

FARM GATE ROUNDUP Saturday 20th October 2007

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REMINDER : Solicit Community Announcement Calls

Alan Good Morning,

Good Morning Simon, what are you doing in Adelaide?

Reply? Lead into Agri Tourism

Yes Simon they have some great agri Tourism products in South Australia and we hope over the next few years Hawkesbury Harvest can extend our offer of Agri Tourism products to your listeners and the people of Sydney and its surrounds.

How did Hawkesbury Harvest get started?

Simon, before I tell you the story let me say that you cannot create what we have created with strong Partners and good volunteer pool. Partners like ABC Sydney Radio and your programme, the Federal Government, the State Government, the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board, Local Councils, Lend Lease GPT and Westlink M7. Our journey started before the Organisation was created ?

Really how Come ?

In 1992 more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil adopted Agenda 21. Agenda 21 was concerned about the Environment and Development.

Fast Forward to 1996 and the Hawkesbury City Council, University of Western Sydney and Hawkesbury District Health Service adopted the W.H. O Healthy Cities Project. This project aimed to place health high on the agenda of decision makers.

Out of that, I recall, the Hawkesbury Food Program was established .

That right Simon. That was 1997. Alongside that program NSW Agriculture, in 1998, released a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Agriculture in the Sydney Region.

This provided the catalyst for the creation of the community based Hawkesbury Harvest organisation. In March 2000 a meeting of 12 people representing economic, social and environmental interests was convened by Hawkesbury Cuisine, a sub-committee of the Hawkesbury Food Program to consider ways to advance the role of sustainable agriculture in the Hawkesbury.

By the End of May 2000, Hawkesbury Harvest was established and your first Agri Tourism Product what developed, an A4 Farm gate Trail Map

You remember Simon, that fantastic. The journey has been long sometime tough but very rewarding.

Along with our partners we have developed 5 editions of the FGT Map. It takes in three local government areas, Hawkesbury, Baulkham Hills and Hornsby. Edition 6 will include Penrith. This project linked farmers with arts/crafts, cafes/restaurants, touring and accommodation businesses in the host landscape – a tourist destination.

What was your next Ari Tourism Product released ?

In 2002 Simon, our Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Gourmet Food market started. That kicked off with 30 stalls and now runs with about 55 stall. It is in the top 3 markets of Sydney and it focuses on local and regional produce. This project was about linking farmers with consumers and food value-adders at a market – mixing the value chain together in one place near consumers.

You were working behind the scenes developing other strategies weren't you ?

Yes Simon, Open Farm Days, Special Food Events. Paddock to Plate Strategies, all these events have one thing in common the need to promote local fresh foods. These projects are about linking farmers direct with restaurants, small fruit and vegetable retailers and other value-adders, establishing a Providore service, building a regional brand – more alternative channels, more linkages, a greater mix of business types brought together.

This links directly back to the Agenda 21 resolution about improving the environment, working on a model of sustainability.

Well Done Hawkesbury Harvest

Thanks Simon we could not have done this alone and we should not try to, Governments, and the community have to come together more often and consider where their food comes from. You know there are only 4 things you can do with Land.

- Build on it Mine It Look at it or Grow something on it or

Governments should work with communities to assist them grow food close to where it is consumed. Urban Development must include the growing of Food. David Mason Urban Agriculture Trip overseas proved this could be done and the people from EcoCity Farm have a model that is sustainable. The bottom line is really with the consumer, if you want local foods demand it. Agri Tourism is one model that assists this.

What happening is happening out on the Trail ?

If you want the real Paddock to Plate experience drop into Sassafras Creek Restaurant this weekend where you will experience the Flavours of Hawkesbury. Local Foods prepared by Local people. It should be a great two days. Toque Restaurant is running their 'Lets Do Lunch' promotion for October. Only 12 Lunches to go Can I suggest people Book Early.

There is a new Wine and Food Club Forming?

Yes Simon The Bacchus Wine and Food Club kicks off next Wednesday 25th October. Its mission is to establish a fine wine and food appreciation society for the North-West Sydney / Hawkesbury area.

Danks St. Festival is on tomorrow as is the Mamre Spring Fair. Hawkesbury Harvest will be at both.

The details and full story is up on the website which is

www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au