkage and of course, taste.*

Peter G Bouchier of Moorabbin in Victoria took out the top gong for the nation's best full rasher. Judges described his entry as a "perfectly proportioned, dry cured rasher, with a sweet aroma, lovely tender texture and excellent flavour".

For the second year in a row, Schulz Butchers of Angaston in South Australia has taken out a national number one, this year for its short cut entry.

Currently, there are 353 butchers and smallgoods producers licensed to champion the PorkMark on their products. Since the inception of Australian Bacon Week in 2010, the number of licensees nationwide has continued to grow, indicating the growing push from the Australian public to buy local and the subsequent real value proposition that being part of the Australian PorkMark program brings to businesses.

Australian Pork Limited

PO Box 4746
KINGSTON ACT 2604

P 02 6285 2200
F 02 6285 2288

www.australianpork.com.au

During Australian Bacon Week, hundreds of licensees around the country will be conducting in-store promotions which include bacon taste testing, price promotions as well as Australian bacon buy one get one free specials, among other localised events.

Food service outlets across the country are on board to support the initiative by featuring Australian bacon dishes on the menu, such as: Brasserie 88 at Wests Leagues Club in Newcastle, Camelia Grove Hotel in Alexandria and Bel Mondo restaurant at The Rocks in Sydney. In Queensland, Australian Bacon Week dishes can be found at Grub St, Gaythorne, while executive chef Michael Hardy at The Mercure in Townsville has created a special menu that showcases Australian bacon in each course – from entrée to dessert. In Western Australia, Australian Bacon Week dishes can be found at Bar 138 on Barrack, Barolo on Beaufort, Jus Burgers outlets, Stringybark Restaurant Wanneroo Villa and Dear Friends Restaurant.

And the national winners are...

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Full Rasher	Peter G Bouchier Pty Ltd – Moorabbin, Vic	Slade Point Meat Specialists – Mackay, Qld	Rapley's Midtown Quality Meats, – Narooma, NSW
Short Cut	Barossa Fine Foods / Schulz Butchers – Angaston, SA	Meatways Butchery – Kambah, ACT	Kanmantoo Bacon Company – Kanmantoo, SA

Peter Bouchier
Peter G Bouchier Pty Ltd
9 Alex Ave
Moorabbin, Vic
Ph: 03 9553 7129

Franz Knoll
Barossa Fine Foods
7 Ridgeway St
Angaston, SA
Ph: 08 8255 3900

**The judges comprised fleishmeister Horst Schurger, who has a Master's degree in Butchering and Smallgoods from the Master College in Mönchengladbach Germany and two chefs, Paul McDonald and Simon Bestley. Between them, McDonald and Bestley have broad international experience working in Michelin starred restaurants, cruise liners and premier teaching institutions.*

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For media enquiries contact:

Emily Mackintosh
General Manager, Communication
Ph: 02 6285 2200 M: 0418 697 595
E: emily.mackintosh@australianpork.com.au
W: www.australianpork.com.au

Amy Braddon
Media & Publications Officer
Ph: 02 6285 2200
E: amy.braddon@australianpork.com.au
W: www.australianpork.com.au