

June 2009

MEAT INDUSTRY NEWS



Victoria Retail Council Report

By Brendon Watts

The Victorian Retail Council met in May and addressed many important issues for members.

The program for the 2009 Sausage King was also finalized and the details are published in this Newsletter. An additional category, Traditional Lamb, has been added to the program in response to a request from a number of members. Some excellent lamb sausages have been entered in the Gourmet class in recent years and it was agreed that the category is strong enough to stand alone. It is hoped that Sam will be seen on our television screens sampling the Lamb Category Sausage King finalists next Australia day!

AMIC has lifted the profile of the Sausage King and we now find that there is increasing media, particularly regional media, for the event. Take advantage of this and support it with your entries – you may be the next Sausage King.

On another positive note, Council reviewed the Domestic Marketing Plan for MLA for 2009 – 2010. Funding has been increased \$25m and there will be three promotions for Beef and three promotions for Lamb during the year. This is in line with the AMIC request to increase promotions from two to three during the year. So Council is very pleased with the outcome.

All other Domestic Marketing programs have maintained or increased funding including the Nutritional program, which addresses the benefits of eating red meat, and the Retail Presence which ensures MLA is represented in each state and that the Red Meat Networking Club is funded.

The National Retail Council has provided strong input to the revision of the Meat Industry Strategic Plan. This plan identifies the strategic goals and acknowledges the key issues for the meat industry and our retail members for 2010-2015. In turn this directs the flow of grower and processor levies, particularly in meat promotion.

The following Strategic Goals have been agreed:

1. Improving Efficiency
2. Growing Demand and Improving Standards
3. Resources – address labour skills and OH&S
4. Regulation - Adapting to environmental and regulatory initiatives
5. Improving Industry viability

Council discussed the details of these goals and agreed to support them.

AMIC has made several submissions to counteract Government proposals which, if implemented, would otherwise result in additional regulation at state level in the

coming years. These include a proposal to remove preservative from sausages (opposed on food safety grounds by AMIC), additional nutritional information on packaged products (opposed by AMIC on the grounds that the current information should be reviewed first) and a proposal that independent butchers should be AUS-MEAT accredited to sell meat (opposed by AMIC on cost and lack of benefits). Each submission is considered by Council and input provided. AMIC will always support genuine food safety improvement recommendations but much of what is being presented does not meet that criteria and will only add costs to members.

AMIC has been successful in having Meat Retailing excluded from the first Modern Awards for General Retail. This decision handed down in late December clears the way for AMIC to continue with the submission that there should be a separate Modern Meat Award. This matter will be considered by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in the near future. Further information is available elsewhere in this Newsletter and in the National Newsletter.

You are welcome to attend the meetings of the Retail Council. Please contact Mark Seymour if you require more details of meeting dates or any of the issues raised above.

New Federal IR/Workplace Laws – they are nearly here

Please find an insert with these Newsletters. It contains a fairly comprehensive summary of the new laws. Some changes apply from 1 July 2009 and some from 1 January 2010. They are far reaching and, at this stage, only apply to national employers (Pty Ltd entities). They do not apply to entities operating as sole traders or partnerships - except for sole traders or partnerships in the state of Victoria and the ACT and NT. For the laws to apply to all other sole traders or partnerships across Australia, the remaining states need to hand their IR powers over to Canberra as Victoria did some 18 years ago.

We will keep you informed if this occurs.

If the new laws apply to you, please read the document carefully. If the laws do not apply you may wish to incorporate your business so that they do apply.

Unfair dismissal laws have changed and apply irrespective of the number of employees. These changes happen on 1 July so you need to understand them and have only a few weeks to do so. New laws apply to the making of federal agreements and the bargaining process. These changes occur on 1 July. New Modern Awards

will replace all the federal awards now applying and this will occur on 1 January.

There will be a Modern Meat Industry Award but, at this point, it has not been published by the Commission. The reason is because the Commission has been given the task of reducing over 3000 awards down to about 80 industry awards and they are judge and jury with no appeal. A Modern Meat Industry Award will be finalized by September. There is much more so if in any doubt about any of the subject matter contained in the insert please contact AMIC.