

Putting the IRON in IRONMAN



Rick Walker, General Manager Sales and Marketing at ANZCO Foods talks about his IRONMAN journey and the company's partnership with Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand.

Tell us about ANZCO Foods' relationship with Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand.

At ANZCO Foods, we're more than just a beef and lamb company. We're really a nutrition and good health company, and we wanted to share that message with New Zealanders. Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand is an incredible event that brings together athletes from across a wide range of ages, backgrounds and abilities. Nutrition plays a major part in their IRONMAN journey, hence it felt like a great way to highlight beef and lamb as one of Mother Nature's nutritional powerhouses, which we carefully craft into a range of products that are then shared with pride to all New Zealanders – whether they be Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand competitors or not.

And you'll be on that start line yourself?

That's the goal! Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand on March 4 would be my tenth full distance IRONMAN race. The thing I enjoy most though, is the process to get to Taupō. Race day can throw up variables outside of your control, but the journey to reach the start line is 100% of your making. It requires a fair bit of sacrifice, discipline, and discomfort, which is what makes the final result so satisfying. For humble weekend warriors like me, it is also about the challenge of balancing training alongside your daily commitments to family and work. Nutrition is also a crucial element in that journey, ensuring you perform at your best.

So, what does your training schedule look like?

I try to stay pretty active all year round, and I have done Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand enough times to know what I need to do to achieve my personal goals, hence my training regime has definitely changed as I've got older and wiser. I tend to focus on no more than three months of formal preparation, with weekly training loads of 16-22 hours split across the three disciplines. I'm a morning person, so the key weekday sessions are done pre-work, and then the weekends are about getting in those essential long bike rides. I always try to run straight off the bike too – even if it's just for 30 minutes. It helps get used to having tired legs on the marathon.

What role does diet play in your preparation?

Unfortunately, I am not getting any younger, hence high-quality protein is crucial for my recovery and being able to front up day after day. In my mind, you can't beat beef and lamb as a source of natural protein. I am also a proud dad of two teenage daughters, so it is really important to me that they understand the value of a good diet. Once again you can't beat beef and lamb when it comes to providing essential vitamins and minerals like iron, B12 and zinc for their good health and development. But let's get real – I am a notorious sweet tooth and I enjoy a glass of wine, and one of the benefits of training for Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand is that you get to enjoy those treats guilt free.

When it's your turn to cook, what's on the menu?

I'm a pretty simple fellow, so I don't think you can beat the flavour, versatility and great value for money that ground beef and lamb provides. I like to mix the two together when we make our family famous meatballs and spaghetti recipe, and I have been known to cook up a pretty mean Chilli. I love slowcooked brisket, but I'm not brave enough to cook that at home. Luckily, we have Tristan at Smokey T's here in Christchurch who uses Ocean Beef brisket from ANZCO Foods at his restaurant – amazing!

Any tips for first-timers taking on Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand next month?

Keep moving. IRONMAN competitors tend to get hung up on hitting numbers and goals, but race day is full of surprises, hence your first priority is to not let the course beat you. By crossing the finish line you ultimately win the day, and as a first-timer that should be your number one focus.

Take the time to appreciate the volunteers. Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand couldn't happen without the great support of the local community in Taupō. Race day is all about you, but it only takes five seconds to flash a smile and say thanks as you run or cycle by. Remember, they have given up their day to make your day the best it can be.



"Training for Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Zealand, as with life, is about finding balance and being consistent. Beef and lamb from ANZCO Foods is an incredible source of natural nutrition and good health that can help everyone perform at their best."

Rick Walker

IRONMAN and
General Manager, Sales & Marketing
ANZCO Foods

**Created by nature.
Crafted with care.
Shared with pride.**

