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New video unlocks lamb leg secrets

Do you know your lamb chump from your lamb shank, or how to make your own easy-carve lamb roast?

A new video produced by the Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC) aims to unlock the secrets of the lamb leg so consumers can understand its versatility and the many cuts it can yield beyond a traditional roast.

Professor Dave Pethick, Meat Quality Program Leader with Sheep CRC, and specialist butcher Rafael Ramirez, feature in the YouTube video 'Lamb leg secrets with the Butcher and the Doc', demonstrating how to identify cuts including the chump or rump, silverside, round, shank, topside and how to debone a lamb leg to produce an easy-carve roast.

"When you start working with lamb and breaking it down into all these cuts, it becomes quite exciting for consumers to maybe buy a whole piece like a leg and start doing a bit of their own butchery using these simple steps," Mr Ramirez said.

The video also explains how various cuts are rated in the Meat Standards Australia (MSA) consumer testing scores, and the best cooking methods to use for each cut.

MSA was developed by the Australian red meat industry to improve the eating quality consistency of beef and sheepmeat. The system is based on almost 700,000 consumer taste tests by over 100,000 consumers from nine countries and takes into account all factors that affect eating quality from the paddock to the plate.

Prof. Pethick is leading a Sheep CRC research program aimed at implementing a cuts-based MSA grading system for the Australian lamb industry, with consumer testing currently underway in China, the United States and Australia to assess consumer taste differences, perceptions of various cuts and ages of sheepmeats, and the impacts of different cooking styles such as Asian hot pot methods.

Prof. Pethick said the video was all about educating consumers, further building on Sheep CRC's years of research into sheepmeat eating quality.

"Modern genetics is such that we are able to produce just a nice amount of fat cover on today's lamb leg - you haven't got large amounts of fat that you would have had say 20 years ago," Prof Pethick said.

"You need some fat coverage but most importantly you need fat inside the meat, known as the intramuscular fat.

"The CRC has been doing a lot of work on genetically identifying animals that can marble and we now know that there is a very high genetic heritability for that trait.

"It's a very exciting attribute of the new direction we're taking in lamb. We can keep the lamb lean but put the fat where it should be inside the meat where it contributes to juiciness."

To help producers improve the lean meat yield obtained from each carcase, and processors and retailers to save time in preparing meat for sale, the lean meat yield measure of a lamb carcase has been developed.



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In February, a new industry manual was jointly published by the Sheep CRC and Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) to assist the supply chain to extract maximum value from this important measure.

Lean meat yield is a standard measurement used to compare lamb carcasses – it is the amount of lean meat recovered after the separation of all muscle tissue from the fat and bone components of a carcass.

The manual, 'Improving Lamb Lean Meat Yield - A technical guide for the Australian lamb and sheep meat supply chain', is a key resource for producers and processors to refer to for all the technical information they need.

The Sheep CRC is also researching new technologies to measure lean meat yield on the processing line and provide immediate price signals to the supply chain about the value of individual carcasses.

- More information is available at www.sheepcrc.org.au or click here (<https://youtu.be/x5wpJUWLvWg>) to view the video.

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