



MELBOURNE
ROYAL
AUSTRALIAN
FOOD AWARDS

*Shaping Palates.
Savouring Perfection.*



Entry Booklet 2026

The Australian Food Awards celebrate excellence and recognise the best Australian food producers, this year judging products across six major categories: Dairy, Preserves, Smallgoods, Meat, Bread & Baked Goods and Olive Oil

Government **Partner**

AGRICULTURE  **VICTORIA**





Contents

General information	4
2026 calendar of important dates	4
Introduction	4
Why you should enter	4
What you should know when entering	4
Audit procedures	5
Third party manufacturing	5
Food safety	5
Products requiring preparation	5
Entry eligibility	6
How to enter	6
How we use your products	6
What our trophy winners say	7
New in 2026	8
Events	9
Trophies and eligibility	10
Exhibit requirements	12
Entry fee and payment	144
Sections and classes of entry	15
Judging	21
Scoring and medals	22
Submissions	29
Results	31
Connect with us	31
Special Regulations & Conditions of Entry	32
Office Bearers	38

General information

2026 calendar of important dates

Entries open	Tuesday 19 May
Entries close (all classes except Olive Oil)	Friday 26 June
Entries close (Olive Oil)	Friday 17 July
Deliveries to Melbourne Showgrounds	Preserves & Olive Oil: Tuesday 21 – Friday 31 July Dairy, Smallgoods and Meat: Monday 27 – Friday 31 July Bread & Baked Goods: Friday 7 August
Judging	Monday 3 August – Tuesday 11 August
Trophy Announcement	Wednesday 30 September

Introduction

The Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards inspire and celebrate excellence in food production. The Awards have a long and rich history beginning with the foundation of the Society in the 1870s when 'Dairy Produce' were among the 'Exhibits of Show' in 1874 and included sections for Cheese, Salt Butter, Bacon and Hams, and Fresh Butter.

One of the largest programs of its kind, the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards provides producers from around the country with an essential benchmarking opportunity. The Awards are open to commercial food producers of all sizes, from boutique small volume to large-scale commercial production.

Following a hiatus through COVID-19 and a thorough review, Melbourne Royal was pleased to welcome back the Awards in 2023 with the Preserves and Dairy Categories. With the re-introduction of Branded Meats & Value Add Meats in 2025, we are adding Bread & Baked Goods and Olive Oil back into the Awards for 2026.

These categories were developed in consultation with industry experts and followed a review of the Awards that included engagement from exhibitors and judges, and feedback from producers.

Why you should enter

As a distinguished national industry focused award, the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards offer exhibitors an unparalleled opportunity to benchmark their products against industry standards.

In reporting results to exhibitors, exhibit scores are represented on distribution graphs (where there is sufficient data to do so) enabling exhibitors to see how their products rank against those of their peers in Australia.

Medal-winning exhibitors will be provided with a Marketing & PR Tool Kit to assist with promoting their win and marketing their products with a seal of quality.

Award-winning producers have the opportunity to showcase their products at Melbourne Royal events, including The Melbourne Royal Show.

What you should know when entering

The Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards is a credible and impartial competition conducted by one of Australia's most highly esteemed royal agricultural societies, Melbourne Royal, the organisation responsible for the Australian International Spirits Awards, Melbourne Royal Wine Awards, and the Australian International Beer Awards.

The judging panel boasts some of Australia's most highly respected Food Producers, Food Technologists, Food Writers, Recipe Developers, Retailers, Chefs and Educators.

Entries are blind tasted and judged on their own merits against a set of criteria (see 'Judging' for details).

Entries are allocated a tasting order number, separate from the catalogue (exhibit) number, to ensure the anonymity of the exhibit and to protect the integrity of the judging process.

Audit procedures

To uphold the integrity of the competition and its results, each year Melbourne Royal conducts a physical and telephone audit of entrants and entries in the lead up to, during, and after judging, to ensure compliance with the entry requirements.

Auditing ensures compliance with labelling, regulatory requirements and commercial availability. Entries not complying with these requirements will be disqualified.

Third party manufacturing

An exhibit (i.e. product) can be submitted by either the producer or the brand owner who has had the product produced under contract.

Subject to judging results, these entries are eligible for medal awards, or a trophy, provided they meet entry requirements.

The contract producer must be recorded as the 'Contract Manufacturer' in the entry process. Please note that exhibitors who have had the awarded products made under contract by a third-party manufacturer are not eligible for Champion Producer Trophies.

The exhibitor's name and the product name as recorded in the entry process, will be published in the Results Catalogue and other announcements. The Contract Producer or Brand Owner will not be published as in previous years.

Food safety

All Entries must comply with the requirements of the Australian Food Standard Code for both product and packaging. For information on the Australian Food Standard Code go to: www.foodstandards.gov.au.

Producers must be accredited and supply a Food Safety Quality Assurance certification or registration number on their entry application. Certification or registration may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)
- Safe Quality Food (SQF)
- ISO 22000
- Certification of Food Premises

Each state has different classifications for food businesses, and you will need to determine your classification to obtain the proper license or registration. For further information regarding compliance and certification in your local area, please refer to the FSANZ or Australian Institute of Food Safety websites.

Products requiring preparation

The below classes will be heated or cooked for consumption or tasting:

- SMA007 – Bacon
- MEA001-008 – All Meat Classes
- APP001 – APP002
- CHE001 – Haloumi
- SMA001 – Frankfurters
- BGS002 – Savoury Pie, Pastie, Sausage Roll or Quiche (if required)

Entry eligibility

Entries must be 100% produced in Australia and natural produce must be 100% Australian grown. Entries are required to be commercially available for retail in the precise composition and in the same packaging, including labels, in which it is submitted for judging.

A single product available in multiple packing formats or sizes, can only be entered in one size. Entries packaged especially for the competition that are not ordinarily available in packaged form will not be accepted.

Exhibitors may be required to verify commercial availability by providing the details of at least one stockist or outlet.

All entries must contain at least 50% of ingredients (by weight), grown and processed in Australia.

All individual samples must have a Use By or Best Before date. Any container or pack missing this information will be discarded.

Products must be clearly labelled with any allergen information, as per food regulations.

Exhibitors must provide their Food Safety Quality Assurance Certification Number.

Entrants are responsible for all transportation fees and for ensuring the prompt and safe delivery of their entries.

Exhibitors are responsible for selecting the correct classes, providing accurate information and abiding by the rules and published deadlines.

No product class transfers shall be made without instruction by the Exhibitor.

Exhibitors are responsible for entering the correct product class and should check their entry

Acknowledgement email carefully to ensure all details are correct. Organisers will not transfer products between classes unless discussed with the Exhibitor.

How to enter

There are three simple steps to enter the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards:

1. Read through the competition Entry Booklet (this document) and the categories you can enter product into.
2. Complete the online entry process at www.melbourneroyal.com.au/food.
3. Upon receiving confirmation of your entries and product delivery instructions, submit your exhibits to Australian Food Awards for judging.

How we use your products

In addition to samples being used for judging, they are used to verify that products entered are commercially available in retail and comply with labelling and other regulatory requirements.

Samples are also used for promotional purposes including at VIP and media tastings, and in displays of trophy and medal-winning product.

Exhibit stock remaining after the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards judging has been completed will remain the property of Melbourne Royal and may be donated to food charities.

What our trophy winners say

We at Long Paddock enter the awards to see how we would stand next to our colleague cheesemakers. Winning a trophy is a great validation and endorsement of what we work towards. It has brought great pride to our staff, cheesemakers and stockists. As a business we are very grateful for the awards and the feedback we receive from them.

Gaetan Chapon, Long Paddock Cheese
Champion Cheese

I enter the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards because they set the standard in our industry. As a small artisan producer, having our butter evaluated by respected judges is an opportunity to measure ourselves against the highest level of quality in Australia.

Winning a Trophy is a milestone representing the passion, sacrifice and relentless pursuit of excellence behind Del Boccia. The Trophy has transformed the way people approach the product being a real catalyst for growth.

It has strengthened our identity and our mission. The recognition confirms that staying loyal to our process – slower, more traditional, and completely focused on flavour – is the right path. It has allowed us to position Del Boccia as a premium, standout butter in the market, and has given us even more motivation to push boundaries and continue raising the bar.

Alberto Borghi, Del Boccia
Champion Australian Small Dairy Producer

We enter the awards to receive recognition for the years of hard work we have put in to make Drunken Sailor Canning Co. what it is today. It means a great deal to have industry experts acknowledge that we produce an outstanding product. Winning the trophy has significantly enhanced our reputation and built greater trust within the industry. We gain motivation to keep striving further, knowing that we are on the right path.

Justin Arnoux, Drunken Sailor Jams
Champion Australian Large Preserves Producer

We enter the Melbourne Royal Awards because they are a genuine benchmark for quality and craftsmanship. Winning a trophy is a real point of pride for our team. It is recognition from an organisation we respect and trust, and it means the work being done day in and day out is being seen and valued.

It gives customers confidence in what they are buying and reinforces our position in the market. Internally, it motivates the team and supports a strong culture of pride, training, and consistency.

The standards expected at the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards are closely aligned with how we already operate as a business. Quality, consistency, and pride in craftsmanship are core to what we do, so being recognised alongside peers who share those values feels like a natural fit.

Jacqueline Bouchier, Peter Bouchier
Best Ham

New in 2026

In 2026, the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards welcomes a number of refinements to the program.

Introduction of Bread & Baked Goods and Olive Oil Categories

Melbourne Royal is proud to announce the re-introduction of the Bread & Baked Goods and Olive Oil categories to the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards.

Reflecting evolving market trends and developed in close consultation with leading industry experts, this distinguished category will comprise three Bread, three Baked Good and two Olive Oil classes. These classes will culminate in the presentation of the esteemed Champion Bread, Champion Baked Good and Champion Olive Oil trophies.

The new categories offer an exceptional opportunity for the Australian Baking and Olive Oil industry to present its finest products to a panel of highly respected judges, each recognised for their expertise and contribution to the field. All entries must be 100% Australian.

Melbourne Royal is delighted to celebrate and elevate excellence in Australian baking and olive oil production through these exciting new categories.

New Champion Chilli Preserve Trophy in Preserves Category

To recognise the exponential growth in chilli-based products in Australia, the Awards have introduced a new Champion Chilli Preserve Trophy, splitting SAV005 – Chilli into three classes:

- CHI001 – Chilli Sauce
- CHI002 – Chilli Oil
- CHI003 – Other Chilli Preserve

New Apprentice Butcher Category

The category is open to all apprentices in Australia, currently undertaking a Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher) apprenticeship and working in a retail butcher.

The category offers a unique opportunity for apprentices to benchmark their products and gain invaluable feedback from expert judges in a blind-judging environment judged with a trophy awarded to the best apprentice exhibit in each class, as well as the Excellence in Apprentice Butchery Trophy.

The available classes to enter are:

- APP001 – Apprentice Gourmet Sausages
- APP002 – Apprentice Gourmet Burgers

Apprentices must be within their apprenticeship contract term at the time of close of deliveries, Friday 8 August.

The winner of the Excellence in Apprentice Butchery Trophy will receive a \$1,000 bursary to assist with the costs of their apprenticeship and training.

Champion Australian Independent Cheesemaker Award

Celebrating the artistry, dedication, and exceptional craftsmanship of Australia's independent cheesemakers, this award is presented to the maker of the Champion Cheese, or the highest-scoring independent cheese produced by an eligible cheesemaking company.

To qualify, producers must be an independent cheesemaking company with less than 20% foreign ownership and an annual turnover of \$1,000,000 or less.

Events

Trophy Announcement

Melbourne Royal invites you to celebrate excellence in the Australian food industry on Wednesday 30 September 2026 with a Trophy Presentation at Melbourne Showgrounds. Please save the date - more details to be announced closer to the time.

Trophies and *eligibility*

Best In Class Medals

Best in Class medals will be awarded to the highest scoring exhibit in each class. The highest scoring gold medal winning exhibit from each class will progress to the relevant Trophy taste off as listed below.

Champion Trophies

Trophy	Class
Champion Butter	BTR001
Champion Cheese	CHE001-007
Champion Cream	CRM001
Champion Yoghurt	YOG001-002
Champion Milk	MLK001-003
Champion Ice Cream	ICE001-003
Champion Savoury Preserve	SAV001-006
Champion Chilli Preserve	CHI001-003
Champion Sweet Preserve	SWE001-005
Champion Smallgoods	SMA001-007
Champion Branded Meat	MEA001-006
Champion Value Add Meat	VAM001-002
Champion Olive Oil	OOL001-002
Champion Bread	BRD001-003
Champion Baked Good	BGS001-003
Best Apprentice Gourmet Sausage	APP001
Best Apprentice Gourmet Burger	APP002

Major Trophies

Champion Australian Small Producer Trophies

Awarded to the Small Producer from each category (Dairy, Preserves, Smallgoods, Meat) with the highest total score calculated from the entrants top three (3) scoring entries, at least one of which must have been awarded a gold medal. entrants will not be able to count entries produced under contract towards their score for this trophy. For details on Small or Large exhibitor classification, please see page 14.

Champion Australian Large Producer Trophies

Awarded to the Large Producer from each category (Dairy, Preserves, Smallgoods, Meat) with the highest average score calculated from the entrants top three (3) scoring entries, at least one of which must have been awarded a gold medal. entrants will not be able to count entries produced under contract towards their score for this trophy. For details on Small or Large exhibitor classification, please see page 14.

Champion Victorian Producer Trophies

Awarded to the Victorian Producer from each category (Dairy, Preserves, Smallgoods, Meat) with the highest average score calculated from the entrants top two (2) scoring entries, at least one of which must have been awarded a gold medal. entrants will not be able to count entries produced under contract towards their score for this trophy.

Champion Victorian Bakery Trophy

Awarded to the Bakery from the Bread & Baked Goods category with the highest average score calculated from the entrants top three (3) scoring entries, at least one of which must have been awarded a gold medal. Entrants will not be able to count entries produced under contract towards their score for this trophy.

Champion Australian Olive Oil Producer Trophy

Awarded to the Producer from the Olive Oil category with the highest average score calculated from the entrants top three (3) scoring entries, at least one of which must have been awarded a gold medal. Entrants will not be able to count entries produced under contract towards their score for this trophy.

Champion Australian Bakery Trophy

Awarded to the Producer from the Bread & Baked Goods category with the highest average score calculated from the entrants top three (3) scoring entries, at least one of which must have been awarded a gold medal. Entrants will not be able to count entries produced under contract towards their score for this trophy.

Champion Australian Independent Cheesemaker

Awarded to the maker responsible for the production of the highest scoring cheese made by an independent cheesemaker.

Eligibility: Must be “independent” cheesemaking company with less than 20% foreign-ownership and a turnover of \$1,000,000 or less

Excellence in Apprentice Butchery Trophy

Awarded to the apprentice butcher from the apprentice category with the highest average score calculated from the entrants top two (2) scoring entries, at least one of which must have been awarded a gold medal. Entrants will not be able to count entries produced under contract towards their score for this trophy.

The winner of the Excellence in Apprentice Butchery Trophy will receive a \$1,000 bursary to assist with the costs of their apprenticeship and training.

Exhibit requirements

Following are the minimum quantities required to be submitted for judging – remembering that an exhibit may only be entered if it is commercially available to the public in the precise composition and in the same packaging, including labels, in which it is sent for judging. All exhibits need to comply with the relevant Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Code. Exhibits entered not meeting these criteria will not be judged.

In addition to samples being used for judging, they are used to verify that products entered are commercially available and comply with labelling and other regulatory requirements. Samples are also used for promotional purposes including at VIP and media tastings, and in displays of trophy and medal-winning product. Exhibit stock remaining after Australian Food Awards judging has been completed will remain the property of Melbourne Royal.

Class	Minimum quantity required for judging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTR001 – Butter 	3 x 250gm butter packs or equivalent total
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHE001 – Fresh Cheese 	3 x 250gm commercial packs. Exhibit must be a total minimum weight of 750 g and complete cheeses. If sold commercially in smaller sizes, include more than 1 whole cheese
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHE002 – Mould Surface or Washed rind • CHE003 – Blue Cheese 	Exhibit must be a total minimum weight of 750 g and a complete cheese. If sold commercially in smaller sizes, include more than 1 whole cheese
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHE004 – Cheddar • CHE005 – Semi-Hard or Eye Cheese • CHE006 – Hard Cheese • CHE007 – Non-Cow Dairy Cheese, All Styles 	Any Size: single wheels or large blocks which meet the total minimum 1kg are acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YOG001 – Yoghurt – Unflavoured • YOG002 – Yoghurt – Flavoured 	4 packs x 300ml each. Retail packs to a total of 1200g (or 1200ml) or more, must be supplied when the pack size is less than 250gm (or 250ml)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRM001 - Cream 	3 x 250gm packs or equivalent total
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MLK001 – Cow’s Milk, Unflavoured • MLK002 – Cow’s Milk, Flavoured • MLK003 – Non-Cow Fresh Milk 	3 x 1 litre bottle or pack. If sold commercially in smaller sizes, retail packs to a minimum total of 3 litres must be supplied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICE001 – Ice Cream • ICE002 – Single Serve Ice Cream • ICE003 – Gelato 	Minimum four 4 x 250gm tubs, or 9 ice-creams on sticks, sandwiches, or other individual portions. If the commercial size is 500 ml or 1 litre, 2 packs must be supplied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAV001 – Savoury Chutney, Relishes or Jam • SAV002 – Mustard • SAV003 – Vinegar or Dressing • SAV004 – Savoury Sauce or Paste • SAV005 – Pickled, Fermented or Preserved Fruit or Vegetables • SAV006 – Other Savoury Preserves • SWE001 – Jam, Conserve or Marmalade • SWE002 – Fruit Paste, Curd, Jelly or Butter • SWE003 – Sweet Dressing or Sauce • SWE004 – Syrup or Cordial • SWE005 – Other Sweet Preserves • CHI001 – Chilli Sauce • CHI002 – Chilli Oil • CHI003 – Other Chilli 	3 x 200g packs, or equivalent total. One (1) commercially branded pack and two (2) unbranded packs with Best Before date and Melbourne Royal issued competition labels.

EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS

Class	Minimum quantity required for judging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA001 – Cooked Meat • SMA002 – Cured Meat • SMA004 – Jerky/Biltong • SMA006 – Salami 	2 x samples with a total combined minimum weight of 750g
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA003 – Ham 	Traditional, Semi Boneless, and Boneless require one whole piece, not cut or sliced. Manufactured or sliced require two (2) x samples with a total combined minimum weight of 750g
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA005 – Pates and Terrines 	4 x 200g samples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA007 – Bacon 	3 packs x 4 rashers per pack (middle bacon cut), vacuum sealed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEA001 – Branded Beef • MEA002 – Branded Wagyu • MEA006 – Branded Other Meat 	1 x vacuum sealed striploin (as per HAM2140) www.ausmeat.com.au/cutcodes/2140.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEA003 – Branded Lamb 	2 x vacuum sealed whole 8 rib racks, frenched with cap on (as per HAM4756) www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/blocks/marketing-beef-and-lamb/msa_sheepcuts_poster_lowres.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEA004 – Branded Pork 	1 x vacuum sealed boneless pork loin from the 4-14 rib, skin on (as per HAM4089) www.virtualweberbullet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/pork.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEA005 – Branded Poultry 	2 x vacuum sealed breasts, skin on, bone out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAM001 – Gourmet Sausages • APP001 – Gourmet Sausages 	3 packs x 4 sausages per pack, vacuum sealed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAM002 – Gourmet Burgers • APP002 – Gourmet Burgers 	3 packs x 4 burgers per pack, vacuum sealed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OOL001 – Extra Virgin Olive Oil • OOL002 – Flavoured Olive Oil 	2 x 250ml each or equivalent volume
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRD001 – Bread • BRD002 – Traditional Bread • BRD003 – Specialty and Dietary Bread 	All breads excluding rolls: 2 samples Rolls: 2 x 6 samples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGS001 – Biscuits 	2 x 250 gram packs or equivalent volume
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGS002 – Savoury Pie, Pastie, Sausage Roll or Quiche • BGS003 – Viennoiserie and Choux 	4 x samples

In addition to samples being used for judging, they are used to verify that products entered are commercially available and comply with labelling and other regulatory requirements. Samples are also used for promotional purposes including at VIP and media tastings, and in displays of trophy and medal-winning product. Exhibit stock remaining after Australian Food Awards judging has been completed will remain the property of Melbourne Royal.

Melbourne Royal will not be liable for any other costs or loss incurred by the Exhibitor due to COVID-19 or pandemic related event cancellation such as costs associated with the delivery, collection and return shipping of any exhibitor product entered in the Australian Food Awards.

Entry fee and *payment*

Entry fees

Category/ Class	Exhibitor Size	Entry fee (A\$ inc. GST)
Dairy	Small	\$95
	Large	\$210
Preserves	Small	\$95
	Large	\$210
Smallgoods	Small	\$95
	Large	\$210
Beef	Small	\$460
	Large	\$460
Lamb	Small	\$210
	Large	\$210
Pork	Small	\$210
	Large	\$210
Poultry	Small	\$150
	Large	\$150
Other Meat	Small	\$150
	Large	\$150
Value Add Meat	Small	\$95
	Large	\$210
Olive Oil	Small	\$95
	Large	\$210
Bread & Baked Goods	Small	\$95
	Large	\$210
Apprentice	\$20	

Small exhibitor:

Annual turnover of \$1,000,000 or less

Large exhibitor:

Annual turnover of \$1,000,001 or more

Closing date

The online entry facility at www.melbourneroyal.com.au/food closes Friday 26 June 2026 for all class except Olive Oil (Friday 17 July). Entries received after this time will be processed at the discretion of Melbourne Royal and attract an AUD\$15 per entry late fee.

Payment

Entries and full payment must be received by Melbourne Royal no later than Friday 26 June 2026. Entries received after the closing date will not be guaranteed admission to the competition.

Entries will not be accepted until the entry fee is received in full. Visa, MasterCard, Australian cheques and money orders are all accepted, Amex is not. Please make Australian cheques and money orders payable to The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Ltd. Online entries will not be validated until payment is received. Entry fees must be paid in Australian dollars, including any bank fees, and are non-refundable.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

Please enter the exhibitor name in the reference field and make payment to:

Company: RASV Ltd

Company Address: Epsom Road, Ascot Vale VIC 3032

Australia Bank Account: 03-769-4755

Swift code: NATAAU3303M

Beneficiary Bank: National Australia Bank Limited
Beneficiary Bank Address: Level 28,
500 Bourke St, Melbourne VIC 3000, Australia

Sections and classes of entry

Dairy

All Dairy must be 100% Australian. All Dairy classes are for product made from cow's milk only, with the exception of classes specified as "Other – Non Cow".

All sample packs must display a Use By Date or Best Before Date and, where appropriate, a batch & dispatch number. Any samples entered without a Use By Date or Best before Date displayed will be withdrawn.

Please note that the use of the aroma additive 2,4 – Dithiapentane is not permitted.

Plant based milk products are ineligible.

Butter

BTR001 – Butter or Butter Blend

This class is for dairy products made from cow's milk only. Product, flavour and blend are to be named and stated on the application for entry.

Cheese

CHE001 – Fresh Cheese

Fresh Unripened Cheese (e.g. Cottage, Farm Style, Ricotta, Paneer, Cream Cheese, Neufchatel, Quark, Labneh, Feta – plain, Fresh other).

Fresh Unripened Cheese – Flavoured (e.g. Flavoured Cottage, Flavoured Farm Style, Flavoured Ricotta, Flavoured Paneer, Cream Cheese/Neufchatel or Quark, Flavoured Labneh, Feta – marinated, Other – marinated, Flavoured Fresh – other). Flavoured fresh unripened cheeses – marinated or infused with additional flavours, condiments, or blended with fruit, seeds or nuts. All ingredients to be stated on the application for entry.

Fresh Stretched Unripened Cheese (e.g. Bocconcini, Mozzarella, Buffalo Mozzarella, Burrata, Fior di Latte, Haloumi, Quesillo, Oaxaca, Fresh Stretched – other).

CHE002 – Mould Surface or Washed Rind

White Mould Surface (e.g. Camembert, Brie, Triple Cream, Caprice, etc.). Must be a whole cheese; any size.

Mixed Rind or Washed Rind soft cheese. May contain adjunct cultures as well as white mould. Exhibitor must specify type and flavour on the Application for Entry. Must be a whole cheese.

CHE003 – Blue Cheese

Blue Mould Cheese (e.g. Gorgonzola style, Roquefort style, Stilton style, Danablu style, Cabrales style, Wax coated, Non wax coated, Other). Blue mould development may be internal and/or external. Includes rindless cheese finished with a wax coating, herbs or leaves. Exhibitor must specify type on the Application for Entry.

Surface Mould Blue Veined Cheese (e.g. Blue Brie, Triple Cream Blue, Blue Vein Surface Mould – Other).. Exhibitor must specify type on the Application for Entry. Must be a whole cheese.

CHE004 – Cheddar

Cheddar, Mild to Sharp and Semi Mature May include club cheese and flavoured cheddar style cheeses. Exhibitor to specify maturity and/or flavour on entry.

Cheddar, Matured or Vintage Exhibitor to specify maturity on entry.

Traditional Waxed Cheddar Traditional cheddar styles, uncut and coated in paraffin or wax or paracoat prior to or early in curing.

Natural Rinded Cheddar Traditional natural cow's milk cheddar styles, unflavored, and cured to form a natural rind.

Cloth Bound Cheddar Natural, unflavored, cow's milk cheddared Cheese, cloth wrapped.

CHE005 – Semi Hard or Eye Cheese

Semi-hard Cheese (e.g. Cheshire, Colby, Edam, Fontina, Gloucestershire, Gouda, Greek Style (Kasseri), Havarti, Leicester, Mimolette, Monterey Jack, Provolone, Red Leicester, Scamorza, other Semi-hard). No processed or club cheese.

Flavoured Semi-hard Cheese (e.g. Smoked, Spiced, Herbed, Pepper, Chilli, Truffle, Other).

Eye Cheese (e.g. Appenzeller, Emmental, Gloucester, Gruyere, Jarlsberg, Raclette, Swiss, Swiss Bergkäse or Mountain Cheese, Tilsit, Tomme, Eye Cheese – other).

CHE006 – Hard Cheese

Hard Cheese (e.g. Parmesan, Pecorino, Grana Padano, Romano, Aged Gouda, Hard Cheese – Other)

Flavoured Hard Cheese (e.g. Smoked, Spiced, Herbed, Pepper, Chilli, Truffle, Other). Natural hard cheese with a firm to dense texture. Infused or coated with natural flavouring.

Smear Ripened or Washed Rind Hard Cheese
Natural, flavoured or unflavored cow's milk cheeses.

CHE007 – Other Cheese (Non-Cow)

Non-cow Dairy Cheese (e.g. Sheep, Goat, Buffalo, Camel, Other). Any type of cheese made from animal milks other than cow's milk.

Cream

CRM001 – Cream

Exhibitor to specify type (eg, fresh cream, sour cream, dollop cream etc) and fat content.

Yogurt

YOG001 – Yogurt, Unflavoured

Yoghurt – Unflavoured (e.g. Natural, Greek/Greek Style, Set, Stirred). Entry can be full or low fat, fat content to be declared on entry

YOG002 – Yogurt, Flavoured

Yoghurt – Flavoured (e.g. Natural Flavoured, Drinking; Honey, Real Fruit, Vanilla, Other natural flavour). Entry can be full or low fat, fat content to be declared on entry.

Milk

MLK001 – Cows Milk, Unflavoured

This class is for fresh cow's milk. Must be pasteurised as per food regulations. May be homogenised, non-homogenised, lactose free or cultured, the type of milk to be specified on entry. May be full fat, low or reduced fat,

MLK002 – Cows Milk, Flavoured

This class is for flavoured fresh cow's milk only. Must be pasteurised as per food regulations. May be homogenised, non-homogenised, lactose free or cultured, the type of milk to be specified on entry. May be full fat, low or reduced fat.

MLK003 – Non-Cow Fresh Milk

Non-cow Milk (e.g. Sheep, Goat, Buffalo, Camel, Other). Any type of milk made from animals other than cows.

Ice Cream

ICE001 – Ice Cream

All Dairy used must be 100% Australian. Product, flavour and ingredients are to be named and stated on the application for entry.

ICE002 – Single Serve Ice Cream

Product, flavour and ingredients are to be named and stated on the application for entry.

Single Serve Ice Cream (Stick, cone, cup, sandwich, other).

ICE003 – Gelato

Product, flavour and ingredients are to be named and stated on the application for entry.

Please Note: All Dairy Gold medal winners at the Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards are automatically eligible for the Australian Grand Dairy Awards

Preserves

Classes are available for sweet and savoury preserves and condiments based on fruit, vegetables, herbs or spices.

Savoury Preserves include liquid condiments, vinegar, salsas, pesto, pastes and sauces served cold or at room temperature.

Chilli may be a characterising ingredient or a minor added flavouring. Products in which chilli is a dominant flavour must be entered into CHI001-CHI003. Products which have other characterising ingredients with only a hint of chilli may be entered into the other preserve classes.

Sweet Preserves includes dessert sauces such as chocolate, brandy or caramel flavour.

Savoury Preserves

SAV001 – Savoury Chutney, Relishes or Jam

Any fruit or vegetable; Additional flavourings to be specified; Chutney, Relish, Savoury Jam – excludes chilli-based product.

SAV002 – Mustard

Any mustard; Additional flavouring to be specified

SAV003 – Vinegar or Dressing

Naturally fermented, flavoured or macerated, caramelisation through reduction, fermentation or ageing; Wine or cider base; Additional flavouring to be specified

SAV004 – Savoury Sauce or Paste

Any fruit or vegetable; Additional flavourings to be specified, excluding chilli based products

SAV005 – Pickled, Fermented or Preserved Fruit or Vegetables

Any fruit or vegetable; Additional flavourings to be specified; Method and medium of preservation must be included in the product description for example 'Pickled in vinegar, brine or oil

SAV006 – Other Savoury Preserves

Any other savoury preserve that is not eligible to enter into SAV001 – SAV005.

Chilli

CHI001 – Chilli Sauce

CHI002 – Chilli Oil

CHI003 – Other Chilli

For Chilli's not eligible in CHI001 and CHI002 E.g, Jam, Dressing or Pastes. Additional flavourings to be specified.

Sweet Preserves

SWE001 – Jam, Conserve or Marmalade

Any fruit or vegetable, flavour/s to specified

SWE002 – Fruit Paste, Curd, Jelly or Butter

Any fruit, flavour/s to specified; Includes Lemon curd, Lemon Butter, Lime Curd

SWE003 – Sweet Dressing or Sauce

Any fruit or vegetable, flavour/s to specified

SWE004 – Syrup or Cordial

Any fruit, flavour/s to specified; Fruit or flower infused in a sugar syrup

SWE005 – Other Sweet Preserves

Any other sweet preserve that is not eligible to enter into SWE001 – SWE004.

Smallgoods

SMA001 – Cooked Meat

Whole piece, includes Mortadella, Pastrami, Corned Beef, Roast Beef, Roast Pork, Chicken Breast, Frankfurters.

SMA002 – Cured Meat

Dried or cured meats, includes Prosciutto, Pancetta, Coppa, Basturma, Bresaola etc.

SMA003 – Ham

Includes Traditional, Manufactured, Semi Boneless, Boneless, Sliced

SMA004 – Jerky/Biltong

Traditional Jerky or Biltong; meat that has been salted, spiced and then dried. Smoked or not smoked

SMA005 – Pates & Terrines

Pates and Terrines. Flavour, ingredients and type of meat used to be specified.

SMA006 – Salami

Whole piece; Smoked or Non-smoked

SMA007 – Bacon

Meat

All entries must be 100% Australian farmed, grown, manufactured and produced Beef, Lamb, Pork, Poultry or Other Meat.

MEA001 – Branded Beef

This class is for meat from non-Wagyu breeds.

- **Grain Fed Beef:** Grain fed Exhibits must be from cattle that have been placed in a feedlot accredited by the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme. Exhibitors must specify the number of days of grain on the entry form
- **Grass Fed Beef:** Grass fed Exhibits must be from cattle that have been grazed on natural pasture and have not been placed on a feedlot.

MEA002 – Branded Wagyu

This class is for Wagyu pure & cross breeds. Exhibitors must nominate the Wagyu breed (pure or cross breed) and the marbling score for their entry.

- **Grain Fed Wagyu:** Grain fed Exhibits must be from cattle that have been placed in a feedlot accredited by the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme. Exhibitors must specify the number of days of grain on the entry form
- **Grass Fed Wagyu:** Grass fed Exhibits must be from cattle that have been grazed on natural pasture and have not been placed in a feedlot.

MEA003 – Branded Lamb

MEA004 – Branded Pork

Natural cuts of pork

MEA005 – Branded Poultry

Natural cuts of poultry, includes chicken, duck, turkey or quail.

MEA006 – Branded Other Meat

This class is for other natural cuts of branded meat, including goat, venison and veal.

VAM001 – Gourmet Sausages

Exhibitors to specific flavour ingredients and type of meat.

VAM002 – Gourmet Burgers

Must be flavoured. Exhibitors to specific flavour ingredients and type of meat.

Apprentice Value-Add Meat

Only open to all apprentices in Australia, currently undertaking a Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher) apprenticeship and working in a retail butcher.

Digital eCertificates will be provided for entries that receive a medal score.

The winner of the Excellence in Apprentice Butchery Trophy will receive a \$1,000 bursary to assist with the costs of their apprenticeship and training.

APP001 – Gourmet Sausages

Exhibitors to specific flavour ingredients and type of meat.

APP002 – Gourmet Burgers

Must be flavoured. Exhibitors to specific flavour ingredients and type of meat.

Olive Oil

All entries must be produced from olives grown and harvested in Australia.

Laboratory report

A laboratory report must be submitted along with the entry form to confirm the free fatty acid content, the peroxide value and polyphenols content of each exhibit. The free fatty acid content must not exceed 0.8% and the peroxide value must not exceed 20 meqO₂/kg oil.

OOL001 – Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Single variety or blend; No additional flavourings; type needs to be specified as one of the below:

- **Delicate:** Polyphenol level: <120ppm (mg/kg).
The overall combined level of bitterness and pungency must be the least prevalent characteristic of the oil, with little bitterness or pungency.
- **Medium:** Polyphenol level: 120 - 220ppm (mg/kg).
The overall combined level of bitterness and pungency must be moderate but not high.
- **Robust:** Polyphenol level: > 220ppm (mg/kg)>
The overall combined level of bitterness and pungency must be high.

OOL002 – Flavoured Olive Oil

Infused or agrumato; Flavouring to be specified.

Product definitions

- **Agrumato oils:** Flavoured olive oils made by pressing fresh whole fruits, herbs, or chilli peppers together with the olives in the press.
- **Infused oils:** Flavoured olive oils made by infusing the olive oil with various flavouring agents.

Bread & Baked Goods

BRD001 – Sourdough Bread

Loaf or roll produced using non-commercially available sourdough starter, cultured by wild yeasts.

- **Rye:** Loaf or roll produced with a minimum 30% rye flour by weight
- **Spelt:** Loaf or roll produced with a minimum 30% spelt flour by weight
- **Seed and Grain:** Loaf or roll produced with a minimum 30% seed or grain by weight to flour

BRD002 – Traditional Bread

Loaf or roll produced using commercially available yeast.

- **Rye:** Loaf or roll produced with a minimum 30% rye flour by weight
- **Spelt:** Loaf or roll produced with a minimum 30% spelt flour by weight
- **Seed and Grain:** Loaf or roll produced with a minimum 30% seed or grain by weight to flour
- **Wholemeal:** Loaf or roll produced with at a minimum 30% wholemeal flour

BRD003 – Dietary and Specialty Bread

- **Dietary Bread:** loaf or roll; Plain or Flavoured; Special Dietary can include, but not limited to, gluten free, vegan, sugar free, dairy free.
- **Specialty Bread:** Any bread loaf, roll, bagel, naan bread, wraps that is not eligible to be entered into BRD001 and BRD002; Product description to be specified.

BGS001 – Biscuits

Individual or multi-pack. Flavours and inclusions to be specified.

BGS002 – Savoury Pie, Pastie, Sausage Roll or Quiche

Baked and ready to heat. Individual or family size. Exhibitor to provide reheating instructions if required

BGS003 – Viennoiserie and Choux

Baked and ready to eat. Entrant must provide description of product e.g Croissant, Profiterole, Brioche.

Provide reheating instructions if required.

Judging

Judging of the 2026 Australian Food Awards will take place at Melbourne Showgrounds, Ascot Vale, Victoria, Monday 3 August – Tuesday 11 August. Judging is closed to exhibitors, trade, and the public.

Entries will be allocated a tasting order number, separate from the catalogue (exhibit) number, to ensure the anonymity of the exhibit and to retain the integrity of the judging process. Additionally, exhibits will be judged 'blind'. Exhibits are judged according to Class (style) and are critically and quantitatively evaluated for their commercial excellence, quality attributes and trueness to type. Exhibits are not judged or ranked against each other but are assessed on their own merits.

Attribute scores for each exhibit will be awarded, checked, and entered by the judging panel.

Classes will be judged for bronze, silver and gold medals. The process for determining the trophy winner of each category requires an additional level of scrutiny. The gold medal products from each category will be individually and independently reassessed and ranked using the borda count method – only gold medal-awarded exhibits are eligible for trophies.

Awards may be withheld or restricted in any Class where exhibits are considered unworthy or if insufficient entries are available. The Competition Manager shall have the power to reallocate, dismiss or disqualify as being ineligible for judging, any exhibit that, in their opinion, does not comply with the regulations in every respect, and such reallocation, dismissal or disqualification shall be accepted as final.

The above instructions do not in any way limit or restrict any of the powers, discretions, rights, and duties conferred upon the judges by the regulations or Melbourne Royal's powers under the regulations.

2026 Judging panel

Each year the Australian Food Awards competition management select a panel of food industry experts to assemble in Melbourne to assess the entries. Judges are chosen on the basis of their industry knowledge and expertise and allocated to a panel for each product class so that products are assessed by a group of judges.

Scoring and *medals*

Dairy

Criteria

Exhibits will be scored out of twenty (20) points and assessed against the following criteria:

Judging Attributes

Maximum total 20

All Dairy classes other than Ice Cream and Gelato

Attribute	Points
Flavour & Aroma	10
Body & Texture	6
Presentation	4
Total	20

Ice Cream and Gelato

Attribute	Points
Flavour	10
Body & Texture	6
Condition	3
Melting	1
Total	20

Medals

Medal	Point Range	Description
Gold	18-20	A Gold Medal Exhibit is an outstanding Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and outstanding technical merit.
Silver	17-17.9	A Silver Medal Exhibit is an excellent Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and a high level of technical merit.
Bronze	16-16.9	A Bronze Medal Exhibit is a quality Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and the absence of major faults.

Preserves

Criteria

Exhibits will be scored out of one hundred (100) points and assessed against the following criteria:

Judging Attributes

Maximum total 100

Attribute	Points
Colour	20
Flavour	20
Aroma	20
Texture & Body	20
True to description	10
Finish of product	10
Total	100

Medals

Medal	Point Range	Description
Gold	90-100	A Gold Medal Exhibit is an outstanding Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and outstanding technical merit.
Silver	82-89	A Silver Medal Exhibit is an excellent Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and a high level of technical merit.
Bronze	74-81	A Bronze Medal Exhibit is a quality Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and the absence of major faults.

Smallgoods

Criteria

Exhibits will be scored out of one hundred (100) points and assessed against the following criteria:

Judging Attributes

Maximum total 100

All classes except SMA003 – Ham

Attribute	Points
Appearance	20
Aroma	10
Flavour	50
Texture & Body	20
Total	100

SMA003 – Ham

Attribute	Points
Appearance	15
Aroma	15
Flavour	60
Texture & Body	10
Total	100

Medals

Medal	Point Range	Description
Gold	90–100	A Gold Medal Exhibit is an outstanding Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and outstanding technical merit.
Silver	82–89	A Silver Medal Exhibit is an excellent Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and a high level of technical merit.
Bronze	74–81	A Bronze Medal Exhibit is a quality Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and the absence of major faults.

Meat

Criteria

Exhibits will be scored out of one hundred (100) points and assessed against the following criteria:

Judging Attributes

Maximum total 100

MEA001 – MEA006

Attribute	Points
Appearance/Texture (raw)	10
Appearance (Cooked)	10
Aroma	10
Flavour	30
Tenderness	20
Juiciness	20
Total	100

VAM001 – VAM002

Attribute	Points
Appearance	10
Aroma	10
Flavour	40
Tenderness	20
Juiciness	20
Total	100

Medals

Medal	Point Range	Description
Gold	90–100	A Gold Medal Exhibit is an outstanding Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and outstanding technical merit.
Silver	82–89	A Silver Medal Exhibit is an excellent Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and a high level of technical merit.
Bronze	74–81	A Bronze Medal Exhibit is a quality Exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and the absence of major faults.

Apprentice Value-Add Meat

Criteria

Exhibits will be scored out of one hundred (100) points and assessed against the following criteria:

Judging Attributes

Maximum total 100

APP001 – APP002

Attribute	Points
Appearance	10
Aroma	10
Flavour	40
Tenderness	20
Juiciness	20
Total	100

Medals

Medal	Point Range	Description
Gold	90–100	A Gold Medal Exhibit is an outstanding exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and outstanding technical merit.
Silver	82–89	A Silver Medal Exhibit is an excellent exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and a high level of technical merit.
Bronze	74–81	A Bronze Medal Exhibit is a quality exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and the absence of major faults.

Olive Oil

Criteria

Exhibits will be scored out of one hundred (100) points and assessed against the following criteria:

Judging Attributes

Maximum total 100

APP001 – APP002

Attribute	Points
Aroma	35
Flavour	45
Balance	20
Total	100

Bread & Baked Goods

Criteria

Exhibits will be scored out of one hundred (100) points and assessed against the following criteria:

Judging Attributes

Maximum total 100

BGS001

Attribute	Points
Aroma	35
Flavour	45
Balance	20
Total	100

BGS002

Attribute	Points
Appearance	20
Flavour	40
Texture	20
Finish/Fillings	20
Total	100

BGS003

Attribute	Points
Appearance	30
Aroma	10
Texture	30
Flavour	30
Total	100

BGS004

Attribute	Points
Appearance	20
Flavour	40
Texture	20
Finish/Fillings	20
Total	100

Medals

Medal	Point Range	Description
Gold	90-100	A Gold Medal Exhibit is an outstanding exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and outstanding technical merit.
Silver	82-89	A Silver Medal Exhibit is an excellent exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and a high level of technical merit.
Bronze	74-81	A Bronze Medal Exhibit is a quality exhibit that displays the correct balance of taste, aroma and appearance appropriate for the style, and the absence of major faults.

Submissions

Submitting your entry

Once payment has been received and your entries have been verified as correctly entered and accepted, you will receive, by email from food@melbourneroyal.com.au, an exhibitor entry confirmation containing your labels in PDF format and instructions on how to submit your entries.

Labelling of exhibits

In addition to bearing commercial labels, all exhibits must bear Australian Food Awards- issued labels. These competition labels will be included in the exhibitor entry confirmation email in PDF format (as an attachment) that will be sent once your entries have been validated and payment received in full.

Exhibitors are required to print the labels in the precise format they are sent, preserving size, font, etc., and securely attach them to each container (bottle, box, can, pouch, etc.) submitted for entry. Labels can either be printed on A4 paper, cut out and affixed with clear packing tape, or alternatively printed (using a Laser Printer) on Avery L7162 adhesive labels (99.1 x 34mm x 16).

The competition label must not obscure or cover the commercial label and should either be run up the side of the package between the front and back commercial labels, or affixed beneath or above the back label, or can be tied to the neck of a jar, tub or bottle with string or cable tie.

Delivery of exhibits

Receipting of Australian Food Awards 2026 will take place at Melbourne Showgrounds for the categories outlined below:

Preserves and Olive Oil

Delivery: Tuesday 21 July – Friday 31 July
9:00am – 4:30pm
Australian Food Awards
Building 13, Melbourne Showgrounds
Gate 5 Langs Road
Ascot Vale VIC 3032

Dairy, Meat and Smallgoods

Delivery: Monday 27 July – Friday 31 July
9:00am – 4:30pm
Australian Food Awards
Building 13, Melbourne Showgrounds
Gate 5 Langs Road
Ascot Vale VIC 3032

Bread & Baked Goods

Delivery: Friday 7 August
6:00am – 10:30am
Australian Food Awards
Building 5, Melbourne Showgrounds
Gate 5, Langs Road
Ascot Vale VIC 3032

Melbourne Royal will take receipt of your exhibits in these hours only and accepted following inspection for damage or contamination. It is therefore important to co-ordinate the dispatch of your entries to ensure their arrival during this window.

Please clearly label the outside of your samples to ensure your delivery can be easily identified. Exhibitors will be advised prior to the commencement of judging if exhibits have not been received.

Under no circumstances will the event organisers or any of their officers or employees or partners be responsible for the late, missed or non-delivery of any exhibit(s). Melbourne Royal (the Australian Food Awards) will not be responsible for any costs associated with the return of exhibits, or for lost or misplaced exhibits that were not clearly labelled upon receiving.

All food products are to be delivered via a suitable and appropriate Food Transport Vehicle. Food articles that require temperature control must be noted in the entry form and delivered in a vehicle that can maintain temperature at 5°C or below for fresh products or in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications.

Addressing deliveries (all categories except Bread & Baked Goods)

Outer cartons must be clearly labelled to ensure your delivery can be easily identified. Please address deliveries to:

Australian Food Awards
C/- Harrison Straw
Melbourne Showgrounds
Gate 5 via Langs Road,
Ground floor foyer,
Building 13
Ascot Vale VIC 3032
Australia
P: 03 9281 7444

Addressing (Bread & Baked Goods)

Delivery: Friday 7 August
6:00am – 10:30am
Australian Food Awards
Building 5, Melbourne Showgrounds
Gate 5, Langs Road
Ascot Vale VIC 3032

Results

Trophy winners will be announced at the Trophy Presentation on Wednesday 30 September 2026. Further details to be advised. Full results will be emailed to exhibitors and made available online after the conclusion of the Presentation.

Connect with us

Stay up to date with the latest developments and engage with Melbourne Royal and the Australian Food Awards on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn:

- Instagram @melbourne.royal
- Facebook @melbourne.royal
- LinkedIn @melbourne royal®

Contacts

Competition

For all general and competition enquiries relating to the 2026 Australian Food Awards please contact:

Oskar Long
Manager, Food & Beverage Awards
Melbourne Royal
T +61 (0)3 9281 7444
E food@melbournroyal.com.au

Media

For all media enquiries relating to the 2026 Australian Food Awards please contact:

Communications Manager
Melbourne Royal
T +61 (0)3 9281 7444
E communications@melbournroyal.com.au

Sponsorship opportunities

For all enquiries relating to sponsorship please contact:

Sponsorship Team
Melbourne Royal
T +61 (0)3 9281 7444
E food@melbournroyal.com.au

Special Regulations & Conditions of Entry

2026 Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards

1. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply unless the context requires otherwise:

Advisory Group means those persons appointed by the Event Organiser to provide industry guidance on the Event.

Agent includes any authorised person, representation, association or corporation engaged by or on behalf of the Exhibitor and any person acting or purporting to act on the Exhibitor's behalf (including any person who is an invitee of the Exhibitor and regardless of whether the person is remunerated or not). An agent cannot be named on any awards or certificates.

Apprentice means a person working in a retail butcher currently undertaking a Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher).

Award means a prize awarded by the Judges to an Exhibit in a class.

Business Day means a weekday on which banks in Melbourne are open for business

Closing Date means the date and time set out in the Entry Booklet after which entries for the Event will not be accepted by the Event Organiser.

Commercially Available means available for retail in the precise composition and in the same packaging, including labels, in which it is submitted for judging. Entries of packages, especially for the competition, that are not ordinarily available in packaged form will not be accepted. Exhibitors may be required to verify commercial availability by providing the details of at least one stockist or outlet.

Entry Form means an entry form (or online equivalent) supplied by the Event Organiser for an Event.

Event means the 2026 Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards (MRAFA). Event also includes the period of bump-in and bump-out for the Event and the period of the Event competition.

Event Organiser means The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited trading as Melbourne Royal (ACN 006 728 785).

Exhibit means the item entered into the Event by an Exhibitor.

Exhibitor means the owner of the Exhibit, and if the owner is less than 18 years of age, the parent or guardian of the owner who signs the Entry Form.

Head Judge means a person appointed by the Event Organiser to oversee the judging of the Event.

Independent Cheesemaker means a person who oversees the production of cheese and works at an independent cheesemaking company with less than 20% foreign ownership and an annual turnover of \$1,000,000 or less.

Judge means a person appointed by the Event Organiser to judge the Event.

Judging Panel means a panel consisting of not less than two judges.

Premises means the Melbourne Showgrounds, Epsom Road, Ascot Value, Victoria, Australia.

Product means a dairy product, smallgoods, or sweet or savoury preserve that is Commercially Available.

Regulations means the Event Organiser's regulations and conditions of entry for the MRAFA Competition, including without limitation the relevant Entry Form, all provisions set out in the Entry Booklet, the description of sections and classes of entry, and description of awards.

Steward means a person occupying or acting in the position of steward.

1.2 Interpretation

Headings are for convenience only and do not affect interpretation. The following rules apply unless the context requires otherwise:

- i. the singular includes the plural and conversely;
- ii. a gender includes all genders;
- iii. if a word or phrase is defined, its other grammatical forms have a corresponding meaning;
- iv. a reference to a person, corporation, trust, partnership, unincorporated body or other entity includes any of them;
- v. a reference to a regulation, rule or condition of entry is to the regulation, rule or condition of entry as amended, varied, supplemented, novated or replaced, except to the extent prohibited by these regulations;

- vi. a reference to a right or obligation of any two or more persons confers that right, or imposes that obligation, as the case may be, jointly and severally.

2. ENTRIES

- 2.1 Only commercial producers, manufacturers and brand owners with a registered business name and an ABN or equivalent are eligible to enter Exhibitors must provide the number on their entry. Entries must be made by using the online entry facility, must be submitted by the Closing Date, and be accompanied by the applicable entry fee for each Exhibit.
- 2.2 Exhibitors must state on the online entry form:
 - i. the class;
 - ii. the product's commercial brand name;
 - iii. particulars of the Exhibit;
 - iv. ingredients; and
 - v. any other information required.
- 2.3 Product Name and Packaging
Entries containing any language, text, logo, image, design or representation in either the product name or packaging that is offensive, obscene, indecent or likely to offend or be misconstrued may be refused or disqualified, or subject to publication and presentation restrictions, at the Event Organiser's absolute discretion.
- 2.4 Number of Entries
An Exhibit can only be entered once into the Event. Multiple entries can be entered into a single class by an Exhibitor, provided each Exhibit is a different product.
- 2.5 The Exhibitor must certify that each Exhibit entered is representative of a Commercially Available product in Australia or which is produced for export overseas. All Exhibits must be 100% Australian produced or manufactured. Please refer to the category requirements for specific information.
- 2.6 Warranty
The Exhibitor represents and warrants to the Event Organiser that the information set out in the Entry Form is complete, accurate and not misleading in any way.
- 2.7 Entries subject to rules and regulations
Upon submission of an Entry Form in accordance with regulations 2.1 and 2.2, the Exhibitor agrees to be bound by the rules and relations set out in the Entry Booklet.
- 2.8 Alteration and inspection of Entry Forms
An Entry Form may not be altered or inspected after the Closing Date.

2.9 Entry Fee

The Entry Fee becomes the property of the Event Organiser on receipt and, without limitation, the fee paid in respect of Exhibits withdrawn or which do not satisfy the conditions of eligibility will not be refunded.

If the Event and/or the award program is cancelled due to government-imposed health regulations or restrictions due to a pandemic, the Event Organiser will provide a full refund on entry fees. The Event Organiser will not be liable for any other costs or loss incurred as a result of the cancellation or any costs associated with the delivery, collection and return shipping of any Exhibitor product entered into the Event.

The Event Organiser will set an annual schedule for the entry requirements and the entry fees which will apply to each MRAFA program.

2.10 Calculation of Entry Fee

Entry fees will be set on the basis of annual turnover.

Entry fees will be set for small and large size businesses based on the turnover range:

Large producer/ manufacturer or brand owner is defined as being a business entity with greater than \$1M annual turnover.

Small size producer/ manufacturer or brand owner is defined as being a business entity with turnover less than \$1M annual turnover.

2.11 Satisfactory proof of annual turnover

Exhibitors may be requested to produce their most recent audited annual financial statement as proof of their annual turnover.

The audited annual financial statement should be forwarded to the MRAFA Event Manager: food@melbournroyal.com.au if requested.

All statements submitted will be treated confidentially and destroyed directly following the announcement of the Awards.

2.12 The Exhibitor must have authority to enter the Exhibit(s) on behalf of the Producer, Brand Owner, and the Third-Party Manufacturer where applicable.

3 CONDUCT OF EXHIBITORS

3.1 Unacceptable Behaviour

The Event Organiser is committed to providing a fair and equitable Premises and Event for all participants, free from all forms of harassment, bullying, and violence. The following behaviours will not be tolerated and may result in the Exhibitor/persons being removed from the competition Premises and/

or disqualified from the competition and formal procedures initiated:

- a) Violence;
- b) Bullying;
- c) Harassment;
- d) Sexual harassment;
- e) Unlawful discrimination;
- f) Victimization.

Persons breaching unacceptable standards of behaviour may be banned from entering future Events and/or the Premises.

3.2 Compliance with Rules and Regulations

Where an Exhibit and/or Exhibitor and/or Agent fail to comply with any of the Rules and Regulations, the Event Organiser may impose one or more of the following penalties on the Exhibit or Exhibitor or both of them:

- a) Disqualification;
- b) Suspension;
- c) A fine;
- d) Order the Exhibit or the Exhibitor, or any Agents be removed from the Premises; or
- e) Any other penalty.

Without limiting the above, the Event Organiser may forfeit an award, and upon forfeiture, the Exhibitor must immediately return any evidence of that award to the Event Organiser upon receiving notification of the forfeiture.

3.3 Compliance with Directions

The Exhibitor must fully comply with the directions and requests of the Event Organiser. Without limitation, directions and requests of the Event Organiser may apply to the entry of the Exhibit, the Exhibitor, the conditions of the Event, the conduct of the Exhibitor, the conduct of the Event, the decision of the Judge, or the award of prizes.

3.4 General Conditions of Entry

All Exhibitors and/or persons entering the Premises are required to adhere to the Conditions of Entry whilst on site which can be found at <https://www.melbourneshowgrounds.com/terms-and-privacy/conditions-of-entry/>
The Premises is a completely smoke-free zone. Exhibitors and/or persons wanting to smoke must exit the Premises to do so.

4 AGENTS

Any person purporting to act as an agent of an Exhibitor is deemed to have given the Event Organiser a warranty of their authority, and the Event Organiser is not required to make any enquiry as to that authority.

5 EXHIBITS

5.1 Exhibit Requirements

Exhibits must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the Entry Booklet and these Regulations.

A Brand Owner who has had a product produced under contract by another manufacturer/ producer may enter an Exhibit and will be required to record the contract manufacturer in the application process.

5.2 Exhibits become the property of Event Organiser.

Unless otherwise stated, all Exhibits become the property of the Event Organiser and may be used for promotional purposes. The Event Organiser accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to any Exhibit whether occurring before, during or after the Event.

Exhibit stock remaining after the Event judging has been completed will remain the property of the Event Organiser.

5.3 Statements

The Exhibitors must not make a statement regarding an Exhibit which in the opinion of the Event Organiser is fraudulent, false, erroneous, misleading or deceptive or likely to mislead or deceive.

5.4 Tampering

An Exhibit must not be or have been tampered with or otherwise improperly dealt with.

5.5 Labelling of Exhibits

All Exhibits must bear labels. Exhibitors will be emailed official labels to be used for judging which show:

- i. the year of the competition;
- ii. class name;
- iii. class number;
- iv. Exhibit number; and
- v. The allocated barcode.

The Event Organiser will email all Exhibitors the required labels, along with the entry confirmation letter.

5.6 Inspection of Exhibits

The Event Organiser may nominate a person or persons to inspect and/ or analyse any Exhibit to verify that it meets the relevant conditions of the class in which it was entered, and that the product held by the Exhibitor represents the Exhibit provided for judging. The Exhibitor must permit the nominated person to take samples of the product if requested. Any inspection and/ or analysis is to be conducted within four weeks of the announcement of the Awards.

The nominated person or persons appointed to carry out the inspection and/or analysis must make a written report to the Event Organiser.

Should the inspection and/or analysis prove that the Exhibit for that class is incorrect or non-compliant; all awards for that Exhibit shall be forfeited.

5.7 Access to Exhibits

Except for the Head Stewards or their nominee/s, no person will be permitted access to the Exhibits until after the judging is completed.

5.8 Compliance of Exhibits

An Exhibitor may only enter Exhibits which:

- i. comply in all respects with the criteria established by the Event Organiser for entry in the relevant class;
- ii. are the bona fide property of the Exhibitor; and
- iii. represent the product listed on the entry form.

5.9 Compliance with Australian Food Standards

All Exhibits must comply with the requirements of the Australian Food Standards Codes for both product and packaging.

*<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code>

5.10 Australian Customs Clearance

It is each Exhibitor's responsibility to obtain Australian customs clearance of their Exhibit(s) into Australia, including payment of all costs.

5.11 Additional Products

Exhibitors may be required to provide additional product at their own cost for judging the any of the Champion product trophies. Award winning producers may also be requested to provide at their own cost product to feature on the menu for the Event Presentation Dinner.

6 POWERS OF EVENT ORGANISER IN RESPECT OF CONTROL OF THE EVENT

6.1 Power to refuse to accept an Entry Form, Exhibit or Exhibitor

The Event Organiser may, in its absolute discretion, refuse to accept an Entry Form, an Exhibit and/or an Exhibitor without providing a reason.

6.2 Power to cancel or alter

The Event Organiser may, without assigning a reason:

- a. alter the closing Date for the Event;
- b. remove any Exhibit from the Premises or cause any Exhibit to be removed from the Premises;

- c. amend an Exhibit to, without limitation, substitute an alternate class or sub-class for the class or sub-class in which the Exhibit was entered;
- d. alter the conditions of the Event, including but not exclusive to the judging conditions and process followed;
- e. rule that an Exhibit or Exhibitor may not compete or is ineligible to compete;
- f. alter the date, time or place on or at which the event is scheduled to take place;
- g. alter the Judge scheduled to judge the event; or
- h. cancel the Event.

The rights set out above apply notwithstanding:

- a. the Event Organiser's acceptance of an entry;
- b. Inclusion of an entry in the event catalogue;
- c. the issuance of an Exhibit ticket; or
- d. the issuance of any other document.

7 JUDGING

7.1 How judging is conducted

All entries will be blindly tasted and judged against a specified set of criteria.

7.2 Interference by Exhibitor

An Exhibitor, their invitees or agents, must not consult, influence or interfere with a Judge or attempt to consult, influence or interfere with a Judge or do any other thing which may interfere with the Judge's freedom of choice or judgement.

7.3 Disqualification of Exhibit or Exhibitor

The Head Judge or judging panel, in consultation with the Event Organiser Competition Manager, has the power to disqualify or dismiss, as being ineligible for judging, any Exhibit which, in its opinion, fails to comply with the Regulations. Such disqualification will be final.

7.4 Forfeiture of Award if disqualified

Where an Exhibit or an Exhibitor is disqualified and their prize is forfeited, the Event Organiser may (but is not obliged to) promote the Exhibit next in order to that prize, whether the Exhibit was awarded a prize or a reserve number. Exhibits next in order, whether awarded a prize or reserve number, may also be promoted to the prize next in order.

8 DECISIONS

All decisions of the Event Organiser and the judges as to the application of the Regulations, or any decisions made under the Regulations, will be final and binding on all Exhibitors. The Event Organiser may in its absolute discretion elect to review and alter any decision made by it or its Judges under the Regulations at any time. This includes without limitation, the conferring of awards or decisions of the Judges. The Event Organiser may in its absolute discretion take actions or steps it considers appropriate in respect of the Regulations including without limitation, revoking awards and suspending or prohibiting persons from future entry in any Event.

9 RESULTS AND FEEDBACK

9.1 Feedback

The Judges' feedback to an Exhibitor about their Exhibits will remain commercial-in-confidence and will not be shared with any other Exhibitors.

9.2 Results

Trophy winners will be announced at the MRAFA Presentation event with class results being made available after this announcement.

10 PROTESTS

10.1 Protests may only be made by Exhibitors with Exhibits in the class to which a protest relates, and only if the results of that class directly impact their own entry.

10.2 No protest will be entertained unless made in writing strictly within seven (7) calendar days of the announcement of the awards. Such protest must set out the grounds of the protest and be addressed to the Event Organiser, Australian Food Awards, and either:

- i. mailed to or lodged with The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited t/as Melbourne Royal, Melbourne Showgrounds, Langs Road, Ascot Vale, Victoria, Australia 3032, addressed to the Event Manager; or
- ii. via email food@melbourneroyal.com.au; or
- iii. faxed to +61 3 9281 7561

Such protest must be accompanied with a deposit of AUD\$200.00 (incl. GST) which may be forfeited to the Event Organiser if in the opinion of the Event Organiser the protest is unfounded, frivolous or vexatious. The Event Organiser will determine in their absolute discretion the process to be adopted in considering any protest and any sanction or other result of any successful protest.

11 AWARDS

11.1 The Event Organiser will determine the medal ranges for Gold, Silver and Bronze medals and judging criteria for the Event on an annual basis.

11.2 The Event Organiser will review and determine the trophies to be awarded and the eligibility requirements annually.

11.3 E-Certificates will be awarded to Gold, Silver and Bronze medal winning Exhibits. The certificates will be awarded to the Company/ Exhibitor named and product specified on the online Entry Form.

11.4 Champion Trophy and Medal winners in the MRAFA are required to supply, at their own expense, product to be used at the Awards Presentation. Trophies will be presented at the official MRAFA Presentation Event.

12 TROPHIES

12.1 The Event Organiser will set an annual schedule for trophies and the progression pathways that will apply to each MRAFA program.

12.2 To be eligible for a Trophy, an Exhibit or an Exhibitor must comply with the eligibility requirements set by the Event Organiser.

12.3 Exhibitor based trophies will be determined on the basis of a ranking or scoring system to be determined by the Event Organiser.

12.4 An Exhibit must be awarded a gold medal to be eligible for a Champion Trophy.

12.5 The Best-in-Class medals will be awarded to the highest scoring product in the product categories. Where there are multiple classes feeding up to one class, such as cheese, and where there are split panels across product categories, a taste off of the highest scoring gold medal products will be tasted using the Borda count method. This will determine the best in class or trophy winners.

12.6 Should two or more Exhibitors or Exhibits be tied for a trophy, the Head Judge, in consultation with the Event Organiser Competition Manager will have the final power to arbitrate the Awards where a consensus decision cannot be reached by the panel.

12.7 If a Gold Medal is not awarded in an eligible trophy class or classes, the trophy will not be awarded.

12.8 To be eligible for a Champion Product Trophy (i.e. Champion Butter, Champion Savoury Preserve) the Exhibit must be 100% manufactured in Australia with at least 50% of the product's ingredients grown or produced in Australia. Natural or unprocessed produce must be 100% Australian grown.

12.9 Where a medal or trophy is awarded to an Exhibit which has been produced under contract, the medal or trophy will acknowledge the Exhibitor as listed by the Exhibitor on the online Entry Form. This may include one or both parties at their discretion.

12.10 Exhibits that have been made under contract are not eligible for the Champion Small or Large Producer Awards, Champion Australian Butcher and Champion Australian Independent Cheesemaker Awards.

12.11 Trophy and medal winners will be required to provide additional award-winning product for the MRAFA Presentation Dinner at their own cost.

13 ADVERTISING AND OWNERSHIP OF AWARDS

13.1 Licence to use Trademark

Exhibitors awarded a Champion Trophy or Certificate must seek approval from the Event Organiser to use the MRAFA graphic trademark. Such approval and its terms are to be at the absolute discretion of the Event Organiser.

13.2 Exhibitor Advertising

No Exhibitor shall advertise or allow to be advertised by any means whatsoever, whether by broadcasting, pictorially, or in writing, the fact that any Exhibit has won any award unless such advertisement shows clearly:

- i. the year of award;
- ii. description of the Class;
- iii. the name under which the Exhibit was entered; and
- iv. in the case of on-packaging advertising, the Exhibit/s must carry the same name and relevant information under which the Exhibit was entered.

Medal and trophy artwork shall only be featured on a product that has been entered into the Event and awarded a medal and/or trophy. The medal artwork shall show the year of the award. Medal style guidelines will be emailed with results and must be adhered to.

13.3 Ownership of Awards

The Exhibitor acknowledges that all awards are owned by the Event Organiser and that the Exhibitor may not promote the winning of any award or any association with an award or the Event, other than in accordance with the Regulations. The Event Organiser may take any action considered necessary in respect of any advertising that does not comply with the Regulations, including without limitation, revoking any award.

14 Consent of Images

The Exhibitor agrees to the Event Organiser publishing or reproducing information and images associated with them or with their Exhibits at any time, in any medium, for any purpose and in perpetuity, without notification, acknowledgement or compensation. Copyright in the images will be wholly owned by the Event Organiser.

15 Workplace Surveillance

The Event Organiser operates surveillance cameras which are located in and around the facilities requiring security monitoring for the safety and security of individuals and property. Please note that security camera monitoring is continuous and ongoing and it is deemed that a person, by entering the Premises, consents to this photographing, filming or taping. The Event Organiser strictly complies with the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*.

16 Information Handling

The Event Organiser is bound by the national Privacy Principles of the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* and other applicable laws governing privacy. Please refer to the privacy policy which can be found at: <https://www.melbourneroyal.com.au/privacy/>

17 Indemnity

The Exhibitor indemnifies, holds harmless and keeps indemnified the Event Organiser and its officers, employees, contractors, officials and agents against all actions, claims, demands, losses, damages, costs, expenses and liabilities including without limitation, consequential loss and loss of profits (whether arising under statute, from negligence, personal injury, death, property damage or infringement of third party rights) in connection with the Exhibit, Exhibitor or the relevant Event.

18 Governing Law

These Regulations are governed by the laws of the State of Victoria, Australia. In the event of a dispute, each party irrevocably submits to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the State of Victoria and waives any right to claim that those courts are an inconvenient forum.



**MELBOURNE
ROYAL**
AUSTRALIAN
FOOD AWARDS

2026 Entry Booklet

Melbourne Royal® is a registered trademark of

The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited

ABN 66 006 728 785

ACN 006 728 785

Melbourne Showgrounds

Epsom Road, Ascot Vale VIC 3032

www.melbourneroyal.com.au

Office Bearers

as at 9/8/2023

Patron

Her Excellency Professor the Honourable
Margaret Gardner AC – Governor of Victoria

Board of Directors

MJ (Matthew) Coleman (President)

CGV (Catherine) Ainsworth

D (Darrin) Grimsey

PJB (Jason) Ronald OAM

P (Peter) Hertan

R (Robert) Millar

T (Tina) Savona

K (Kate) O'Sullivan

Chief Executive Officer

Brad Jenkins

Company Secretary

Darryl Ferris

Competition Managers

Harrison Straw

Kirrily Waldhorn

Oskar Long

Sophia Legge

Stephanie Bobik

Taylor Blayney

Email: food@melbourneroyal.com.au





MELBOURNE
ROYAL



For more than 175 years, Melbourne Royal has been inspiring excellence in agriculture and food production.

In this pursuit of excellence, Melbourne Royal, on behalf of the Australian food and beverage industries, conducts a range of world-class food programs and events recognising premium products in food and beverage.

These awards include:

- Melbourne Royal Wine Awards
- Melbourne Royal Australian Food Awards
- Melbourne Royal Australian International Beer Awards
- Melbourne Royal Australian International Spirits Awards

Contact Us


+61 3 9281 7444

info@melbourneroyal.com.au

melbourneroyal.com.au

 @Melbourne.Royal

 @Melbourne.Royal

 Melbourne Royal