

FARM GATE ROUNDUP Saturday 20 May 2006

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

Fords Farm at Wisemans Ferry currently has a variety of mandarin ready for picking called Satsumas. This variety is well known in the UK where some of your older listeners would remember finding them in their Christmas stocking when they were children. They are seedless, sweet and juicy and one of the easiest fruit to peel. Nicky Alexander Manager of the farm says that children love them because of the ease of peeling and the fact that they have virtually no seeds. People can enjoy eating, juicing or simply making jam with this mandarin.

Ford's Farm is one of the few citrus orchards around Sydney where people and families can come and try before you buy and experience the joy of picking their own fruit fresh from the tree. They have other citrus fruit available in season, such as other varieties of mandarins, limes, oranges, cumquats and kaffir limes."

The farm is open to the public from this weekend and every weekend thereafter until September or when the fruit has all gone. The opening times are Sat, Sun & Public Hols from 10am to 4pm.

Nicky will be selling her mandarins on the Hawkesbury Harvest stand at the Castle Hill Showground this morning.

So its Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Gourmet Food Market time again?

Yes Simon – 2nd Saturday of the month – half way through the year already. Alan Eagle and I will be on the stall with our trusty volunteers telling people all about the FGT.

What else is happening?

On Monday Geoff and Cheryl Uren are having an open day on their Alpaca Farm 'Tanglin Lodge Alpacas' at Tennyson a few minutes north of North Richmond. I was talking to Cheryl and she said that they have a brand new cria (baby alpaca). His name is Arrow

There is some thing about the names of their animals and beer – is that right?

They name all their animals after a brand of beer. Arrow is a Danish beer.

How many animals do they have?

Exactly 50 with the arrival of Arrow – 25 breeding females called 'humbra', and the balance made up of castrated males called 'weathers' (as for sheep) and the males used for breeding called – and get this- 'machos'.

So that is where macho comes from – it's a South American word

I looked macho up in the dictionary – denoting or exhibiting pride in physical strength, sexual appetite etc

The Open day starts at 10 am and all members of the family will be able to do any or all of the following: cuddle and alpaca, lead one, watch them having their toenails clipped, buy an alpaca, buy a fleece to spin, or buy the finished products such as jumpers, scarves, capes, and cardigans. Lunch and morning and afternoon teas are available.

Alpacas is a growing industry

A few weeks ago the Hawkesbury-Blue Mountains Alpaca Association had a sale at Richmond where seven of the eleven lots offered for sale fetched an average price of \$8690 with the highest price paid being \$16,500 for a white male macho.

I heard on the grapevine that you are off to Vancouver to tell the world about the Farm Gate Trail

Ian Knowd, the immediate past president of HH and I are off the inaugural World Planners Congress in Vancouver to tell the world about Hawkesbury Harvest. Ian and I and another fellow, Ian Sinclair have co-authored a presentation titled 'Growing Food and Growing Houses – it's a landscape thing' – essentially commonality is found through recognition of the cultural landscape.

The loss of agricultural land to rapid urban expansion is an international phenomenon and we have been invited to tell our story. We want to hear what other countries are doing as well. Apparently there will be 400 delegates at the congress.

How long are you away?

Leave next Friday – arrive on the Friday and the conference starts the next day until the following Tuesday afternoon – Ian will be making the presentation and I will be participating in a Roundtable about the importance of retaining local food production in urban situations. On the Wed there is a whole of Canada Forum where I will be making another presentation 'Urban Agriculture – The new frontier' and on the Thursday and Friday I will be attending parts of the 3rd United Nations World Urban Forum. As well as this I will be meeting with people from two Vancouver community agriculture organisations – Farm Folk/City Folk and The Office of urban Agriculture. I leave on next Friday night and return on the following Sunday week. HH will feature in all our presentations and discussions,

So it is going to be a full week – ends