

FARM GATE ROUNDUP Saturday 23rd September 2006

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David what's happening on the Farm Gate Trail this weekend?

The biggest event today is the Hawkesbury Community Expo at the UWS Campus here in Richmond. The Campus is a member of HH by virtue of its wine course and vineyard which is included on the HH wine trail on the FGT map.

What's the idea behind the Community Expo?

Its part of the process of the university developing its long held view that it is part of a community and not a place that is separate to the rest of the world – and by community I mean the whole Sydney community as well as the local one. There is also a greater international presence on the Campus. Simon you can claim that you were part of the first expo when you did your Sat morning broadcast at last years event. It is something that will get bigger and better each year I have no doubt.

What are the details of the day?

10 am to 4 pm

Lots of events and stalls – something for everyone - etc

The Hawkesbury Campus has a long and historic association with agriculture

Recently I came across a book published in 1970 titled Hawkesbury Harvest – History of Hawkesbury Agricultural College Vol II by John Boland. It covered the period 1941 to 1966. The college was established in 1891 and remained in that form until 1972 when it became the Hawkesbury Agricultural College of Advanced Education. In 1989 I became the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury Campus.

In my research for today's FGT segment I found this wonderful letter that I would like to share with you and your listeners. It was from the first students in 1891 to the Minister who established the College.

Richmond 16 March 1891

*To The Hon Sydney Smith M.P.
Minister of Mines & Agriculture*

Sir,

On this the occasion of your first visit to the Hawkesbury Agricultural College of New South Wales, the first College of the kind started in this Colony, We,

the first Session of Students admitted by you to the privilege of such an Institution, think it becoming to offer you, the first Minister of Agriculture in New South Wales, a tribute of our respect and sincere congratulations.

We feel that we have cause to congratulate ourselves. First, because the duties of this important office have fallen to such an enthusiastic friend of Agriculture and such an able administrator as yourself; Second, because you have made such a happy choice in the Principal and Staff who are to direct our studies; and Third, because we have been chosen as the first to enjoy the benefits of the complete system of Agricultural Education as planned by you. On the other hand we feel confident that it is a source of gratification to you that you have had the privilege of guiding the early destinies of this young Department and of initiating this College and its many other useful agencies.

We would express our sincere prayer that you may long be spared to administer the affairs of this useful Department, that your satisfaction with the results of your work may be strengthened year by year and that you will never see cause to regret the splendid efforts you are now making to give the young men of New South Wales a complete Practical and Scientific Agricultural Education.

*We have the honor to remain, Sir
Your respectful students*

So what is the future for agriculture at the Hawkesbury Campus?

There is a group of far-thinking people associated with the campus who are putting together a new course of agriculture studies that will commence next year. It will be an Agro-business undergraduate course that recognises the whole food system - from paddock to plate. It also recognises the emerging importance of what I term urban agriculture in its many forms and what others refer to as peri-urban agriculture. Information about this course will be available at the Expo today.

The importance of this urban or peri-urban agriculture is getting greater recognition

Recent research done by the SA DPI indicates that the value of this form of agriculture production as it passes through the farm gate to wherever it is going represent as much as 25% of Australia's total agricultural production ie. \$7 billion of \$28 billion. The USDA estimates that the value of its agriculture associated with metropolitan areas as more than 40% of its total production

You will be looking at this type of agriculture on your Churchill Study tour. When do you leave.

I leave in 3 weeks a to go to Singapore, Holland, England, USA and Canada for 8 weeks. Those countries recognise the importance of urban agriculture and are doing a great deal to preserve it in the face of increasing urbanisation.

People will be able to follow your trip on your blog

I have created a web presence to record my trip. I have information there already and people can access it by going to www.urbanagricultureworldwide.com

Anything else on this weekend David?

When people come out this weekend to visit the trail and to come to the Expo I recommend they also visit a photographic exhibition by one of our up and coming local photographers Kylie Pitt. Kylie is a beautiful and talented young local newspaper photographer who has captured many aspects and faces of the Hawkesbury. Her work is beginning to get the recognition it deserves and is on display at Breewood Gallery in the main street of Richmond.