



MEDIA RELEASE

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Shortage of organic pork this Christmas

CHRISTMAS is a time for meat-laden tables but as far as organic pork goes, there'll be slim pickings.

Consumers are asking for it but retailers can't source it. Certified organic ham and pork only make up 0.14 per cent of total organic sales.

Kellie Lewis from the country's largest organic certifying body Australian Certified Organic says she regularly gets calls from retailers wanting to stock it but there aren't many certified organic pork producers. "We only have a small number of pork producers certified with us and there's simply not enough being produced to meet demand."

Certified organic butchers like Gary McBean from Gary's Quality Meats in Melbourne says, "We receive regular requests from customers for organic pork but we haven't been able to find a regular supply."

The shortage is partly because most conventional ham is treated with synthetic nitrite preservatives (which also increases the pink colour of the flesh) but these nitrites are also a known carcinogen and prohibited in certified organic food.

Recent research has made a natural, vegetable-derived nitrite available but it's more expensive than synthetic nitrites, adding to the costs and availability of certified organic ham.

Another contributing factor to the lack of supply is it costs more to grow certified organic pigs because they have to be free range and grown without antibiotics, therefore farmers can't stock as many and they grow slower.

Andrew Betts is the New South Wales state manager for Belmore Meats. He says organic pork is almost cost prohibitive. Belmore Meats' Melbourne store is certified organic and gets asked periodically for organic pork.

Andrew says, "When we have looked into it, the lack of producers makes organic pork very expensive, double the cost of traditional pork. Organic pork tends to come from traditional breeds like Berkshire which has a small yield."

Meanwhile Kellie says, "For the sake of our health and the welfare of animals we would really like to help more producers get into certified organic pork."

"Hopefully with the increasing availability of natural preservatives there will be more organic pork on Christmas tables in 2014."

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