



MINTRAC

Special points of interest:

- New products and specials
- Licensed access to MINTRAC materials
- Welcome Thomas
- Custom Compost visit
- Scholarship research

Inside this issue:

Fast Track Apprenticeships Program	2
Charleville - a school spectacular	3
Meat Retail Trainers' Conference	4
Dave Clapham - Already a leader in the meat industry	5
MINTRAC 2010 National Conference	6
Vet in Schools for the Meat Industry	7
2009/10 MINTRAC Training Awards	8-9
New training and assessment materials due for release	10
Standardised AWOSS Training and Assessment	11
Environment network visits Churchill	12



Volume 7, Issue 10

December 2009

Meat Inspection & Quality Assurance conference looks to the future

Ninety-six delegates gathered in Brisbane in October to attend the annual Meat Inspection and Quality Assurance conference. Once again it was a conference with broad appeal; with delegates commenting on the fast pace, diversity and high quality of speakers, the New Zealand perspectives, the chance to meet and network and the forward-looking nature of the presentations.



Majella Furey giving one of her two presentations on auditing

and an overview of the revised AMIC standards. AMIC representatives provided a challenging overview of the operational and environmental risks confronting the industry and Clive Richardson encouraged greater standardisation of training and assessment practices in meat inspection. There were also presentations on the electronic capture of endemic diseases information and effective audit preparation.



Delegates on Day 1 of the conference



Delegates enjoying the conference dinner in the hotel courtyard



Ross Dodds winning the 3M Microbiology lucky door prize



Networking always ranks very highly in conference evaluations

Over the two days New Zealand presenters covered areas such as transport of export products, added value services from ASURE, perceived and real risk and monitoring and auditing meat inspection. Many respondents commented on the differences in approaches to meat inspection between NZ and Australia.

Two presentations covered issues related to animal welfare including changes to animal welfare requirements in the EU



Ira Stapp and Andrew Bell from AsureQuality, New Zealand, gave two presentations at the conference



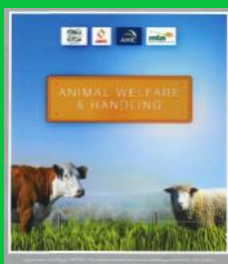
Product Specials

Microbiology Booklet / DVD



Regular Price: \$48.00
Meat processing levy payer/
MINTRAC Associate price:
\$24.00

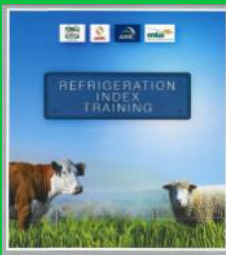
Animal Welfare Kit



Regular Price: \$48.00
Meat processing levy payer/
MINTRAC Associate price:
\$24.00

Refrigeration Index Training Kits

SPECIAL 2-FOR-ONE OFFER!
Purchase the Refrigeration Index training kit and receive the e-learning version for free.



Regular Price: \$220.00
Meat processing levy payer/
MINTRAC Associate price:
\$110.00

Careers Brochures



Printed copies of the new brochure are available free-of-charge from MINTRAC, although there will be a postage and handling charge.

Fast Track Apprenticeships Program - December Update

Where did those three months go? December already, which as you know means lots of pork, turkeys, chickens, hams, hams, and more hams in the cool room. An extremely busy time within a butcher shop – no matter what state of Australia you are in, but I will talk about that further on.

Although work commenced on this project in September, Paul Woods, a representative from the Dept. of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) officially launched MINTRAC's Fast Track Apprenticeship Program in November, at the National Meat Retail Conference held in Brisbane.

Feedback from all involved was mainly positive, but with any new system or change there will be small teething problems – this one is no different.

The National Steering Committee (comprising of representatives from AMIC, AMIEU, RTOs, AACs, major employers and MINTRAC) held their second meeting for this project on the day before the Retail Conference. Key concerns and benefits were discussed; and directions were set for moving forward.

The Fast Track Apprenticeship program's name conjures up images of 'rushed training', or 'lesser qualified tradesperson' which could not be further from the truth.

A more apt title would be 'Competency Based' – which is the system that the Australian Government introduced as the base model of training in 2006.

This change was not just in Melbourne or Sydney, not just for bricklaying or hairdressing, but within every state of Australia for every trade –

including Butchery.

What this means is that the old adage of a time-based apprenticeship, is disappearing – so no longer does an apprentice have to take four years of an apprenticeship, (unless they need it). This is now only nominal (or approximate) timeframe for the qualification. This new system encourages a model where the timeframe is as a "guide only".

If the apprentice can complete the requirements of the Training Package qualification and meet all criteria before the "nominal timeframe" has been reached, then the apprenticeship will be completed (dependant on State Training Authority current regulations – which do differ slightly by state)

Key areas to be met include:

- all units of competency to be completed (forty-three in total) for the Certificate III Meat Processing/Meat Retailing qualification
- the employer must be willing to sign off competency within the workplace
- the RTO must sign off the apprentice as being competent
- the apprentice must be able to demonstrate competency over time, consistently and under normal workplace conditions.

Then, if the above criteria have been met, the apprentice is deemed qualified – and any remaining nominal time is gone. This provides a much fairer system for the apprentice - if supported correctly within the workplace.

It should also foster a culture to learn and provide competent tradespersons

within a shorter timeframe – thus providing the industry with much needed experience. This system may also create an environment where people want to establish a "career" and stay and work in this great job.

As I said at the start of this article, December in a butcher shop can be chaotic, and an extra set of hands could make all the difference.

Under a competency based completion system an employer could hire now and by this time next year could very well have an extremely competent apprentice. If the right person is selected and employed, and if the competency based completion model is utilised and supported within the workplace the apprentice could very well be into their second year of units of competency. Then during Christmas 2011, the workplace could have an extremely capable, enthusiastic and contented employee – a key member of the team.

Now, wouldn't that be a wonderful Christmas present!

But, it is important to note that:

- Fast tracking is not a one-size fits all strategy
- Fast tracking is entirely about a flexible delivery meeting the key stakeholders needs – (Employer, RTO and most importantly the Apprentices).

The Fast Track butchery program is supported by the Australian Government.

Darren Scott, MINTRAC

Charleville - a school spectacular

In September this year I took a trip to Charleville to visit Charleville State High School. Alana Thornber from the Gateway Schools Program in Queensland recommended that I speak to Tracy Tully, the school principal, about setting up a School-based traineeship program in the meat industry. Tracy was very amenable to the idea, as there are two meat processing plants within ten kilometres of the school, and also three butcher shops in town, one of them already a keen supporter of school-based apprenticeships.

We set up meetings with both plants and I soon boarded the first of three flights to get out there. Charleville is about 744km west of Brisbane. As I flew over the town I noticed the earth had suddenly turned very red – the reddest earth I have ever seen. Tracy picked me up from the airport and took me to the school where I met a number of teachers, all very excited about the idea of VET in schools programs. Certainly a change from the regional and metropolitan schools I usually hear of.



Charleville is about 744km west of Brisbane

We talked through some ideas, concerns and types of jobs on offer in meat processing then headed out to visit the plants. Both plants were very excited about being involved and both offered a number of places for School

based trainees. Over the course of one morning we managed to get commitment for about 14 to 20 positions in the plant and even a couple in administration.



Students undertaking the upholstery vocational subject

During the afternoon, we visited another site owned by the school – a site they are in the process of developing called the Outback College of Rural Education (OCRE). Here they educate students who don't function well in normal school classrooms. They travel out to OCRE each day where they undertake vocational subjects such as agriculture, horticulture, upholstery, meat processing, industrial design etc., as well as literacy and numeracy classes and a personal fitness regime modelled on one used in the defence forces. The students thrive in this environment and learn skills related to jobs that are available in their own region – a school for regional sustainability, as Tracy describes it.

Tracy also explained her vision for the future. The school will incorporate a great deal of vocational subject matter into the standard curriculum, so that education is related back to real jobs.

They are creating a tourism and hospitality aspect of OCRE where students of both steams (normal school and OCRE) will be able to develop products and services to a real tourist market. Their 'Plate of Origin' project, which has just been trademarked will provide

students with the opportunity to develop food produce and menus using local produce such as lamb and mutton and dates, market the dish and sell the dish. The project is set to be launched at next year's State of Origin Brisbane game.

There is such a buzz around this school, I jumped at the chance to return in early November to talk to the students and teachers. As a representative of the meat industry, I was asked to talk to the entire assembly and invite students to a lunch time meeting to discuss the opportunity of getting a school based traineeship in a processing plant. It was a scary experience standing in front of an entire school talking up the industry and encouraging students to consider it as a career, but I must have done OK as ten students gave up their lunch hour to hear more about it.

Since then, about seven or eight students have asked to be considered for the program, and one student in year 12 has applied for a MINTRAC scholarship to undertake Rural studies at the University of Queensland.



School student studying at OCRE

SUCCESS!
Tracy Tully shared her plans and her passion with the delegates of the Meat Retail Conference two weeks ago and was the hit of the conference. She has agreed to join us again for the National Conference in March 2010.

Don't miss this session!
Jodie Hummerston

Food Safety Auditor Training Kit

The Food Safety Auditor Training kit covers training in FDFFSACA Assess compliance with food safety program, FDFFSOCMA Communicate and negotiate to conduct food safety audits and FDFFSOCFAA Conduct food safety audits, in the Certificate IV in Meat Processing. The kit consists of trainer's notes, trainee notes and sample assessment tools, as well as a training CD, designed to give students an overview of the food safety audit process.



Regular Price: \$220.00
Meat processing levy payer/
MINTRAC Associate price:
\$110.00

Meat Industry Assessment, Validation and Moderation Kit

The Meat Industry assessment, validation and moderation kit is designed to assist Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to apply quality management practices to their assessment processes. It will assist RTOs to demonstrate a comparability of assessment standards and processes across the industry, and to meet their own requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).



Regular Price: \$220.00
Meat processing levy payer/
MINTRAC Associate price:
\$110.00

Meat Retail Trainers' Conference 18-19 November 2009

Two weeks ago saw 38 delegates from across Australia head to Axial House in Springwood, Queensland for the fourth annual MINTRAC Meat Retail Trainers' Conference. The Conference was a huge success, with plenty of time for networking, sharing ideas and solving training issues.



Eddie Pritchard from Axial Training welcoming delegates to the Conference

The launch of the Fast Track project was held on day one of the conference. The delegates had 30 minutes to discuss the project in depth. They raised a number of concerns and talked them through, provided advice for the way forward, discussed the differences in state legislation regarding both completions of apprenticeships and awards systems and provided a tonne of knowledge and information for Darren Scott, the MINTRAC project officer assigned to this project.

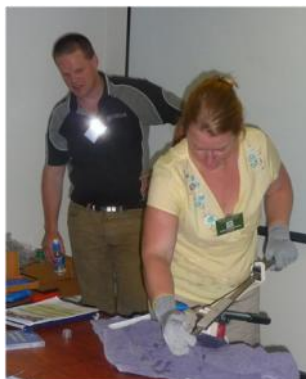
The group undertook an assessment moderation and validation exercise, facilitated by Wayne McGee from Hunter TAFE in NSW and the delegates were also brought up to speed on implementing the new Listeria laws in meat retail outlets and had the opportunity to try out the 'butcher's buddy' a smaller,

more portable version of the Argus Realcold knife sharpening setter, with Glen



Group discussion during assessment moderation workshop

Bramley. One participant sharpened and steeled a knife for the very first time (Ok, it was me). A daunting experience, but with nine meat retail trainers around to teach me the correct techniques I not only survived the experience, but went home with a brand new knife – sharpened beyond any other in my kitchen. Something to remember though, for all you trainers who have forgotten what it is like sharpening a knife for the first time – it is scary. With arms as short as mine, I thought I was going to cut off my nose trying to steel.



Jodie Hummerston trying her hand at the knife sharpening workshop

Wendy Hall and Clive Richardson spent two hours working through issues restricting trainers from meeting the requirements of the training package. The workshop agreed that training and assessment methods were not the only issue and MINTRAC will have some

work to do fixing the problems within the Training Package itself in the next review.

Roger Bond from MLA updated delegates on what is happening in MLA, especially the Red Meat Networking Club (RMNC) around Australia, whilst Lyle Todd and Kerry Melrose shared their employers' perspectives on training in the industry.



Rachel Pauling from 3M sharing resources with Don Buchanan from William Angliss Institute

The highlight of the conference though, was a very refreshing presentation from Tracy Tully, Principal of Charleville State High School, who shared with us her school's vision for vocational education and training in schools. It was a real feel good story of a school working outside the square to provide the best, most rewarding education for their particular group of students and for the sustainability of the region. (See the Charleville story for more details).

Congratulations to Jenny's superstars for winning the much coveted prize of the conference trivia competition – a rubber duck (each!). We wish you all happy bathing with the prize.



Winners of the conference trivia - Jenny's Superstars with their prized ducks

MINTRAC would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors for the conference. You all help to put on a great conference and keep the costs down for delegates. Thank you to:

- Axial Training for providing a venue, administrative assistance throughout the conference and a taxi service for delegates between the hotel and the venue



- MLA for financial support for the conference



- Argus Realcold for putting on a delicious BBQ for all delegates on day 2 of the conference.



**Next Year's
Conference
17 & 18
November 2010**



Dave Clapham - already a leader in the meat industry

Dave Clapham has been working in the meat industry for sixteen years having started in the "skin shed" with the last eleven years being at Monbeef, in Cooma NSW. Whilst his official title is QA Manager, the CEO of Monbeef describes Dave's role as 'to facilitate adoption of company Vision and Goals into all levels of Monbeefs operations.' His personal aims are to 'systematically dismantle or overcome all impediments to achieving world's best practise in every facet of operations at Monbeef.'



Dave Clapham

As part of his strategy for achieving this goal, Dave joined the Diploma of Meat Processing to gain the strategies and management tools and build his networks with industry experts. On completion of the Diploma he was quick to apply for, and be accepted into the Meat

Industry Leadership Program, in which he is undertaking the Advanced Diploma of Meat Processing with seven other industry members.

Dave is already a leader. He regularly acts as a facilitator and mentor within the company, mainly to senior and middle management and has been seen to provide a similar role to other students within the Diploma program.

Dave clearly knows his

strengths and weaknesses and is strongly concerned with continuous self improvement. In his application he discussed his growth since joining the meat industry, stating 'I have learnt to empathise, be a little less one-eyed, to listen, evaluate and value input from others, important team lessons I feel and also relevant as leadership qualities.' Another personal goal for Dave is to relax more, take a little more time in life for himself and spend more time fishing. Good luck with that!

Dave and his fellow Leadership Program participants are now 3/4s of the way through the program. They will complete their final unit in March next year, undertake a three day Leadership workshop in May and graduate at the AMIC conference in September.

"I have learnt to empathise, be a little less one-eyed, to listen, evaluate and value input from others"

Licensed access to MINTRAC Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Meat Processing training and assessment materials now available

Commencing January 2010, Registered Training Organisations can enter into a three-year licence with MINTRAC to access the *Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Meat Processing* training and assessment materials.

As well as receiving the training and assessment materials, the licensee will:

- gain access to the trainer and RTO sections of the MINTRAC website
- automatically receive updated versions of training and assessment materials as they become available
- be alerted to the availability of additional industry material which may be relevant to individual Units of

Competency

- have access one free professional development workshop relevant to the Diploma or Advanced Diploma of Meat Processing for licensees per year.

By entering into the licence agreement, the RTO will also have some obligations, including:

- using qualified trainers and assessors approved by MINTRAC
- providing to MINTRAC details of the proposal delivery methodology, time frame and location of the unit delivery program prior to commencement
- customising the training and assessment materials as appropriate to the

client group

- notifying MINTRAC of any corrections or improvements required to improve the training materials
- acknowledging MINTRAC's ownership of MINTRAC in any portion of the training and assessment materials reproduced for student use
- providing summary commencement and completion statistics to MINTRAC
- attending one MINTRAC professional development workshop per year.

Licences are issued per Unit of Competency for a three-year fee of \$1,000 per unit.

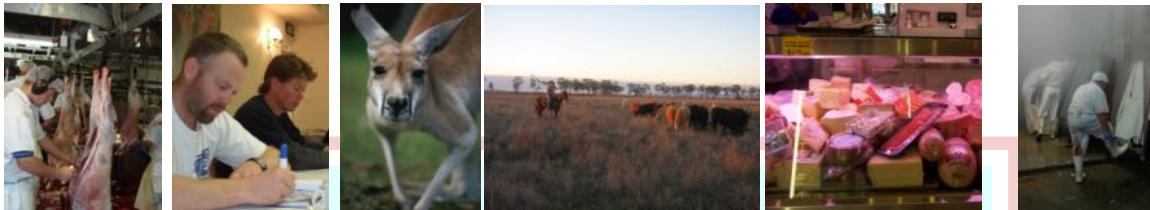


MINTRAC 2010 National Training and Research Conference

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Save the date!

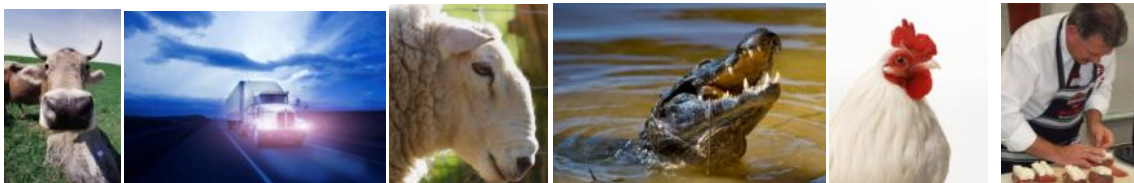
Brisbane 24-25th March 2010



The 2010 conference will explore a range of education and training issues which are common to meat processing and related industries.

Proposed topics and issues to be addressed include:

- Red Meat Industry Strategic Plan
- Federal Government policies and priorities
- Bobby calves
- Lotfeeding
- Wholesale meat preparation
- Livestock transport
- HACCP requirements and training
- Training for Cleaners
- Crocodile processing
- VET in Schools
- White meat processing
- Game harvesting and processing for human consumption
- Where are they now? Meat Industry leadership graduates
- Smallgoods processing
- Collecting industry intelligence – the environmental scan process.



Full details including registration and accommodation information will be available on the MINTRAC website from the end of January 2010.

www.mintrac.com.au

Vet in Schools for the Meat Industry

The VET in Schools for the Meat Industry resource kit is available now.

The kit provides information about the new VETIS policy, state policies regarding VETIS, ideas on how to set up a successful VET in Schools program and information for stakeholders.

Whether you are setting up a school based apprenticeship or traineeship in meat

processing, smallgoods or meat retailing there is information relevant to you.

Whether you are an RTO, employer, school teacher or even a student looking to get into the meat industry, the kit will be useful in negotiating a suitable program. There is information for students, teachers, RTOs, parents and AACs about the industry and the training. All the information is available in

word format on CD so that you can create your own personalised brochures or information sheets.

There are also communication charts, a PowerPoint presentation that will support you in selling your program to other stakeholders, careers information and several case studies.

The kit is on sale now for \$220 (or \$110 for associate

members and red meat levy payers). Order your copy from the MINTRAC website.




MINTRAC Scholarship Program

MINTRAC Scholarship Program

MINTRAC the Meat Industry Training Advisory Council Ltd is offering scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate students and existing red meat employees undertaking tertiary studies relevant to the meat industry (TAFE or university)

For more information call MINTRAC 1800 817 462

Proudly supported by:  

 www.mintrac.com.au

Welcome Thomas



MINTRAC would like to congratulate Rebekka Hawkins and her husband Jeff for having a healthy and handsome baby boy. Thomas Jeffrey Hawkins was born on the 18th September at 2:30pm weighing 3.89 kg.

Both mother and baby are doing really well, and the staff at MINTRAC would be lying if they didn't look forward to Thomas being brought into the office every now and then. Congratulations once again Rebekka and Jeff!





2009/10 MINTRAC Training Awards



The MINTRAC Training Awards opened on 1 December 2009

Important dates

- 1 December 2009 - awards open
- 19 February 2010 - Nominations Close
- 24 March 2010 - Presentations at MINTRAC Conference dinner.



Award categories

There are now five meat industry awards.

1. *Meat Industry Training Initiative Award*

The Meat Industry Training Initiative Award will recognise a leading edge program or product developed and implemented for the purpose of providing high quality education and training in the meat industry. The principal nominee will be one organisation (or part thereof) which initiated or implemented the development of the program or product.

2. *Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award*

(Proudly sponsored by Hepworths)

The Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award will be presented to an enterprise with 20 or more employees that demonstrate outstanding commitment and excellence in the provision of training to their employees.

Organisations which are RTOs providing services to the meat industry are **not eligible** for this category. Enterprise RTOs **may** nominate under this category.

3. *Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year*

To be eligible for this award, an organisation must:

- be a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) with one or more qualifications from the MTM07 Australian Meat Industry Training Package on its scope of registration
- have as its core business the delivery of vocational education and training
- have provided training and assessment services to a meat processing company within the last twelve months.

4. *Meat Industry Trainer of the Year*

The Meat Industry Trainer of the Year Award recognises innovation and excellence demonstrated by individuals providing vocational education and training to meat industry students.



5. *Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year*

(Proudly sponsored by Hepworths)

This award is for a person who has undertaken an accredited vocational education and training qualification, relevant to the meat industry, within the last twelve months, either as a full-time or part-time student.

Prizes

1. **Meat Industry Training Initiative Award**

- MINTRAC sponsorship to prepare for and attend State Training Awards
- Plaque
- Acknowledgement on perpetual trophy.

2. **Meat Industry Employer of the Year Training Award**

- MINTRAC sponsorship to prepare for and attend State Training Awards
- Hepworth products to the value of \$1,000
- Plaque
- Acknowledgement on perpetual trophy.

3. **Meat Industry Training Provider of the Year**

- MINTRAC sponsorship to prepare for and attend State Training Awards
- Plaque
- Acknowledgement on perpetual trophy.

4. **Meat Industry Trainer of the Year**

- MINTRAC sponsorship to prepare for and attend State Training Awards
- Plaque
- Acknowledgement on perpetual trophy.

5. **Meat Industry Vocational Student of the Year**

- MINTRAC sponsorship to prepare for and attend State Training Awards
- Protective boots supplied by Hepworths
- Plaque
- Acknowledgement on perpetual trophy.



Award details and application forms

Go to the MINTRAC website: www.mintrac.com.au



New Training and Assessment materials due for release

An eighteen month project to develop training and assessment materials for the remaining Units of Competency within MTM07 is due for completion in November this year. By the end of the project, materials will be available for nearly all of the Meat Retailing and Smallgoods Units, including imported Units. In addition, most of the Certificate IV level Units will also have updated training materials.

The Training and Assessment

materials contain, for each Unit of competency:

- advice on how to use the materials
- information about Employability Skills
- information on using inclusive practices in training and assessment
- unit-specific training information
- ideas for training
- general information about assessment
- evidence guide
- sample assessment tools

- and customisation advice
- sheet for recording completed assessment.

Training and Assessment materials will be sold on disk in Word format to enable easy customisation by RTOs. The CDs available will be:

- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs) (\$440/\$220)
- Certificate III in Meat Processing (Abattoirs) (\$440/\$220)

- Certificates I-III in Meat Processing (Meat Retailing) (\$440/\$220)
- Certificates I-III in Meat Processing (Smallgoods) (\$440/\$220)
- Certificate IV in Meat Processing (\$440/\$220)



Materials have NOT yet been developed for the following Units of Competency:

Unit	Reason
WRRPL2B Set strategic plans	Unit likely to change before materials would be used
BSBHR404A Co-ordinate human resource services	Unit likely to change before materials would be used
BSBHR604A Manage employee relations	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
BSBMGT504A Manage budgets and financial plans	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
BSBMKG405A Implement and monitor marketing activities	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
CHCORG11B Lead and Develop Others	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5601B Assess and purchase livestock	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5602B Analyse and develop enterprise systems for new opportunities	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5603B Develop, manage and maintain quality systems	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5604B Manage maintenance systems	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5605B Manage utilities and energy	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5606B Benchmark enterprise performance	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5607B Manage and improve meat industry plant operations	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5608B Manage environmental impacts of meat processing operations	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5609B Manage, maintain and continuously improve occupational health and safety plans and systems	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPS5610B Manage transportation of meat, meat products and meat by products	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPSR5601B Design and manage the food safety system	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPSR5602B Manage Meat Processing Systems for Meat and Meat Product Quality	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPSR5603B Control cold chain (refrigeration) operations	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPSR5604B Manage new product/process development	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPSR5605B Establish new markets	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
MTMPSR5606B Monitor legal requirements and business compliance	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
PMLORG602B Manage complex projects	Will develop/update once qualification changes are implemented
FDFFSCHZA identify, evaluate and control food safety	Development underway
BSBMGT511A Develop a business opportunity	Unit not currently in use
BSBMGT603A Review and develop business plans	Unit not currently in use
MTMMP82C Collect evidence for prosecution	Unit likely to change before materials would be used
PRSSO206A Provide first aid	Not required
WRRO6B Manage store facilities	Unit not currently in use
WRRPL3B Initiate and implement change	Unit not currently in use

MINTRAC would like to extend a huge vote of thanks to all those people who have provided comment and advice during the development of the Training and Assessment materials.



Standardising Animal Welfare Officer Training and Assessment

With the imminent changes to the Meat Industry Animal Welfare standards and international developments, it was timely to review the implications for Animal Welfare Officer Training. Accordingly, Registered Training Organisations delivering training and assessment in the Animal Welfare Officer Skills Set (AWOSS) were invited to Brisbane last week to participate in the first full review and moderation of the program.

The full day included a close examination of the current Units of Competency in comparison with the new standard and EU requirements, then reviewing of the coverage and effectiveness of the training

materials. Alison Small from CSIRO provided an overview of the science underpinning stunning and slaughtering practices, and then a close review of the assessment materials was undertaken. Finally a review of the training



Trainers participating in group discussion

delivery models was conducted.

Several recommendations have emerged from the day, including recommendations

for changes to the Units (to go onto the Issues Register), plus a number of recommended changes to the training materials and updated assessment tools. All of these changes will now be addressed by MINTRAC to produce a revised version of the AWOSS kit to coincide with the release of the new standards.

The session also provided RTOs with the opportunity to compare notes, approaches and practices in order to move towards a more standardised approach to Animal Welfare Officer training – a consistency that is important to demonstrate to overseas auditors and customers.

Scholarship research

MINTRAC Postgraduate Scholarship holder, Michael White, is in the final stages of completing his research thesis.

Michael's research is an analysis of gene marker data for meat tenderness and finding its associated effects, if they exist, on other meat quality traits such as intramuscular fat, cooking loss and meat colour.

This project was developed after acknowledging that consumer satisfaction with beef is mainly influenced by meat tenderness. Previous extensive research in many breeds have shown that shear force, a mechanical measure of tenderness, has a genetic basis, particularly in Bos Indicus cattle.

Recently a number of genetic markers have been commercialised in Australia and overseas which have an influence (up to 1kg between extreme animals) on meat tenderness (shear force) and also on MSA quality score. In order to validate the use of these markers in a breeding program, the correlated effects of selecting for these markers on meat quality traits

aside from tenderness must first be established.

As expected, three of the markers were found to have a strong relationship with objective measurements and consumer evaluated scores of tenderness. Markers in Bos Taurus had little effect on other meat quality traits, including MSA consumer evaluated tenderness scores, whereas in tropical breeds, the markers had significant effects on a number of meat quality traits. More specifically, Michael found that cooking loss (the volume lost during cooking) was reduced in cattle of Bos Indicus in the presence of two of the four markers studied and consumer evaluated scores of meat samples were improved in the presence of three of the markers.

Michael's thesis will be available from MINTRAC by the end of the year.

If you have any queries about the research or the Scholarship program, please contact Kate Christensen at kchristensen@mintrac.com.au or 0409 092 566.

Custom Compost visit

MINTRAC WA Environmental Managers Network visited Custom Composting on 10th November. The site is set up next to a piggery, and uses the manure, dead stock and wastewater from the site as well as green waste from local landfills to produce high quality compost. The owners have invested heavily in two key aspects of their business - equipment and research. On the equipment front, they have purchased machinery which removes pieces of plastic and metal from municipal collections of green waste. They have also invested in a purpose built machine for turning the rows of compost.

The research has enabled the site to consistently produce high quality certified organic fertilisers, which are rich in

organic matter as well as nutrients. They are currently developing a pelletised product which is suitable for direct seeding. They have worked co-operatively with different types of growers on field trials, and in some instances growers can use one quarter of the amount of organic fertiliser that they would normally have to use of an equivalent chemical fertiliser. The owners believe that a part of the answer as to why their fertilisers work so well is that they add organic matter to the soil, which promotes healthy soil microbiology.

MINTRAC would like to extend sincere thanks to David Cullen and Andrew Gulliver for their hospitality.



MINTRAC
Suite 2, 150 Victoria Road
Drummoyne NSW 2047

Phone: 02 9819 6699
Fax: 02 9819 6099

Email: mintrac@mintrac.com.au
Web: www.mintrac.com.au



Environment network visits Churchill Abattoir wastewater pond system

MINTRAC would like to extend sincere thanks to Mike Spence and the staff at Churchill Abattoir for hosting the Qld Environment network on 1 December. Below is a photo story of the visit.



1. Mike Spence introduces MINTRAC environment managers to the Churchill Abattoir wastewater pond system.



2. Start of a riffle bed nicknamed the "The Trout Stream" to remove Nitrogen, aerate the wastewater, and remove Struvite by crystallisation from the Number 3 Aerobic Lagoon. Build up of sludge around the margins indicates that the ponds are overloaded which would eventually create anaerobic conditions in the aerobic pond.



3. Number 3 Aerobic Lagoon – note sludge that is accumulating around the edges of the pond due to overloading.



4. Longitudinal view of riffle bed – approximately 120m long. The flow is to increase to over 10L/s to create a more turbulent flow. Note the heavy algal growth.



5. Mike Spence demonstrating unusual golf swing.



6. Earthworks' pad for eventual settling drains to accept pond sludge.



7. New pond approximately 50 x 20 m x 5 m – one of five new ponds; part-filled with irrigation water.



8. Demonstration of the Liquid Rubber pond cover that is being trialled. Unfortunately the rain beat us before an application demonstration could be done.



9. Pipe welding techniques being demonstrated. A key point was that each weld takes about one hour to complete; other issues of weather, dust, cleanliness etc were also discussed.



10. View of demonstration cover site.



11. One method of achieving a 'lift' of the cover to avoid pooling of water. This method has now been discarded. Note that the cover material can be damaged but is readily and easily repaired in-situ compared to HDPE.

Note: Mike demonstrates his strength in holding up a backhoe bucket.



12. Liquid Rubber being sprayed on geofabric.



13. Demonstration cover, 16 x 8 m, floating on the pond and being inflated to simulate gas capture - demonstrates 'proof of concept'. Unfortunately this was taken after the MINTRAC visit.

