

### ***3B-108: Exploring barriers to fresh and total pork consumption among children: parental perspectives***

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**Project Participants - Elizabeth Neale, Landmark Nutrition, and Karen Charlton, University of Wollongong**

**Aims and Objectives -** Factors influencing children's consumption of total and fresh pork were examined through focus groups with parents of children aged 2 - 16 years

#### **Key Outcomes**

- Parents reported that pork was an acceptable meat to include in children's meals and there was an overall perception that fresh pork was a healthy meat, because of its leanness. In comparison, processed pork such as ham and bacon was seen to be less healthy than fresh pork, although it was viewed as being more convenient
- Family and cultural traditions had a large influence on the type and amount of pork participants served their children. Fresh pork tended to be eaten commonly on special occasions, for example roast pork at Christmas.
- Parents felt they lacked confidence when cooking fresh pork, and many believed that pork needed to be cooked until well-done to avoid food poisoning. A strong desire for easy and fast recipes using fresh pork was discussed. Participants also felt they lacked knowledge of the nutrition contribution of pork compared to other meats.
- Fresh pork was seen to be less visible in shopping outlets than beef or chicken, and was also seen to be advertised less frequently than these meats. This lack of visibility was seen as having a negative impact on the likelihood that parents would serve fresh pork to their children.
- Animal welfare and country of origin concerns were discussed by a small number of participants but did not appear to have a large impact on purchasing patterns. A key finding was that participants did not check the country of origin when buying pork, and assumed that all pork (both fresh and processed) was from Australia.
- Popular children's programs involving pigs could be a barrier to fresh pork consumption in younger children.
- The texture of fresh pork was also discussed as a barrier for younger children, with the inclusion of fresh pork in mixed dishes such as stir-fries discussed as a way of overcoming this barrier and encouraging consumption. Participants also found that involving their children in preparing dishes containing fresh pork (for example dumplings) improved their acceptance of these meals.
- When participants were provided examples of value-added fresh pork products, participants viewed them as being convenient meal options; however they were sceptical of pre-marinated products, and viewed them to be too expensive to regularly serve them to their families.