

Alan mentioned last week that Hawkesbury Harvest have launched the 5th Edition of the Farm Gate Trail Map

That's right Simon, this is the fifth map in just six years and it looks fantastic!

Can I introduce you to the new members and what they have to offer on the farm gate trail;

Let's Go Driving

First stop Simon is Dechamps Delights, Shirley and Paul work out of their farm at St Albans. Deschamps Delights source fresh produce from local growers and produce a mouth watering range of jams, products, marmalades, butters, honeys, pickles, chutneys and sauces. Something for everyone to treat themselves with. You can also find them at the Wisemans Ferry Ferry most weekends.

It sounds like the St Albans / Wisemans Ferry end of the trail is growing?

Absolutely Simon, and why not? These sorts of areas towards Sydney's north are still so authentically rural and are just a delight to visit.

Where are we going now?

Off to the Mountains where we have 4 new members.

Shields Orchard at Bilpin is another "pick your own" orchard- very popular with parents who want their children to learn about where fruit actually comes from. You know, Bill and his family have been farming in the Area since 1955.

Is it True that Bill has 10 Varieties of Apples on his Orchard?

Yes, Simon and 7 Varieties of Peaches. This is a must stop Farm gate from Jan 2007 when the Fruit ripens. I think Bill is keen to catch up with you in the coming months about his farm. He's had many years experience in farming and is well respected in the mountains for his commitment to Agriculture.

That makes about 6 Pick your own Farms on the trail now.

That's right Simon, 1 Orange, 1 Mandarin, 2 Apples and 2 Chestnut and Walnut Farms.

One Walnut and Chestnut Farm is Kookootonga Farm, what is the other?

“Nutwood Farm” at Mount Irvine, Simon. Bev Carruthers is your host here.

20 hectares set on the edge of Wollangambe National Park. Nutwood Farm is an established nut orchard with large, good quality, fresh chestnuts and walnuts. It is a children-friendly farm in a most beautiful setting at Mount Irvine. It won't be open until mid March but make sure to plan ahead and set aside some time for a visit.

I see you have another Garden and Nursery on the Trail ?

And a most beautiful Garden and Nursery with spectacular views to the city. “Town and Country Gardens” in Bilpin specialises in a range of unusual shrubs, bulbs and perennials. Peta and Peter are your hosts here and their silver and variegated plants are a special feature. They are open now. The two Peta's also run the successful Collectors Plant Fair, which will be on in April 2007- another must for your “to do list”.

I notice also that you have a couple of new things people can do whilst picking up their fresh produce.

If you are into Quilting then the Packing Shed Patchwork at Grose Vale is the place to visit. Larna, a good friend and neighbour of mine, has an excellent set up, having converted a packing shed on her beautiful property into a quilting room. Larna's products add a beautiful touch to any home, making them great gift ideas.

While you are out on the Trail you must have a bite to eat and I see the Berowra Water Inn has come on board.

That's correct, Jeremy Laws hosts the “Berowra Waters Inn”. This is a beautiful restaurant set in a wonderful part of the Hawkesbury River. Unfortunately they are closed for renovations but we will let you know where they re open.

That certainly is a rich addition to the trail. So tell me, what have Hawkesbury Harvest got on this weekend?

Well as we speak the Hawkesbury Harvest and Gourmet food markets are being set up. As always this market is located at Castle Hill showground with gates opening to the public at 8 o'clock.

And what fresh produce will be available? Strawberries, stonefruit...?

Absolutely Simon. Fresh picked strawberries from Dural as well as peaches, nectarines and plums from Grose Vale.

And I understand there's a brunch coming up at December's market...

Yes the "Urban Graze Cooking School" will be putting on a brunch at December's market. Tickets are available at the Hawkesbury Harvest stand and I would like to encourage anyone interested in participating to enquire there too.

And what about the Hawkesbury showground?

Well Simon, this weekend the Hawkesbury Showground is hosting the "Farming Small Areas Expo". This is an annual event which is jam packed with demonstrations and exhibits for anyone farming in the Sydney basin, or who perhaps has a backyard they'd like to cultivate.

Well there's a couple of good reasons for people to get out and about today. So tell me Adrian, where do we find David Mason this week?

As we last heard, David was in London last week and has since made it to New York, so it will be interesting to hear what he finds there.

And what did he do in the last part of his English visit?

David met with a group in Surry called the Bio-Regional Development Group. By way of incorporating 100 homes into the natural environment they've found that for the past four years it has taken only one tenth of the energy to heat the homes as what it would have taken in a typical household.

Well that sure sounds good for the environment... and the hip pocket too of course. So how can people follow David's environmental adventures?

David has an online journal at the following address:

www.urbanagricultureworldwide.blogspot.com

I'm sure you've got a lot of work to do this week with not only running the farm but also preparing for the upcoming Hawkesbury showcase at Parliament house.

Very busy Simon, yes, on the 20th of this month, the Hawkesbury region will be given the opportunity to serve up some of its tastiest cuisine using fresh Hawkesbury produce. I understand you'll be there too Simon...

That's right I'll be hosting the event. But we can talk more about that next Saturday. Thanks Adrian

Thank you Simon.