



MEDIA RELEASE – October 13, 2005

2005 WATSONIA GROWERS OF THE YEAR

David Chown of Serpentine is the 2005 Watsonia Contract Grower of the Year in the category of more than 4000 baconer pigs supplied per annum to Watsons Foods (WA).

Mr Chown has been in pig production for many years, however this is the first time he has won the prestigious award.

Watsons Livestock Manager, Joe Ascenso said 62 per cent of the baconers Mr Chown supplied met the company's peak weight and grade schedule.

Mr Chown operates Tralka Pty Ltd, which supplies Watsons with about 350 pigs per week, with approximately 60 per cent of his females being exported fresh to Singapore.

"Supporting Watsons' fresh meat strategy to increase pork cuts into Singapore, he also supplies us with castrated males," Mr Ascenso said.

For the sixth successive year, CA & EM Benson & Sons of Mingenew were awarded the less than 4000 baconers category at Burswood during the gala dinner, which was attended by 80 producers and Watsons management.

The Bensons consigned 92.9 per cent of their baconers into Watsons peak grade – which is an increase of 10 per cent on last year.

David Ives won a merit award for quickly integrating into WA's pork industry after relocating from the United Kingdom in 2004 and successfully retaining Ella Plains' position as the second largest supplier of trade porkers to Watsons.

Mr Ives' operation at Geraldton currently runs 400 sows, which he plans to increase to 500 to meet demand.

According to Mr Ascenso, average grading percentage of pigs supplied to Watsons had not changed over the course of the year. Nineteen per cent of pigs made the 13 – 14 mm backfat grading, a three per cent increase over the course of the year.

"These results are good, but I'm sure producers can take it to the next level," he said.

Guest speaker, Erwin Schick, Executive Chef of Burswood Entertainment Complex, said that the pork industry could progress by re-branding pork products.

“The pork industry could benefit by promoting new cuts of pork along with a healthy way of living.

“For example, products like pig trotters could be renamed to sell better,” Mr Schick said.

He said functions mostly only served roast pork if offering buffets, with organizers shying away from serving it as a main dish.

Mr Schick noted that Burswood’s biggest pork consumer was the 2000 staff members he feeds every day.

“If I serve roast pork or spare ribs to the staff, we always run out. It is that popular.”

“Pork outdoes beef in flavour any time, especially if it is not over-cooked.

“Pork is an excellent product, which has only got better in the last few years,” Mr Schick said.

Acknowledged at the dinner were retiring Watsonia contract growers Anne and Jim Graham of Pinjarra, Nick and Elizabeth Numans of Kojonup and Lloyd and Margaret Mullins and John and Peter Anderson, all of Trayning.

ENDS

Authorised by Watsons Foods (WA) and issued on its behalf by
Brendon Cant & Associates, Tel 08 9385 7779

MEDIA CONTACT: Joe Ascenso, Watsons, Tel 08 9418 0717

GOY05WinMedRelE.doc

PREVIOUS WATSONIA CONTRACT GROWER OF THE YEAR WINNERS:

More than 4000 baconer category

2004: Marty and Karen Van Beek, Moora.

2003 - 2002: AF Smith & Co., Geraldton.

2001: Great Southern Pig Co., Albany & Narrogin.

2000: AF Smith & Co., Geraldton.

1999: Scolaro family, Parkmora Farms

1998 - 1996: G & M Jones, Corackerup Farming, Ongerup.

Less than 4000 baconer category

2004 - 2000: CA & EM Benson & Sons, Mingenew.

1999 - 1996: G & M Jones, Corackerup Farming, Ongerup.