



## Making sure the beef hasn't travelled far

by Caroline Bullock

IN a week when a BBC investigation found that a high percentage of beef served in the food service sector passed off as local or British is, in fact, foreign, an independently owned training and conference centre in Farncombe is going to great lengths to ensure its own beef has travelled minimal miles.

Using the highest quality produce has been one of head chef Nick Jeffels' main priorities since he came to The Manor House more than a year ago, leading him to explore the seasonal produce available across the area and establish strong working relationships with suppliers.

Lydling Farm, supplies some of the beef used in The Manor House kitchen and is based less than three miles from the hotel.

Angus Stovold's award-winning Rosemead herd of Aberdeen Angus is one of the oldest and largest Aberdeen Angus herds in the UK, with the young stock grazing on traditional unfertilised, unsprayed water meadows and in winter housed and fed home-grown maize silage.

There is no use of hormones, GM foods or growth promoters and this natural approach combined with many years' experience of farming in the area produces some of the finest beef available. The farm is also the home of Plantation pigs which provides the pork used at The Manor House.

"We work with two butchers, Wakeling's in Godalming and Kaighin & Daughter in Hindhead, while our fruit and veg is supplied by another local business, Cheesmans in Guildford," said Jeffels.



The head chef of The Manor House Hotel in Farncombe, Nick Jeffels, with Surrey farmer Angus Stovold.

"The environmental and social reasons for using local suppliers are important but, when it comes to ingredients, the deciding factors have to be taste and quality. I think a lot of people have actually forgotten what some foods should really taste like.

"Meats like pork and gammon steak, which everyone thinks they're familiar with, are almost unrecognisable when you compare the real thing to bland supermarket offerings. The sort of quality we get from

farms like Lydling is outstanding and starting with the very best ingredients allows us to prepare food simply and deliver delicious menus."

It is this approach which rural economy experts the County Land Association are hoping will become more commonplace across the county's food service sector as part of its Just Ask campaign, putting the responsibility on the consumer to ask the origin of the food sold and also on the supplier to make sure the food

they say is local is precisely that. It is now calling for greater transparency in the labelling of beef and clarity on the origins of the food on people's plates.

The BBC probe found that DNA testing at 40 food outlets revealed 20% of samples taken from beef in south-west England labelled as local or British were really foreign.

They were tested by Identigen, a DNA analysis company, which found eight of the samples were from a type

of cattle called the humped zebu. It is not seen in this country at all but is farmed in South America and Africa and is commonly crossed with European breeds, in hot countries.

The BBC report said the caterers were taking advantage of loopholes in labelling law – also highlighted as part of the *Yorkshire Post's* Clearly British campaign.

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