

# **FARM GATE ROUNDUP Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2007**

**Alan Eagle: 02 45 782326 or 0415244477 (M)**

**Alan Good Morning,**

G'Day Simon,

**What a few weeks of wet weather we have had Alan, has the Hawkesbury River been flushed out.**

It is on its way Simon but we still need a lot more water. I called Gary Howard who catches Prawns along the river and he tells me the rain has helped a lot to flush out the river but they need more rain for it to return to a good healthy system. The salt water has been pushed back to Wisemans Ferry. That goods so I suspect it is improving

**What was Gary catch like this year?**

Gary has had an average year this year Simon, but with this flush he is hoping for an improved catch when the season kicks off in November. Gary one of those characters who really cares about the health of the river he is always talking about it and rightly so. He understands that the rivers are a part of a system and for the last few weeks he has been having lots of discussions with locals about the rain run off. He does not see it as a waste he sees it as a cleansing agent for the river system. This is an important point for everyone to understand.

**Any other issues along the river ?**

Well St Albans was hit really hard the McDonald river rose a hell of a lot and a lot of damage was done along the shores around St Albans, some stock was lost and of course that water fed into the Hawkesbury and one of our members, Fords Farm, a Mandarin farm on Singleton road was partially flooded

**Aren't Fords Farm Opening their season on the 30<sup>th</sup> June?**

Thats right Simon. I visited Fords Farm on the banks of the Hawkesbury last Wednesday and spoke with Nicky and Sue about their open day and they told me that the Orchard was partially flooded, but the fruit has survived although this year there is a much smaller crop than in previous years.

**Why is that ?**

The drought . It has really knocked their crop around Simon and as you know they have about 1000 Mandarin trees along with Tahitian and Kaffir limes, cumquats, oranges and lemons trees for self picking or Pick Your Own as we call it.

**Are they still taking their crop to the central markets?**

Not this year Simon. They will only have enough for pick your own and the season will be shorter. Instead of being open for three months the season could be a short as

one month but they are very optimistic about the future and they know there are other farmers much worse off than them.

**This shows the importance of Hawkesbury Harvest in working hard with lots of different stakeholders in the community to provide farmers with alternate distribution outlets, like the Farm Gate Trail and the Farmers Markets other than the central markets.**

Sure does Simon and we enjoy helping these farmers grow and succeed. Fresh local food is so important.

### **What is happening on Fords Farm Opening Day ?**

People can just pop down and Pick their own Mandarins and other fruits. There will also be about 6 stalls there, a few local Jam makers, and Olive growers and one of the local restaurants, 'The Retreat', who have prepared some Mandarin Curd tarts using Mandarins from the farm for the day. They sound really tasty. Hawkesbury Harvest will also be there, kicks off at 10am. Should be fun.

### **Hows the Other Fruit and vegies?**

Vicki called as usual from the Vegie Farm and there is plenty of Spinach, Lettuces, Cabbage, Caulis, Broccoli, Endives, Chicory, Potatoes, Rhubarb.

### **Across at Grose Vale?**

They have spinach, butternut lettuce, pumpkin, mandarins, pecans and the last of the Apples from Mountain Lagoon a variety called Lady Williams. Adrian tells me the Apples last a long time without refrigeration.

### **What about Oranges**

The local season is in full swing and Ivan from Penrith Valley Oranges called and he has rows and rows of oranges and the seedless Mandarins that you can pick as well as a shed full of local honeys, Australian garlic, pumpkin and Olives and eggs.

### **I hear you have started building the Trail into the Penrith Valley.**

Yes Simon, we have already signed an Egg Farmer at Llandilo and a Winery at Luddenham and we have had some concrete conversations with a Peach and Plum Orchard and two Strawberry Growers. Any Growers in the Penrith region interested in talking to Hawkesbury Harvest please contact us

Don't forget, Geraniums and Roses at Dural, Lavender products at Glenorie, Wine at South Maroota, Ebenezer and Luddenham. We also have a lot of good cafés and restaurant across the regions now choosing to use local foods on their menus.

### **The 'Thin Man' is back**

Tonight, Toque Restaurant in Kurrajong Village will be hosting the launch of Rory O'Donoghue's new vocal and classical guitar "unplugged" album, titled "As It Is".

Listeners will remember Rory, who played the role of "Thin Arthur" with Grahame Bond as "Aunty Jack" in the ABC series which screened during the early-mid 1970's. Toque has a menu that contains local Hawkesbury tucker. It should be a great night.

### **How did the Back to Back Challenge go?**

The Hawkesbury Group came third in the world and raised \$1600 for Breast Cancer.

They did it in 6 hours, 34 mins. 19 secs.(28 mins. faster than last year), a team from Toronto in Canada won this year in 6 hours 18 seconds and 2nd was Bairnsdale team in Victoria in 6 hours 10 mins.

I wonder if the Mountain people could take on the challenge for next year

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

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