

Media Release
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Christchurch butchery awarded best ham in the land
Judge describes winning product "astounding"

A honey manuka smoked leg of ham from a boutique butchery in Canterbury has today been crowned the most tasty, tender and overall best ham in the country in the inaugural 100% New Zealand Ham Competition.

The competition celebrates the best-of-the-best New Zealand ham, made from 100% New Zealand pork, PigCare Accredited* and is judged by a team of 10 acclaimed food writers, chefs and meat industry experts headed up by president of the National Chef's Association, and renowned chef Anita Sarginson.

Kurt Robinson of Cashmere Cuisine in Christchurch was awarded The Courier Sharpening Ltd 100% New Zealand Ham of Year Supreme award, winning against 85 other competing entries (86 total entries).

"We're absolutely thrilled to have won this award because we have enormous pride in our products. But given it's the first year of the ham competition, we had no idea of what to expect or who we were coming up against, so we are really chuffed with the results.

"We believe we won the award because we source free-farmed products from PigCare Accredited* farms in the Canterbury region, where possible. This results in meat bursting with flavour and goodness, which customers love," says Mr Robinson.

The supreme winning ham followed a traditional method of preparation where it is kept in brine for up to a week and then hung for another week to rid of any excess water. The ham then undergoes a double smoking process with natural manuka woodchips from the West Coast and is then slowly cooked on a low-temperature for up to 10 hours.

The winning ham was described by the judges as "an astounding example of how to prepare this traditional cut of meat, while delivering a superb balance of sweetness, salt and smoke taste."

The 100% New Zealand Ham competition saw 86 ham entries from 51 businesses nationwide, featuring products in two categories including bone-in-ham and boneless ham. On competition day, the panel of judges assessed entries based on a set of criteria including taste, aroma, texture and appearance.

"What we saw in the first year of this competition was a very high-standard from all the ham entries. We are definitely looking forward to this event becoming an on-going competition, with further high-standards across the board," says Ms Sarginson.

Other medal winners included: Brian Jennings of Redcliffs Butchery, Redcliffs Christchurch and John Cormack of Butcher Jacks Ltd, Glenfield Auckland who won awards for their leg of ham entries.

Angus Black of Harrington's Small Goods Ltd, Miramar Wellington; John Borcovsky of Murchison Meats, Murchison and Corey Winder of Ashby's Butchery, Wigram, Christchurch also won awards for their sliced ham entries.

The 100% Ham Competition was established to celebrate New Zealand's best ham and to help consumers identify local New Zealand ham from imported product. The competition is only open to New Zealand butchers who make ham from 100% New Zealand pork, PigCare Accredited*.

Recent research undertaken by New Zealand Pork found that only 36 percent of consumers know where the pork they buy comes from. Each week more than 700,000 kilograms of imported pork enters New Zealand, most of it made into bacon and ham – this is the equivalent weight of 224 Boeing 747's.

With the average Kiwi consuming 8.5 kilograms of imported ham, bacon and pork every year, consumers should look for the 100% New Zealand Pork or Ham rosette label or the 2011 Ham of the Year, Gold, Silver and Bronze award labels on-pack to ensure they are choosing local New Zealand ham.

Winners by category:

Courier Sharpening Ltd 100% New Zealand Ham of the Year winner

Kurt Robinson of Cashmere Cuisine, Cashmere, Christchurch

Sliced Ham

Gold – Angus Black of Harrington's Small Goods Ltd, Miramar, Wellington

Silver – John Borcovsky of Murchison Meats, Murchison, Nelson

Bronze – Corey Winder of Ashby's Butchery, Wigram, Christchurch

Leg of Ham

Gold – Kurt Robinson of Cashmere Cuisine, Cashmere, Christchurch

Silver – Brian Jennings of Redcliffs Butchery, Redcliffs, Christchurch

Bronze – John Cormack of Butcher Jacks Ltd, Glenfield, Auckland

ENDS

Image attached: (L-R) Nick Warnes, Kurt Robinson, Chris Mowat-Smith (Sponsor, Courier Sharpening Ltd).

For further information or interviews with the 100% New Zealand Ham Competition judges or winners, please contact:

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Notes for editors'

(* About PigCare Accredited

PigCare is the New Zealand pork industry's independent welfare accreditation programme developed by animal welfare experts and managed byASUREQuality. The audit underpins NZPork's 100% NZ Pork, Bacon, and Ham labelling. Commercial pig farms are audited annually, and only products from PigCare accredited farms can carry the 100% New Zealand pork suite of labels. NZPork developed the PigCare audit from the on-farm welfare validation tool developed by Massey University. The tool was developed with the support of MAF and in conjunction with veterinarians and the RNZSPCA.

About 100% New Zealand Pork Label

The 100% New Zealand Pork, PigCare Accredited* logo guarantee's consumers are purchasing only pork that has been raised in New Zealand. Meat retailers are audited to prove only 100% New Zealand pork is being used when these labels are used on-pack. Only 100% New Zealand pork is guaranteed to be:

- From pigs born and raised on New Zealand farms
- Produced according to New Zealand's Animal Welfare (Pigs) Code of Welfare 2010
- Compliant with New Zealand's stringent food safety standards

For a full list of all entrants and contact details for this year's winner's visit: www.pork.co.nz

For further information on the 100% Ham Competition visit:
<http://www.pork.co.nz/ForMeatRetailers/BaconHamCompetition.aspx>