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## **PORK IMPORTS HURTING AUSSIE PIG FARMERS**

Australian pork farmers have seen prices slide as imported pork products flood the market.

The Australian pork industry has been competing with imported processed pork, like bacon and ham, for more than a decade, but now cuts like bellies are being imported and sold cooked to cafes and restaurants. In addition, ribs are also entering the country in a cooked format.

Australian Pork Limited Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Spencer, said the cheap, pre-cooked products were mostly destined for the hospitality industry.

“Our farmers have been competing with cheap pork imports for years, but until now it had been mostly in the ham, bacon and smallgoods space,” Mr Spencer said.

“What we’re seeing now is a sudden influx of pre-cooked imported pork being sold into restaurants, takeaway outlets and hotels.”

This includes ribs from North America and Europe that have been cooked and packaged.

“We are seeing processed ribs that are able to just sit on a shelf for 12-24 months with no refrigeration,” Mr Spencer said.

“They’ve basically been sterilised in the pack and consumers have no idea.

“All fresh pork sold in Australia is from our Australian pig farmers, but there is no labelling requirement on meat served in restaurants and across the hospitality industry. That leaves consumers in the dark about the quality and origin of the pork they are eating.”

As food service outlets opt for the cheaper ribs, Australian pork farmers are feeling the pinch.

“Pork’s popularity is growing in Australia, but these imports are a significant challenge for our farmers,” Mr Spencer said.

“This influx of cheap processed ribs has had a significant effect on the price of fresh Australian pork ribs, which in turn affects overall pig prices. We are forecasting this could equate to up to \$80 million lost at the farm gate in just a year.

“Australian Pork Limited is working with retailers, processors and wholesalers to try and ensure the market can accommodate our pigs. We need consumers to get more pork on their forks and for diners to ask if the ribs and bellies on their restaurant or pub menu are fresh, quality Australian pork.”

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