

Media Release

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COLES BECOMES FIRST MAJOR AUSSIE SUPERMARKET TO LAUNCH OWN BRAND CARBON NEUTRAL BEEF *Australian farms team up with Coles to create carbon neutral beef range*

An industry-leading beef range will hit shelves this week as Coles becomes the first major Australian supermarket to launch a certified own brand carbon neutral beef product.

Coles is today launching Coles Finest Certified Carbon Neutral Beef, which will include seven delicious and premium quality cuts of beef, from eye fillet to porterhouse steak.

The beef range, available in Victorian stores this week with a national rollout over the next 12 months, is certified carbon neutral from paddock to shelf to the Australian Government's Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard.

Over the past two years, Coles has been working with beef farmers across Victoria and New South Wales to help calculate and reduce their emissions, resulting in emissions that are 19% below the Australian national average¹.

Coles CEO Steven Cain said the launch of Coles Finest carbon neutral beef was a great example of Coles working with suppliers to achieve better sustainability outcomes.

"When we announced our Sustainability Strategy just over a year ago, we said we'd work with all our stakeholders to achieve our Together to Zero emissions ambitions and to be Australia's most sustainable supermarket," he said.

"Coles Finest Certified Carbon Neutral Beef is a testament to the hard work of our beef producers and their commitment to sustainable practices, and we're thrilled that they're taking this important step with us."

The packaging for the new beef range is fully recyclable and made from 90% recycled and plant-based sources, an Australian innovation by Coles' packaging partner Plantic.

"As part of our ongoing sustainability journey, Coles is exploring further opportunities to partner with our suppliers on sustainability initiatives, so we can ensure a better future for generations to come," Mr Cain said.

Delatite Station cattle farmers Mark and Fenella Ritchie have been supplying Coles for 10 years, and are now among the beef producers working with Coles to deliver certified carbon neutral beef.

"We are really pleased to be part of the carbon neutral beef project with Coles. We are always looking to produce the finest quality beef with a strong commitment to environmental and animal welfare values that are backed up with an evidence-based approach to our decision making," Mark said.

As part of the carbon neutral beef program, Coles works with farmers to identify ways to reduce emissions from their operations, such as using renewable energy, changing herd management practices for more efficient reproduction and to maximise growth, and use of genetic selection to improve herd health.

¹ Figure based on average emissions per kilogram of live weight produced.

Over the past two years, Coles has been working with Dr Stephen Wiedemann, Principal Research Scientist at Integrity Ag & Environment, to study innovative ways tree planting and vegetation can help reduce net carbon emissions on beef farms through carbon sequestration.

Carbon stored in trees is then included in the farm's 'carbon account' and reduces the overall emissions associated with the farm's production – a process known as carbon 'insetting,' in which the process of reducing emissions is carried out at or directly related to their source.

Coles is the first to pilot insetting as part of the Federal Government's Climate Active program, a partnership between government and Australian businesses to drive voluntary climate action.

"The Coles carbon neutral beef initiative, and the information we have gained along the way about how we can reduce carbon emissions on farms through better herd performance and tree planting, will be invaluable to farmers everywhere," Dr Wiedemann said.

Coles is also purchasing Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) from the Armoobilla Regeneration Project in south-west Queensland to cover emissions that fall outside the scope of the insetting measures, such as those involved in processing and transporting the beef to stores, ensuring that the range achieves carbon neutral status.

Coles Finest Certified Carbon Neutral Beef will carry the Climate Active stamp to help customers identify the certified beef on shelves. Climate Active certification is awarded to businesses and organisations that have credibly reached a state of achieving net zero emissions for their products, services or other initiatives.

Climate Active spokesperson Conrad Buffier said: "Congratulations to Coles on the launch of their certified carbon neutral beef product. We are proud they've made the choice to be part of the Climate Active network."

"It's great to see new carbon neutral products emerging in the market, providing more sustainable options for consumers. Reducing emissions is a shared responsibility, and it is encouraging to see Australian organisations like Coles doing their bit," he said.

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