



Tasmanian grass fed scores gold for Greenham

Tasmania's clean environment, rich pastures and high standards of animal welfare have helped meat processor Greenham score a gold medal in a national competition in Brisbane earlier this month.

The company's Cape Grim Beef landed one of the top honours in the branded beef and lamb section of this year's Royal Queensland Food and Wine Show.

The winning entry came from the property of Les Porteus near Smithton – not far from the weather station that records the world's cleanest air.

The Brisbane show runs from May to October each year and aims to showcase the nation's finest food and wine offerings.

The beef and lamb section saw 24 steak entries submitted by 11 of the nation's premier beef processors.

Way out in front

Greenham romped away from the rest of the field in the grass-fed category with 597.5 points, streets ahead of the second place-getter at 494.5 points.

Food and Wine Show chief judge Russell Smith said the branded beef competition was one of the most comprehensive of its kind in Australia.

"The standard on show this year was exceptional," Mr Smith said.

"It was a closely fought contest and the winners in all categories are truly world-class. Producers are combining great tenderness with silky texture and wonderful flavour.

"The grass-fed class would easily compete with the best of the best internationally, which bodes well for the industry and, importantly, the consumer."

Several judges nominated the full-flavoured grass-fed class as the stand-out division of 2011.

Managing director Peter Greenham said the company had been building its grass-fed brands since late 2007.

"We started out grading 100-200 MSA carcasses a week, but we're now putting through close to 1500 a week," Mr Greenham said.

"Grass-fed now makes up 95% of our kill – the Cape Grim brand gets around 30% of that and the rest goes into Tasmania Natural Beef. The best of the best goes into Cape Grim.

"We often talk about Tasmania having some of the best pastures in the world. It was good to see the judges supporting that.

Great meat from well treated cattle

"The win shows that if you treat cattle well, you get great meat. Our farmers manage their cattle very carefully. They're always on good feed, and the highest welfare standards are applied all the way through the process.

"Consumers want to know that their meat has been grown ethically. They get that assurance with our Tasmanian brands."

Mr Greenham said the win in Brisbane was exciting news for the company.

"It was fantastic," he said. "We entered the competition in Sydney last year and got a silver medal – the top prize, as it turned out, as there was no gold awarded.

"This year, though, it was all down to the season. The cattle have done really well and the grass is as good as it's ever been."

News of the win was a thrill for the Porteus family at Smithton.

Les, wife Coralie and son Troy are part of a giant network of 1200 MSA producers around the state who supply Greenham Tasmania.

Les farms a total of 4180 acres – the Smithton property covers 1200 acres, there are 2500 acres at Roger River and a further 480 acres at Mella.

The Porteus operation is based on buying in stores and turning them off within 12 months, aiming for a dressed weight of 400kg.

Les said 1200 head passed through the property every year.

"When I heard the news, I was quite impressed – to win a nation-wide competition is a pretty good feat. Peter might even take us out for a drink!"

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