

Farmgate Roundup 3/12/05

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Whats happening on the Farmgate Trail this week?

Lots of wonderfully fresh produce available for the festive season. We mentioned Hawkesbury River Prawns last week but there's fresh and frozen duck available too. There's the regular Duck Maryland, breast, fillet or sausages and there's also a new variety available on the trail. It's called the Grimaud Duck, as the name suggests the breed comes from France originally, the fertilised duck eggs were carefully transported here and now the bird is bred locally. Its features are it's larger size... 2.5 to 3.5kg which could be useful for caterers, it has more meat and less fat than regular duck. The fat itself is actually quite good too because its chemical composition is closer to olive oil than butter or lard and this breed of duck has a unique flavour too.

There are many types of produce available on the Farmgate Trail

Yes we have all the different farms that you can visit where you can buy the fresh fruit, vegies, plants and flowers and have a yarn to the grower at the same time, but Farmgate is about value added products too. Things like local wine, tasty goats cheese, olives, crispbreads, jams, chutneys, herbs and spices, essential oils and bush tucker.

All of these have one thing in common, they are locally produced. Farmgate has supported many once small businesses that are now distributing local products far and wide and in some cases to the world. It's about keeping it Australian.

The Farmgate Trail is quite extensive too.

Sydneys Farmgate Trail takes you through the Hornsby area, Hills District, Hawkesbury Valley and up into the Hawkesbury Highlands. These are the traditional food growing areas dating back to colonial times. For the convenience of visitors the trail has been divided up into four sections. Have a look under "Farmgate Trail Itineraries" on our website. You'll see that each itinerary has its own attractions. Not only can you find some lovely fresh produce but there are many other things to see and do as well. For example you could go to a wine tasting!

Local winemaking is coming into it's own.

We're producing some very good wines in Australia, everyone knows that and there are some lovely wines being produced right here in the Sydney Basin. As it is coming up to Christmas I thought I might suggest that people try the Hawkesbury Harvest Wine Trail, there are three or four wineries to choose from and they do open on the weekends to the public, although if you visit the University of Western Sydney's Yarramundi Winery you will need to make an appointment, but they can arrange wine tasting, demonstrations on winemaking and wine appreciation for groups.

What's in season on the trail?

At the moment peaches and nectarines, white and yellow, plums and berries. The strawberries are sweet at the moment, blueberries are in full swing and raspberries are just appearing now. Vegetables in season include silverbeet, baby carrots, cabbage, broccoli, potatoes, radishes and fresh garlic.

One of our orchards is having an open day next weekend the 10th and 11th of December, the growers will answer any questions you may have regarding the fruit, you can have a wander in their orchard, take a picnic lunch or even a BBQ and enjoy it in the tranquil mountain surroundings or they will have light refreshments available there if you prefer. Check the Events page on in the Hawkesbury Harvest website for details.

Tomorrow I'll be able to try out my colonial dress!

Tomorrow, Sunday 4th Dec you'll be able to step back in time. In Windsor they'll be holding the inaugural Hawkesbury Journey Commemoration Day. This is to mark the visit of Governor Macquarie to the Hawkesbury in 1810. The Governor made the journey then in order to officially name the five Macquarie towns...Windsor, Richmond, Castlereagh, Pitt Town and Wilberforce. It will be a family day with entertainment and activities for the kids. It kicks off at 11am in Thompson's Square in Windsor. There'll be a re-enactment of the Proclamation of the five towns, you'll be able to see an original 1810 campsite, the 73rd Regiment of Foot and horse drawn vehicles. Colonial bands will perform all day. If you can dress up in colonial costume all the better. That's tomorrow in Windsor town.

The Farmers and Gourmet markets at Castle Hill are on next weekend.

It's the last one before Xmas so don't miss it. You'll be able to buy fresh fish, oysters and prawns, smoked fish, Farmgate lamb, all smoked meats, Peking and Grimaud duck, organic coffee, certified organic bread, plants, lots of fresh fruit and vegetables and lots more Xmas foods besides. There will be a country and western band to entertain you along the way. It's a great morning out! That's the 10th of December from 8am till midday at Castle Hill Showground. Enter via Carrington rd.

For all the details about anything we've mentioned and more go to the website.

www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au