

**And now we cross to Adrian Maguire from Hawkesbury Harvest for all the latest Farm Gate Trail news. Good morning Adrian**

Morning Simon.

**Well I know Sydney's seen some incredible weather this past week, tell me, how has it been out your way?**

Hasn't it been insane?! Last Sunday we had temperatures in the high 30's, then brief storms on Monday, followed up by Thursday's big chill.

**So what does this mean for farmers?**

Well Sunday's heat lead to a lot of stone fruit ripening up quickly which then meant farmer's had to pick it quickly and get it into the markets at Flemington. Then of course Thursday's cold temperatures reverse the maturing process of the fruit meaning that the amount of fruit being picked should balance out in the coming days.

**And what about hail? This time of year that would have to be of concern to farmers?**

Absolutely! There were some very anxious moments during the week for a few of us worried about our crop.

**I can understand hail netting becoming very handy in these instances, but you have something a little bit different in Grose Vale don't you?**

Yes we do. Unfortunately netting costs around \$100,000 a hectare, so instead a neighbour of ours has what is called a "hail cannon". Which is a very controversial piece of farm equipment around our area, because in order for it to send shock waves into the clouds to disrupt and melt the ice it creates a very loud boom?

**Well you'd certainly hope it'd work then.**

Yes of course.

**Now unfortunately last week we missed you telling us about one of the latest farm gaters. So let's go driving shall we?**

**So where about do we find this latest farm gater Adrian?**

Well today we head up the mountains to Bilpin, just 5km past the primary school, Powell's road to be more specific. Here we find a small award winning nursery run by Peta Trahar called "Town and Country Gardens".

**But we shouldn't be fooled by the name; it features both a wonderful garden and a nursery too doesn't it.**

That's right; from January 2007 the nursery will be open from 10 til 4 each Sunday and Monday until March. Then it will open in October.

Peta is well known for her unusual shrubs bulbs and perennials. She pays particular attention to both variegated foliage plants and silver which grows well in drier gardens.

And of course the nursery is in amongst her beautiful garden so visitors can see many of the plants for sae actually growing.

**Now if my memory serves me correctly, Peta Trahar runs the collectors fair at Bilpin too doesn't she?**

Yes that's correct. The next collectors fair well be held on the weekend of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of April next year. It's a great opportunity for small specialist growers to show off their work and a great source of interesting plants.

Interestingly the fair raised \$9,500 last time for the local bush fire brigade so it's certainly a worthy cause to support.

**Of course. And so what else is happening in the Hawkesbury at the moment?**

Well launched yesterday and running for this weekend only, two artists from Kurrajong: Margaret Mackisack and Virginia Wheatley are having their paintings on display at the Stans Stevens Studio in the new Hawkesbury gallery- "The Deerubbin centre.

Entitled "works in progress" and presented by the Macquarie towns art society, members of the public are invited to view works by the two ladies between 10 o'clock and 4 pm both today and tomorrow at the Deerubbin centre 300 George st Windsor.

**And that's not the only exhibition on at the moment is it?**

Absolutely Simon. If Sydney-siders are looking to travel out to Windsor for "works in progress" this weekend, I would also recommend Lucy Child's "elsewhere exhibition".

Lucy focuses a lot of her work around relief printing and linocuts which she now has on display at her fully operational printmaking studio in St Albans.

**Sounds like another great reason to head up towards the Mcdonald valley then.**

Yes it is. The exhibition is running now until the 26<sup>th</sup> of November on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 11am til 5.

**And of course more details are available on the Hawkesbury Harvest website which is**

[www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au](http://www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au)

**Now where on earth do we find David Mason this week? Last we heard he was travelling to the United States?**

Yes he's spent the last week in the US.

**David of course is our resident primary industries researcher who is currently on a world wide tour learning about how other countries are incorporating agriculture into urban living.**

Last week he spent time in New York where he came across a report released in 2002 which showed that 18% of the state's farmers sold their produce direct to the public with a third of sales being made from stalls at the farm gate whilst 50% were made through farmers markets and via mail order.

**Ok. Well Australia often follows America's lead on just about everything... Do you think we'll see similar trends here?**

Of course Simon. Farmer's markets are particularly favourable with consumers. The produce is fresh and people get to talk directly to the person who grew their food. As for Farm Gate sales- just look at the success and popularity of Hawkesbury Harvest and it's Farm Gate map.

**That sounds great. Well thanks for talking to us Adrian, that's about all for another week- except of course you and I will be seeing each other on Monday at Parliament house for the Hawkesbury showcase.**

Absolutely. As we mentioned last week, this initiative gives growers and chefs from the region a chance to "show off" some of the great flavours we have to offer.

**Well my mouth is watering already Adrian- I look forward to seeing you then.**

Thanks Simon