

# final report

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## **Evaluation of training in the Australian Meat Processing Industry**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Background and Assumptions</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Training Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Castricum Brothers Training Evaluation Pilot Project</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. The Train-the-Trainer Course</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.1 Train-the-Trainer Evaluation</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>5.1.1 Course structure and programming</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>5.1.2 Course content</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>5.1.3. Trainer knowledge and learning</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>5.1.4 Lack of formal assessment</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5.1.5 Inadequate trainer selection process</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5.1.6 The course provider</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>5.1.7 General lack of enterprise or industry focus</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>6. A Time to Change Direction: Castricum Brothers Training Workshop</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6.1 Module Preparation</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6.2 Additional Trainer Training</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7. Trainee Pilot</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7.1 Trainee Pre-evaluation</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>7.1.1 Trainee understanding of training</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>7.1.2 Trainee expectations of skill enhancement</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>7.1.3 Trainee knowledge of Castricum Brothers                 internal grading system</i>	<i>21</i>

<b>7.2</b>	<b>Pilot Training Program - Module Delivery</b>	<b>21</b>
	<i>7.2.1 Industrial Communication Module</i>	<b>23</b>
	<i>7.2.2 Occupational Health and Safety Module</i>	<b>25</b>
	<i>7.2.3 Quality Assurance Module</i>	<b>26</b>
	<i>7.2.4 Knife Skills Module</i>	<b>26</b>
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Summary of Module Training Delivery</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Trainee Post-Evaluation</b>	<b>29</b>
	<i>7.4.1 Content, knowledge retention and skill enhancement</i>	<b>30</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix 1:</b>	<b>Module Briefs</b>	
<b>Appendix 2:</b>	<b>Module and Session Structure</b>	
<b>Appendix 3:</b>	<b>Teaching Schedule</b>	
<b>Bibliography</b>		

## **1. Introduction**

The Australian meat industry is currently in the process of developing an integrated and structured form of accredited training, in response to repeated calls by various inquiries over the last ten years. These inquiries have indicated that a lack of formalised accredited training is a major concern for the future development and growth of the meat industry whose emphasis is increasingly on supplying high quality value added product for both the domestic and export markets (Harrison, 1991: Industry Commission Meat Processing Report, 1994: The Report of the Australian Meat Industry Tripartite Overseas Mission, 1990). The underlying logic of the national training agenda states that training is a means to a number of desirable ends, including a more highly skilled workforce and, ultimately, increased productivity.

Castricum Brothers Ltd, a major meat processor based in Dandenong, Victoria, has commenced an Australian Vocational Training System (AVTS) 1-3 pilot training program. The AVTS program is linked to the Castricum Brothers internal grading system as part of the Enterprise Bargaining agreement. This program, although in its infancy, will allow employees at all levels to access training and to undertake a range of courses in order to progressively advance through the grading structure.

This pilot training program is one of two such pilots (the other being undertaken by South Burnett Meatworks Co-operative, Murgon, Queensland) designed to form part of a proposed AVTS training structure for the meat processing industry. In principle, the development of an AVTS training structure is designed to establish competency-based training pathways for meat industry employees and to facilitate an industry training 'culture' that will aid the process of productive workplace change.

The aim of the Castricum Brothers AVTS Training Evaluation and Intervention Project is to establish and develop the proposed AVTS training structure and to function as a quality assurance mechanism. Specifically, the project brief is to maximise both the enterprise and industry outcomes of the pilot project, using both intervention and evaluation processes.

## **2. Background and Assumptions**

There are many complex reasons why Castricum Brothers stakeholders (unions, employees, supervisors and management) are dedicated to implementing a training structure at their Dandenong plant. Two years ago, as part of their Enterprise Bargaining agreement, Castricum Brothers introduced a grading system that, in principle, classified employees on a graded scale loosely based on acquired and demonstrated skills. By the beginning of 1995, this system had been in place for more than two years without a clear set of processes or procedures for individual employees to access the grading system and move up the grades. At the commencement of this project there was some industrial agitation by employees to get the grading/training system moving, since there seemed little point in having such a system otherwise.

There is a strong commitment to training as a means of allowing individuals to improve their skill levels. This forms part of Castricum Brothers' commitment to improve workplace culture. This cultural aspect is very important in an industry that is so heavily production orientated, any process that interrupts production in the short term is usually rejected.

The success of this pilot project was dependent upon significant 'change drivers' or 'champions' of the training project at all levels in the plant (employees, union delegates and management). The importance of the actions and attitudes of these individuals cannot be overemphasised. For example, when the training module design or pilot trainee program became bogged down due to competing time and resource demands at the plant, one or more of the 'change drivers' would resolve the issue, refocus all those involved, and re-energise the process. While the cultural commitment to training has been tested during the program, it has never faltered.

The training project, as initiated by Castricum Brothers, was based on a number of assumptions about enterprise-based training, the national training framework and government support for such projects. At the commencement of the project in mid-1994, these assumptions appeared reasonable, given the development and anticipated progress of the training agenda at both a national and industry level. In brief, it was assumed by Castricum Brothers stakeholders that:

- this pilot would form part of a nationally accredited training regime that would, in time, provide employees with a portable and recognised trade qualification;
- the training process would impart the knowledge and skills necessary to enhance the plant's operational efficiency and enterprise productivity;
- the enterprise-based training program would function as the mechanism through which employees would be able to progress through the internal Castricum Brothers grading system;
- the National Competencies Standards in the meat industry would be developed by the National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council (MINTRAC) and Training and Further Education (TAFE), to a point where there would be a curriculum available in terms of content and delivery for the enterprise-based training pilot;
- there existed a 'train-the-trainer' course that would provide competent trainers ready to deliver the enterprise-based training; and
- an enterprise-based training framework would fit within the production, management, work organisation and structures that already existed within the plant.

Thus far, the pilot project has tested and called into question many of these original assumptions. The impact of these unmet assumptions will be discussed in more detail in the Discussion section of the report. However, it should be stressed that only the commitment and perseverance of Castricum Brothers' managers and employees has overcome various problems and generated workable solutions. It should also be stressed that there are some issues that will require much longer term solutions. For example, the issue of utilising people from the production line as trainers impacts on the production process. The experience of Castricum Brothers at establishing and running an enterprise-based training system provides a valuable example for other enterprises, both in and outside the meat industry, that wish to embark on enterprise-based training.



### **3. Training Aims and Objectives**

At the beginning of the training pilot, the company and its major stakeholders (unions, employees, supervisors and management) had a number of aims and objectives they wished to achieve as part of the training process. These have been refined with experience, and some now receive greater emphasis. However, as previously discussed, underpinning these aims has been, and continues to be, a great deal of 'good faith' on the part of all plant stakeholders in cooperating to achieve the aims of training. The main anticipated advantages of training were that:

- training would deliver an increase in employee skill levels;
- in turn, it would provide a direct benefit to both the company and the employees;
- the training system would give practical meaning to the grading system from both an industrial and training perspective;
- the plant/company culture would be further enhanced by a strong commitment to training;
- training demonstrated Castricum Brothers moral and social obligation to provide employees with the opportunity to improve their skills;
- training would contribute to 'bottom line' business improvement through increased productivity and competitive advantage.

### **4. Castricum Brothers Training Evaluation Pilot Project**

At the commencement of the AVTS pilot training program, Castricum Brothers' stakeholders were concerned with the issue of how the program could be evaluated, and modified if necessary, in order to ensure that their stated aims had been met. They realised that they needed some form of independent evaluation based on a methodology that would answer these concerns. The Workplace Culture and Training Research Unit was selected by Castricum

Brothers for this process because the research unit had expertise in both training evaluation and training intervention strategies. Furthermore, the research group, spanning academics from four universities, was broad enough that evaluation and intervention could be conducted by different researchers independently of each other.

Castricum Brothers' stakeholders were aware that training is a very broad term. In general, this project has proceeded on the basis that training can be used to refer to general skills (across a range of enterprises and industries) at one end of the spectrum, and to very specific skills (relevant to individual enterprises) at the other. The project was concerned with developing a curriculum that met both the general and the specific skill requirements.

It has been acknowledged as part of this project that 'best practice' training - its content, processes and outcomes - should be enterprise-based and determined in such a way as to be primarily tailored to specific workplace goals and functions (Dumas and Wile, 1992: 108; Kirkpatrick, 1983; Hamblin, 1974; Robinson and Robinson, 1989). However, in the contemporary Australian context, the distinction between 'general' and 'specific' training is often difficult to identify. The current government policy environment, and its translation to the specific enterprise level, has created a model where many enterprises 'train' employees in generic educational skills, rather than enterprise specific skills. Castricum Brothers' stakeholders were determined to try and achieve an optimal mix between generic skills (e.g. communication and problem solving) and enterprise specific skills that would benefit the plant.

It became clear at the outset that the effectiveness of the training program would depend on a range of factors: the intrinsic quality of the training program; the relevance of the training program to both the participants and the enterprise; the skills being taught; the type and quality of training evaluation; the value being placed on the training by the enterprise; and the quality of the trainers.

## **5. The Train-the-Trainer Course**

The quality of the trainers is fundamentally important to the success of an enterprise-based training program as these employees are the first link in the training chain. At the commencement of the project, Castricum Brothers engaged staff members from a TAFE College to deliver an enterprise-based train-the-trainer course. This was done in the belief that TAFE were experienced in delivering this type of course and that the course would more than adequately meet the needs of the trainers and the training framework.

The train-the-trainer course commenced in September 1994 and was intended to run for 17 weeks. In practice, due mainly to production demands, the sessions were spread over a longer period of 26 weeks. The sessions were held on-site at the Dandenong processing plant and were conducted during working hours.

The course was attended by twelve Castricum Brothers' employees from across a range of production centres. These were selected by Castricum Brothers' Training Manager on the basis of candidates' work ability, previous on-the-job training experience, motivation, personality type and work history. Participation was on a voluntary basis. Many participants had previously been informal on-the-job trainers, and having enjoyed this, wished to formalise this role.

The train-the-trainer course was pivotal to the training agenda at Castricum Brothers because it would provide the workplace trainers to deliver training at the plant. Thus, the quality of this course, and the quality of the trainers that it sought to produce would have a large and on-going impact on the success of workplace training at the plant. Given the importance of this train-the-trainer course, an evaluation of the program was conducted to determine its adequacy from a trainee and enterprise perspective.

The fundamental purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain whether or not the trainers felt that they had the skills and confidence to deliver training at the workplace after completing the course. The evaluation was conducted over three days by members of the research team who were not involved in the training and intervention program. The participants were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire that focused upon a number of important

course-related issues. All responses were recorded on a Training Evaluation Database (TED), purpose-designed for the project.

## **5.1 Train-the-Trainer Evaluation**

Throughout the evaluation process, the trainers identified a number of problems with the train-the-trainer course. In addition they brought to the attention of both the researchers and plant stakeholders a number of difficulties with the original approach to developing in-house training skills and expertise.

### *5.1.1 Course structure and programming*

Trainers expressed dissatisfaction with the disjointed nature of the course. Some sessions were cancelled, often at short notice, usually because of production demands. As a result, the course was seen to lack continuity and at times generated a degree of disinterest and boredom. For example, participants often could not remember the content of previous sessions. Furthermore, the extension of the course to 26 weeks meant that some later modules had to be combined and were often seen as rushed.

Trainers believed that while there was a company commitment to training, production demands would often take precedence. As noted by one interviewee: 'You need time to do proper training and explain things to new people and not just throw them to the wolves'.

All participants felt that production demands were placed well before training, as emphasised by the cancellation of some sessions when trainers were required on the line. At this stage of the program (late 1994 - early 1995), there was a feeling that Castrium Brothers' management should have demonstrated a more practical commitment towards the training process. This often manifested itself in terms of the issue of time release from work duties to participate in the training program. Participants felt there was not enough time to actually do the training. People met together outside of work to do their assignments. However, many group members lived some distance from each other and had other commitments. Therefore, participants believed that time at work should have been set aside for all group members to get together and do the assignments.

It was generally felt that the course should be run over a shorter period of time without interruptions. In fact, some interviewees felt that the course should have been done in intense

blocks (i.e. three days per week) so that full concentration and dedication could be given to the training course without worrying about production quotas. In addition, participants expressed the view that a revision of the previous session's content each week would have been very useful.

### *5.1.2 Course Content*

The TAFE train-the-trainer course was designed to provide participants with the ability to design and deliver training within a classroom-based environment. Consequently, it focused on topics such as overheads, hand-outs, question-and-answer techniques and so on. However, many participants felt that this was not the most appropriate approach to training at their enterprise. The majority of interviewees expressed the view that while some aspects could be classroom-based, most of the course should be focused on the production line, using a 'hands on' approach. As one respondent stated:

'For this sort of job you really have to be in that room and show them. You can't sort of come in here and say look this is what you do when you go in there. You gotta be on the job, otherwise they wouldn't know what you are talking about. It wouldn't be any good'.

This issue revealed a discrepancy between the type of training being delivered in the program and the participants' view of effective and worthwhile training. All interviewees believed that actual training should be conducted on the production line rather than in the classroom. However, this view was to change at a later point (see below) after the trainers had been involved in the module development and pilot training course.

There were some topics covered during the course which participants believed had enhanced their ability to deliver enterprise-based training. Interviewees nominated the sessions on communication and literacy as being most useful. Nevertheless, participants stated that the focus on generic training skills was too strong, to the detriment of task or enterprise-specific skills. Although participants had differing views concerning the core definition of a 'competent' worker, they agreed that this revolved more around task and enterprise-related skills than generic skills.

In terms of teaching and assessment criteria, there was dissatisfaction with changing teaching staff and with perceived lack of adequate assessment. Both of these problems were reflected

in participants' comments concerning the overall effectiveness of the program:

'You still need a pass or fail rate or else it just makes it a joke'.

'You only had to attend the course and you got through it and received your certificate'.

'You could sit there and do nothing and you still get your bit of paper at the end, regardless of if you did the work or not'.

'There were too many teachers, they were changing them all the time and they didn't know what the others (teachers) had done before'.

### *5.1.3 Trainer Knowledge and Learning*

The train-the-trainer evaluation probed what course participants had actually learnt in the train-the-trainer course. For example, interviewees were asked: 'As part of the course you covered a topic called "industrial communication", how might you go about designing and delivering a module on this for trainees?' Further, interviewees were asked to comment on several pertinent training issues or principles that were covered in the course, such as the notion of recognition of prior learning, and competency-based training.

Overall, interviewees were only able to provide limited examples of how they could apply the teaching and instruction skills covered in the course. Almost all interviewees had substantial difficulty in describing how they might design and structure a single hypothetical training module. Furthermore, very few were able to describe what techniques they might employ in delivering modules. In terms of the significant training principles outlined in the course, few interviewees had apparently understood the concepts of prior learning, or competency-based training frameworks. Interestingly, this deficiency also appeared to surprise the interviewees themselves.

This poor outcome was explained by participants in terms of several of the factors described above: a general lack of adequate course assessment; inappropriate motivation by some participants; a lack of opportunity to practise skills; a lack of course continuity (in terms of teachers and sessions); and a lack of relevance of course content. These problems are examined below.

#### ***5.1.4 Lack of formal assessment***

All course participants argued that there was insufficient formal assessment in the course. At the beginning of the course, for example, participants were informed that no one would fail. According to some, this information had an immediate effect upon the performance and attendance of some trainers. Several relevant comments concerning this were reported in the previous section. All participants believed that this compromised the quality of the course and could produce uneven outcomes in the competence of trainers. The evaluation did confirm and identify some 'qualified' individuals who had completed the course but were not yet competent or confident enough to deliver a training course.

#### ***5.1.5 Inadequate Trainer Selection Process***

Another problem identified by train-the-trainer course participants, and subsequently by many supervisors, managers and employees at the plant, concerned the selection of potential trainers prior to the train-the-trainer course. Many trainers believed that the selection process had not been fair or appropriate and that favouritism had been a factor. Interviewees suggested that the selection process should have been more rigorous, with a greater emphasis on ability and motivation. There was a widely held belief that many participants were motivated more by the financial gains in being a recognised trainer than in learning how to train. As noted by one participant, 'some people were only thinking of the money, some people only wanted the piece of paper and some people were committed'.

#### ***5.1.6 The Course Provider***

The evaluation found dissatisfaction with the number of teachers delivering the course. Just as participants felt comfortable with one teacher, another would take over and some of the progress was lost. Participants would have benefited more with one or two teachers for the duration of the course. In addition, they felt that communication between teachers was very poor. Incoming teachers had no idea of where the class was up to and what had been covered. Work tasks set by previous teachers for the next session were never followed up, and this caused a degree of frustration among the participants. According to one trainer, 'there was not much communication between teachers, we had to tell the teachers what we had done before'. Participants felt that it was difficult to maintain their attention and that their time was not being used effectively or efficiently.

### *5.1.7 General Lack of Enterprise or Industry Focus*

There was a consensus that the material covered in the course should have been geared towards providing more specifically tailored skills, tools and techniques to enable the enterprise-based trainers to train meat processing employees. In other words, while the participants saw the relevance of learning generic training skills (using overheads, conducting a class, questioning technique, and so on), trainers were disappointed that the course focused almost exclusively on classroom teaching skills and did not include any strategies tailored for training in the meat industry. Overall it was felt that the course did not meet the needs of Castrium Brothers' stakeholders or the broader meat industry.

At the completion of the train-the-trainer course, 85% of the trainers who were accredited to deliver enterprise-based training believed that they did not have the skills or self-confidence to do so. As previously discussed, there were many reasons offered by interviewees for this expressed lack of confidence and ability. In summary, these issues crystallised around finding the most appropriate and relevant balance between the theory or mechanics of how to train in the workplace and the practice of these skills - in other words, a balance between content and process. The design of the TAFE train-the-trainer program focused almost exclusively upon the process of teaching or instruction at the expense of practice or content.

In summary, by mid-1995, the training program at Castrium Brothers faced some major challenges. Company employees had completed the train-the-trainer course some months earlier but had yet to use their skills formally. Moreover, very few felt prepared to commence any form of formalised training at the plant. The reasons for this outcome covered a range of course management, content, structure, and format problems. For Castrium Brothers' employees and management, this prompted a serious re-consideration of how the process should develop.



## **6. A Time to Change Direction: Castricum Brothers Training Workshop**

By late May 1995, the train-the-trainer course had been completed and evaluated, and the outcomes and issues had been disseminated through the plant. A significant number of employees were dissatisfied with the progress of the training program and, in particular, with how the training program would relate to the functioning of the grading system. The future of the training program, and to some extent the grading system, was in the balance.

At the instigation of several employees and some union delegates, it was decided that a group of representatives from Castricum Brothers should meet for a one-day workshop to consider the company's training program at Castricum Brothers. The workshop was held on Saturday 17 June 1995, and involved Castricum Brothers' union delegates, employee representatives, supervisors and managers. It was facilitated by members of the research team.

Castricum Brothers' stakeholders who attended the workshop articulated their view that the training program should be part of a nationally accredited training framework. They reaffirmed their belief that this would provide employees with a portable and recognised trade qualification that would impart the knowledge and skills necessary to enhance the plant's operational efficiency and enterprise productivity. Furthermore, the enterprise-based training program should function as the mechanism through which employees were able to progress through the internal grading system.

There was much discussion about the need for the meat industry to develop a nationally accredited training curriculum that complies with the AVTS system. There was also further discussion about the role of existing meat industry training bodies. For example, MINTRAC, the National Food Industry Training Board (NFITB) and the Meat Research Corporation (MRC).

The Workshop participants were aware that MINTRAC has pursued a number of training initiatives, in its role as the primary industry body devoted to the development and promotion of meat industry training. These have included the development of industry competency-based standards, the development of a training assessment system, and funding of various

training projects and initiatives at a number of meat processing enterprises.

However, the Training Workshop participants felt that MINTRAC had, at this stage, not adequately drafted an AVTS training curriculum for the industry. There was a belief expressed that MINTRAC's function as the industry training body had come under increasing scrutiny within the industry and its effectiveness had been compromised by a number of factors. These include: restrictions placed upon its activities funded by the NFITB; the broader question of its lack of priorities; the subsequent lack of financial and human resources to achieve its objectives; the lack of general cooperation between industry participants that renders the development of relevant curriculum within a consultative framework difficult; the overall disparate nature of the meat processing industry (where curriculum needs to cater for tasks involved in processing a large number of different species and for different markets); the lack of cooperation of major industry groups; and a general lack of a training culture within the industry.

The Training Workshop noted that two AVTS curricula have been developed recently which apply to the meat industry. These are the Certificate in Meat (Abattoir) Processing, prepared by vocational educational consultants for Queensland TAFE, which was finalised in mid-1995 and the Certificate in Food Processing (General Foods), jointly developed by the National Food Industry Training Council and Australian Committee on Training Curriculum (ACTRAC - a tripartite body comprised of employers, unions, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) and TAFE).

As part of the training program at Castricum Brothers, these curricula had already been assessed by the company stakeholders. The outcome of this initial assessment was that the available training curricula, although valuable, were not immediately suitable to be incorporated into the company training program in their current forms. The specific deficiencies identified included concerns that:

- their content did not relate to Castricum processes and practices;
- both curricula were process-driven, rather than content driven;
- for Castricum Brothers, they involved unrealistic requirements in terms of employee time-release and resources.

Thus, while the participants believed that these programs complied with the AVTS training framework, and in principle did provide employees with portable and industry recognised skills, they were effectively unusable due to the difficulties associated with operating them within an enterprise context. Furthermore, the lack of company-specific content within the programs brought into question the likelihood they would achieve a direct benefit for the company and its employees. The workshop concluded that Castricum Brothers should proactively modify and adapt the existing curricula to its own needs while ensuring that the enterprise-based training conformed to the AVTS system.

The other main issue considered by the stakeholders' workshop was how the AVTS Levels 1-3 could complement and support the Castricum Brothers Grading System. After much debate and discussion, it was agreed by all participants that the framework would consist of the following levels:

**Castricum Brothers Grading System and the AVTS Levels**

Castricum Brothers Grade 4 (entry level)	
Castricum Brothers Grade 3	AVTS Level 1
Castricum Brothers Grade 2	AVTS Level 2
Castricum Brothers Grade 1	AVTS Level 3

The challenge facing the training program now involved working out the content, structure and timeframe for the first step between Grades 4-3, and how this would connect with, and ultimately satisfy, the AVTS Level 1. The workshop participants believed that it was important to initially establish the content and structure of the generic skills. The generic skills modules chosen by the workshop participants were Occupational Health and Safety, Industrial Communication, Quality Assurance and Knife Skills. These modules also fitted within the framework of the AVTS Level 1 module guidelines.

The workshop developed several strategies to regain the momentum of the training program. The first strategy was relatively straightforward - to provide existing company trainers with additional training to overcome the deficiencies in the initial course. The second strategy was to draw the participants of the training program into a single advisory and decision making body. This body would address the adequacy of the available curricula and in the longer term,

would facilitate the development and progress of the training program.

Accordingly, a Castricum Brothers Training Committee of sixteen people was selected to work with the support of the research group. This committee comprised representatives from senior management, production management, supervisors from the different production area, union representatives, trainers, and employee representatives. The Training Committee was given a specific brief (see below) and was to report back to the broader stakeholders on a regular basis.

The Training Committee's first task was to develop a relevant enterprise-based curriculum, building on the ground work undertaken at the training weekend workshop. As previously discussed, the workshop had clearly articulated major reservations about the appropriateness of the available curricula and had formulated a strategy to address the curriculum problem. This represented a substantial turning point in the training program. The Training Committee reaffirmed that in light of the significance of the training project, and the quality of available syllabi, the company would undertake to draft its own training curriculum utilising the most appropriate aspects of existing curricula. It would customise and add material to meet the specific needs of Castricum Brothers. Over subsequent meetings the Training Committee decided that the curriculum would:

- comply with AVTS requirements, so as to be available to submit for accreditation;
- comprise both 'core' and 'functional' skills training;
- relate to the production processes and requirements of the Dandenong plant;
- be drafted by nominated Castricum employees working closely with members of the research team;
- be undertaken progressively, with the first stage targeting employee progression from Grade 4 to Grade 3 in the internal grading system (effectively for all new employees);
- be initially confined to four Grade 4 to Grade 3 core skills modules;

- undergo a comprehensive evaluation after the completion of the four Grade 4 to Grade 3 core skills modules, in the form of a pilot training exercise involving company trainers and trainees; and
- be extended to Grade 4 to 3 functional skills modules pending the outcomes of the pilot exercise (completing the curriculum for this level) and further to Grade 3 to Grade 2.

The Training Committee acting on the recommendations of the workshop established four sub-committee module writing teams, to develop the specific content of the modules: Occupational Health and Safety; Quality Assurance; Industrial Communication; and Knife Skills. These areas are vital to the continued operation of the plant and were identified as presenting opportunities for productivity improvement. The four module writing teams were given specific briefs.

For the Occupational Health and Safety unit, the sub-committee was directed to focus its attention on what an employee at Level 4-3 should know (in terms of content). Examples include: how to work in a safe manner; how to work within the regulations of the company; to wear all safety equipment provided by the company; to be aware of all evacuation procedures; to understand hygiene; personal and equipment procedures; personal protective equipment (hearing); stock handling awareness; animal husbandry; amenities and restrictions (non smoking areas, food); plant speed limits (forklifts); plant signage around areas that are restricted; high risk areas; hazardous areas; injury report procedures; chemical awareness; and the issue of cross contamination from other work and production areas. For details of other module briefs, see Appendix 1.

In drafting each of the modules, the writing teams paid specific attention to structural issues such as overall duration, required classroom time and on-the-job learning. The broad parameters of these structural requirements had been set by the Training Committee, which agreed that the split between classroom and on-the-job would be 50%, and the overall duration of each module should be sensitive to the limited resources of the company and production demands.

## **6.1 Module Preparation**

The development and preparation of the four pilot training modules involved two phases. The first involved developing the module content - gathering, categorising and drafting the information that needed to be delivered in each module. The second task involved the structural organisation of this material in order that it could be effectively delivered to trainees, dividing the module content into individual module sessions and drafting lesson plans. This process was undertaken by each module writing team in conjunction with the trainers.

Each module writing team consisted of one or more trainers, and an additional two or three Castricum Brothers' staff members acknowledged as having sufficient expertise in each respective area. The teams were provided with various resources, including existing meat and food processing industry curricula, access to plant information and personnel, and ongoing assistance from the research team. Over a two month period, the module-writing teams produced draft module documents containing the information which, in their view, trainees should be required to know.

Towards the latter stages of the module-writing exercise, the trainers nominated which of the four modules they would prefer to teach in the pilot exercise. The Training Committee determined that each module would be taught by two trainers. Once the module documents had been finalised, the training teams commenced, dividing the module documents into individual teaching sessions and ordering the sessions into a logical sequence. Over a period of one month, the trainers developed detailed lesson plans for each of the module sessions and commenced preparation for teaching in the pilot exercise. During the writing process, the module teams continually referred back to the Training Committee for advice, input and support. At the completion of the module research and writing process, the modules were approved by the participants in the Training Workshop. A complete guide to each module and session structure is provided in Appendix 2.

## **6.2 Additional Trainer Training**

At the same time as the training modules were being developed, the enterprise-based trainers were undertaking a program of additional training. As previously discussed, this was in response to the evaluation of the train-the-trainer course which clearly highlighted that none of the trainers felt capable of delivering classroom-based training at the workplace. If this

issue was left unaddressed, it had the potential to compromise the quality of the training delivered at the plant. An intensive two-day remedial training workshop was therefore conducted for all company trainers. The trainers' training workshop was developed by staff from the University of Newcastle working in conjunction with members of the research team who were familiar with the specific requirements of the trainers. The aim of the workshop was to provide participants with the tools necessary for facilitating a training program, and thereby to enhance their training skills to a level where they felt comfortable with the prospect of delivering classroom-based training. The stated objectives of the workshop were to provide participants with:

- an understanding of the principles of training;
- the ability to categorise and write learning objectives;
- the ability to select appropriate methods, evaluate lessons and resources;
- the ability to write lesson plans; and
- greater self-confidence.

The workshop was divided into two sessions. The first covered basic training theory and principles and included instruction on definitions of training, training methods and resources, session planning, verbal and non-verbal communication, and training problems. The second session focused on the application of the theory, involving extensive participant practice in the form of a micro-training session. This also involved videotaping and analysis of participant presentations.

At the completion of the two-day workshop, a comprehensive evaluation was undertaken. This revealed that workshop participants gained a great deal from this experience. Overall the evaluation also revealed trainers felt more confident in their ability to conduct the forthcoming training sessions.

It is important to emphasise that at this stage of the training program at Castricum Brothers, there had been many difficulties. However, these were largely overcome through meaningful

employee involvement and the realisation by Castricum Brothers' management of the advantages of a 'bottom-up' approach to training, whereby the training agenda was owned and driven by all major stakeholders. This was seen as the only practical and feasible way to proceed if the training program was to be a success. This change in approach to a more inclusive one was also a very practical given the limited plant resources, and the realisation by many people that it was vital to tap into the skills of both employees and managers and incorporate them into the training modules and program. These factors have contributed to the success of the training program. In many ways this process has involved a major change in the workplace culture at Castricum Brothers. This will be discussed in greater detail in the concluding Discussion section.

## **7. Trainee Pilot**

At this stage, the training modules were written, the trainers were confident that they could deliver the training, and perhaps more importantly, both the managers and employees were firmly committed to, and supportive of, the training project. It was now time to pilot the program with the trainees.

In line with the consensus-based inclusive approach now adopted by the training process, it was decided that the selection of trainees for the pilot should be undertaken by the stakeholders in each production centre. The only condition placed on the selection was that the trainees should be new employees. Therefore all trainees selected had worked at Castricum Brothers for between 1 and 12 months.

### **7.1 Trainee Pre-evaluation**

As part of the formal evaluation of the pilot exercise, the research team conducted a pre-training questionnaire with pilot trainees. This pre-training investigation sought demographic information, trainee work histories, their conceptual understanding of training, their previous training experience, their attitudes towards participation in the exercise, and their expectation of the training.

The pre-training evaluation comprised semi-structured interviews with each trainee, conducted some two weeks prior to the commencement of the pilot exercise. This was administered by



project researchers at the Castricum Brothers Dandenong processing site.

All the trainees were male. This was not intentional but reflected recent employee appointments. The trainees came from several production areas from the plant. Two trainees worked as labourers from the Beef Boning Room, two were labourers from the Mutton Kill Floor, one was a boner from the Lamb Cutting Room, one worked as a labourer in the Offal Room, one worked in the Yards and one worked as a labourer in the Beef Kill Floor.

### *7.1.1 Trainee Understanding of Training*

The pre-evaluation questionnaire sought to test the trainees' understanding of training before they embarked upon the pilot training program. All trainees perceived training in terms of very specific functional skills associated with performing job tasks on-the-job. As one trainee commented: 'Training is being taught to become better at your job. That's basically it in a nutshell. Teaching about jobs and learning about jobs. Basically, training is teaching, being taught how to do certain jobs and how to do them the right way according to the experts. It's just teaching jobs'.

All the trainees believed that training was about being 'taught jobs' exclusively on-the-job, and by knowledgeable personnel. This reflects the training that the trainees have already experienced at the plant:

'It's learning on the job, being shown how to do the job properly by someone who knows what they are talking about'.

'In my case, although I've known how to do jobs as a boner, what the training has done is shown me how to do the volume, how to keep up the pace. I learned this on the job'.

### *7.1.2 Trainee Expectations of Skill Enhancement*

The trainees were optimistic that the training pilot program would enhance their skills in their day-to-day work duties. They believed that this would provide a means for improving their skills and they felt that training could impart new skills relating to new or other jobs in the plant.

'It might help. I hope it will. Basically, I think I've got a bit to go in learning about the stuff that I already do here'.

'It will be a very big benefit in helping me do the jobs that I do now better.

I feel that there is scope for improvement for me in this area'.

'I expect that there will be better performance in the jobs because of this training. I'm hoping that this will help my skills because I'm really keen to be a slaughterman. I want to work my way up as quickly as possible'.

'There is definitely a chance that training will improve how I do the stuff that I already do everyday. Everyone has a different way of doing it so its always possible to take up tips from others, try it out, see if it worked,. There's always room for improvement'.

Trainee reaction to the proposed training modules was generally positive. The only module that they were unsure about was 'Industrial Communication'. When its aims were explained, the trainees were less convinced of the value of this module.

### ***7.1.3 Trainee Knowledge of Castricum Brothers Internal Grading System***

When asked 'Do you know how the grading system at Castricum works?', half of the trainees suggested that they were aware of how the internal grading system worked. The other half reported that they did not.

'Yes, to move from Grade 4 to Grade 3 you have to do a hygiene test. The grading system was part of the enterprise something and you have to do tests and things to move from one to another. I'm not sure of what each of the levels actually mean though'.

'There's a hygiene test that you have to do. There are 4 levels but I don't know how you go about moving from one to another. I think AUS-Meat training is involved somehow'.

'Yes. We have to sit a test and basically learn more, such as in hygiene, and how to do the jobs. Then they put you up a grade. There are four grades. That's about what I know of it'.

Of the trainees selected, 80% had attended the company induction training course that had involved a three hour basic introduction to working at Castricum Brothers.

## **7.2 Pilot training program - Module Training Delivery**

The four modules were conducted on-site at the Castricum Brothers Dandenong plant over a two week period in November 1995. The Training Sub-committee decided that the pilot

exercise should be run over a short timeframe, given the potential for conflicting demands between production requirements and employee release, though it was recognised that this would expose the first cohort of trainees to a large number of sessions over a relatively short period. The classroom training was conducted in the plant's training room. The trainers functioned as coordinators of the training schedule with support from the project researchers. The schedule for the pilot training program is presented in Appendix 3.

Each module contained simple tests to assess how much each trainee had learned. This contrasted with the original train-the-trainer course which contained no such knowledge-testing component.

The tests sought to determine trainee recall of the module material delivered by the trainers. This served two aims: firstly, to determine how successful the pilot exercise had been in imparting knowledge and skills to trainees; and secondly, to identify deficiencies in the module and training delivery, in order to assist in refining the module content and the modes of training delivery.

In the light of reservations expressed by trainees during pre-training discussion - specifically that this assessment would be an exam that would influence their jobs and possible career progression - it was decided that the form of assessment would be as non-threatening as possible. The assessment format also needed to cater for two trainees who had literacy difficulties.

The tests used in the pilot exercise were in the form of 'quizzes'. For each module, researchers and trainers devised a series of primarily multiple-choice questions based upon clearly articulated points covered in the training. The Knife Skills quiz contained 10 questions: 8 of which were multiple choice and 2 of which required trainees to nominate responses. The Industrial Communication quiz contained 13 questions: 12 of which were multiple choice. The Occupational Health and Safety quiz contained 10 questions: 7 of which were multiple choice. The Quality Assurance quiz had 12 questions: 10 of which were multiple choice.

The quizzes were conducted during the final session of each module. This followed a period of revision conducted either immediately prior to the assessment or relatively shortly beforehand. The trainers adopted a low key approach in the administration of the assessment,

and provided support to the trainees with literacy problems. In the case of the Knife Skills module, the trainers supplemented the quiz with an individual assessment of trainee knife sharpening skills. This sought to identify trainees with obvious skill deficiencies rather than to rate their competence.

### ***7.2.1 Industrial Communication Module***

There were six sessions conducted by the two trainers in the Industrial Communication module. Each session lasted approximately one hour. As part of the evaluation process, the two trainers were required to keep a diary of their thoughts and impressions of each session and the overall module. A formal interview and debrief was conducted with each trainer at the end of the module.

To illustrate the kind of diary and debrief material obtained in this way, a detailed profile is given for this module. As will be clear from this section, the feedback ranged from the micro to the macro and across content and process issues. For illustrative purposes, the account is given here in terms of both session chronology and emerging issues.

Overall, the trainers were pleased with the success of the module and enjoyed the training experience. However, the trainers reported some frustration with the inadequate time before the module commenced, either overtime or work time, to coordinate and prepare the module. Both trainers invested a great deal of their personal time working on the module material. At the outset of the pilot, both trainers still felt under-prepared due to lack of time.

In Session 1, the trainers introduced the module and briefly outlined how the sessions would be conducted. There were two guest speakers: Castricum Brothers' Human Resource Manager, who outlined how the training program fitted in within the plant HR functions; and a member of the project research team, who outlined the broad parameters of the AVTS training system and how this pilot project fitted within it. At the conclusion of the session, the trainers believed that it had progressed well, and felt that they were applying the principles they had learnt during their own training.

Sessions 2, 3 and 4 covered a range of topics and activities including: a tour of the plant; how the Enterprise Bargaining agreement operates; the plant layout; and identifying plant management, supervisors and their roles and functions. Trainers believed that these sessions

were successful, but there were some small problems with the module material. For example, the company structure was not covered clearly or extensively enough in the materials. The sessions with guest speakers were very effective, because the guest speakers had delivered the material with 'a lot of authority and credibility because they knew exactly how it all worked'. Trainers pointed to the need for a written summary of speakers' material. They also recommended that they edit the section on the AVTS.

Both trainers felt that the trainees found the tour of the plant very interesting. They planned to devote more time to this in subsequent training. In addition, they pointed to a need for someone from each area to give an overview, or for more information on the functions of each area to be provided beforehand. Trainers also pointed out that in the module material the names of supervisors and foremen were out-of-date.

Session 5, focusing on Occupational Health and Safety, met with some problems, primarily in terms of the accuracy of the module information in relation to First Aiders and the Occupational Health and Safety Representatives. This led to a situation where the trainers were forced to deliver inaccurate information. One positive aspect of this session was an impromptu revision exercise conducted in the form of an in-depth question and answer session which was very effective. Both trainers suggested that they needed to provide a lot more positive feedback to trainees.

The final session concerned pay and conditions. The trainers believed that it was very well received by trainees who were very attentive and interested. The trainers suggested that this material should come earlier in the module schedule. The speaker delivering this information was seen as 'very good'.

The trainers' overall recommendation was that the pilot (four modules) contained too much information for the trainees to cover in the two week period. They suggested that the Industrial Communication module should ideally be delivered over a full week, with better overheads, and that some sections of the module information needed updating.

At the completion of the module, the trainees were given a quiz that was administered to gauge the amount of knowledge they had acquired and retained from the module. The trainee assessment from the Industrial Communication quiz suggested that there was good recall of

the Industrial Communication material. One trainee scored 96%, two scored 92%, two scored 84%, one scored 77%, two scored 69%, and one scored 61%. Overall, there was good knowledge of the various enterprise officers (union delegates, production managers, human resources officer), specific employee entitlements, specific codes of conduct and company management. At the same time, the quiz responses highlighted deficiencies in trainee understanding of what is meant by core and functional skills, and limited knowledge of the role of AVTS training in progression through internal grades.

### *7.2.2 Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Module*

There were seven sessions conducted by two trainers in the Occupational Health and Safety module. These trainers experienced similar problems to the Industrial Communication trainers and were dissatisfied with the lack of preparation time for the module. Coordination between the two trainers was especially difficult because each worked a different shift.

The trainers indicated that ideally there should be only one module per week, and where more than one module is run in a week, that these be conducted as separately as possible (in particular, avoiding a situation where trainees are attending different modules on the same day). Both found the team-teaching approach effective, commenting that, 'it breaks the monotony. Lifts the pressure off trainers. Makes it easier'. Overall, both trainers reported feeling confident that the trainees had picked up the main points of the material, noting that, 'it was clear that they had a very different understanding of what OHS was at the beginning and at the end. They did seem to learn'.

The seven sessions covered a broad range of material: definitions of OHS; OHS policy and responsibilities; specific OHS issues (chemical use hazards and forklift dangers); safe knife use; special requirements and regulations; and First Aid requirements. Despite the best efforts of the trainers, some module material was not current or up-to-date due to time and resource constraints. Nevertheless the trainers went through all of the material very thoroughly, and provided a great deal of explanation. According to the trainers, most of the trainees did not realise that they carried specific responsibilities for OHS as employees, believing that this was the sole responsibility of the company. Generally, there was a lot of interaction and discussion in these sessions.

The trainers found that quite a few trainees had a fair idea of the relevant issues. The trainers

commented that the video material and handouts were very useful teaching tools. These tools prompted a high degree of trainee interest and input.

In the final quiz, the trainee assessment for the Occupational Health and Safety module suggested that trainees had a good grasp of the material covered. Six scored 100%, one scored 90%, one scored 80%, and one scored 70%. The only apparent knowledge deficiencies revealed by the assessment related to some specific work practices. Trainees demonstrated knowledge of common sources of work injury, knowledge of protective equipment, procedures in the event of an injury, and who to deal with when making a Workcover claim.

### ***7.2.3 Quality Assurance Module***

The Quality Assurance module was conducted over five sessions by two trainers. Again, the main problem highlighted by trainers was the lack of time for preparation. Overall, the trainers felt that they had been successful. They believed that a major reason for this success was their own credibility as employees from the floor. As one stated, 'we were listened to more because the information was not coming from the bosses, but from other workers and we were learning together. It gave us extra credibility'.

The sessions covered a range of topics: an introductory session with an ice-breaker exercise that informed trainees of what to expect in each session; hygiene videos; flip charts; a guest speaker on diseases; revision exercises; and a guest speaker on regulatory bodies and requirements. Trainees were particularly interested in the content of the session on diseases, and there was considerable discussion during the session.

Again, the trainees were quizzed on their knowledge retention and the results mirrored those for Occupational Health and Safety.

### ***7.2.4 Knife Skills Module***

The trainers who delivered the Knife Skills module were also dissatisfied with the time provided to prepare the module. 'We were pushed all the time. We had to push and push to get any time to do the work. There were hassles all the time and in the end we only got a few hours for a couple of days to get the lesson plans and stuff together'. They suggested that ideally trainers needed a week or two to prepare and suggested that a rehearsal would have been valuable. Neither of the trainers felt ready or confident at the outset of the training.

There were six sessions in the Knife Skills module and overall, the trainers believed that they had achieved their objectives. 'At the start we thought that if, after the six sessions, we could teach the trainees four or five small tips that they could use when using their knives, then we would have been successful. I think that we did that'. The trainers felt that the trainees showed a high level of interest in the material, essentially because trainees saw knife skills as highly relevant to them. However, both trainers felt that by the time the trainees had reached the last module, they had been exposed to too much information.

In the introductory session, the trainers reported that they felt very nervous, but felt more comfortable once the session had progressed. The module material was seen as 'good' and effective by the trainees. The session went twenty minutes over time due to active discussion and participation by trainees. The trainees were seen as 'excellent' by the trainers. 'They were prepared to listen, they gave a lot of feedback. They were genuinely interested in what we had to say'.

Session 2 focused on knife safety. It was also reported as a useful session. 'The session flowed a lot better than the first, mainly because everyone was a lot more relaxed, we were much more relaxed and confident'. The teaching delivery was found to be very effective, trainees continued to be very interested. 'They were glued to the material. There was two or three trainees that were very keen and wanted to know every little detail'. The more experienced trainees provided much input which enhanced the session. The timing of the sessions improved and generally only ran ten minutes over the scheduled time.

In the later sessions, trainees had the opportunity to practise their skills. Overall the practice was seen as 'very good', although it would have been enhanced had a proper practice area and more materials been available. 'We got them to sharpen their own work knives. After the practice we had a look at how they'd done and most of them were able to get a pretty good edge'. The trainers also debriefed the quiz in class once the trainees had completed it.

Trainees generally scored well in the Knife Skills Quiz, given that this was the last in a large number of module training sessions, and given the highly practical, hands-on, nature of this training. One trainee scored 100%, another scored 90%, and seven scored 80%. Furthermore, the trainers assessed eight out of the nine trainees as able to demonstrate correct knife sharpening and maintenance practice and procedures. This positive outcome may reflect a



number of factors in addition to the module content and the training delivery. These include the high degree of relevance perceived by trainees, trainee preference for demonstration and practice, and the level of prior knowledge held by some trainees.

### **7.3 Summary of Module Training Delivery**

The pilot exercise provided a range of recommendations for the logistical and structural organisation of this form of enterprise-based training, as well as for the further development of these four training modules. These include:

- adequate time for trainers to prepare lesson plans and resources (either work time or paid overtime);
- avoiding, where possible, teaching teams where trainers work on different production shifts;
- eliciting further support from supervisory staff for the training agenda;
- the need to institute a principle where employees scheduled to attend a training session will attend that session regardless of production requirements;
- the appointment of a training manager to act as a resource person or facilitator with sole responsibility for the logistical organisation of enterprise-based training;
- the need to have a sufficient number of accredited trainers to cover the growth and expansion of the training program;
- the need to adequately space modules to avoid information overload (one or two modules per week);
- the need to structure periodic reviews of the module material to ensure that all information is accurate and up-to-date;
- the need to structure and plan revision exercises within lesson plans;

- further encouragement of trainee interaction and participation activities within lesson plans;
- the need for greater preparation for practical activities such as the setting up of a practice area; and
- numerous recommended changes to the module material.

#### **7.4 Trainee Post-evaluation**

Overall the post-evaluation revealed that the trainees had enjoyed the training experience. Trainees rated the four modules overall as 'very good' and also felt that the trainers' performance was 'excellent'.

All trainees felt that the training course was more beneficial than the existing induction course provided at Castricum Brothers, as it covered a wider range of topics and in greater depth. In general, participants believed that the module training had not only enhanced their skills but had led to better job performance.

Participants felt that the course could have been more spread out, to avoid information overload. However, otherwise they believed the modules were well paced, with the length of each session being 'just right'. They also held the trainers in very high regard expressing that 'they explained a lot and knew what they were on about'.

The trainees made a number of valuable suggestions for improving the modules:

- having the modules taught over a longer period of time to avoid information overload;
- having only one session per day otherwise the day becomes too long and tiring; and
- ensuring labourers can obtain time-release, otherwise the sessions run late.

#### ***7.4.1 Content, Knowledge Retention and Skill Enhancement***

Generally participants retained a large proportion of the information covered in the modules. All trainees were able to give a brief summary of the content of each of the four modules, although some had difficulties in remembering the exact names of the modules (particularly Industrial Communication).

Confirming their prior expectations of skill enhancement, trainees were also able to give examples of how they had transferred the knowledge they had learned into their daily work. 'Before I didn't know how to use a knife and didn't keep it sharp. Now I can and it makes my work so much easier'.

Overall participants felt that Occupational Health and Safety and Quality Assurance were the two most important modules, followed by Knife Skills and finally Industrial Communication.

In summary, all of the Castricum Brothers' stakeholders are pleased with the success of the pilot training course. Both the trainers and the trainees and have gained valuable knowledge from this process.

### **8. Discussion**

As discussed in the Introduction, the pilot project has tested and called into question many of the original assumptions about enterprise-based training and the process of achieving it. There are a number of issues at this stage of the pilot project that need to be addressed. Some of these are specific to Castricum Brothers but many are relevant to other enterprises, both within and outside the meat processing industry. At this stage, the discussion will mainly focus on the issues as they affect the Castricum Brothers training process.

Over the last eighteen months, the training program has been instrumental in contributing to a significant change in the workplace culture at the Castricum Brothers Dandenong plant. The success and impact of this change has been aided and supported by the ongoing Workplace Culture Change Project (see Bodi, Greig, Maggs and Testi, 1995) that has operated in both the Mutton Slaughter and Beef Boning production areas. The continual success of both projects lends a great deal of support to the argument that workplace culture change needs

to be addressed on a number of fronts simultaneously. This approach allows for the continual reinforcement of change and greater involvement by all enterprise stakeholders. It maximises the options for change in terms of multiple approaches and methods. The training project has provided not only a tangible vehicle for change but a concrete means to illustrate the degree and impact of the change process.

Castricum Brothers' management realised very early in the process that for the training program to deliver the required outcomes and meet the stated aims, it could not be organised in a structured, bureaucratic or hierarchical management-controlled manner. The training program had to be owned and controlled by all the company stakeholders, and in particular the employees. There were very good practical reasons for adopting this approach. It became increasingly apparent that to develop the necessary and relevant curriculum, to develop a simple and effective training structure, and to organise the operation of the training program on a daily basis, management had to rely on the commitment, support and input of all employees and production supervisors. In other words, a company the size of Castricum Brothers could not afford to put in place a training bureaucracy to run and oversee the enterprise-based training framework. The company also realised that by promoting a real and practical sense of employee involvement, the company could tap into the knowledge and skills of the employees.

In practical day-to-day terms, the new workplace culture perspective of employee involvement and commitment is revealed by the fact that individuals involved in the training program have all given their time freely. This is true of trainers, members of the module-writing teams, and training sub-committee members. This was unheard of at the plant before the training and workplace culture change projects commenced.

It is against this background, and through a process of multi-stakeholder involvement, that some of the issues raised in the original aims and objectives of the training program have been resolved to the satisfaction of all plant stakeholders. The first and perhaps most controversial was the issue of the grading system and AVTS training framework. As previously discussed, one of the major aims of the enterprise-based training program was to provide the mechanism through which employees would be able to progress through the internal Castricum Brothers grading system. The foundations of the grading structure had been in place for over two years. As a general principle, it was supported by all stakeholders. There

was a time during the project when the existence of the grading system was brought into question because there was a view amongst employees that it had not delivered anything during its two-year lifespan. This is now not the case. Employees have seen the training program in operation and now support it, and understand how they will be able to move from one level to another utilising the enterprise-based training program. In other words, there is now in place a process within which the grading system operates.

There is still a substantial amount of work to be completed before the training program is fully operationalised. The curricula for Grade Levels 3-2 and 2-1 are still to be developed, there are still not enough enterprise-based trainers, and there are still issues of what functional skills should be included in each grade level and how they will be assessed. However, thus far, the project has clearly illustrated that Castricum Brothers' management and employees have the commitment, means and processes in place to address these issues.

Another lesson from the project was that the train-the-trainer course originally purchased by Castricum Brothers did not provide competent trainers ready to deliver the enterprise-based training. This train-the-trainer program is an example of a training program that has been designed and determined from outside the enterprise and the industry. The delivery proceeded without tailoring the course design, curriculum or delivery to the enterprise, and with an evaluation model that was not clear, either in principle or in practice. The lesson to be drawn is that in terms of train-the-trainer courses for this industry, there are no quick fixes. These courses need to be enterprise-specific in terms of content, delivery and evaluation.

There is also a need to train more train-the-trainers for the continual ongoing functioning of the training program. This presents a problem for the company and the broader industry. There is not currently a train-the-trainer program that can cater for the needs of Castricum Brothers. The training program, and in particular the train-the-trainer evaluation, has illustrated that there is an urgent need to develop a much more industry/plant specific course, tailored to the need of the industry. This course should place greater emphasis on content, industry context and on developing the self-confidence of trainers. It should also be conducted over a shorter time period of time than the TAFE train-the-trainer course conducted at Castricum Brothers.

A crucial issue that was raised at the outset of this program was that an enterprise-based training framework should fit within the production and management work organisation structures that already existed within the plant. This pilot program has produced some answers to this and brought about some changes. As previously discussed, perhaps the most important change has been in the area of responsibility and control. The manner in which Castricum Brothers have realised they can run the training program has meant that it will be largely worker driven and owned. In terms of fitting in with the production demands, this is only possible with a great deal of goodwill on part of all participants and a degree of flexibility. There will always be conflicting demands between production schedules and programs such as the training scheme. The successful balance largely depends on how it is managed by the stakeholders.

The training process has increased the knowledge and skill levels of the trainers, trainees, and all the other participants in the training program. At this stage, it is too early to claim that the training program has clearly enhanced the plant's operational efficiency and enterprise productivity. However, the signs are encouraging. The final stage of this project (February-June 1996) will closely examine and analyse the impact of this enterprise-based AVTS training pilot program. There is no doubt that training has delivered an improvement in employee skill levels.

In terms of macro training policy issues, the pilot project outcomes support the objective of the Australian meat industry to have a nationally accredited training regime. This would in time provide employees with a portable and recognised trade qualification that would benefit both individual enterprises and the meat processing industry generally. Perhaps the single largest contribution that this type of project makes is in the area of changing the workplace culture at both an enterprise and industry level. To be a success, training programs demand a more responsive, flexible committed and co-operative work environment that includes all major enterprise stakeholders. This can provide the solid basis required for successful, relevant training.

## **Appendix 1: Module Briefs**

### **1. Industrial Communication**

#### **1.1 What an employee should know about the Company/job:**

- Basic knowledge of what all departments do and where they are;
- Who your delegate, first aider, paymaster and your supervisor are etc;
- Hygiene - how and why (outcomes for the company);
- Knowing basic cuts;
- Nature of the work, seasonality of work;
- Customer relations (what they require);
- Communication processes - newsletters, focus groups, fact sheets, half hour sectional meetings to discuss issues;
- Human resources and entitlements issues including RDOs, sickleave, annual leave, rates of pay, Workcover, and Enterprise Bargaining agreement; and
- Ability to work as a team member, responsibility to teams and consequences.

#### **1.2 Structure of the module**

In drafting each of the modules, the writing teams paid specific attention to structural issues such as overall duration, required classroom time and on-the-job learning. The broad parameters of these structural requirements had been set by the Training Committee, which agreed that the split between classroom and on-the-job would be 50%, and the overall duration of each module should be sensitive to the limited resources of the company and production demands.

## **2. Quality Assurance**

Quality Assurance covers three broad areas: work practices - how they do the job; the product - ie: dropped meat procedures; and awareness of the regulations under which Castricum Brothers employees work.

### **2.1 What an employee should know:**

- Basic hygiene: clothes, lockers, knives and equipment;
- How and where equipment should be kept;
- Personal/personnel hygiene;
- Dropped meat procedures;
- General awareness of the role of Quality Assurance, AQIS and AUSmeat;
- Tub colour codes;
- Correct use of machinery (from a hygiene point of view);
- Designated area for your equipment; and
- Where employees can actually eat.

### **2.2 Structure of the module**

In drafting each of the modules, the writing teams paid specific attention to structural issues such as overall duration, required classroom time and on-the-job learning. The broad parameters of these structural requirements had been set by the Training Committee, which agreed that the split between classroom and on-the-job would be 50%, and the overall duration of each module should be sensitive to the limited resources of the company and production demands.



### **3. Knife Skills**

#### **3.1 What an employee should know:**

- Induction - basics;
- Video and booklet on knife sharpening;
- Where knives are kept - how to get them and what to do;
- Export requirements - knife sterilisation;
- Identification of knife types used for each area, i.e. edges and angles;
- Knife maintenance - sharpening and use;
- Assessment - knife skills, use and sharpening requirements;
- Safety requirements - knife, apron, pouch, rubber stopper, steel; and
- Correct Knife Use.

#### **3.2 Structure of the module**

In drafting each of the modules, the writing teams paid specific attention to structural issues such as overall duration, required classroom time and on-the-job learning. The broad parameters of these structural requirements had been set by the Training Committee, which agreed that the split between classroom and on-the-job would be 50%, and the overall duration of each module should be sensitive to the limited resources of the company and production demands.

## **Appendix 2: Module and Session Structure**

### **1. Industrial Communication**

Given work conducted within the company to improve the work culture at the plant over the previous two years, it was felt that Industrial Communication would assist in continuing this process, and assimilate new employees into the broader life of the company. The Industrial Communication Module contained the following sessions:

- Session 1: Introduction, What Is Industrial Communication;
- Session 2: AVTS Training and Internal Grading System;
- Session 3: Management, Union Officials;
- Session 4: Departmental Staff and Plant Layout;
- Session 5: First Aid, Occupational Health and Safety Officers, Human Resources Officers;
- Session 6: Pay and Conditions;
- Session 7: Revision and Assessment.

### **2. Occupational Health and Safety**

Occupational Health and Safety is a ongoing concern due to the inherently hazardous nature of meat processing work. Further, there is some evidence that accident and injury rates at the plant had increased in recent times. This module contained the following sessions:

- Session 1: Introduction to Module, What Is Occupational Health and Safety;
- Session 2: Company Health and Safety Policy, Management and Employee Responsibilities;
- Session 3: Personal Protective Equipment;
- Session 4: Other Safety Issues;

- Session 5: First Aid Officers, Facilities and Procedures;
- Session 6: Plant Evacuation Procedure;
- Session 7: Safe Use of Knives;
- Session 8: Individual Work Area Safety Regulations and Assessment.

### **3. Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance carries a very high priority given the highly regulated environment in which the company operates. Failure to meet statutory operating standards carries a real danger of withdrawal of the plants operating licence, and failure to meet customer requirements leads to loss of sales contracts. In addition, management plans to implement a new mandatory quality assurance system in the near future. The Quality Assurance module included the following sessions:

- Session 1: Introduction to Module, What Is Quality Assurance;
- Session 2: Hygiene;
- Session 3: Working For Quality Guidelines 1;
- Session 4: Working For Quality (1 continued);
- Session 5: Government Bodies and Regulations;
- Session 6: Revision and Assessment.

### **4. Knife Skills**

There was concern that many, often long standing, employees were lacking basic knife sharpening and maintenance skills, and that training in this area could lead to relatively immediate productivity improvements. The Knife Skills module included the following sessions:

- Session 1: Introduction to Module, What Are Knife Skills;

UMON.007 - Evaluation of training in the Australian Meat Processing Industry

- Session 2: Safety;
- Session 3: Knives and Gear;
- Session 4: Honing with a Stone;
- Session 5: Steeling;
- Session 6: Grinding;
- Session 7: Practice and Assessment.

**Appendix 3: Teaching Schedule** (as given to Trainers)

<b>DAY</b>	<b>INDUSTRIAL COMMUNICATION 8 HOURS</b>	<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE 4 HOURS</b>	<b>OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH &amp; SAFETY 8 HOURS</b>	<b>KNIFE SKILLS 4 HOURS</b>
<b>Monday</b>	Session 1 Session 2			
<b>Tuesday</b>	Session 3	Session 1		
<b>Wednesday</b>	Session 4	Session 2		
<b>Thursday</b>	Session 5	Session 3 Session 4		
<b>Friday</b>	Session 6			
<b>Monday</b>			Session 1 Session 2	
<b>Tuesday</b>			Session 3 Session 4	Session 1
<b>Wednesday</b>			Session 5	Session 2 Session 3
<b>Thursday</b>			Session 6 Session 7	Session 4
<b>Friday</b>	Session 7	Session 5	Session 8	Session 5 Session 6

**NB:** One session is 50 minutes of teaching time

**NB:** There will be a quiz at the completion of each module

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