

5 February 2024

## **Barra and prawns are on the menu at Queensland's first ever Aquaculture Awards**

Australian seafood is in the spotlight with the launch of the RNA's inaugural Royal Queensland Awards (RQA) Aquaculture Competition.

Under the expertise of head judge and international seafood expert John Susman, aquaculture producers will be hoping to take out the title of the nation's best prawns and barramundi, in the first competition of its kind in Queensland.

Mr Susman, together with an expert judging panel, will spend two days assessing farmed barramundi and prawns as part of the RQA's newest competition.

The RNA's prestigious Royal Queensland Awards celebrates and crowns Australia's best beef, lamb, cheese, ice cream, gelato, wine, and now aquaculture annually.

Competition entries are now open for aquaculture farmers to offer up their most mouth-watering produce across the three classes of small and large barramundi and cooked tiger prawns.

The competition will culminate in a presentation of gold, silver and bronze medals at the Brisbane Showgrounds on May 17, 2024.

Mr Susman said each entry, whether it was barramundi or prawns, would undergo a rigorous assessment based on quality, flavour, and presentation.

"Our judging process, mirroring the revered wine show system, epitomises objectivity and excellence," he said.

"It has been developed collaboratively by a diverse team of experts spanning the seafood supply chain—fisheries managers, scientists, farmers, wholesalers, distributors, chefs, and retailers—it ensures a comprehensive evaluation."

"Through this show, we spotlight best-in-class producers, elevating the aquaculture industry to new heights. It will be a beacon for trade and consumers alike, guiding them to superior quality and sustainability.

"The RQ Aquaculture Awards program doesn't just celebrate excellence; it shapes the future of seafood consumption and production," he said.

Mr Susman is renowned for his marketing work with catchers and growers of seafood to build their global recognition and his innovative approaches to sustainable and responsible sourcing of seafood.



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“It has been a real focus of mine to promote environmentally conscious practices, working closely with fishermen, suppliers and chefs to ensure the availability of high-quality ingredients while preserving our precious ecosystems,” Mr Susman said.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the inaugural aquaculture awards were an exciting new event on the RQA calendar providing the opportunity to showcase a staple on almost every top restaurant menu.

“The competition aims to recognise and honour the efforts of aquaculture farmers from around Australia who are dedicated to producing high-quality seafood while maintaining a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and animal welfare,” Mr Christou said.

“This competition is the first of its kind in Queensland and is set to get bigger and better each year with the planned introduction of other farmed fish varieties including salmon, oysters, lobster, crabs and bugs in future years.

“This event complements the comprehensive suite of Royal Queensland Awards which already celebrates the country’s best beer, cheese, ice cream, gelato, beef, lamb and wine,” he said.

Entries for the RQA Aquaculture Awards close on Monday 12 February, with produce delivered to the Brisbane Showgrounds on March 4 and 5, before judging commences on Friday, March 6.

The inaugural RQA Aquaculture Award recipients will be announced at a presentation event from 1pm to 3pm on Friday, May 17, 2024 at the Ernest Baynes Dining Room, Brisbane Showgrounds.

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