

## **Farm Gate Trail – Saturday 21 March 2009**

David Mason 4729 8120 (W); 0411 128 456

### **Salutations**

**One of the many impressive things about HH is its capacity to develop partnerships with a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations.**

That's true Simon. Partnerships are one of HH's foundation stones because relationships are the very basis of sustainability. Without trusting relationships there is no sustainability. And those relationships encompass everything that exists between people as individuals, groups and organisations and all other living forms including this living planet earth.

### **What are some of HH's partnerships?**

HH has partnerships with farmers, people who value add to farmers produce, consumers of those raw produce and products, the three levels of government, the corporate world, print media organisations and of course the ABC. And just recently HH has established a new relationship with the ABC Shop at Rouse Hill and because of this at next Saturday's Rouse Hill Farmers and Fine Food Market at the Rouse Hill Town Centre there will be a special appearance by Chrissie McIntyre from ABC TV's Wagging School.

### **Comment – so what is happening there?**

People will be able to bring their dog along for some training, which will start at 11am on the grassed area of the Farmers Market. Chrissie will also be available to sign copies of her latest DVD 'Wagging School'. However in case of large queues it's not possible to guarantee every dog will get trained. For those who bring their dog make sure they are on a collar and lead and of course a plastic bag to pick up the doggie do.

### **How's everything going with pick your own?**

Both Kookootonga and Nutwood Farms report great opening to the nut season last weekend. Ruth Scrivener has advised some walnuts are available but the big drop is yet to come – plenty of chestnuts however.

The major apple variety that is in season at this very moment in the Bilpin district is the Braeburn, which is at its best from mid February to late March to be followed by the Red Fuji later this month.

### **When does the Pink Lady come in?**

They will be at their best from early to late April. When I say at their best I mean the apples are on the trees ready to harvest and eat. This generally applies to a 3-4 week period. There is nothing so beautiful a picking an apple straight off the tree and eating it.

**It doesn't mean other varieties whose best time has passed are not worth buying does it?**

Not at all. For instance I bought some Jonathons at last week's Castle Hill Market and they were sensational. In the Bilpin district their best time is mid to the end of February. They would have been picked and kept in cold storage.

### **So cold storage is OK then?**

When you are buying direct from the farmer there is absolutely no problem or loss of nutritional value buying apples that have come out of cold storage during the apple season which starts in January and extends to July in the Bilpin district. What happens is the farmer picks the apples and they go straight from the tree to the cold storage. The problem that occurs with cold storage is when the apple is picked and is exposed to the outside atmosphere while it is being loaded onto a truck to take it to the central market place be it Flemington or a major retailer, it is further exposed to normal atmosphere conditions as it is offloaded and put into storage and then again as it is moved from cold storage to retail outlets and also the time the apples sit on the shelf.

### **So it's the amount of handling and time exposed to normal atmosphere conditions that contributes to the problem with cold storage apples.**

Yes whereas when buying direct from the farmer either on the FGT or at a Farmers Market the amount of handling and expose to atmospheric conditions is minimal.

### **What else is in the wind?**

In May Hawkesbury Harvest will be kicking off its third market in the west. Working in partnership with Penrith City Council Hawkesbury Harvest is pleased to announce it will commence this market on 2nd May and will run monthly after that on the 1st Saturday of each month. It will be on the grassed area outside the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and Penrith Plaza. Alan Eagle who had been organising this is looking for extra fresh fruit, vegetable and hot food stallholders. Please telephone Alan on 0406237877.

### **That partnershiping again.**

Yes indeed. Also in the Wollondilly Shire on the 5th April there will be a harvest market called 'Creative Traders Day. Held on the grounds at the Visitor Information Centre in Picton, there will be produce from Mowbray Park Produce, Fresh Organic vegies from Pine End Organic Farm, lovely olives from Langdale Farm, fresh fruit from Top Forty Orchard. These FGT outlets are on the Farm Gate Trail Map, just refer to the Wollondilly Harvest pages. Starts at 10am.

When down that way drop into Tennessee Orchard and Cedar Creek Orchard for their lovely apples.

Cedar Creek are currently picking Gala and Fuji Apples, Sweet September Peaches and in 3 weeks, their persimmons will arrive. The newer varieties of persimmons are great to eat.

### **Lots happening as usual on the FGT. To find out more go to:**

[www.hawkesburyharest.com.au](http://www.hawkesburyharest.com.au)