



The southern state of Kerala tops the list for meat consumption in India, but it is not so partial to pork. DLG Farms tells ZAHRAH IMTIAZ how it plans to change this.



**ASIAN MEAT**  
MAGAZINE

## DLG Farms introduces various ways to eat pork



DLG Farms attracts customers to its weekly pork cookout in Kochi, Kerala.

Having spent much of his professional life working in IT in California, OK Sanjit returned to India in 2007 to open a commercial piggery.

"My initial plan was to stick to pig breeding. But herd development was taking time and resources were available, so why not get into chilled meat? So we started our first outlet in Thrissur in Kerala," said Mr Sanjit.

He soon found that demand was not as high as he had expected. Since it was sold chilled, the pork had to be sold within five or six days and it was not moving fast enough.

Some research found consumers in the area were not sophisticated or choosy about the cuts they bought.

"If you leave a carcass hanging, people will run to it. But they don't know what ribs are, or the difference between baby back, spare ribs or chops," said Mr Sanjit. "The customer needed to be educated first."



**The Ranch team at one of their BBQ events.**

Drawing from his time in the US, coupled with past experience as a chef, led him to open a central kitchen for ribs and chops in 2016, under the Ranch brand. Twice a year,

his family and staff would come together for roadshows, introducing new pork recipes to consumers.

Located in Kochi, Kerala's biggest city, the central kitchen also holds BBQs every evening, attracting crowds for its Texan ribs.

"We give special cuts and people know about the types of pork now. We are slowly stopping the roadshows as the awareness is now there. Now, people can buy," said Mr Sanjit.

The central kitchen also delivers most of its smoked, barbecued and locally prepared pork dishes to customers in hot bags.

### **Moving to a bigger market**

Given its success in Kochi, Mr Sanjit then decided his pork was ready to

move to a much bigger market: Bangalore, the capital of the Indian south.

"Kochi has a big base of non-resident Indians. When they come back home, they get excited about these American preparations, but the market is too small," Mr Sanjit said.

In Bangalore, he plans to start a pork specialty restaurant—a place where the whole family can come to eat. As not everyone consumes pork, the restaurant will also serve chicken menus.

DLG Farms also plans to introduce its own range of Ranch-branded ready-to-eat pork and a home delivery service for cooked pork in the Karnataka state capital.

By introducing new ways to eat pork and making it easy for consumers to access it, Mr Sanjit believes Indian pork consumption will grow.

"In the past, pork would not sold openly. When you asked people where to buy it, they would direct you to some shady alleyway. This is changing now. People are eating it more openly," he said.

### **Competing with imported pork**

Indian pork producers were late to start manufacturing processed pork, so most supplies are imported.

"Pork is still expensive in India and we are competing with imports. For hotels and institutions, import has become the only solution for a steady supply," said Mr Sanjit.

Pork ribs, for example, are imported at USD 11.30/kg, while DLG Farms can provide the same cut for USD 9.90. The only problem is meeting demand.

"If India seriously starts pork processing, it would make a huge difference," he said.

Having started out as a breeding farm, DLG Farms today has fully integrated its operations. "We did the entire integration by our second year but we did it on a small scale," said Mr Sanjit.

He now looks forward to continuing scaling, one pork rib at a time. **AM**



**BBQ and cooked Ranch pork.**