

MEAT

The worldwide magazine on meat trade and technology

international

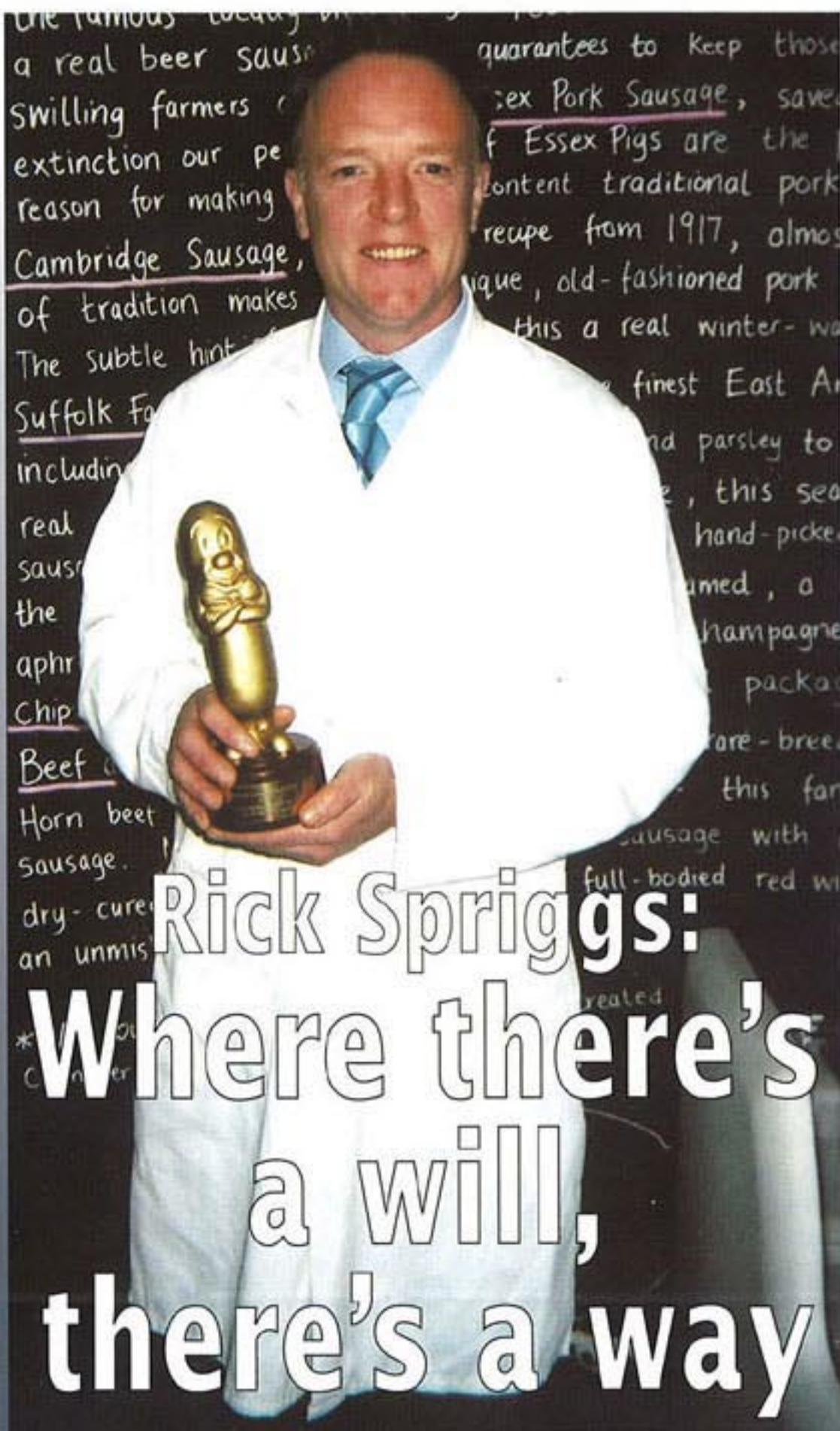
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Actively improving the safety of meat



Australia's and New Zealand's meat industries



Rick Spriggs: Where there's a will, there's a way

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Can-do attitude adds value

Aria Farm, located in Hamilton, New Zealand, is a family owned, innovative company that has perfected a method of adding value to manufacturing beef and lamb cuts into high value consumer ready premium strips.

By Brian Harvey

The concept has been so successful that the company is now exploring a variety of potential export markets and has recently completed a licensing agreement with Aria Foods in Britain, marketed through the Sainsbury's chain of retail stores and in the food service sector for school and health-



The product meets the needs of the consumer, whether it is for a household meal, snacks while watching the All Blacks rugby team on TV, finger food at business meetings or on the barbecue during summer.



Aria Farm has developed an opportunity of turning low-priced, manufacturing grade cuts of beef, lamb and chicken into nutritious, easy to prepare, healthy meals for today's fast living families. Photos: Aria Farm.

care catering.

Aria Farm has developed the idea of meat strips by incorporating a unique process called cold set binding. This technology uses a seaweed extract to bind the meat into strips. The products are gluten- and dairy-free and contain no preservatives or colouring. This gives con-

sumers the confidence to eat meat knowing it is safe, healthy, natural, convenient and very quick to prepare after work.

This young, innovative company, run by Erik and Anna Arndt, typifies the "can-do attitude" that exists in New Zealand, due to its geographic isolation. They have devel-

oped an opportunity of turning low-priced, manufacturing grade cuts of beef, lamb and chicken into nutritious, easy to prepare, healthy meals for today's fast living families.

The strips have been sold in over 300 supermarkets around New Zealand for four years, proving that the range and type of product is meet-

Out of the mouths of babes

Erik and Anna were farming 526ha in the King Country and wanted to add value to the beef and lamb from traditional meat export companies, who currently tend to pay on carcase weight rather than by the weight of meat harvested from the carcase.

They went to visit the Meat Industry Research Institute of New Zealand (MIRINZ) at Ruakura, Hamilton, where they were introduced to the concept of cold binding setting of reconstituted meat into different portion sizes.

This led to some lateral thinking down on the farm about how they could increase their farm income and after some trial and error, Erik began with his "Superburger". Now this was fine for the

adult appetite but was far too large for kids to manage, so when a friend began slicing up a "Superburger" into bite size kid portions the idea of meat strips was born. Out of the mouths of babes! Erik and Anna then leased processing premises at MIRINZ and began to develop the strips concept into a marketable, innovative, healthy and safe meat product.

It has been very hard work for the Arndt's and their dedicated team but the payback is starting to happen with genuine enquiries from around the world for their beef and lamb strips. This is a classic example of a simple concept, using new technology, being developed into a successful business by adding value.

Company profile

ing the needs of the consumer, whether it is for a household meal, snacks while watching the All Blacks rugby team on TV, finger food at business meetings or on the barbecue during summer.

Developing new ideas Naturally, the mental juices flow when developing a new consumer product. Erik and Anna's next innovative idea was free-flow, frozen mince,

which can be used straight from the freezer, measured out, returned to the freezer and cooked without thawing, providing a meal in about ten minutes. This mince is very popular with the catering trade, rest homes and the freezer market. The mince is simple to use, nutritious, contains only 1.5% fat, and is versatile and convenient for many types of meals, including ethnic meals because the

meat is Halal certified in New Zealand.

The agreement with Aria Foods in the UK opens up a huge opportunity for the meat strips in Britain and Europe, where consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about the quality of the meat they eat and the drive is on to reduce salt intake and reduce obesity. What's more, the UK business has used the same tech-

nology, working with its food-service customers, to produce the 'Better Burger', a low-fat burger that meets all the criteria for healthier school meals. Finally, as the EU expands, the market potential for this unique New Zealand technology is enormous. **MI**

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