

Launch features 'pop-up' restaurant

As part of the process of introducing the Australian food service and upper-end retail market to PCAS certification and how it will be applied to Teys' Grasslands brand, the company last week hosted leading national food writers and commentators, influential trade media and bloggers to a novel brand showcase event near Wagga Wagga.

A 'pop-up' restaurant was installed on a scenic property called Toonga, not far from Tarcutta, owned and operated by Des and Pat Castine. The Castines are members of Teys' southern PCAS pasturefed supply chain.



"The exercise was primarily about raising awareness of the Grasslands brand program, and how it will now be underpinned by a third-party audited assurance system," said Teys Australia's general manager for marketing, Mark Ellison.

The primary focus for the food service segment was on Grasslands Premium, a sub-brand operating under the broader Grasslands 'umbrella' brand, he said.

While the entire PCAS program is underpinned by MSA quality standards, Grasslands Premium will be drawn from the premium end of supply to set it apart as a truly elite food service offering.

Haverick Meats, Teys' food-service partner on the Grasslands project, was also present at the Toonga showcase last week, explaining their role in portion-cutting, dry-aging and distribution to customers.

Manning the rustic barbecue set-up for the occasion at Toonga was top Sydney CBD restaurant chef, Sean Connolly, from The Morrison, who showcased the product over a 'long lunch' to the gathered media contingent.

After lunch the group got their hands dirty, undertaking a property tour to complete the 'paddock to plate' experience. The Castines explained their pasture improvement program, based on cocksfoot, phalaris and clover, and the genetics and management applied in their cattle - required to deliver an outstanding pastured beef experience. NLIS and traceability, and compliance with the PCAS requirements was woven into the discussion.

"There was lots of talk about PCAS, and what it means," Mr Ellison said.

"The media visitors clearly understood the significance of a third-party auditable process to back the brand claims," he said. "They also understood the need for growth in the PCAS supply chain to meet the rapidly expanding consumer demand for a product like this."

Geoff Teys said the sort of questions the food writers focussed on were how the PCAS supply process works, how the registration, certification and third-party audit process works, and how the product was expected to perform on the dinner plate.

"They were extremely enthusiastic about its prospects, and could immediately see the merit in a supply chain process where the brand claim has some rigour behind it," Mr Teys said.

Teys' general manager sales and marketing, Andrew Macpherson, said his company saw itself as competing against supply chains, rather than any other beef processor.



“How effective we are in putting consumer-responsive supply chains together is really the difference, and the competitive advantage we are aiming to create. Adoption of PCAS is a significant part of that process,” Mr Macpherson said.

“The process starts with the consumer, and works its way back, so this project is about getting all those key stakeholders, back as far as the cattle producer, involved, and identifying with the PCAS/Grasslands program and its values.”

“It’s all about how best to service the consumer with a clean, green, sustainable, animal welfare-friendly product message, attached to a product that also produces an exceptional eating experience.”

PCAS could also be used to underpin a powerful ‘health and wellbeing’ marketing message to consumers, Mr Macpherson said.



The motivation to purchase a pasturefed-type product was still very strong, regardless of the consumer’s retail budget and disposable income. Through its brand structure, the Grasslands program was able to segment itself to achieve the right price points, relative to each customer’s disposable income, through various eating quality grades, such as Grasslands Premium, and the next tier down, Grasslands Classic.