

FARM GATE ROUNDUP Saturday 18th August 2006

Alan Eagle: 02 45 774233
John Houston General Manager(W)

Good Morning Simon

What's happening on the Farm Gate Trail this weekend Alan

We'll Simon I thought it would be nice to chat with one of the farmers today and I have made my way down to Pepes Duck at South Windsor.

I hand you over to John Houston the General Manager of Pepes

Good Morning John,

Good Morning Simon,

Alan tells me your Ducks come from around 20 Farms in the Hawkesbury

Yes, that's right Simon, we have 20 Farms, 3 Breeder Farms and 2 Hatcheries and over a week we process 60,000 ducks

60,000 that about 12,000 per day.

We are very Busy Simon, it takes about 42 days to grow a duck and those 20 farms are working a full production to keep us with the demand.

John can you tell us a little about what happens on a Duck Farm.

Sure Simon,

Firstly each farm contains about 4 to 5 shed each housing 4000 – 5000 ducks. The Ducks are free to roam around the shed and as such the cleanliness of the shed is paramount to ensure a good quality product. Each morning every shed gets clean wood shavings spread out on the floor. This keeps the floor dry and clean.

Secondly; Water is the another important ingredient in raising the Ducks as they love to drink a lot and as such the water they get is fresh and from a continuous feed.

What is the staple diet for the Ducks

Good old pure Australian wheat. Wheat is the best nutritional feed produced for Duck breeding and it comes from a mill in the Southern Highlands, Berrima to be exact. The Wheat is HACCP approved.

The other key ingredient is the Farmer. Duck farmers like all farmers are passionate about their farms. It is more than a job to them and all of our farmers as you know Simon work long hours, but are very satisfied at the end of the day when they produce quality products.

I recall David Mason mentioned about 1 year ago you were bringing a new leaner, French Duck, The Grimaud, to Australia. How is the breeding going ?

The Grimaud is a larger, leaner, beautiful flavoured succulent Duck Simon and it is termed by the French the Magre't. It is quite unique and is available now from Pepes.

Thanks John, Pepes is certainly contributing to the food bowl of Sydney and we thank you for your time this morning. If you could please pass me back to Alan

G' Day Simon, that was very interesting, I am always amazed that you learn so much when chatting with the farmers. That one of Hawkesbury Harvest key roles, linking people with the producers of Fresh Food.

What happening in the Vege area.

Plenty of fresh vegies around like Lettuce, Cabbage, all types, Silverbeet, Potatoes (Sabago's) ,Spinach, Jap pumpkin and Butternut, Carrots, Beans Shallots and Celery.

And the Fruit

Oranges, Mandarins, Tomatoes, Pecan nuts are plentiful right know. Strawberries will be here soon.

The, "Your Land, Your Life Style, Our Hawkesbury forum is on next weekend"

Yes Simon, that's right, this is an important forum and people can download the information from the latest news on the website. Just to remind Listeners it is on at the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury on the 27 August.

I see Artburst is on again,

Simon, when I hear this event I just close my eye and just think of my three favourite things, art, wine and food and that what the Artburst Festival is about. A fusion of Art, Food and Wine. September 16 and 17th.

All details are on the website: www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au

Simon, before you go I would like to thank all those listeners who dropped into our Birthday Celebrations at the markets last Saturday. It was a great day. The baskets full of Fresh tucker leaving the market was a confirmation of the role of Hawkesbury Harvest it very uplifting. Catch you in a couple of weeks.

You can contact John Houston at Pepes Duck on 02 45 774233