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A feminine touch finds new markets for Far North Qld's only 'Australian Certified Organic' abattoir

A Far North Qld (FNQ) organic operation near Tully could give McLeod's Daughters a run for their money this year.

Kristine and Kerry Jonsson from Jervoise Organic Meats have been 'Australian Certified Organic' (ACO) graziers in the Tully region for the past five years, creating an organic success story despite location setbacks.

The mother and daughter team took on traditionally male orientated roles to expand their operations to include the only 'Australian Certified Organic' abattoir in FNQ, allowing them to pursue new markets this year.

"I'm now a qualified butcher, and we've both become accredited meat inspectors!" says daughter Kristine.

She says the move was necessary to ensure Jervoise Organic Meats could retain its certified organic status.

"Most abattoirs licensed to process organic meat are located much further south. (The next closest abattoir for certified organic beef producers in central Qld is Thomas Borthwick & Sons Pty Ltd (certified ACO) in Mackay).

"The transport costs were restrictive to organic producers like ourselves - so we decided to take the organic meat supply chain into our own hands.

"We wanted to ensure organic cattle producers in areas in the far north would have somewhere available to them to process certified organic meat products ready for market."

Kristine says the venture is paying off. For the first time in 2009, organic meat products from Jervoise Organic Meats will be seen down south.

"We've combined forces with Mungalli Creek bio-dynamic Dairy (from South Atherton Tablelands)," says Kristine.

"Jervoise Organic Meats will now be found in the same outlets which sell Mungalli Creek Dairy products, and distributed nationally by hundreds of retailers and stockists. After years of setting up our operations to a level we are happy with, it's incredibly exciting."

Jervoise Organic Meat is sourced from the Jonsson's property near Greenvale (256 kilometres from Atherton), where they run 7,000 head of certified organic cattle. Kristine says the business will now be able to assist anyone interested in organic meat production in the far north.



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“One of our biggest problems when we were starting was that processors would not take private or small orders of just two or three head.

“Our abattoir will take orders of any size from people around the region - with an emphasis on those that are organic or biodynamic.”

She says Jervoise Organic Meats will also ensure the local Cairns, Atherton, and Townsville regions are kept well supplied with high quality organic meat items – *“everything from non-nitrate corn beef, to preservative and gluten free sausages!*

“Ultimately, we would like to supply around 20 head of prime certified cattle per week to markets down south, 50 weeks a year, while still servicing the local Cairns and Townsville regions.”

Quentin Kennedy, BFA Director and Managing Director of Kialla Pure Foods (Darling Downs, Qld), says Jervoise’s operations are part of a gradually maturing market for organic meat.

“There are limitations to organic meat production in Qld, but these are being overcome with time.

“Freight costs have always been an issue, with some producers having problems finishing enough cattle to the right specification to fill trucks for abattoirs some distance away.

“But growers are finding ways around the issue – from joining together to fill freight consignments, to finishing pasture fed cattle on organic grain to meet the specifications of processors.

“There’s now tighter control over the final product, and the quality of organic meat available to the buyer is high.”

To find details for all ‘Australian Certified Organic’ meat processors and abattoirs in Qld
CLICK HERE - [www.bfa.com.au/ files/Fact%20Sheet_Abattoirs.doc](http://www.bfa.com.au/files/Fact%20Sheet_Abattoirs.doc)

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