

Roles in the Red Meat Industry

Primary or secondary processing labourer

This is often the entry point for people into the sector. You will participate in a range of tasks in either slaughter or boning with full training given on the job. If you have a reasonable level of physical fitness, the ability to work well in a team, are reliable, willing to learn and have transport to get to and from the plant, then this could be the starting point for your career in the sector. There are good opportunities for career progression.

Stockyard labourer

As a stockyard labourer you will be working in the stock yard, receiving animals as they arrive for transport and helping to oversee their care and wellbeing and preparation for processing. Previous experience with animals, such as cattle and lambs is preferable. This would suit someone keen to progress from farm work to a career in the red meat sector.

Boner

Boners break down a full carcass into individual portions for further processing or packaging. This requires knife sharpening and handling skills, experience trimming meat and potentially saw operation skills. You will require strong attention to detail and the ability to listen and follow directions. The industry also offers a two-year boning apprenticeship, which not only deals with the technical aspects of the job but is intended to develop a future generation of trainers and supervisors.

Slaughter person/Halal slaughter person

The slaughter person may work in processing beef, lamb, mutton, venison and goats. The slaughterer uses a knife and operates machinery to dress a slaughtered animal ready for further processing. A slaughterer needs to be suitably fit for lifting, be a good team worker, be flexible and have a strong commitment to health and safety processes. At least two years' experience in a meat production environment will usually be required but the industry also offers a two-year slaughter person apprenticeship leading to a level four qualification – with a focus on further career progression. There is strong demand in the sector for Halal slaughterers. This role requires you to be certified in Halal slaughter and to be a practicing Muslim. The industry offers specific training in Halal meat processing, leading to a formal qualification, which offers strong career progression opportunities.

Process worker – fellmongery

Work in the fellmongery section of a processing plant includes the handling and primary processing of fresh animal skins and pelts, separating wool from skin and preservation of skins. You will operate process machinery, pack products, and help with maintenance of processing equipment. On job training can be provided, leading to a formal qualification.

Livestock representative

Livestock representatives work with farmers to help them to achieve financial and volume targets. They are the direct link between the farmer and the processor. They balance livestock availability

against processing requirements and help adjust management plans in line with seasonal conditions. You will have a sound knowledge of marketplace conditions, meat processing and livestock farming lifecycle and an understanding of your company's operating model. You need good communication, negotiation and people skills to allow you to foster effective relationships with farmers, built on trust and confidence.

Shift coordinator

As shift coordinator, you will coordinate and manage teams across a range of areas of a processing plant, including stockyards, slaughter, boning and packing. You will focus on maximising productivity, yield and customer satisfaction. You will need experience in the primary industry or a produce-based operations environment, strong leadership and team management skills, good systems and computer skills and the ability to motivate people.

Production Manager

This role is an integral part of the plant management team, working with employees, livestock procurement, slaughter, cold stores, government bodies, quality assurance, compliance, plant administration and asset management. The production manager assists the plant manager in overseeing the processing of stock to company, customer and regulatory standards whilst maximising the plant's profitability and efficiency and motivating the workforce. It requires previous experience in a supervisory or management role in a meat processing environment. You will need to be highly organised, self-motivated and passionate about delivering excellence. A relevant tertiary qualification is an advantage but not essential.

Distribution Manager

As distribution manager, you will be overseeing the distribution network for product. You will need strong knowledge of and experience with export distribution, in process and systems. You will have a minimum of five to 10 years' experience in warehousing, transport and distribution to effectively design the future state distribution network and implement continuous improvement business cases. Good communication skills, the ability to manage multiple stakeholders and lead a team to achieve key operational targets and business objectives are required. A strong commitment to health and safety is essential.

Industry technical specialist

Technical advisor roles in the sector provide support and expertise to producers and others working across the industry. They will often work with industry organisations, as staff members or in a consulting capacity. Technical specialist roles extend across a range of areas from veterinary, food science, nutritional or production and welfare advice, to policy and technology transfer, and co-ordinating industry events, workshops and seminars.

Environmental specialist

Industry environmental specialists provide strategic policy advice on environmental issues. This includes providing advice to industry on how to best mitigate environmental impacts, liaising with regulators, developing submissions and proposals, and developing and maintaining best practice guidance material on environmental practices.