



# final report

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## Knife sharpening workshops

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# **1 Milestone Report April 2008**

Report on:

- workshop presentations
- subsequent discussions with presenter and suppliers
- recommendations

## **2 Workshop presentations**

MINTRAC ran a one day Knife Sharpening workshop in Melbourne on the 26 March 2008. The workshop attracted three very large industry supplier exhibitors and a total of 50 plus delegates.

The Agenda for the workshop (Attachment one) included speakers from industry (NZ and Australia), Registered Training Organisations (NZ and Australia) and researchers who have looked at the impact of poor knife sharpening on industry as well as possible models for addressing the issue.

In many ways the most thought provoking presentation was that from New Zealand where PPCS (largest meat processing group) presented on the integrated and well resourced approach they have taken to this issue over a ten year period. This was followed by a practical demonstration of the equipment utilised and the training implemented.

The NZ equivalent of "Work Cover" has funded the roll-out of the PPCS knife sharpening program throughout the NZ meat industry including subsidising training and equipment. The backbone of this program was the need for a full time knife tutor to ensure the ongoing implementation of the training and monitoring of knife sharpness.

All the presentations were recorded and will be available to industry in the near future. The response to this workshop by delegates has been nothing short of remarkable (see attachment two) with most stressing that the workshop should be repeated on a state by state basis.

The NZ trainers also presented to the MINTRAC training conference the next day and again this was well received by the conference attendees and frequently mentioned as one of the highlights of the conference.

### **2.1 Subsequent discussions with presenter and suppliers**

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MINTRAC has entered into negotiations with both NZ presenters and Australian equipment suppliers to assess the viability of putting on a road show which will centre around a two day knife sharpening train the trainer program.

The program has been supported by a lot of research into its effectiveness but regardless of the uptake of the whole program there is much that can be incorporated into any existing knife sharpening training program.

## **2.2 Recommendations**

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In NZ the research showed that before they made their big push into knife sharpening training only 1 in 5 workers had a well sharpened knife. The knife sharpening data MINTRAC has collected in Australia (over 2000 knives tested) suggests a very similar picture and that there is plenty of room here for significant improvement in knife sharpening proficiency.

MINTRAC has a proposed project focusing on knife sharpening for 2008/9 and the concept of a national road show is an ideal vehicle to help achieve the project's outcomes of increased proficiency in training knife hands.

### 3 Attachment 1 Program and agenda



## **Aim of the workshop**

The knife sharpening workshop will give trainers an opportunity to hear how operators in NZ and Australia have tackled the issue of training staff to sharpen knives and maintain a sharp knife during production. Manufacturers and suppliers of knife sharpening equipment will also be given an opportunity to demonstrate and display their products.

In selecting speakers we have sought to find trainers with a different approach to knife sharpening training with the hope of provoking discussion about this subject and encouraging trainers to take a fresh look at what which is for most plants an ongoing issue.

## **Format of the workshop**

**The workshop will consist of two parts:**

### **Part 1 - Presentations**

Firstly there will be a number of presentations on knife sharpening training and equipment. These presentations will be given in a formal setting with access to the full range of AV equipment and the ability to give demonstrations of equipment to the workshop attendees.

The presentations from industry speakers will include the opportunity to question them on how their approach to knife sharpening training was developed, implemented, assessed and what long term impact it has had on worker competency.

Equipment suppliers will also will be given an opportunity to make presentations to the workshop attendees. These will enable them to demonstrate the equipment they retail and the benefits that their machines bring to the knife sharpening task.

### **Part 2 - Static displays and demonstrations**

In addition some equipment suppliers will have stands and equipment in the exhibitors' area. There will be break out sessions where the workshop attendees can move among the stands and watch formal and impromptu demonstrations of sharpening equipment.

## Program

- 10.00am Welcome and introduction  
**Clive Richardson - MINTRAC**
- 10.10am A trainer's perspective on the importance of knife Sharpening  
**Scott Robinson - Innoven Goulburn Ovens TAFE**
- 10.30am An employer's perspective - employee safety and the bottom line - teaching old dogs new tricks  
**Jane Barton - Gundagai Abattoirs**

### 11.00am Morning Tea

- 11.15am The NZ employer experience in adapting a new approach to knife training  
**Brian Waltham - PPCS**
- 12.15 pm Demonstration of knife sharpening - hollow grinding machine  
**Brian Waltham - PPCS and Allan Raupita - R & W Associates**

### 12.30 Lunch and demonstrations at exhibitor stands

- 1.30 pm Demonstration of knife sharpening equipment - TruHone knife sharpening system  
**Alistair and Peter Connell - Start Food-Tech Australia**
- 2.00 pm Demonstration of knife sharpening - knife setting machine  
**Allan Raupita and Mark Westcott - R & W Associates**
- 2.30 pm Knife safety kit and equipment  
**Leesa Schuh - Zen Automation Technology**

### 2.50 Afternoon tea

- 3.00 pm The science of steeling a knife and demonstration  
**Allan Raupita and Mark Westcott - R & W Associates**
- 3.30 pm NZ trainers take on changing knife sharpening habits  
**Allan Raupita and Mark Westcott - R & W Associates**
- 4.00 pm Workshop close



*MINTRAC gratefully acknowledges  
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## 4 Attachment two

Summary of comments about Knife Sharpening workshop

Conference highlights

- Not really part of conference, enjoyed knife sharpening before the actual conference
- knife sharpening day
- knife sharpening x 2
- knife sharpening workshop very useful - good to hear from the Kiwis
- knife sharpening - a very interesting workshop; would be good for meat retailers
- Displays and explanation of research into knife sharpening
- knife sharpening training opportunities
- Wednesday - knife sharpening - overall very good and worthwhile
- Knife sharpening - pre-conference workshop
- found the knife sharpening workshop interesting as it highlights an area that is often overlooked