



Murtoa's Historical Industry

Wimmera Inland Freezing Works – 1911 to 1926

With the advent and development of refrigeration by James Harrison, the new trade of shipping frozen meat across the world grew. In the period from 1881 to 1914, 8 Freezer Works were established in Victoria. The Victorian Railways, sale yards, stock agents and the Freezer Work owners were all part of the export chain.

By 1910 plans and tenders were drawn up for construction of a Freezing Works in Murtoa. The first shipment leaving the plant by October 1911.

On average more than a million mutton and lamb carcasses per year were exported from Victoria in the years 1912 to 1920. However, the demand dropped after the war and the USA and Argentina supplies increased competition, Argentina exports being 1/3rd the price.

The site was sold to V J Roche, trading as Miller Machinery in 1938.

During World War II the Murtoa site was reopened for storage of frozen meat, after repairs to the rail siding and the installation of a high speed Bell compressor. In 1995 the site was sold to M Schier for use as a furniture factory which is still operating today.

The remaining engines have been restored and are on display. 'The Dunmunkle Sump Oilers' machinery shed houses Engines No1 and No2, which can be seen running during Murtoa's Big Weekend celebrations every October.

Excerpts from the publication 'The Wimmera Inland Freezing Works'.



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