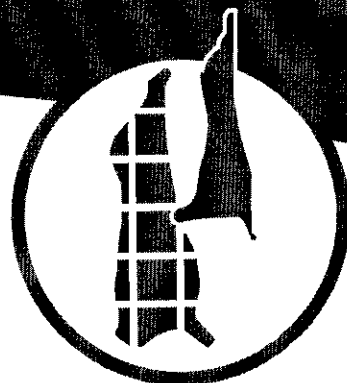


# PPI



## **Meat packaging and distribution study M.119**

**1992**

*Prepared by:*  
**Rearck Research Pty,  
Marketing and Social  
Research Consultants**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. BACKGROUND

The principals of Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd have had extensive background with the retail grocery market, including sales and marketing, distribution, contract manufacture and retail management. Larry Botham (while marketing manager for a discount chain in NSW) identified the opportunity for case ready meat. His companies performance in butchery units was acceptable but were never measured for real profit contribution when part of a store infrastructure. The cost benefit of a butchery unit versus a meat case being supplied by a remote supplier, weighed in favour of the meat case however they were vulnerable to product quality and consistency. In many instances it was such a problem meat cases were leased to a operator.

Case ready meat was the answer but it had to satisfy some key points:

- 1) It had to be packed differently than traditional tray over wrap to enable more efficient merchandising (vertical display cabinets).
- 2) Provide longer shelf-life with advent of 7 day trading.
- 3) Consistent meat quality.
- 4) Good range.
- 5) Provide a margin on sell better than 10-15% across the range.

This issue was consistent with a significant part of the retail grocery market.

With the development of the concept it was clearly identified that market place was changing, stores had to meet the demands of the new consumer therefore the emergence of extended trading hours, growth of convenience type stores and traditional stores offering convenience type trading. This new consumer wishes to buy more fresh food than ever before, she wanted to buy little and often, when she wanted to, not when she had to. New life styles require convenience shopping and convenience foods. It was identified that fresh meat was not meeting the challenge in it's traditional form and was losing ground to chicken, frozen meals, takeaways, home deliveries even pasta.

Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd believed it could develop a commercially sound concept with dedicated effort in the research and development of a product that was acceptable not only to the consumer but to the retailer as well and therefore meet the challenge.

## 2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To launch a system for packaging, distribution and marketing of fresh meat in a case ready form for the non-traditional supermarkets with a major focus on the new convenience stores. This system must be designed to not only adequately service and meet the requirements of this market but be commercially viable.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The system was structured around a packaging concept called Darfresh-Vacuum Skin Packaging (V.S.P.). Many packaging forms were accessed prior to the development of V.S.P. to enable the product to be highly marketable and provide extended shelf life. A pilot factory was established at West Gosford NSW where test production commenced. Target retail groups were approached and three test stores were established.

A specific chilled cabinet was developed to provide proper temperature control and enable proper merchandising in an upright format. Meat specification was established and suitable supplier contracted. Distribution system was put in place designed to meet the critical consistent temperature control requirement. Brand, product packaging and point of sale was developed and sponsored by A.M.L.C.

## 4. RESULTS

The concept has proved to be commercially acceptable to both the consumer and the retailer. Commercial viability requires the business to be structured .

- . Marketing /Development
- . Processing/Procurement
- . Distribution

Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd are currently finalising agreements with contractors for processing and distribution. These contractors will operate in close an harmonious manner, controlled by Prime-Vac Products which will also control the Marketing & Product Development. The process contractor will provide a base for national supply.

As a result of efforts to date we have provided a most viable opportunity for target retail groups to move into Red Meat retailing. Negotiations with all the convenience store groups have resulted in placement of product in selected stores for testing prior to acceptance as a total group. The major delay has been the uneasiness to sell fresh Red Meat. We feel the traditional method for fresh meat marketing, and the lack of case ready product has created this attitude. It is a situation that is more prevalent at senior executive level as opposed to the store operators. Senior management wish to avoid any of the perceived problems associated with fresh Red Meat and rely heavily on our total management plan to expedite decisions not just in favour of Prime-Vac Products but to sell fresh Red Meat.

The general Retail Industry (outside the majors) seem ill-informed with respect to fresh Red Meat and due to the lack of Industry initiative and inivativness the opportunity has often been shelved as too hard.

Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd offers the industry a new and untapped distribution for Red Meat and will co-ordinate marketing which can support the development of specific meat types with strong emphasis on value adding. The structure enables any retailer to sell meat and stand it alongside all other grocery products.

#### 5. ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd were able to achieve the stated objectives of;

- a) Procurement
- b) Processing
- c) Packaging
- d) Distribution
- e) Marketing

to the non-traditional markets ie:

- . Small Independent Supermarket
- . Discount grocery chains
- . Convenience Stores

#### Test Market Stores

- |                         |                 |                                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. JEWEL FOOD BARN      | - Blacktown     | - Discount Chain                |
| 2. CLANCY'S SUPERMARKET | - Edgecliffe    | - Small Independent Supermarket |
| 3. FOODMASTER (NICK'S)  | - Woolloomooloo | - Convenience Store             |

#### PRODUCT RANGE

##### BEEF

Scotch Fillet  
Boneless Sirloin  
Eye Fillet  
Rump  
Round  
Topside  
Blade  
Chuck  
B B Q Steak  
Roast Beef  
Schnitzel Steak  
Garlic Steak  
Pepper Steak

##### LAMB

Lamb Fillets  
Lamb Legs  
Boned Lamb Shoulder  
Lamb Racks  
Mongolian Lamb

## 6. INTERLECTUAL PROPERTY

Interlectual property arising from this project will be derived from two key areas.

a) **System Specification & Procedures Manual:**

Each step in the entire system shall be developed to the required specification and, consistent with the total quality management approach, documented in the Manual. The Manual shall document a monitoring and testing system for maintaining the quality of product, Meat Colour, Meat Quality (tenderness), pH, Temperature, Hygiene, Handling, Drip Loss and Merchandising. This manual will be used in the training of Meat Processors, Distributors and Retailers.

b) **Market Research Programme:**

The overall objective of the research was to assess consumer response to the 'Butcher's Pride' products, and on the basis of this information to develop guidelines for future marketing and distribution.

This goal required a detailed examination of consumer behaviour and attitudes, as well as analysis of the response to the product itself.

The research consisted of two separate phases. Initially interviewers observed customers in four selected outlets, recruited them to participate in the product test, and then interviewed them. This initial interview explored the following:

**Response to Product**

- . Initial impressions of the product
- . Likes and dislikes
- . Interest in purchase
- . Barriers to purchase
- . Detailed evaluation of product features

**Response to Packaging**

- . Suitability of packaging
- . Suggestions for improvement
- . Pack size preferences
- . Preferences regarding contents

**Meat Purchasing and Usage Patterns**

- . Purchase and consumption of
  - . Red meat
  - . White meat
  - . Take away and prepackaged foods
- . Attitudes and practices with regard to freezing of meat.

#### **Consumer Attitudes**

- . Market segmentation based on attitudes and lifestyle dimensions
- . Attitudes towards quality
- . Perceptions regarding Restaurant meat
- . Quality versus price dimension

#### **Demographics**

- . both personal and household demographics  
After ten to fourteen days customers were contacted at home by phone and their opinions of the product sought. The second interview focussed very much on the product itself and examined the following issues.
  
- . Usage of the meat in home
- . Likes and dislikes
- . Perceived consumer benefits
- . Meat preferred
- . Detailed evaluation of product features
- . Evaluation of quality relative to 'normal' meat
- . Purchase interest
- . Perceptions of price
- . Likely frequency of purchase
- . Substitution effects
- . Suggestions for distribution, marketing and promotions

This two phase program provided not only an understanding of consumer response to the product, but also the background information about the behaviour and attitudes of the likely buyer that is needed to develop marketing strategies.

An important supplementary goal of the research was to convert our understanding of key buyer characteristics into geographic terms using CD-ROM mapping. Defining the target buyer areas will provide guidelines for distribution.

#### **7. COMMERCIALISATION**

Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd have completed a commercialisation assessment report as a milestone report. From the report we recommend the implementation of a structure to enable the proper commercialisation of the research project.

Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd will be responsible for ultimate commercialisation by the co-ordination and structuring of contract operators to a specific brief and guidelines.

S T R U C T U R E

P	.Quality Management	Prime-Vac Products	Marketing
V	.Product Development		Sales
P			

ADMINISTRATION

C  
O  
N  
T  
R  
A  
C  
T  
O  
R  
S

PROCUREMENT PROCESSING PACKAGING	ORDER PROCESSING DISTRIBUTION	SALES
		FIELD MERCHANDISING

Negotiations with proposed contractors are near to finality. Manufacturing will be centrally based to supply the NSW, QLD & VIC market. Distributor and selling contractors will be established on a state and regional basis.

8. INDUSTRY IMPACT

(i) Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd development plan and objectives

- a) Focus market - all retail groups without Butchery Units
- b) Target, marketing and product development to impact White Meat and Processed meal products.
- c) Marketing efforts will have a strong inference toward convenience.
- d) Launch pre-portioned branded fresh Red Meat to the Foodservice market supported by a co-ordinated marketing effort.
- e) Vertical intergration of value added products, take home to prepare and pre-cooked products.
- f) Development of pre-cooked meals (portion serve) for the Foodservice market.
- g) Introduction of a Premium Breed range of Beef to existing range, Retail and Foodservice
- h) Committment to the Butcher's Pride brand and the grading of the Beef and Lamb range.
- i) Will not market meat generically

- (i) Market potential: See attached
- (ii) Volume Estimates (NSW only)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Retail Accounts	92478	193112	236249	289883	356571
Food Service	68478	179758	219645	269238	330902
TOTAL Kilo's	160957	372871	455893	559121	687473

Estimates are based on current volume achieved by current accounts projected at the rate of 2% growth per month. Queensland and Victoria will generate similar volume levels to NSW however the mix of retail and Food Service may vary. Acceptance of Butcher's Pride programme by any of the major groups will obviously have significant impact on current projections.

(iv) Sales Mix

Beef	- 34.23%
Lamb Cuts	- 12.65%
Lamb Roasts	- 5.86%
Mince and Sausages	- 42.80%
Other	- 4.46%



**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE**  
(for the year ending 31 DEC 1991)

**FORM B**

**CONTRACT / GRANT**

RESEARCH ORGANISATION PROJECT NUMBER TITLE OF PROJECT	\$ Operating 84,628.00 O/s Travel Capital 32,000.00 Overheads Total Contract 116,628.00
---	--

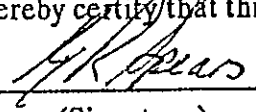
	Period	EXPENDITURE				TOTAL
		Operating	Overseas Travel	Capital	Overhead Contribution	
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
A) Unspent and Uncommitted	b/f 1 July	8,628	---	---	---	8,628
B) Cash Received from AMLRDC	1 July to 31 Dec	26,000	---	32,000	---	58,000
C) Cash Received from AMLRDC	1 Jan to 30 June	50,000	---	---	---	50,000
D) Cash Received from AMLRDC	Total	84,628	---	32,000	---	116,628
E) Expenditure	1 July to 31 Dec	139,306	---	36,797	---	176,103
F) Expenditure	1 Jan to 30 June	---	---	---	---	---
G) Expenditure	Total	139,306	---	36,797	---	176,103
H) Unspent and Uncommitted A+D-G	c/f 30 June	8,628	---	---	---	8,628

Notes on completion of return

- 1) The return is to be completed half yearly at 31 December and annually at 30 June each year.
- 2) Expenditure for the current year is defined as Cash expended during the current period less Commitments bought forward from the prior half year plus Commitments at the end of the current half year.
- 3) You may be required by the Corporation to have the statement certified as correct by your auditors.
- 4) The statement is required within 30 days of the 31st December and 30th June for each year.

**Certificate of Accounting Officer**

I hereby certify that this statement of expenditure is correct

 (Signature)	GEOFF SPEARS (Printed Name)	DIRECTOR (Designation)	01,05 / 1992
--	--------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------

**MEAT RESEARCH CORPORATION  
LIST OF ASSETS**

(Attachment to the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure as at 31/12/1991 ) FORM D

RESEARCH ORGANISATION  
PROJECT NUMBER  
TITLE OF PROJECT

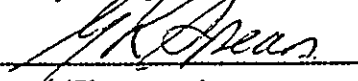
M119  
PRIME-VAC PRODUCTS PTY LTD

DESCRIPTION OF ASSET	PURCHASE DATE	PURCHASE PRICE
E2000 MAZDA REFRIGERATED TRUCK		11,500.00
FACTORY TABLES/BENCHES		12,267.00

Note: An asset is any capital item with a purchase price greater than or equal to \$5,000.00 or any livestock item regardless of purchase price

**Certificate of Accounting Officer**

I hereby certify that this statement of expenditure is correct

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

(Printed Name) GEOFF SPEARS

(Designation) DIRECTOR

01 /05/ 1992

## 11. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The research project has identified a clearly defined market and market potential which will be detailed in the final draft of the market research. Initial projections as detailed are strictly conservative and do not indicate the real market potential if Red Meat could be marketed and distributed similarly to associated products (Smallgoods) and competitor White Meats (Chicken) only then, could the real potential be approached. Our target market is only a vacuum created by the very traditional attitudes of the meat industry and the lack of inivativness. We have identified the market, developed the concept and are ready to launch, however we require full support of the industry in setting new and modern precedences and breaking down the restrictive practices currently in place, vis;

- a) Trading hours and specific store requirements other than local and state Health Dept requirements.
- b) Vehicle Licencing for meat distribution
- c) Minimising the restrictive trade practices of processing abattoirs.

Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd will continue to seek Meat Research Corporation support, it has taken the concept to the consumer, now it must find it's real potential. Our major restriction is the growth potential and marginal profits all of which can be addressed with new technology currently on the horizon and a productive relationship with M.R.C.

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# EUROBAY PTY LTD

CONSULTANTS TO THE FOOD INDUSTRY

RECEIVED 11 FEB 1992

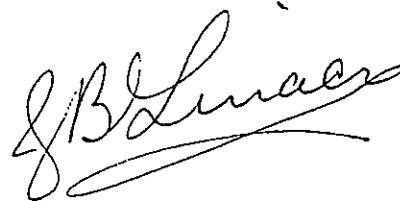
6th February 1992

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT FOR PRIME-VAC PRODUCTS PTY LTD

The objective of the work to be done is to produce a customer acceptable package and a system for the retail sale of fresh meat that can be centrally produced and distributed over a long period.

The areas investigated were:

1. The packaging system to be employed.
2. The packaging materials to be used.
3. The type of meat to be sold.
4. The temperature control of the meat throughout its life.
5. The hygiene at all levels of the meat handling.
6. The lighting employed at the retail level.
7. The labelling of the package.
8. The future.



J B LINACRE  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

## 1. THE PACKAGING TO BE EMPLOYED

Four packaging systems were originally looked at:

1. Styrene tray with P.V.C. overwrap - daily delivery.
11. Gas flushed package using an oxygen and carbon dioxide mixture to retain colour.
111. Vacuum - thermoform pack using laminates with all over seal.
- 1V. The Darfresh skin packaging system.

### 1. The Styrene tray:

This system is used in supermarkets where the meat is sliced and packaged in the butchery section of each supermarket. The meat has a 3-4 day shelf life.

This system can be used if the temperature control and hygiene is excellent and the distribution distances and times are very short.

It is used in Japan where the meat can be packaged in the afternoon and night and delivered daily early in the morning - i e - between 4 and 6 am. These factors are very difficult to carry out in Australia.

### 11. The Gas Flushed package.

This system has proven to be successful in the U K and in some parts of Europe. Marks & Spencer - Supermarkets are the largest users of this system in the U K but they only have 4% of the retail meat market and have excellent distribution and refrigeration. They are very special stores.

This system has been tried by three different companies in Australia:

- (a) Chill Fresh Meat.
- (b) Fresh Pack Meat
- (c) Coles Farmland.

11. The Gas Flushed Package con'd.

All three continued the sale of this pack for over a year but then discontinued the system for fresh meat.

The reasons for discontinuing were found to be:

- (1) Cost of packaging materials
- (2) Cost of gas.
- (3) Bulk of pack is excessive.
- (4) Leaking packs cannot be distinguished from good packs.
- (5) Tenderness of meat is inferior to that just under vacuum.
- (6) Colour of meat is only acceptable if gas mixture is very accurately controlled.

111. The Vacuum Thermoform Pack:

This system was investigated thoroughly and both manufacturing and market acceptance trials were carried out.

The reasons for rejecting this system were:

- (1) Excessive drip formed in the pack.
- (2) A large amount of plastic is on show in the retail cabinet.
- (3) The pack is not rigid and does not display well.

1V, The Darfresh Skin Packaging System:

This system was selected because of the following points.

- (1) The drip is locked into the meat by the skin.
- (2) There was reasonably low cost equipment available to carry out the packaging.
- (3) The temperature control has to be good but not quite as good as other systems.
- (4) The display effects of the pack are excellent if the lighting in the cabinet is of a particular kind.
- (5) There was high speed equipment available for when the volume increases.

1V, The Darfresh-Skin Packaging System (cont'd.

- (6) The pack is excellent for freezing if the housewife needs to keep the meat for long periods - months.
- (7) The pack is excellent for export - both fresh - airfreighted or frozen by ship.
- (8) The Skin Pack thaws well and only a little drip comes out of the meat.



## 1 - 1V THE DARFRESH -SKIN PACKAGING SYSTEM

Research and Development work carried out prior to equipment selection.

1. A selection of steaks were purchased from a Coles Supermarket cabinet (6° C) and taken to a room at 20° C. They were skin packaged on to P V C trays on a Furakawa - F I P 50 skin packaging machine using Cryovac coated film.

The ten packs were then stored at 4° C in a refrigerator for three weeks. The samples were then tested for bacteria counts. All but one pack had counts under 100,000 total count. One pack in one place had a count of one million.

There was obviously some contamination on this pack.

2. One strip loin - vacuum packaged was purchased from an export works. This was transported in ice to a room kept at 10° C.

The strip loin was sliced on a polyethylene cutting board which had been sterilized and sliced with a sterilized knife. Steaks were immediately placed on trays and skin packaged using Cryovac film and a Furakawa F I P 50 machine then placed under refrigeration at 4° C.

After three weeks the samples were tested for bacteria counts. All samples were well under the acceptable limits for retail sale and this indicated that we had a commercial process.

Research and Development work carried out after the installation of the F I P 50 machine at Gosford N S W

A range of meat cuts - strip loin - rump - fillet - were purchased - vacuum packaged from Midco Meat. They were delivered in a refrigerated truck and placed into cold storage at 2° C. The cuts were sliced using sanitized equipment and placed on trays and immediately skin packaged Cryovac - P V C coated trays and Cryovac coated top webb film were used.

Samples were placed in a prototype refrigerator and held at 2° to 4° C. Special lighting was installed in the refrigerator and the colour of the meat was excellent.

After two and three weeks the samples were opened and tested for organolyptic properties. All two week samples were excellent. Most three week samples were excellent.

Improvements to be made: (a) Bring the cutting room temperature down to 10° C.  
It had been approx. 15° C.  
(b) Bring the refrigerator temperature down to 0 to 2° C

At this stage we had a commercial process which would be tested in the field.

## 2. THE PACKAGING MATERIALS TO BE USED.

The materials in the Prime-Vac case had to achieve the following.

- I They had to have low oxygen and carbon dioxide permeability.
11. The bottom tray had to be shaped and be rigid enough to stand up in the refrigerator.
111. The top web had to work on the equipment to be used and form the skin around the meat.
- IV. The cost should be as low as possible so that the final pack could be priced competitively.
- V. The supply should be regular and from a reputable supplier.

Research and Development work carried out on the materials.

1. Various thicknesses of material were tried for the manufacture of the trays:

180	P V C
200	P V C
250	P V C

All with a 38 E V A. coating.

11. The top web film is critical to get a good skin and seal so no changes were made at this stage.
111. Work was done on a Flex - flex process, i.e. where no tray was used.

Layers of top web were used on both top and bottom and with some adjustments to the machine were very successful.

During the start up period a range of settings on the F I P were tried to get the best results. These covered:

- (a) Temperature of platter
- (b) Vacuum level and time
- (c) Venting level and time.

### 3. THE TYPE OF MEAT TO BE SOLD.

Research and Development carried out :

1. After a number of trials on weight range and size of cut, it was decided on the correct specification to give top quality meat with sizes to fit the trays and satisfy the customer.

All meat to be aged under vacuum for two weeks prior to slicing -- the meat should be of a quality superior to that now sold in the best supermarkets.

11. Beef and lamb would be the first meat to be sold.

111. Ground beef and sausages would be added to the range.

- 1V. Other meats and processed meats would be added to the range when the time was right.

- V. The source of the meat should be from an export works, either vacuum packaged or delivered in quarter form.

#### 4. THE TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Research and Development carried out:

1. From the time of slaughter temperature was watched and measured at the following points:
  1. Carcass chiller
  2. Boning room.
  3. Vacuum packed storage.
  4. Transport
  5. Cold storage and boning location.
  6. Boning room.
  7. Cold storage and warehouse.
  8. Transport to store.
  9. Refrigerator in store.

These areas must constantly be checked.

2. The meat from the time of the slaughter through its entire life must be brought to the temperature that will control the bacteria and give it the shelf life and quality required to produce excellent meat at the retailer and consumer levels.

## 5, HYGIENE

Research and Development carried out:

- I. Places where hygiene is regularly checked are:
  1. At the export works - this of course is monitored by D P I inspectors.
  2. In the slicing room where the packaging is carried out.

Hygiene during handling.

11. The meat should come from an export works so that all export standards of hygiene are carried out.
111. Vacuum packaged meat to be delivered at 0 - 1 degree C.
- 1V. Vacuum packaged meat to be sliced and repackaged in a room where export standards of hygiene and temperature are kept.

## 6 THE LIGHTING EMPLOYED AT RETAIL

1. Because the meat is vacuum packaged and chilled the colour on display will be the myoglobin colour.
11. With correct lighting in the display area the colour can be changed to near the oxymyoglobin colour that customers are used to.

Research and Development carried out.

111. We found a N E C light in Japan which gives the right colour to vacuum packaged meat.

## 7, THE LABELLING OF THE PACKAGE

1. The header labels - the description labels - the weights price and use-by date labels must all conform to proper Government regulations.
11. The colour design and strength of the labels must show quality and be mechanically effective in their job.
111. Research and Development carried out.
  1. Working with the A M L C and their advertising people and agents a range of header and stick on labels were developed.
  2. The method of attachment was developed at the slicing and packaging room.
  3. The labels giving weight - price and use by date were developed with the assistance of the scale people.

A system had to be developed to give fast and accurate weighing and accurate weighing pricing and labelling.

## 8 THE FUTURE

1. The continuation of a Research and Development Program is essential.
2. There are a number of areas that need constant research and development to be carried out.

These follow the original seven items.

1. **THE PACKAGING SYSTEM** - There are new machines for skin packaging already available and new ones being developed. These must be tested and monitored.

J B Linacre visited Multivac in Germany in September 1991 to investigate the new developments.

2. **MATERIALS** - New materials must be investigated. Cost of materials should be brought down without sacrificing quality.

We are working with the material suppliers at present.

J B Linacre visited Europe in Sept.-Oct. 1991 to look at new materials as well as machines. He visited W R Grace in the U K and brought back useful information.

3. **MEAT** - A constant search for new cuts and ways of producing and selling meat.
4. **TEMPERATURE** - Better monitoring equipment must be installed as volume and distribution expands. A lot of work must be put into this if export and Australia wide distribution is to be successful.
5. **HYGIENE** - As before this needs constant checking and upgrading as the volume increases.
6. **LIGHTING** - Looks good at the moment but in some meats the colour needs improving.
7. **LABELLING** - As the system goes more automated the labelling system will need to be changed. This will need quite some research and development.





## INTRODUCING : BUTCHER'S PRIDE

The Australian consumer purchased \$1.720 Billion of Beef and Lamb in 1990 30% of all Meat purchases come from Supermarkets and this share is increasing significantly each year as the consumer looks to the convenience of one stop shopping and extended trading hours. How can you get part of this action?

PRIME-VAC PRODUCTS Pty Ltd provide the answer, not only to be a part of a huge market but enjoy high profit \$'s.

The BUTCHER'S PRIDE concept was born about by the need to provide the consumer with fresh pre-packed Meat and available in broader base of retail stores. To the retailer BUTCHER'S PRIDE will offer the opportunity to service your customers with a full range of quality Meat products, packaged, merchandised and marketed to gain maximum consumer franchise. Every aspect of the BUTCHER'S PRIDE concept has been researched to ensure that you realise maximum sales potential and maximum gross \$'s.

Key to the BUTCHER'S PRIDE programme :-

**MEAT QUALITY** - Our buyers work to a strict quality control method that guarantees only the best available every week of the year. We will only use Prime Yearling Beef and Prime Lamb as we recognise that the product is only as good as it "eats". The BUTCHER'S PRIDE range includes a full range of boneless meat cuts with particular attention to the new value-added Meat cuts.

**PACKAGING** - We are using the latest packaging process called DARFRESH which dramatically improves product freshness, shelf life and presentation.

**MERCHANDISING** - The BUTCHER'S PRIDE product will be sold only from designated chilled merchandising units that provide optimum temperature controls and enable maximum merchandising impact.

**MARKETING** - BUTCHER'S PRIDE will be supported by fully co-ordinated programme of Point of Sale, media and consumer demonstration/education.

**DELIVERY** - PRIME-VAC PRODUCTS Pty Ltd have been critical to control all the processes of procurement, manufacture and most importantly delivery. Stock will be supplied weekly and more often dependent upon your individual customer needs. Each delivery will be checked in and stock filled into the cabinet, all credits and unsaleable stock will be returned at our cost.

**MARGIN** - PRIME-VAC PRODUCTS Pty Ltd will maintain a nett profit return on sales of 15%.

PRIME-VAC PRODUCTS Pty Ltd will be your **PARTNER** in this venture and will guarantee :

The BEST QUALITY  
The BEST SERVICE  
The BEST BACK UP

All to ensure maximum sales and profit.



Ref:355

## STORE FACTS MANUAL

### ABOUT THE PRODUCT

Butcher's Pride is a first and a very unique concept. Immediately you will notice a striking difference in our packaging as opposed to the standard prepack (tray over wrapped) as offered generally in Meat cabinets throughout Australia.

OUR PACKAGING - is similar to Cryovac however it not only air evacuates the product but the top layer film is brought down onto the meat and tray to form an impermeable barrier snugly around the meat. This method called "DARFRESH" uses only vacuum and no gas flushing or any additives. The unique packaging offers many benefits to our customers;

- . You can see both sides of the meat.
- . No leaking or meat laying on a soaker pad.
- . Seals in juices for more flavour
- . It is, if the customer wishes the perfect freezing pack.

MEAT COLOUR - Butcher's Pride Meat vacuumed-packed is darker than other meat. This colour is your assurance that each piece is packed as soon as it is cut, so no oxygen has time to turn it red. Once opened and exposed to oxygen the meat will take on a rich red colour as you are accustomed to seeing in traditional packing.

MEAT AGING - Aging has been used for centuries to make meat more tender and juicy. In the early days it was the practice of hanging meat, but with modern times the same result can be achieved by what we know as Cryovacing or Barrier Bagging whereby meat is boned into primal cut form and vacuum sealed. Unfortunately this method has been abused by some processors who don't follow the strict guide lines of hygienic processing and temperature environment but opt for the processing method as a convenient way of packing meat only. Under the strict controlled processing and proper livestock selection the Cryovac method will allow meat to age. Butcher's Pride through very strict packing environment is a continuation of the aging method therefore the longer meat is held in our packaging the better it will eat.

MEAT SELECTION - our meat buyers are working to a specification unlike any other meat processors. Australia unfortunately dose not have any grading identification for consumers therefore to your customer meat is meat which in fact is far from the truth. We stand very confident of our meat quality especially Beef and offer the very best year round.

MEAT TYPES

**BEEF** Butcher's Pride will only use Prime Australian Yearling Beef all boned to give the consumer maximum value for money. We will not accept or chase cheaper alternatives just to be the cheapest on the shelf and not be embarrassed to ask the consumer to buy premium prime grade meat.

**LAMB** Butcher's Pride again only buy the best available and process it all into boneless and semi-boneless cuts for consumer convenience and value. We will be unique in offering the new styles of Lamb Cuts as heavily promoted by the Australian Meat & Livestock. What consumers see on T.V. will be available under the Butcher's Pride Label.

**QUALITY CONTROL** - We are proud to boast a system that controls every aspect of the processing chain. Our selected meat is brought into our factory located at Gosford and in a controlled processing environment packed fresh and held in our holding chiller ready for despatch. Meat is transported in our chilled Truck direct to your store and immediately placed into the Butcher's Pride chilled merchandiser. Now its up to you to see that the customer buys a product in its best condition so for that to happen a number of points to remember.

1. Product must be held in refridgeration at all times.
2. Major temperature variences will cause a limited amount of juice migration.
3. Optimum temperature should be at 2 Degrees Centergrade to ensure product aging and quality.
4. Any packs with any sign of leaking should be placed at the back of the unit layed flat ready for pick-ups and crediting at next delivery.
5. Any problems with product or refridgeration should be reported immediately to our office.
6. If you have reserve stock held then a critical monitor should be made on room temperature especially during trading.
7. Any customer querie such that can't be handled at store level should be referred to our office.

KEY POINTS TO KNOW

- . Butcher's Pride packaging Keeps Meat Fresh - Meat is packed within minutes of cutting under controlled temperature and hygiene.
- . You can see both sides of the Meat.
- . No leaking.
- . Vacuumed packed as soon as its cut to keep natural colour (meat is only red when exposed to oxygen).
- . Freshness guaranteed "USE BY" date on each package.
- . Only Prime Australian Beef and Lamb used.
- . No preservatives.

- . Air tight seal locks in freshness.
- . Freezer - ready pack (meat will not loose an excessive amount of juice during defrost due to the tight vacuuming).
- . Seals in juices for more flavour.
- . More tender - Meat ages naturally in its own juices.
- . Boned and trimmed just right for extra value.
- . Unique range of new style Meat Cuts.

#### DESPATCH AND DELIVERY SYSTEM

- . Each order is made up individually for your store.
- . Product is weighed, date coded and priced for your store.
- . At the end of each weighing sequence a total ticket is produced for each product all total tickets will be attached to your invoice as reference.
- . Invoices will show product, number of packs, total weight, total retail price by product. The invoice total shows a gross profit deduction.
- . Product once checked in should be signed for on the Invoice and the original will be left with you.
- . All credits will be raised on our credit docket and original left with you once signed.
- . Credits will appear on your next Invoice or adjusted through Head Office accounts.

#### ORDERS

- . Orders will be supplied relative to your stores sales history.
- . Any obvious "Out of Stock" should be reported to our office so as immediate action can be taken.

#### CONTACTS

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FACTORY MANAGER  
JOHN PEARCE

# UPDATE

WINTER / SPRING 1991

VOLUME 13

## LAUNCHED WITH PRIDE!



Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd has recently launched its Butcher's Pride brand, offering a full range of chilled, pre-packed beef, veal and lamb cuts. The range has already been launched in Sydney, and will be available in other states shortly.

Butcher's Pride is ideal for any convenience store or supermarket without the facility to carry fresh meat, because Prime-Vac can also arrange supply of a dedicated refrigeration unit to retailers carrying the range.

Butcher's Pride offers a full range of boneless beef, veal and lamb cuts, as well as mince and sausages. The meat is vacuum packed, and comes in one, two, and four person servings. It is supported by a large range of eye-catching point-of-sale material.

Larry Botham, Director of Prime-Vac says consumer response to the range has been more than encouraging. "Once a customer buys Butcher's Pride, she (or he) usually buys again. The level of re-purchase is high, which does mean they are happy, and impressed with the product".



AUSTRALIAN MEAT AND LIVE-STOCK CORPORATION

# FOODWEEK

AND LIQUOR WEEK

No 1156

10 September 1991

## BRANDED FRESH MEAT INNOVATION

A Sydney company has begun selling a new style of prepacked meat in NSW independent stores and plans to expand into Queensland and Victorian stores, writes KATE McILWAINE, FOODWEEK's Brisbane correspondent.

It is also developing a more generic-looking range of budget-priced meats for sale in stores totally price-oriented.

The branded meat products are merchandised from special stand-alone refrigerated upright cabinets.

But the generic-style product would be available for display in the store's

dairy or meat cabinet.

Larry Botham, project manager for Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd, said Butcher's Pride portion-control products were now available in 24 NSW stores, including Jewel, Foodmaster, Clancy's and Rite-way outlets.

He hoped to have them in 60 NSW stores by Christmas - "there is the potential for 1200 outlets in NSW alone". The products will be available in other states soon.

"We are having discussions with interested parties in Queensland and Victoria, and should finalise something within a month," Mr Botham said.

Mr Botham is in Victoria this week to talk with potential retailers and his partner, John Turner, was in Queensland last week.

The Butcher's Pride range is beef, lamb and veal, in vacuum skin packing which completely seals the meat and extends its shelf life. Provided the meat is stored at the correct temperature, it will stay fresh for 28 days.

Mr Botham said fellow Prime-Vac directors and he had set up the company six months ago "because we thought there had to be a better way to do prepacked meat".

"The concept has great opportunities for convenience stores," he said.

Because they are fully sealed, Butcher's Pride products have no juice leakage and the plastic skin is impermeable.

Mr Botham said the products would be price competitive with prepacked meat in the chains.

Prime-Vac has a factory at Gosford, on the central coast of NSW, where the meat is sliced and packed. Mr Botham said quality control would be the key to success.

"We have very strict specifications about meat quality and the level of ageing," he said. "The critical issue is how it 'eats'."

He said consumers would not make repeat purchases if they found the meat was tough.

Mr Botham will build brand awareness by marketing the range to the foodservice industry.

He said Prime-Vac was pioneering a new market because Australian consumers had little awareness of meat

## RARE UNITY COULD CHANGE MEAT DEFINITION

Australian meat pie manufacturers and the Australian Consumers' Association will work together to change the National Food Authority's definition of meat.

Robert McMains, managing director of Queensland-based Taste Products, told FOODWEEK he believed it was the first time the groups had agreed on a change to the definition.

The move follows years of controversy over the precise definition of the meat in meat pies.

"The definition of a meat pie, meat encased in pastry, is fine," Mr McMains said.

"The problem is over the definition of meat, which has basically meant any edible part of just about any edible animal you can name.

"We believe the definition should be changed to skeletal tissue, which is muscle meat, and would be most people's conception of the word. Mind you, some sections of the processed-meat industry might have problems with this."

Mr McMains said previous attempts to change the definition had failed when opposed by the ACA.

"We believe this will be the first time the industry has gone to the NFA with the support of the ACA," he said.

"We now are finalising our argument through consultation with various manufacturers, and then it should be presented to the NFA." ♦

• See also, Page 5, this issue - Pie Maker Expands Successful Range.

TO PAGE 16 ▶

# HARRIS/DE IS BORN

The Netherlands' headquarters of Sara Lee/DE has confirmed the creation of its new Australian associate, Harris/DE, as reported exclusively by FOODWEEK (August 6).

The Sara Lee/DE group, owned by Sara Lee Corporation USA, manufactures and markets well-known brands of coffee, groceries, household and personal care products.

Its Harris/DE offshoot, formed in co-operation with Stuart Alexander & Co, the previous distributor of its Douwe Egberts coffee, employs about 200 people, with production centralised in Sydney.

Senior executives for Harris/DE will be Ken McClelland, the former managing director of EH Harris & Co, as chairman; Phillip McClelland as general manager of sales and marketing; and Peter Boyer as general manager of production and distribution.

The 107-years-old Stuart Alexander & Co has moved quickly to replace the \$30 million Douwe Egberts coffee business lost to the new Sara Lee company, Harris/DE.

Apart from seeking proposals from other producers of premium products, it will campaign at the ANUGA exhibition in Cologne this October, and again at the ISM confectionery

exhibition in Cologne next February.

Wesley Brown, chairman and managing director, said the company's 1990-91 turnover was close to \$110 million.

He nominated the growth of Moccona coffee in Australia "from next-to-nothing" into a \$25 million business as one of its major successes.

Other top brands Stuart Alexander markets include Lindt, Guylian, Thornton, Paynes and Anthon Berg chocolates; Betty Crocker cake mixes; Drum cigarette tobacco; Amphora tobacco; and Henri Winternans cigars.

Mr Browne said sales of Switzerland's Lindt chocolates in Australia had grown by 30% to 40% each year for the past four years.

In the same period, sales of Guylian chocolate seashells from Belgium had doubled, and sales of UK's Thornton chocolates had tripled.

Sales of Betty Crocker cake mixes and other foods from General Mills USA have built from \$200,000 in 1987 to \$2 million today.

Mr Browne, who celebrates 50 years' service with Stuart Alexander this year, said that, even after losing Douwe Egberts' coffee business, it would still have a sales and merchandising team of more than 50. ❖

## BRANDED FRESH MEAT PACKS INNOVATION

### ► FROM PAGE 1

qualities and were not familiar with branded meat.

"We are succeeding, but slowly," Mr Botham said. "It's hard to get people to change their habits. We want to give red meat a wider distribution."

Red meat would become a viable alternative to chicken and frozen foods once it was readily available in convenience stores.

The Butcher's Pride range gave consumers another purchase option and was profitable for store operators.

Mr Botham said traditional butchers shops had not "moved with the times" and did not offer consumers convenience either in opening hours or in meat cuts.

Value-added products, such as marinated meats, would soon be added to the Butcher's Pride range.

Current products include boneless lamb, beef and veal, sausages, mince, and legs and rib roasts. They range from single serve to four-serve packs.

Mr Botham said Prime-Vac was taking advantage of the Australian Meat & Live-stock Corporation's advertising by offering products in the lamb Short Cuts range. ❖

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# COKE KICKS OFF WITH SKYSURFING

Coca-Cola South Pacific and its advertising agency, McCann-Erickson Sydney, created a new sport for the anchor television commercial which will head its summer advertising campaign.

The new Coke commercial features "freefall surfing" or skysurfing, developed and performed by members of the Australian Sky Diving team.

It will be the first Australian-produced commercial for Coca-Cola to be used globally.

Already on air in the US, the Coca-Cola Company has recommended its inclusion in the advertising campaigns of the 160-plus countries where Coke is available.

The skysurfing commercial is one of nine new commercials to go to air this summer for the flagship brands of Coca-Cola and Diet Coke.

John Wardley, Coca-Cola South Pacific media and advertising manager, said the commercial was the "traditional Coca-Cola story of thirst, taste and

refreshment, depicting the lengths a group of young Australian surfers would go to for an ice cold Coke".

Another four new commercials set in various exotic locations such as Paris, Barcelona and the Whitsunday Islands, for each of the colas, will also be shown.

The newly relaunched Fanta and new release, Diet Fanta, will sponsor the young American band, New Kids on the Block, on their Australian tour.

Fanta's association with television program, The Bugs Bunny Show with presenter Sophie Lee, will continue throughout summer.

The current Lift television campaign featuring Molten Man, launched in October last year, will also continue to run throughout summer.

Sprite and Diet Sprite lemonade brands will also have new television commercials and retain the theme I like the Sprite in You.

The new campaign will be supported

by radio and point of sale material.

The Australian Coca-Cola System is launching its first direct marketing campaign with the creation of Club Coca-Cola.

For an annual membership fee of \$20, members will receive a club magazine - The Watch - ID card, baseball cap, backpack and Skysurfer poster.

The Watch will contain articles on music, film and fashion and have promotional offers and discounts.

Brand Coca-Cola holds almost a 42% share of the total \$2.8 billion softdrink market and 66% of the cola segment.

An additional 17.5% share of the cola segment is held by Diet Coke and Caffeine Free Diet Coke.

The cola segment, valued at \$1.5 billion, accounts for nearly half of the softdrink market and is experiencing volume growth of 7.5%. ♦

- MICHELLE CHALLACOMBE

## OPINION By MURRAY WHITE

FOODWEEK has been a consistent supporter of innovative, entrepreneurial food companies, and of new products, the industry's lifeblood.

It is pleased to be able to report good news on product research and development, and innovation, amid the tales of woe suffered by many companies in the recession.

Our Page 1 stories this week feature a couple of remarkable companies which have gone out and done something new, and are succeeding at it.

Prime-Vac Products has begun selling a new style of prepacked fresh red meat, because there had to be a better way".

It is enjoying rapid growth. It is also bold enough to be adapting its product to make it enticing for a chain such as Franklins to move seriously into fresh meat - a category outside its core business.

Prime-Vac is making it possible for

Franklins, for instance, to become more competitive in previously unfamiliar territory, and without having to develop new skills, undertake significant retraining of staff or installation of new equipment.

Think of the opportunities this company has created for itself through its entrepreneurial approach.

Similarly, Queensland-based Tastee Products has won Australian Consumers' Association support for a joint approach to get the definition of meat, as in meat pies, changed, thus eliminating an age-old bugbear for pie manufacturers.

Not only is Tastee Products active on this front. We report on Page 5 how the company has taken the market by storm with its cholesterol-free, all-natural microwaveable apple pie, to be followed this week with an apricot version.

"If you take time to be innovative, to research and develop products that meet

consumer desires, then you win every time," the company principal said.

Sounds easy. But it takes a lot of courage and investment to put your money where your mouth is, which is what Tastee Products has done, and is succeeding as a result.

Also on Page 5, we report how Metro Quality Foods has decided to do something about a tired processed meats market, and, at the same time, fend off the new competition.

Sure, the company says it's tough at present. It's never easy and it may be even tougher than usual at present.

But these companies are all doing positive things, not just to survive, but to lay the foundations for a flourishing, successful business.

And not one bleat about co-op charges, new line fees, et al, was heard. Must be a moral in there somewhere. ♦



# wholesale recession a

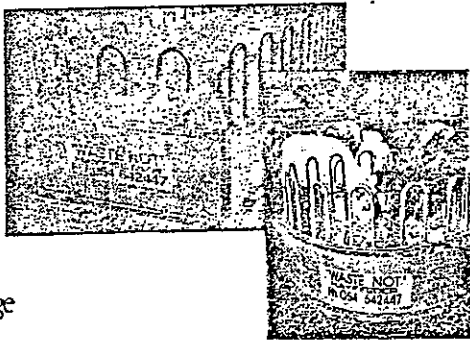
kg of lamb but mutton use is up because of its increased use in processing.

"Sausages are doing well!" Mr Penn said.

While the overall retail market for meat is depressed, beef has held its market share of around 54% of total wholesale value. Lamb has declined from 19% to 17%. Poultry, particularly chicken, gained share to around 19% of the market.

"Sales of frozen chickens—always considered by consumers to be a cheap food product—have been phenomenal in the last six months, boosted by very low prices.

"To add to the turmoil there has been a sharp market share gain by supermarkets, to almost 40% of total meat purchased at retail, as price-cutting, 'specials' and savings have moved a large proportion of consumers to do their meat shopping at the supermarket meat-case," Mr Penn said.



## TRIALS CONFIRM:

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- Almost DOUBLE the liveweight gain
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# Branding to boost consumption and increase prices

SMALL signs of domestic meat market recovery are evident, but a full recovery will take some time, the AMLC's John Penn said in Tamworth.

But Australian consumers, he observed, are rapidly becoming used to the new everyday low retail prices product. This poses a real future problem.

"We need to encourage increased consumption at higher prices," Mr Penn said.

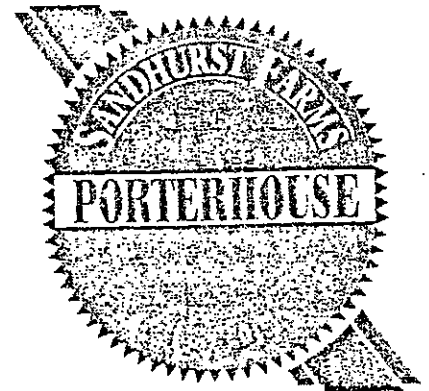
"Now, more than ever, there is a real need for a better described product to identify the quality end of the market, and justify a premium price.

"I strongly suggest to you that the way of bringing better described, quality product forward is to take brands—and by this I mean company brands—through to the consumer to provide a real choice between products.

"This must be done in conjunction with tight product specifications and aggressive promotion."

Mr Penn said examples of recent developments in the specification-driven branding area included:

- The launch of a range of high quality beef and boneless lamb cuts from Butchers' Pride through convenience stores in Sydney.
- The launch of a range of tightly-specified branded beef primals by Sandhurst Farms into the Melbourne food service market last year. Sandhurst Farms is now expanding rapidly into other markets; and
- Coles recent decision to brand all its meat and back it up with a money-



back guarantee.

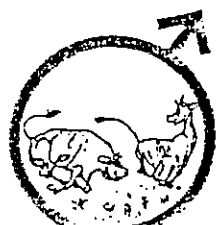
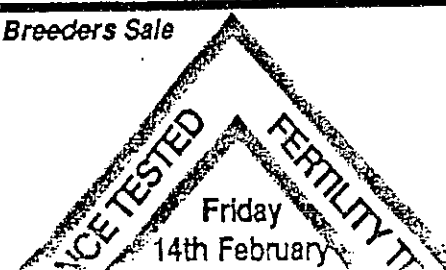
"There is an urgent need for the processing, manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing industry to work with their suppliers to differentiate their product through consumer brands that are meaningful to the consumer, and encourage more targeted promotion," Mr Penn said.

The domestic market, Mr Penn predicted, would be "crying out for new products" as the recession eased.

following on from Breeders Sale



# ANGUS BREEDERS



The ultimate in  
convenience  
beef



# BEEF

## IMPROVEMENT NEWS

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BEEF IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



Turning beef into the ultimate in convenience food. Geoff Spears and Larry Botham, who operate Butcher's Pride, are using modern packaging technology to merchandise selected cuts of beef through convenience stores and small supermarkets. And they're using merchandising techniques that are used by other, well established household brand names. Butcher's Pride stocks refrigerated cabinets with the full range of lamb and beef. The retailer supplies the store space and electricity and is guaranteed a percentage return on retail sales. See story page 28-29

### INSIDE

#### INTERVIEW

Elders' southern livestock manager, Bill Hill, retires after 42 years as a stock agent PAGES 12-13

#### HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Vaccine for BEF virus and develops test for Pompey Disease PAGE 34  
Counterfeiters' heives hit MSD products PAGE 34

#### RETAILING

Butcher's Pride makes the most of value-adding with clever packaging and retailing angle PAGES 28-29

#### BREEDS & BREEDING

Mature size EBVs just around the corner PAGE 26  
4000 Wagyu's to be born this year PAGE 27

#### REGULAR FEATURES

HOLMES PAGES 24-25  
BLOCKEY PAGES 18-19  
KIMBERLEY PAGE 15

#### CARCASS QUALITY

Carcass defects cost U.S. industry \$256 a head P16  
Reducing losses from dark cutting meat P11  
Bruising costs every producer \$7 a head P16

#### HERD MANAGEMENT

Spring calving can boost earnings PAGES 20-22

# Our office is where you want it to be.

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# BEEF IMPROVEMENT NEWS

RETAILING

## Red meat a winner for Nicks till Midnight

'NICKS TILL MIDNIGHT', sounds like fun, but it is about providing a one stop food shop for 18 hours a day seven days a week and competing for the retail floor.

Nick David with his brothers Pat and Greg, operate 'Nicks till Midnight' their self serve convenience store in Woolloomooloo an historic inner Sydney suburb.

Their family has been retailing there since 1927.

"To attract and retain our customers we must offer a full range of products, otherwise they go to a supermarket just to get one item we do not stock and lose the rest of their business," explains Pat David.

"Meat was the one item we did not have until Butcher's Pride came along. When Larry Botham explained the concept we jumped at it and became their first customer. We could not be more pleased with the result."

Woolloomooloo is predominantly a blue collar suburb with a very high proportion of social security beneficiaries.

"Our customers responded very quickly to the concept and regularly comment on the quality. Shoppers buy to a budget

and in small portions. The packaging is critical to the success of the product," Pat David said.

After cigarettes and liquor, meat is the biggest selling single line. Currently they sell in excess of 500 packs per week at between \$4 and \$6 each or about

\$2,000 a week. With a fixed 15% of retail sales the 1.3 metre wide fully serviced cabinet makes a significant contribution to the business.

"We don't have to do anything except provide the space and the electricity," said Pat David.

### Packaging the key to Case Ready

CASE READY is a concept where perishable products are specially packed at a central processing plant and distributed to retailers who simply put the product in the refrigerated cabinet or case.

Packaging has revolutionised the distribution and marketing of many meat and dairy products.

Poultry has been available chilled or frozen in bags for decades. Butcher's Pride uses a sophisticated vacuum skin packaging system called 'Darfresh', a process supplied by W. T. Grace well known for the Cryovac bag system widely used for packing chilled beef for domestic and export markets.

In the Darfresh process the meat is placed on a rigid plastic base and all the air is expelled.

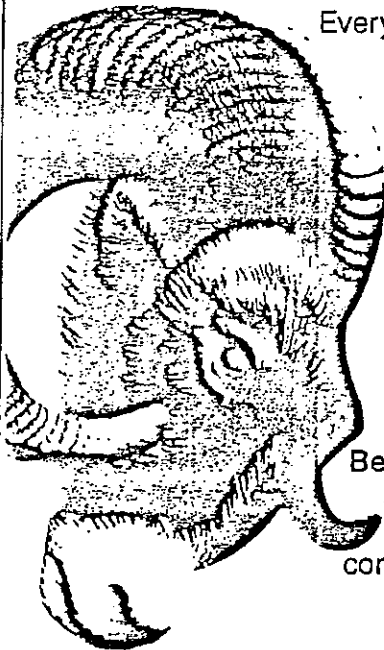
A hot melting multiply film is wrapped over the pack and pulled down to fit intimately over the meat by the

vacuum below and air pressure from above. The film is fused to the base to complete the seal. The objective is to totally exclude oxygen thus reducing the oxidation of the meat as with the Cryovac system.

The film used in the Darfresh process is almost impermeable to air. Meat packed in this way is in its oxygenated state and appears dark in colour. This contrasts with the permeable plastic film used by supermarkets which restrict contamination of, and leakage from, the pack. It is designed to let the air through and make the meat 'bloom' and express its light colour.

Beef packed with the Darfresh process will 'bloom' when the packet is opened. Meat packed with Darfresh will keep 4 weeks while meat packed in supermarket packs will keep 3-4 days under 0-1 degree C refrigeration. The technology has been available some years and has been used in Europe and New Zealand.

## MEETING THE COMPETITION



Every day you face competition from other breeding programs, other breeds and other meat species. To meet that competition you require effective cost efficient communication and promotion.

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# BEEF IMPROVEMENT NEWS



## RETAILING

# Butcher's Pride brings on a beef retailing revolution

By ATHOL ECONOMOU

**MERCHANDISING** beef like a dry grocery might sound unlikely, but if it works for thousands of successful grocery products, why shouldn't it work for beef?

Using modern marketing principles, vacuum skin packaging technology, and in effect merchandising fresh meat the same way one merchandises dry grocery items, Prime-Vac Products Pty Ltd is tapping this enormous market for fresh meat with its Butcher's Pride brand products.

Fresh beef, lamb and pork cuts under the Butcher's Pride brand name, are now available in many convenience and discount supermarkets throughout NSW.

The rapid growth of convenience stores like Circle K, Seven-Eleven, Food Plus, Road Pantry and Clancys reflects the changing shopping habits of our urban populations.

There are about 2,500 convenience stores and small discount supermarkets, like Jewels and Franklins in NSW.

These are essentially self service grocery stores, but despite consumer demand they have been unable to stock fresh meat because they could not support a traditional butchers shop.

Geoff Spears and Larry Botham, the principal partners in the business, bring together a diversity of skills.

Geoff Spears, trained as a mechanical engineer and experienced with electrical equipment, has been in the business six months. Larry Botham has a background in food merchandising, including the position of marketing manager for Shoey's Group, now trading as Bi-Lo.

Larry Botham said he had been toying with the concept for four years before the first products hit the shelf in June last year.

## MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITY

The use of vacuum skin packaging and its application to meat products created the merchandising opportunity.

Vacuum Skin packaging is a process that packs meat in an attractive and durable evacuated (air free) plastic container suitable for retail display and handling.

Butcher's Pride uses the 'Darfresh' vacuum skin packaging process developed by W. R. Grace to pack and present its meat products. (see story at right)

Individual meat cuts are placed on a rigid clear plastic tray, which is then placed in an evacuated chamber where a very soft and pliable air proof film is draped on to the meat and tray.

Air pressure above the film and a vacuum beneath, presses it tightly around the meat. It bonds to the clear plastic tray.

The effect is that the meat cut is intimately surrounded by the tray on its base and the film above and around the sides. There is virtually no space for meat juices to accumulate between the meat and the film.

Once packed, beef keeps for three weeks under ideal refrigeration conditions of 0-1 degrees C or about 14 days



A Boylands refrigerated cabinet is fully serviced and stocked by Butcher's Pride. All the retailer has to do is provide the space and the power and receives a guaranteed percentage of sales. This puts red meat on the same commercial footing as most grocery items in the stores. "We manage the range of product on a store by store basis," Larry explained.

in domestic refrigerators. Butcher's Pride offer a full range of beef cuts including rump, sirloin, scotch fillet, mince and added value products like pepper and garlic steaks.

The retail pack is 30 by 19 cm and ranges in weight from 230gms to one kilo and in retail value from \$3.20 to \$7.

All the consumer has to do is choose a cut from the store cabinet. It will keep for four weeks from the date of packaging.

It can be frozen. The packaging protects the meat from freezer burn. The consumer just slits the plastic packaging with a knife and the steak is ready to cook.

But the packing technology is only the beginning.

How to use it to merchandise meat in non traditional outlets was the challenge facing Larry Botham.

"Using the differences," and looking outside normal practices is how Larry describes their approach to retailing meat.

To sell meat to the consumer retailers

must have an attractive margin. And in the limited space in a convenience store it must compete for space with other products.

## REFRIGERATED DISPLAY CABINET

Butcher's Pride has chosen to present their products in specially designed refrigerated display cabinet.

Butcher's Pride use refrigerated display cabinets provided by Boylands. The retailer only has to provide the space and the power to operate the cabinet for a guaranteed percentage of sales.

This in effect puts meat on the same commercial footing as most grocery items in the stores.

"We manage the range of product on a store by store basis," Larry explains.

"By carefully monitoring sales we are able to optimise the mix in the cabinet for each store.

"Inner city stores use more smaller high value cuts while suburban stores want larger, lower value, portions.

Rump, sirloin scotch fillet, and pepper steaks all sell well, as do our added value products like pepper and garlic steaks."

Tenderness is the main consideration and aged grain fed yearling beef is supplied by Midco in northern NSW.

They use no additives, preservatives or colouring.

As the business expands Larry would like to try using heavier carcasses and test the market with "tastier" meat.

The meat colour appears darker and slightly grey in the pack compared with the bright cherry red colour traditionally sought by retailers and consumers.

"Of course, when the meat is removed from the pack it blooms and looks like yearling beef in the shop.

"Customer education will take some time but till now we have not had any complaints and a lot of favourable comments on the eating quality of our product," Larry Botham said.

## PRE PRICED

All product is pre priced and carries a full description of the cut, weight, price per kg and actual price.

It is equivalent product to the well established Coles Premium brand. Cuts sell at the same relative price but for up to 10% more in some convenience stores.

The technology has great potential in the food service industry.

Due to its long shelf life and individual packs, restaurants can stock a wide range of products and cuts but only need to open one pack at a time as required.

Already a 'shingle' pack with up to 10 steaks has been developed, or alternatively a strip of individually wrapped steaks can be ordered.

Larry and Geoff are confident they can improve the quality and consistency of their product if they can establish direct lines of supply with producers.

"We can utilise the whole carcass and have enough throughput to enter into long term supply agreements with interested producers.

"Using AUSMEAT we will be able to track individual animals right down to the retail pack.

"Direct identification with individual breeders and breeds can also work as a promotional tool for special product lines," Larry said.

Export is another area of enormous potential. Retail packaging of beef with brand headers and pricing labels is about as far as you can go in terms of value adding.

"We will be able to deal direct with the retailer, and cut out most of the traditional butchering infrastructure," Geoff explained.

"When we can deal and talk direct to the retailer we will be much closer to our real export markets," he said.