

Australian charge to free range chicken

Australians are voting with their wallets on the way they want their chicken meat to be raised, with three in five choosing chickens that are free to roam outside in paddocks and guaranteed to not contain growth hormones.

The move from the high profile gourmand comes as a new Newspoll survey of 1200 Australians aged 18 years and over indicates that one in five are eating free range chicken meat more often now than they did two years ago, with one in ten eating it a lot more often.

Two thirds of those choosing free range say they are concerned about the conditions under which regular chickens are raised, and two thirds believe that free range meat is better quality.

A similar number are also worried about the use of growth hormones, despite the practice of feeding growth hormones being banned in Australia since the 1960s.

Mangan, who will feature Lilydale on the menu at his acclaimed Sydney restaurant glass brasserie, agreed that more people than ever are asking for free range.

“Top quality produce is a must for creating delicious food. Lilydale chicken has the best flavour and this is one of the reasons why so many Australians, just like me, are choosing Lilydale as a base for all their favourite chicken recipes,” said Mangan.

“It’s also just as important to me as it is to my customers that they can enjoy first class cuisine while knowing that their chickens have experienced a good life. I hope that this will lead the way for other people in the food and hospitality industries to provide their patrons with the high quality, conscience friendly produce they demand,” he said.

The Newspoll figures showed that free range chicken has its strongest support amongst 18-49 year olds and those with children, with young, educated city dwellers driving the change by increasingly choosing free range.

Those only eating regular chicken say they like what they’re having and that free range is too expensive, with around a third saying they don’t know where to buy it.

Lilydale’s free range chickens are naturally raised and free from growth promoters. Once fully-feathered, the birds can roam during the day on chemical-free paddocks sheltering under trees and foraging amongst natural vegetation.

Baiada Poultry managing director, John Camilleri, said that the company (which produces Lilydale) aims to exceed the standards set by Free Range Egg and Poultry Australia (FREPA) wherever possible, for example the unique construction of Lilydale barns means chickens have much easier access to outside paddocks.

“Our birds enjoy a natural, nutritious diet comprising quality cereal grains, supplemented by vitamins and minerals to ensure optimum health and wellbeing. All Lilydale farms are accredited by FREPA and are audited regularly to ensure we meet the highest standards and integrity in our product,” said Camilleri.

“While the Lilydale approach is certainly more time consuming and costly, our farmers and customers believe that it’s worth the effort,” he said.

Lilydale Select Free Range Chicken cuts include skinless thigh fillets, skinless breast fillets, whole chicken, drumsticks, wings and breast stir-fry.

Lilydale is available at Coles, independent supermarkets and in specialty chicken outlets around Australia.