



A rosy future for veal

Have you been thinking about your breeding strategy for next season? Having a well-planned breeding strategy is key and with every region different, it's important to look at what works for your farm.

One of the options you might consider is rearing or selling calves for veal, with good demand for rose veal in particular.

What is 'rose veal'?

- Rose veal is meat from calves over the age of six months (usually about eight months) that have had fibre included in their diet
- The meat is a much darker colour than white veal from calves who have only been fed on milk.

Why is it in demand?

- Uniquely delicious and tender
- Pasture-raised veal has much of the flavour of beef but is leaner and moister.
- Rose veal is also a healthier choice - it has less fat and cholesterol than beef and is an even better source of nutrients like protein, riboflavin and B6.
- 100 grams of Rose Veal provides over 10% of your recommended daily intake of iron.

One of the largest producers of Rose Veal in New Zealand is Gourmet Direct. Their rose veal is 100% New Zealand grown, sourced from animals that have been raised on farms within the Hawke's Bay region of the North Island.

One of the key factors for Gourmet Direct was finding the ideal farming partners to raise the calves in a sustainable environment for the calves and the farmer. Hawke's Bay beef and dairy farmers Paul and Wilma Janssen have been working with Gourmet Direct for the past two years to develop a viable production model for Rose Veal. The Janssens operate their family-run business in a way that meets consumers' expectations when it comes to animal welfare and meat quality.

A key priority for Paul and Wilma is ensuring the welfare of the calves is maintained at every life stage while under their care.

When the calves are very young, they are cared for within purpose-built specialty sheds. This provides the calves with comfortable bedding, access to fresh cow's milk, water and food, along with fresh air and sunshine with protection from adverse weather.

The calves continue to receive fresh cow's milk as part of their diet until they are fully weaned. Once they transition to free range outside on grass and pasture, they remain in their social herd growing and gaining weight for the next 8 -10 months and can reach weights of approximately 240kg.

Supplementary feed, including home grown crops, ensures the animals receive the correct nutrient balance throughout their lives.

Ultimately, Gourmet Direct Rose Veal aims to be one of the most environmentally friendly meats available, with the production model putting a strong emphasis on sustainability and a low carbon footprint.

Gourmet Direct Rose Veal is currently available online via their website and through the chain of Farro Fresh stores in Auckland. Wider distribution is planned for the near future as new channels are found for the wide range of meat cuts. International markets are also being explored and seen as an exciting development opportunity.