

October 27, 2025

Beefing up carcass performance in the Ekka's Paddock to Palate Competition

Entries are now open for the 2026 RNA Paddock to Palate Competition presented by JBS Australia, with extended feed days designed to strengthen carcass performance and better meet evolving market demands.

Offering almost \$55,000 in prize money, the prestigious competition allows beef producers to benchmark their cattle using cutting-edge data collection technology, helping drive genetic improvement and commercial performance across the industry.

In 2026, the days on feed have increased for all classes - Classes 37 and 40 from 100 to 120 days, and Class 38 from 70 to 100 days.

RNA Beef Committee Chair Gary Noller said the change would help further enhance carcass quality and deliver stronger outcomes for consumers.

"The extra time on feed is a consumer-driven change – it gives the cattle more opportunity to achieve the marbling and fat cover needed to meet market specifications," Mr Noller said.

"That improved carcass quality ultimately benefits the consumer through a better end product."

The Paddock to Palate Competition is the only beef competition in Australia that produces a commercial brand - the JBS Royal 100.

Now in its 29th year, the competition continues to go from strength to strength, attracting 1,085 head of cattle in 2025, an increase of 35 per cent on 2024.

"The competition gives exhibitors the opportunity to see how their cattle perform in a commercial environment and benchmark their results against some of the best in the industry," Mr Noller said.

"The respect, reputation and integrity around the competition and the data we provide back to exhibitors is second to none.

"The data comparison allows exhibitors to validate and refine their genetic selection, helping shape the future direction of their breeding programs and strengthening their connection to the consumer."

The competition features three phases - best aggregate weight gain, held at the JBS Beef City feedlot west of Toowoomba, followed by a carcass competition and an MSA eating quality competition.

The exhibitors achieving the highest combined scores across all three phases in each class will take out top honours at the Paddock to Palate Awards and Beef Industry Dinner during Ekka Beef Week 2026.

Entries close Friday 5 December 2025. For more information and to enter please [click here](#).

Entries for the Paddock to Paddock Wagyu Challenge presented by JBS Australia will open in 2026.

Proud sponsors of the Paddock to Palate Competition: JBS Australia, Coopers Animal Health, Zoetis, Queensland Country Life, Black Box Co, Datamars Livestock, Thynne + Macartney, 3D Genetics, Complete Women's Healthcare, Australian Wagyu Association, and Thompson Longhorn.

Class 37 Export (120 days)

Prize pool:

Sponsor/Section/Class	Placing	Prize
JBS Australia Class 37 Overall Winner	1st	\$2,500 & The Sturrock Perpetual Trophy
	2nd	\$1,700
	3rd	\$1,100
	4th	\$800
	5th	\$550
Class 37A Best Weight Gain for Pen of Six Grain-Fed Steers	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 37A Highest Individual Weight Gain	1st	\$750
Class 37B JBS Australia Pen of Six Carcass Competition	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 37B JBS Australia Champion Carcass	Champ	\$750
Class 37B JBS Australia Reserve Champion Carcass	Res Champ	\$500
Class 37C Zoetis MSA Eating Quality Competition	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 37C Zoetis Highest Individual Index Score	1st	\$500

Key dates (2026):

- Delivery of animals: Monday 9 February
- Competition start day: Thursday 12 February
- Final weighing day: Friday 12 June
- Field Day at Beef City: Tuesday 16 June

- Processing of cattle: Wednesday 17 June
- Announcement of overall winners during Ekka Beef Week: Thursday 6 August

Class 38 Trade (100 days)

Prize pool:

Sponsor/Section/Class	Placing	Prize
JBS Australia Class 38 Overall Winner	1st	\$2,500 & Ken Crotty OAM Perpetual Trophy
	2nd	\$1,700
	3rd	\$1,100
	4th	\$800
	5th	\$550
Class 38A Best Weight Gain for Pen of Six Grain-Fed Steers	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 38A Highest Individual Weight Gain	1st	\$750
Class 38B Pen of Six Carcass Competition	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 38 Champion Carcass	Champ	\$750
Class 38 Reserve Champion Carcass	Res Champ	\$500
Class 38C Coopers Animal Health MSA Eating Quality Competition	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 38C Coopers Animal Health Highest Individual Index Score	1st	\$500

Key dates (2026):

- Delivery of animals: Friday 27 February
- Competition start day: Tuesday 3 March
- Final weighing day: Thursday 11 June
- Field Day at Beef City: Tuesday 16 June
- Processing of cattle: Thursday 18 June
- Announcement of overall winners at Ekka Beef Week: Thursday 6 August

Class 40 HGP Free Export (120 days)

Prize pool:

Sponsor/Section/Class	Placing	Prize
Class 40 Overall Winner	1st	\$2,500 & A Bassingthwaighe Perpetual Trophy
	2nd	\$1,700
	3rd	\$1,100
	4th	\$800
	5th	\$550
Class 40A Best Weight Gain for Pen of Six Grain-Fed Steers	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 40A Highest Individual Weight Gain	1st	\$750
Class 40B Thynne + Macartney Pen of Six Carcass Competition	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 40 Thynne + Macartney Champion Carcass	Champ	\$750
Class 40 Thynne + Macartney Reserve Champion Carcass	Res Champ	\$500
Class 40C Coopers Animal Health MSA Eating Quality Competition	1st	\$1,000
	2nd	\$700
	3rd	\$300
Class 40C Coopers Animal Health Highest Individual Index Score	1st	\$500

Key dates (2026):

- Delivery of animals: Monday 9 February
- Competition start day: Wednesday 11 February
- Final weighing day: Thursday 11 June
- Field Day at Beef City: Tuesday 16 June
- Processing of cattle: Wednesday 17 June
- Announcement of overall winners at Ekka Beef Week: Thursday 6 August

For the latest updates, follow us on social media @TheEkka



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