

SA Farmer

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SPRING 2023



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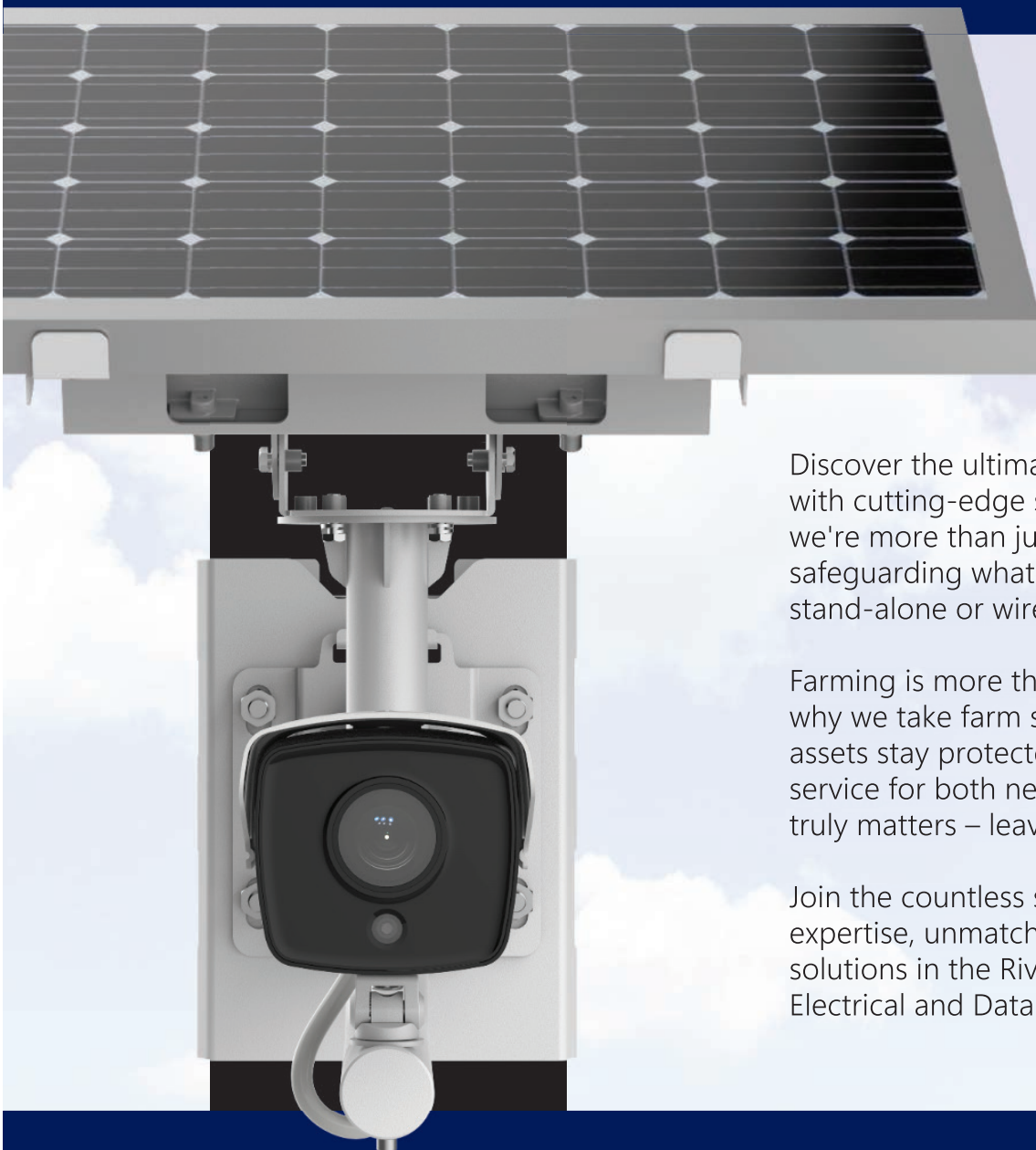
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Welcome to the spring edition of SA Farmer

SA Farmer is produced by the hard-working team at Taylor Group Media, with Riverland, Mallee and Lower North-based journalists dedicated to finding stories worth telling about the regions' primary producers, business owners and industry experts.

This edition begins with a sticky beak into the Paringa-based Glenview Poultry Farm, a Barossa Valley family's truffle mission, your new favourite mandarin variety grown just outside of Loxton, a look at four generations of De leso farming and Cadell inmates branching out into the world of olive oil.

The regular ag news section showcases what is happening in the agricultural industry at a state and national level.

A select few include a must-

have tool for farmers battling cattle diseases, podcasts for drought preparedness, South Australian researchers cracking the barley code, and a report detailing the importance of young perspectives.

Rounding out the feature stories in this edition we read about one of the Riverland's lone pecan farms in Monash, a young cricketer turned winemaker in the Barossa, a renowned horticulturalist's take on the growing constraints on water supply, the success of a Mallee woman's success with mini sheep, long-time stud farmers keeping up with industry challenges, Roseworthy researchers unlocking the answer to chronic pain in livestock and humans, and harvesting heritage at Wira Lear Farm.

Four industry experts give their

updates on stone fruits, winegrapes, dryland farming and citrus at this time of year.

Summerfruit Australia board member Jason size talks fruit quality and fruit fly challenges; Mallala canola farmer John Lush gives insight into weather impacts and fertiliser constraints; Wine Grape Council of SA's Adrian Hoffman talks about the 2023 vintage and tree health; and Citrus SA chair Mark Doecke discusses current harvests and international demand.

The publication would not be what it is without the added support of advertisers, and the production team behind the scenes.

We hope you enjoy the spring 2023 edition of SA Farmer and, until next time, keep updated online by visiting the free-to-read website: www.safarmer.com.au

- Elyse Armanini, SA Farmer co-ordinator



Craig and Kate McLaclan with children Tess, Hugo and Maggie McLachlan alongside Bill Close.

COVER PHOTO:
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Glenview Poultry Farm owner Darren Letton surrounded by free range chickens.



Bok-bok-boking on Glenview's door

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY ELYSE ARMANINI

GLENVIEW Poultry Farm, based in the Riverland's Pike River, is a family-owned and operated farm, home to both free range and caged chickens.

Darren 'Chook' Letton was born into the poultry and egg business, with his parents setting up what is now known as Glenview almost 60 years ago.

"My mum came from Wynarka down in the Mallee," Darren said.

"There were a lot of farmers who had free range set-ups and they would all send their eggs off to the co-operative, the SA Egg Board. When her and my dad got together, he built one of the old sheds here and that was a hobby.

"He was a wool presser and a shearer – he'd go off in the week, working, and the chickens were something that kept Mum busy. It just grew from there, and they became so busy that Dad came back to work full time on the egg farm."

By about 1966, the farm was home to three of the old sheds full of chickens, and in the early 70s they built the first cage shed.

"Cage sheds were a normal, efficient way of producing eggs back then because you could feed and maintain them easily, but that was a simple set up – you hand-collected the eggs still," Darren said.

"We operated like that until the mid-80s before bringing them in as point-of-lay. Each shed would hold 4000 chickens and they had 12,000 cage chickens at the time."

In 2007, Darren took over the family business.

"I shut the old sheds down for a while but then I converted them because we had 28,000 cage chickens here at one stage – and I was sending all of my surplus to Adelaide," he said.

"With the slow demand for free range we decided to gut the old cage sheds and convert them to free range. That was 2009 and it's still how we operate now.

"We have four free range sheds now, holding almost 20,000 chickens, and the one cage shed I built in 2008, which runs 16,000 chickens.

"You're never really at full production, because you can be removing birds to sell, or you have young birds who aren't laying yet.

"We'd probably produce around 2000-dozen eggs every day on average, which is 24,000 eggs and sometimes we get up to 30,000."

In 2008, Darren created the Glenview Poultry Farm brand, which he cites as "the best thing I ever did".

The branded eggs are sold to major supermarkets, including Woolworths, Foodland and IGA in the Riverland, Mallee and Mildura.

"We're very lucky to have really good support from locals here, like our hotels, cafes, hospitals and butchers.

"We pretty much have that local monopoly and we have had for a long time, because we're a well-known brand."

Darren juggles his time as a business owner and manager while also being chairperson of the Commercial Egg Farmers of South Australia and Tasmania.





Darren's mother, Kaylene Letton, sorts the eggs as they make their way through the packing shed.



Jacquie Thiele gathers the eggs from the conveyor belt before they go through to Kaylene.



Glenview employees Tyson Bonner and Fred Brauer wait for the eggs to come to them.



Young point-of-lay chickens.

"We used to be part of the South Australian Farmers Federation in a poultry division but it didn't work out," he explained.

"We just need to be involved with the industry, and the chair of the group – currently me – has to go and have meetings with directors from other states and just discuss things like the standards and guidelines to control running an egg farm.

"Plus, you can learn about disease outbreaks happening overseas so it's good to have your finger on the pulse."

The changes made to the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry earlier this year will see caged eggs phased out over the next 12 years, and Darren said while he has no problem with changing to completely free range, he would like to see compensation from the government.

"If I was to replace the caged shed with free range, I'd have to build four more sheds," he said.

"I don't know where I'd put them here, because it's not a very level site –

I don't even know if I could do it.

"It would cost me \$2.5m, and if I do it in 10 years' time it might be more like \$4m.

"We've got about 10 years from now, but farmers need a bit more time because of the cost.

"While there is still a market for caged eggs, I'll still produce them – and it's about choice.

"Some people prefer caged eggs to free range because they feel free range is a bit of a dirty system. A free-range chicken can go outside and scratch, but it could possibly eat some poo. You go outside to watch the birds, and if they see something they think looks delicious... they'll eat it.

"There're positives to cage systems because you can control the temperature, they get plenty of feed, plenty of water and very little mortality – very little disease.

"In free range, you're more open to those things because they're exposed to the elements, bullying, and sickness can spread through the flock quickly."

Looking at the short-term future of Glenview, Darren said there wouldn't be anything "too extravagant" happening at the farm over the next 12 months.

"I've just spent money on all the other stuff, which has brought our free-range capacity up to 20,000 – I'm above the cage production now," he said.

"Woolworths and Coles have said no more caged eggs by 2025 and I have no problem selling caged eggs elsewhere, but would I have enough free-range supply to satisfy them?

"I don't know, it's all a bit of an unknown thing at the minute."

When asked the philosophical question of what came first, the chicken or the egg, Darren was steadfast with his answer: the egg.

"It has to be the egg, doesn't it?" he said.

"Something laid an egg and then the chicken came from it. It was probably some kind of jungle chicken-bird that made it and it's all breeding... but it has to be the egg."

We'd probably produce around 2000-dozen eggs every day on average, which is 24,000 eggs and sometimes we get up to 30,000.

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Barossa Valley Truffle Co founders Ben and Sabina Kelley with truffle dogs in-training Truffles and Momo.

Kelley family on mission to turn Barossa Valley into truffle town

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY LIAM PHILLIPS

SABINA and Ben Kelley of Barossa Valley Truffle Co had a clear plan in mind when moving from New South Wales to the Barossa Valley in 2019 – to grow world-class truffles in a famous food region.

Truffles are considered the second-most expensive food in the world at around \$3/g, behind only saffron (roughly \$10/g), and are incredibly difficult to farm.

In fact, the couple were informed by the truffle hunting group Adelaide Hills Truffle Dogs that when they pulled up their first black truffles, they were the first South Australians in three years to do so.

Explaining the process, the Kelleys said they cannot think of another farming pursuit to compare it to, particularly due to the amount of waiting required.

"I think it's unique because you don't know what your yield is going to be like, you don't know what the quality is going to look like," they said.

"It's all underground.

"You've got no idea what's happening under there – if worms are eating them, or if you've got an insect problem, or if the soil drainage isn't good enough they can rot.

"The average wait to find a truffle is usually around eight years, so it's a long period of time to plan, do that outlay and then wait.

"Basically, you need to pull out weeds by hand and

mow by hand, or whipper-snip. There're no chemicals – you don't want to kill the spore – so it's actually really hard and labour intensive.

"Truffles hate competition, so you need to make sure to keep the area around the base of the tree pretty clear so the truffle can survive, and then the spore will overtake that and will start killing the grass and weeds itself.

"You test the soil for suitability – its pH level, and various nutrients in the soil – and then you make whatever additions you need to get the pH balance right to host the spore on the tree.

"Truffles grow wildly in Europe, but they don't in Australia – at least not that we know about – so you have to buy a tree that has been deliberately inoculated with the spore.

"Over time, that spore develops into a truffle, and are eventually harvested in the winter, since the ideal truffle-growing weather is frost without too much rain."

With no other truffle farms in the area to lean on for advice, the Kelleys had to experiment with their initial setup.

"After we modified our soil and got it ready, we marked out our rows of trees by hand with a tape measure, planted the inoculated trees, and then crossed our fingers," they said.

"In the early stages it's all about just keeping the trees alive. We planted French and English oak, which produces French black truffle, and we also planted stone pine trees which produce white truffle.

"There are no guarantees either – some people we know have had 1000 trees for up to 10 years, and have still got no truffles to show for it.

"There's another one we know about interstate where someone had about four acres. It was doing really well, so he decided to extend and plant more right next door, and never found a truffle."

While the Barossa is known for its fine dining and world-famous wine, its truffle industry was essentially non-existent, but that is no longer the case after the Kelleys' remarkable early success.

After being told to prepare for a wait of up to eight years before producing their first truffles, the Flaxman Valley farm began showing promising signs just three years in, so they decided to call in the truffle dogs for a closer inspection.

"It was very early," they said.

"We actually asked the truffle hunters when we first started seeing signs like holes being dug by animals, and they said it could be truffle, but it's too soon.

"They were hesitant about coming out, but they eventually did near the end of the season, and we



The average wait to find a truffle is usually around eight years, so it's a long period of time to plan, do that outlay and then wait.

found truffle in a couple of minutes.

"We think there's a little hocus pocus, and some uniqueness to our property, because we're in a 35 million-year-old meteor crater, called the Flaxman Crater – and we're right near the epicentre.

"So 35 million years ago this meteor split in two and one landed kind of right here, so this valley was formed by that meteor impact, and we've had people here asking us about if we've seen any signs of deformed rock, but at that point it was all hocus pocus to us.

"Some of the vineyards in the local area produce some of the most expensive wine in Australia – up to \$800 a bottle – and some attribute that to the unique conditions in the soil, including lots of extra rock that helps heaps with drainage.

"The truffle dog company that we bring in are shocked at how quick everything is progressing... they were asking us if we're sure the trees were that young – which they were, because we only bought the property and planted the trees in 2019 – but



Fresh white and black truffle, which can fetch up to \$3000 per kilogram.



The Kelleys plan on turning this barn into the site for their truffle and wine pairings, where customers will be invited to pick their own truffles and have a chef turn it into a meal.



they'd never seen anything like it."

Now in their second harvest, Barossa Valley Truffle Co are the exclusive truffle supplier of close to 10 local Barossa restaurants, and they got their foot in the door the old-fashioned way.

"We started with the restaurants we like to eat at," they said.

"Talking to chefs, cold-calling, letting them know what we have, and they are always interested in having a look.

"Because truffle usually shrink by around two per

cent per day after being removed from the ground, we will usually dig them up on our hands and knees with a spoon the morning we are going to meet with chefs.

"We had our first meeting with Maggie Beer recently and she was extremely excited over the phone saying how she had never tried white truffle.

"We probably pull up one white truffle for every 40 black truffles, so it is rare and hard to produce, but all the feedback we have been getting is incredibly supportive and has us really excited about what we're doing."



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Once identified by truffle dogs or pigs, the truffle is dug up manually with a spoon.

Gumtree and everywhere saying ‘grapes wanted, cash paid’,” Ben said.

“Eventually people got in touch with us and said we could come and take some of the grapes that they couldn’t harvest, usually because it was on a steep hill where their machines couldn’t access, so we brought in a lovely group of pickers to handle it.

“We got all our equipment and tanks off Gumtree and Facebook and everything, and that’s why we called our signature label Dero – because I’m a nobody, and it was nothing fancy, but people loved it.

“Eventually I realised that the only way to get low-cropping, intense fruit is to grow it yourself... we’re not looking to get a great return from our vineyard, we just want to make really cool wine, so we focus on growing the best fruit we can without having any commercial pressure to produce a certain number of bottles.

“We don’t add water, or acid, it’s just natural fermentation. No wild yeast, no adds, and after we got a great 95-point review early on, our website took off.”

During truffle season, Barossa Valley Truffle Co have a spot at the Barossa Farmer’s Market, where they recently debuted their new truffle butter, and offer the public chances to buy small pieces of truffle for affordable prices.

“One of our favourite sales wasn’t a big deal with a restaurant or anything like that,” they explained.

“It was a \$13 sale to someone who grated it over their hot chips... we want everyone to be able to experience and enjoy it.”

The Kelleys have plans in the near future to create an experience on their property where people can book their very own truffle hunt, with a chef on-site to turn it into a meal, which will be paired with their own wines.

They can be found on Instagram and Facebook by searching for Barossa Valley Truffle Co, and their wine is available for purchase at phasethreewines.com.au

Although the truffle business is now booming, there was no assurance that their property would ever produce any, so the Kelleys supplemented that income with a wine label that has also now taken off.

When they arrived in 2019, a grape shortage meant the Kelleys were unable to buy excess grapes from local vineyards, so they decided to make the most of

their super soil and grow their own.

Under the name Phase Three Wines, the Kelleys decided to lean on Ben’s lifetime of expertise in the wine industry to create their own brand.

“We made about 80 bottles that first year, and it was pretty good, and then the next year I had ads on

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A photograph of a man wearing a hat and a blue shirt, standing in a field with his arms raised in a gesture of triumph or celebration. He is surrounded by a large flock of sheep. The background shows trees and a clear sky.The logo for RLS agribusiness, featuring the letters 'RLS' in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by 'agribusiness' in a smaller, lowercase font. To the right of the text is a green graphic element consisting of two overlapping triangles forming a larger triangle.



Meet your new favourite mandarin variety

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHANIE THOMPSON

THERE is a good reason all tracks lead to a new variety of mandarins at the Arnold's Pyap property.

The new early Sicily variety is proving to be popular with both growers and consumers, ticking all the boxes to become a favourite mandarin.

"We've had trial trees for six or seven years and every year, as soon as these are nearly ripe, the ute tracks, the motorbike tracks, everything goes down to the early Sicilys," grower Michael Arnold said.

"It's the one fruit we grow that every single person likes.

"It's phenomenal."

The new variety is a cross between a clementine mandarin and tarocco blood orange, meaning it is easy to peel, juicy and sweet.

"As far as fruit goes on our property,

it's the number one best-tasting thing as far as mandarins go," Mr Arnold said.

"With the late pick, they get more of that blood orange, berry flavour, whereas the early picks are just a really good mandarin."

Mr Arnold said cold nights and sunny winter days were important for the variety to obtain the anthocyanin – the deep red, purple and blue pigments found in plants.

"They won't colour up in Queensland because they don't get the cold nights," he said.

"You need that cold to trigger the gene that makes it anthocyanin.

"Anything with anthocyanin, that red colour, has amazing health benefits.

"Obviously citrus is good with all its vitamin C and everything else as well."

Venus Citrus packs the new variety and grower liaison Fabio Spiniello said the market response to the early Sicily was "great".

"We are not into any commercial production just yet," he said.

"So, we have been putting them onto the market slowly over the last couple of seasons, with this season being more than last.

"I think in terms of taste and sweetness, it is the best thing on the market. Nothing comes near it."

If left on the tree and picked later in the season, the fruit will blush – or turn red like a blood orange.

If picked early in the season, the fruit will also blush in cool store.

"Anywhere between six and 10 weeks and they blush," Mr Spiniello said.

"We have plans to export them.

"They are received very well and are straight off the shelf.

"Once people eat these, they will seek them and want them just for their flavour."

The Italian variety is available in Australia under Australian Nurserymen's Fruit Improvement Company and has plant breeder rights.

"You can't buy them at the local nursery. They are not going to be a domestic tree," Mr Spiniello said.

"There's three packers or marketers in Australia and we are the main ones here in South Australia."

In the Riverland, both the Arnold family at Pyap and the Lloyd family in Lyrup grow the variety.

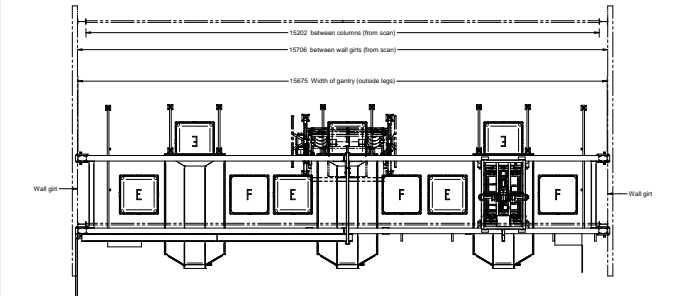
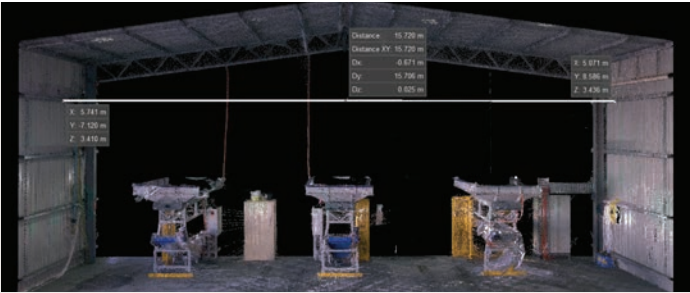


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Thorndon Park Produce's Danny De Ieso, with son Anthony, out in the growing fields at Gawler River.



“

I wouldn't trade this job for anything else in the world.

All in the family: Four generations of De Ieso farming

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY ELLOUISE CRAWFORD

FOURTH-generation grower Anthony De Ieso says he has "the best job in the world".

Together with brother Chris and father Danny, he runs Thorndon Park Produce, a bunchline farm with growing fields at Waterloo Corner and Gawler River.

He mainly handles the sales and distribution arm of the family business, but said he loves how no day is ever the same.

"It can be hustle and bustle in the market, and then you can be doing paper work or out on the tractor getting bogged," he said.

"I actually love this job – to be able to go to a supermarket for example and see something that you've grown, on the shelf, that someone is going to take home...that's really satisfying. "Also being able to employ people, give people jobs, and the challenges of the environment as well, is something I secretly kind of look forward to.

"To be able to say I've grown this under these harsh conditions, I love it.

"I wouldn't trade this job for anything else in the world."

Thorndon Park Produce grows a wide variety of bunch line vegetables, including silverbeet, spring onions, radish, parsley, continental parsley, coriander, kale and spinach.

It's sold wholesale locally through the SA Produce

Market, as well as to interstate markets.

The business was started in the early 1990s by Danny, originally just at Waterloo Corner, before an expansion of 80 acres at Gawler River around five years ago.

Danny once handled all sides of the business, but with his sons now proudly on board, he manages growing at the Gawler River farm.

And while he loves what he does, he said managing increased operational costs are a constant challenge.

"When I see three tractors out there planting just before the rain, it really is great," he said.

"What's heartbreaking is the work I see my sons do, my employees and workers, and then we can't get the rightful value for the effort that has been put in.

"Some of our produce lines are the same prices we were getting in 2006."

Anthony said what works for their business and what sets it above the rest is its ability to grow many varieties year-round, and to do it well.

"Down at Waterloo Corner is just the coriander right now and we grow it seasonally (in winter), while everything else is grown predominately [at Gawler River] and all year round, open-field," he said.

"We are growing stuff that shouldn't be grown right now and we are getting what we would say is really



Anthony De Ieso is manager of growing at Thorndon Park Produce's Waterloo Corner, as well as handles sales and distribution.

good quality for this time of year."

The farm is also regularly looking at innovative new ways to do things.

It has changed its spraying practices to attract lady bugs in the spring as a natural pesticide, and is currently running two compost trials for Jeffries soil suppliers.

However, being a generational farm – Danny's father also farmed at Newton (formally Thorndon Park) – comes with the benefit of having access to decades of growing experience and know-how.

"We look at what we can do differently but we've also got that foundation to fall back on," Anthony said.

The business is currently in the process of relocating its washing and packaging facility from Waterloo Corner to the bigger farm at Gawler River.



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WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTINE WEBSTER

CTC olives specialist Richard Steadman supervises inmates involved with growing olives and bottling extra virgin olive oil at the prison.



CADELL Training Centre (CTC) inmates and staff are producing award-winning extra virgin olive oil from their groves at the prison.

The first olive trees were planted 25 years ago as part of the prison's industries program.

CTC industries manager Kevin Stephens said the original trees were not productive enough and were replaced 18 years ago with stronger-yielding varieties such as correggiola and frantoio.

A plantation of high-density olive trees was also added to the farm last year and is expected to produce fruit next year.

The olives are harvested on site and

then transported to Diana Olive Oil in Willunga, south of Adelaide, to be processed within 48 hours into virgin oil.

The oil is then delivered in vats back to CTC for bottling.

Mr Stephens said the olive oil production program enabled inmates to develop skills for a career in horticulture on the outside.

He said they can obtain certificates in horticulture while working on the prison farm.

"They work alongside the prison officers to gain practical skills and that allows them to work as a farm hand or in horticulture upon their release," Mr Stephens said.

"It gives them a sense of pride and satisfaction in what they are achieving."

Mr Stephens said seeing the olives harvested to produce the oil and bottling it on site was a rewarding experience for the prisoners.

The CTC has no mechanical harvester and most of the olives are taken off the trees by a contractor.

Prisoners involved with the cultivation use a pneumatic harvester to remove the remainder of the olives.

"You place down a net, similar to one used for a trampoline, around the trees and in a raking motion the prisoner uses the tool to take off the olives," Mr Stephens said.

He said the air opens and closes the rake and transfers the olives into the harvest bin.

In the past, the olive oil was only sold internally to staff at Department for Correctional Services prisons at Cadell, and across the state.

But when Mr Stephens started his

role at the CTC three years ago, he decided to do more to promote their high-quality olive oil.

He entered it into the 2021 Royal Adelaide Show Olive Awards and this paid off, with the prison winning bronze in the Class 1 Provenance category.

The prison's olive oil did even better last year, winning three bronze medals and one silver at the 2022 Royal Adelaide Show Olive Awards.

Production has expanded and the olive oil is now available in 5L, 10L and 20L containers, plus 500ml bottles.

Bottles of the olive oil can be purchased from the prison in boxes of six.

Mr Stephens is planning to expand sales this year to the general community at the Riverland's visitor information centres, small independent supermarkets, and boutique businesses.

The CTC olive oil already has a commercial label with a barcode, details about nutritional value, and a South Australian product logo.



Prisoners use a pneumatic harvester to remove the remainder of the olives. PHOTO: supplied

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STANDING BY YOU



Pickers record their own activity, without the need for supervision, using the AgPick Orchard app. PHOTO: supplied

Managing crop harvest? There's an app for that

AN orchard management app to help pickers easily record their progress, and help drivers find full bins via GPS, was implemented at a Riverland citrus operation recently.

South Australian-based company AgPick Technology's orchard app was inspired by a need from a major producer and exporter, Ingy's Citrus, to allow pickers working with little to no supervision to report on progress, reduce admin workload and upload data to comply with piece-rate legislation.

AgPick chief executive officer Henrietta Child said the app's two key functions simplified reporting for both pickers and tractor drivers, and suited operations in citrus, avocados and apples where teams of pickers could be spread out over different blocks on different properties.

"The app works with any Android phone, it doesn't rely on pickers having data contracts or sophisticated phones – it uses SMS technology," she said.

"For a picker, it's as simple as pressing 'start', 'break' or 'finish' to record their activity.

"It's very clearly displayed in bright colours and lettering which is easy to understand by anyone. To prevent errors, the functionality is set so that data cannot be processed if the picker is not on the property."

The data is used to calculate piece rates and is uploaded directly to payroll for accurate payment.

The app also records activity for full or partial bins, including bin location, prompted by Ingy's Citrus' need to save driver time.

"When a bin is ready for collection, pickers select that option on their

phone's screen," Ms Child said.

"The information – the unique bin number and its location – then appears on the driver's tablet screen via a bin list and map. This saves time and messaging between pickers and drivers and is clear, accurate information.

"Drivers can use the map and bin list to plan their route in the orchard to pick up bins. This saves driving around orchards looking for bins or misunderstanding messages about where they are.

"Drivers also don't have to get in and out of the tractor to scan a bin – they click 'collected' on the bin's number and that accounts for the bin. Until the bin is collected, it is marked as 'unverified'."

The app works with any Android phone, it doesn't rely on pickers having data contracts or sophisticated phones...

A must-have tool for cattle farmers

SOUTH Australian cattle farmers are set to be better equipped to deal with diseases thanks to a new guide.

The Cattle Diseases Guide has been developed through the Department of Primary Industries and Regions' (PIRSA) Red Meat and Wool Growth Program, in collaboration with Animal Health Australia, to help farmers act against common cattle diseases and conditions found of farms across the state.

Animal health officers and vets from the red meat and wool industry have contributed to the guide, offering the most current advice on how to identify signs and symptoms of disease, plus provided recommendations on treatment and prevention options.

"South Australia's red meat and wool industries generated \$3.7b in production and processing revenue in 2021-22," said Clare Scriven, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development.

"Tools such as the Cattle and Sheep Diseases Guides help to protect these industries by equipping farmers with valuable knowledge to identify diseases in their livestock to prevent production losses.

"With emergency animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease now established in Indonesia, the Cattle Diseases Guide is a timely and valuable tool for South Australian cattle famers.

"The responsibility to keep South Australia free from emergency animal diseases lies with every one of us but livestock producers play a key role in

identifying and preventing the spread of disease and this guide will help equip them with the ability to recognise the difference between common diseases and exotic diseases."

The quick-reference guide is based on the recently updated Sheep Disease Guide, that was well received following its release in January this year.

Both guides include photos and descriptions of endemic disease and cover exotic diseases most at risk of occurring in SA, including foot and mouth disease and lumpy skin disease.

"This Cattle Disease Guide is adding great value to the series of guides now developed in collaboration with PIRSA, and we are pleased that cattle producers now have access to quick and easy disease information," said Dr Rob Barwell, Head of Biosecurity, Animal Health Australia.

"It is important that cattle producers are aware of the disease risks not yet in our country, but also aware of the disease risks locally as well. This guide gives a great synopsis of both emergency diseases (those not here) and endemic diseases (those here)."

Additional features of the guide include best practice management guidelines on farm biosecurity, vaccination, traceability, and livestock movement obligations.

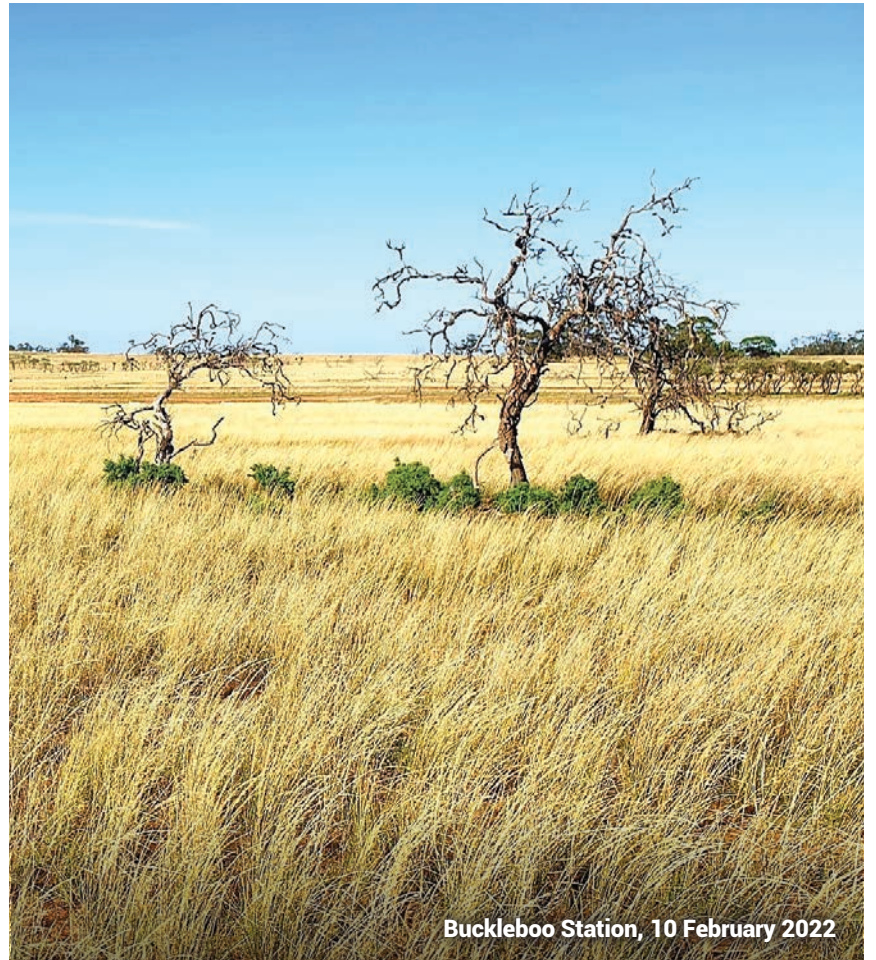
Producers can request a copy of the guide from PIRSA or download a digital version online (www.pir.sa.gov.au/cattle).



AG NEWS



Buckleboo Station, 10 February 2020



Buckleboo Station, 10 February 2022

Practical podcasts for drought preparedness

A NEW podcast series is set to help farmers build drought resilience and adapt to a changing climate ahead.

Launched by the South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SA Drought Hub), the series offers SA producers and agricultural enterprises practical advice, guidance and inspiration on preparing and dealing with drought challenges.

A range of experts and industry leaders feature to share insights and knowledge on how farmers and their communities can become more resilient when facing drought conditions.

"The SA Drought Hub podcast series has been received enthusiastically by our audience, and we are thrilled to have such knowledgeable guests sharing their insights with us," said Dr Stephen Lee, SA Drought Hub director.

"We believe that the series will continue to provide valuable information and support to farmers and rural communities dealing with the challenges of drought."

In episode one of the first season, Buckleboo Station in the northern Eyre Peninsula manager James Kerr shares his insights on regenerative farming practices, the importance of biodiversity, and how those practices

can help mitigate the impacts of drought.

Episode two sees Todd Woodard, managing director of Peel Pastoral – a 2900-hectare grazing enterprise at Wrattobully in the South East – talk about the importance of good decision making during dry seasons and provide practical tips for farmers during tough times.

Research into combatting sheep heat stress, which is estimated to cost the Australian sheep industry more than \$160m per year, is discussed in episode three by University of Adelaide Associate Professor Will van Wettere, Dr Jamee Daly, and PhD student Bobbie Lewis Baida, together with Dr

Alice Weaver from the South Australian Research and Development Institute.

In season two's first episode, South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) principal scientist, climate applications Dr Peter Hayman and University of Adelaide Professor of Agricultural Science Dr Chris Preston discuss what an El Niño event means in practical terms including potential impacts on cropping and what growers can do to prepare.

The podcasts can be found via the SA Drought Hub website (sadroughthub.com.au/category/podcasts) or accessed via Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and other major podcast platforms.

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SA Farmer

US ties drive SA exports record high

A GROWING connection with the United States helped fuel South Australia's highest-ever export result, with meat and wheat contributing to the record \$17.5b.

Local export growth increased by 28 per cent in the 12 months to April 2023, the second-largest growth in any state or territory, behind only New South Wales.

The previous record, set in the year ending March this year, was \$17.2b.

As SA's second-biggest destination market, exports to the US were up 25 per cent to \$1.52b over the 12-month period, leading to a boost – 7.5 per cent, up from 7.1 per cent – in the state's market share of national exports to the US.

South Australian products in demand in the US include sheep meat (\$295.5m export value) and wine (\$178.2m).

Globally, wheat also drove record high exports, up 77 per cent to \$2.8b.

The ABS data results come at the end of Minister for Trade and Investment, Nick Champion's, visit to the US – during

which the opening of a new trade office in Washington DC was announced, seeking to deepen ties with the US and South Australia across a range of important sectors for the state.

"As our alliance with the United States grows, so too do our trade opportunities," Mr Champion said.

"We will keep building this vital connection to support local jobs and industries, now and into the future as the historic AUKUS agreement takes shape.

"This record-breaking result is made possible through our state's world-class industries, led by hardworking South Australian farmers, miners and businesses.

"Their efforts fuel our global reputation as a producer of premium, quality products that are increasingly sought after all over the world.

"These results underpin the esteem in which Australia is held in the US and having met with both the public and private sector throughout the recent trade mission, South Australians can look to the US and be confident in the opportunities that exist for the expansion of their business."



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AG NEWS

Farmer confidence changes direction

AUSTRALIAN farmer confidence has improved marginally thanks to an easing of commodity price and input cost concerns; however, it remains in negative territory across the board.

The latest quarterly Rabobank Rural Confidence Survey, released in June, saw confidence lift nationally from -25 per cent to -22 per cent.

Rabobank group executive for Country Banking Australia, Marcel van Doremaele, said the survey paints a picture of how farming conditions across the nation drive a range of confidence levels, with confidence stabilising in SA.

"Farmers have ridden a rollercoaster of seasons, historically high commodity prices and eye-watering input costs in recent years," Mr van Doremaele said.

"Now, as the heat comes out of many commodities and input prices ease, farmers are adjusting their outlook in response to 'normalisation' of economic conditions.

"Seasonally, they're still experiencing a mixed bag on a national level, which also drives a conservative outlook. The mention of El Niño weather patterns also tempers confidence.

"Many grain growing regions in SA and WA had a dry start to planting – although since the survey was conducted, there's been some great rainfall to really kickstart winter crops, whereas in Victoria early opening rains on the back of strong sub soil moisture underpinned a positive outlook for the 2023 crop."

Sugar, beef, dairy and cotton producers all had improved outlooks in the latest survey.

Confidence in the beef sector nationally improved from -29 per cent to -21 per cent, with falling commodity prices, government interventions and policies, rising interest rates and drought still a cause for concern.

Confidence took a hit in the sheep industry, where 40 per cent of producers expect the agricultural economy to worsen, up from 35 per cent in the first quarter of 2023.

The grains industry also experienced a dip in confidence, falling from -19 per cent to -25 per cent due to concerns about drought, falling commodity prices, rising input costs and rising



• Marcel van Doremaele

interest rates.

Notably, concerns about drought were up, and 42 per cent of grain growers nationally who were pessimistic nominated it as a reason for worsening conditions compared with 18 per cent in the previous quarter, after a dry start to the planting in many grain growing regions.

Despite marginally higher confidence, Australian farmers remain cautious about increasing investment in their farm businesses, with fewer respondents expecting to increase their investment over the next 12 months.

"Farmers across the country are realigning their investment intentions and focusing spending on projects that will deliver essential productivity gains, including labour-saving infrastructure and technologies," Mr van Doremaele said.

"There's also an ongoing focus on investments which will strengthen their seasonal resilience."

The Rabobank Rural Confidence Survey has been conducted since 2000 by an independent research organisation, questioning an average 1000 primary producers across a wide range of commodities and geographical areas throughout Australia on a quarterly basis.

The next results are scheduled for release in September 2023.



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"Farmers have ridden a rollercoaster of seasons, historically high commodity prices and eye-watering input costs in recent years."

Breath testing cows for a better future

A PROPOSED study by the University of Adelaide will investigate if mixing a variety of compounds, including biserrula, into cow feed containing seaweed, can reduce the amount of methane produced by livestock.

Biserrula is a persistent pasture legume grown in Mediterranean farming systems, while other compounds include by-products, grains and unsaturated fatty acids.

The study will also breath test livestock to record methane levels using a low-cost device, making it more accessible for farmers.

The Commonwealth Government has supported the testing, by providing \$1.075m in funding for the project through the Methane Emissions Reduction in Livestock (MERiL) program.

The burps and farts of cows produce methane, a greenhouse gas with 21 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide, and accumulates in the atmosphere at the rate of 1 per cent each year.

Dr Mariana Caetano, lecturer in Animal Nutrition and Metabolism at the University of Adelaide, was eager and ready to investigate the role of other feeds in combination with seaweed in reducing methane emissions, and its impact throughout the production cycle of beef cattle.

This includes the effect of a low-dose

seaweed supplementation given to pregnant cows and the long-term impact it has on methane emissions of calves.

"This project aims to trial and demonstrate innovative and cost-effective on-farm practices of reducing methane emissions throughout the production cycle considering low labour input on-farm," Dr Caetano said.

"Biserrula and seaweed supplements will be used during times of feed shortage and low-feed digestibility.

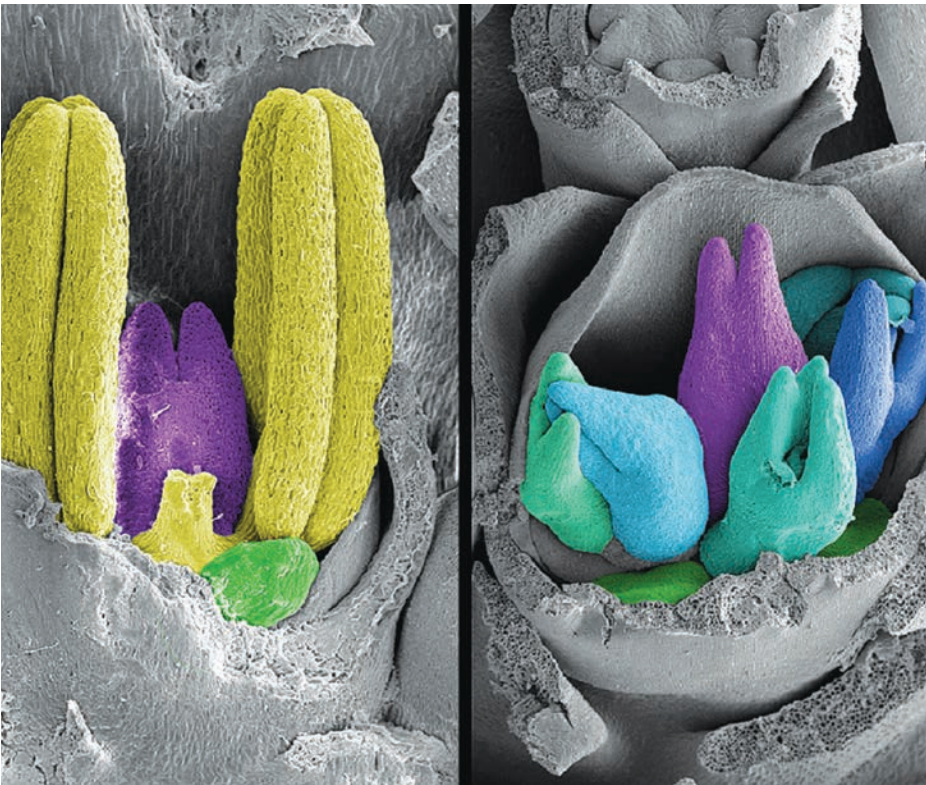
"Many other feeds that contribute to reducing methane will also be fed in combination with seaweed to reduce methane emissions in growing and finishing steers under intensive and extensive systems."

Direct livestock emissions make up for around 15 per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

"This project will provide new insights into seaweed supplementation throughout the beef cattle production cycle in southern Australia," Dr Caetano said.

"(It) will demonstrate different approaches that can be used to reduce methane emissions in livestock."

The project builds on Dr Caetano's previous research projects on seaweed supplementation of pregnant cows and the comparison of two devices to measure methane in livestock funded by the Innovation hub.



A normal barley flower compared to the flower of a mutant barley variety, which could hold the key to increasing yields.

Researchers cracking the barley code

UNIVERSITY of Adelaide researchers have identified several genes in barley that could eventually lead to better, and larger-yielding crops.

The research – carried out at the university's Waite Research Institute – used genetic techniques and molecular biology to examine several historical multiovary barley mutants, and determine which genes boost fertility and make the plants more receptive to cross-pollination.

Lead researcher Dr Caterina Selva carried out the work as part of her PhD studies in the University of Adelaide's School of Agriculture, Food and Wine.

"Although the mutant varieties appeared to be quite similar when grown in the glasshouse, we found one type was more fertile than the others and was capable of producing up to three times the number of seeds than the other plants," she said.

"The genes in that mutant variety of barley could hold the key to increasing the yield of cereal crops."

The multiovary barley mutants, discovered in the 1980s, have different features compared to typical Australian barley varieties, producing extra female reproductive organs in each single flower.

This is the first time the genes responsible for increasing fertility have been identified.

The sequences obtained from the mutant varieties could be used to modify the flower structure of conventional barley, making it more receptive to hybrid breeding, according to Dr Selva.

"By mixing the mutant with other varieties of barley, we can create stronger, more resilient crops that produce higher yields in even the most challenging of environments," she said.

The breeding process, known as hybrid vigour, has been successfully used in maize and rice. It relies on cross-pollination, which can be challenging for wheat and barley due to flower structure.

"This research is an example of how changing one gene can have a positive effect on grain yields," said senior author Associate Professor Matthew Tucker from the University of Adelaide's School of Agriculture, Food and Wine.

"We can overcome barriers to cross pollination by using the more fertile, mutated plants to produce stronger barley and more of it.

"This is even more important in the face of rapid urbanisation, volatile international markets, and extreme weather conditions, which are making growing barley more challenging."

Barley is one of the nation's most widely grown crops, with just over nine million tonnes produced annually, and the majority exported to Asia.

The research was published in the Journal of Experimental Botany (tinyurl.com/4bswst96) and could be used to help improve the agricultural industry, both nationally and on a global scale.

"These findings are a promising step towards facilitating hybrid breeding in wheat and barley and ultimately increasing grain yield," said Dr Selva.

"It could pave the way for enhanced food security and a more sustainable agricultural future."

AG NEWS

Bigger slice of Asian market for Aussie melons

THE peak industry body for Australian melons is set to target increasing access to emerging markets in south-east Asia in a five-year effort to grow export shares

Melons Australia's strategy aims to grow shares from 8 to 20 per cent, and executive officer Johnathon Davey said the industry was in a post-pandemic recovery phase, and poised to seize new opportunities in emerging markets in South Korea, Vietnam and India.

The melon industry reportedly produced 165,000 tonnes last year, compared to approximately 200,000 tonnes pre-Covid.

"Our top three export markets are Japan, Singapore and New Zealand," he said.

"We've worked collaboratively with Japanese buyers, who demand consistency and quality of product, to grow that market from some 498 tonnes in 2017-18 to 4690 tonnes in 2021 and there is potential to grow it further.

"South Korea presents a strong opportunity for development as South Koreans are large consumers of melons. Vietnam is a melon producer in its own right but also a significant importer with a growing melon-consumer base.

"In India, we're seeing the rise of the middle class and growth of the upper class driving a focus on beneficial diets and increasing life expectancy through eating fresh produce.

"In India, promotional channels and access to fresh produce, with Amazon offering speedy direct-to-consumer fresh produce deliveries is providing creative opportunities for exporters."

According to Mr Davey, proximity to Asian markets, a competitive Australian dollar and the ability to leverage off Australia's reputation for quality, fresh produce were all key export advantages for the melon industry.

The industry's Strategic Investment Plan 2022-2026, developed in conjunction with Hort Innovation, provides a roadmap to support the profitability and sustainability of the melon industry.

"Additionally, under Melons Australia's Strategic Plan, we are committed to growing our membership, returning productivity to pre-Covid levels (and exceeding them), developing our export markets and building consumer confidence," Mr Davey said.

"We are happy to discuss membership with anyone in the industry and are also committed to expanding into export opportunities.

"Our work is now about giving growers the confidence to plant full crops. The workforce is returning but the confidence to plant full crops and look towards growth, is not back yet.

"The number of melon varieties available and the amount of research and development going on to meet consumer demand is phenomenal. Improving melon quality and



Melons Australia executive officer, Johnathon Davey. PHOTOS: supplied

consistency is key to the growth of our industry."

The Australian melon industry is valued at approximately \$172m annually, with about 140 growers across the country producing watermelons, rockmelon, honeydew and other specialty varieties over some 8500 hectares.

Mr Davey said the return this year to El Niño weather pattern – which melon production is better suited to – would buoy optimism for industry recovery, with the confidence to exceed 200,000 tonnes in the next five years of production.



Our top three export markets are Japan, Singapore and New Zealand.



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(with Rear Roller)



The award winning range of Cyclone Mowers has been designed to do the work of a flail mower but requires a fraction of the power and fuel that a flail mower would consume.

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- Heavy duty rear roller.

including shrub, saplings, gorse and brush. It is ideal for the clearance of arable stubble, maize and rapeseed crops.

Strenx™ 700 MC high-strength steel is used in the manufacture of these machines. This material is stronger than steel traditionally used in machinery manufacturing. The undersole discs are produced from Hardox® 450, a wear and abrasion resistant steel.



Model	Working Width	Weight	HP	PTO rpm	Rotors
MJ30-200	2.0 m (6'5")	600 kg	50-100	540/1000	3
MJ31-250	2.50 m (8'1")	785 kg	70-120	1000	4
MJ31-280	2.80 m (9'2")	945 kg	80-120	1000	4
MJ30-350 Single Wing	3.50 m (11'5")	1120 kg	90-140	1000	5
MJ30-420 Single Wing	4.2 m (13'9")	1265 kg	100-150	1000	6
MJ30-420 Double Wing	4.2 m (13'9")	1265 kg	100-150	1000	6
MJ30-560	5.60 m (18'4")	1680 kg	110-150	1000	8
MJ30-630	6.30 m (20'8")	1875 kg	140-190	1000	9
MJ30-720	7.20 m (23'6")	2235 kg	150-210	1000	10
MJ30-920 standard with front mounted wheels and full width rollers on the rear	9.0 m (29'5")	3099 kg	180-250	1000	10

CYCLONE RANGE ROTARY SLASHER/MULCHER

(with Rear Wheels)

The MJ30-420DWW Cyclone has been designed especially for the *macadamia industry. The twin wing centrally mounted 4.2 m Cyclone complete with rear wheels is the result of many farm visits, trials and listening to growers needs. Macadamia growers were after a robust three point linkage, folding wing mulching slasher. Furthermore they needed rear castor wheels in lieu of rollers so they can mow and not press the valuable macadamias into the ground. The award-winning Cyclone mower ticks all the boxes as well as offering durability, reliability and efficiency.

Longevity is another great feature of the Cyclone having been

manufactured from Stenx™ 700 MC high strength steel. Whilst this machine evolved from requests from macadamia growers the uses have now extended into maintenance of solar farms, traditional pasture topping, clearing crop stubble and many other slashing applications.

These rotary slasher/mulchers are designed for the most rugged working environments offering reduced power consumption and maintenance when compared with traditional flail mulchers.

Model	Working Width	Weight	HP	PTO rpm	Rotors
MJ30-420 double wing with rear wheels	4.20 m (13'9")	1265 kg	100-150	1000	6
MJ30-560 with rear wheels	5.60 m (18'4")	1680 kg	110-150	1000	8
MJ30-630 with rear wheels	6.30 m (20'6")	1875 kg	140-190	1000	9
MJ30-720 with rear wheels	7.20 m (23'6")	2235 kg	150-210	1000	10

*This model is relevant to all nut growing industries.



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Pecans make perfect

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
ALEXANDRA BULL

LOCATED just outside of Monash is one of the Riverland's only pecan farms, Southern Sky Pecans.

Situated on nine acres, and boasting over 350 pecan trees with seven different varieties, the farm is owned and run by Riverland stalwart Dave Otto de Grancy.

Grape vines and citrus trees were previously on the property before Dave decided to take a different route 16 years ago and go with pecan trees instead.

"It took about nine years to get really anything off of them, you could get a handful if you were lucky," Dave said.

"We got knocked out by a hailstorm a couple of years ago and lost 100 per cent of our crop. We didn't get anything, not even one nibble for ourselves.

"Around November is when we flower, and unfortunately that is our storm time here, so we usually get hit with the big storms.

"Last year in November when we had the big storms; one got Renmark and one got Loxton, we got the big winds but we were lucky we didn't get the (hail storms), but we still lost a lot of flowers."

Despite last November's storm, Dave said this year is Southern Sky Pecans best harvest yet, with their biggest crop prior to this year being nine bins of pecans.



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SCAN TO WATCH

This year, once all is said and done, they will end up with 18 bins of pecans.

Dave contributed this success to a wet winter and spring last year, plus more of the pecan trees starting to come online.

"The trees are getting more mature, so we have got a lot more trees coming online," he said.

"There are about 150 trees that I have grafted myself that are now online, and some of them in their first year of producing have produced great crops, which was a shock.

"We also had that very wet winter and spring, so I think the rains set up a decent crop.

"I think it's just a whole bunch of things coming together, and I think we can start to expect crops like this from now on.

"It's just been a really long, slow and expensive journey to this point, so hopefully we can start reaping the rewards from it in the next few years."

Dave said from the outset they were going to grow organically and try to avoid using any chemicals where possible.

"We still have to spray Roundup or a weed killer," he said.

"We used to employ about 35 geese, they were getting pretty annoying but they did a good job," he said.

Dave, who is also the South Australian rep for the Australian Pecan Growers Association, said out of the seven varieties of pecans he grows, there is only one variety he probably would avoid planting again, with

the rest all performing "really well".

"It's a very, very slow process with the pecans, but the wait is worth it, and when they are in leaf it's such a beautiful area," he said,

"We sell about half our crop to a big processor in Toowoomba, which are all the pecans you see in Coles and Woolworths, and then we have our own processing plant here which is all put away at the moment.

"We get the pecans in the shed, we will run them through the machine, clean them up and then we put them into the container and dry them.

"Then we will get our processing plant, which is a lot smaller and slower than the other stuff, and we will process about two tonnes of our own pecans.

"Next year I hope to make a really big purchase and get ourselves a proper processing plant that can handle the large number of tonnes."

Dave said the biggest challenges Southern Sky Pecans face are getting water, and the isolation from the rest of the industry.

Despite this, Dave described being able to run the pecan farm as being "like heaven to me".

"When you are walking through the trees, especially in the summertime when it's a beautiful, thick canopy; it's such a peaceful and beautiful place," he said.

"I actually just love the serenity of it to be honest with you, it's super calming and we grow a good crop.

"It's kind of exciting to know we are here in Monash producing some of the best pecans in the nation."



Dave with loyal Rocky (Border Collie) and Tess (Kelpie).

It's a very, very slow process with the pecans, but the wait is worth it, and when they are in leaf it's such a beautiful area.

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Winter handed the Kies to the castle

WORDS BEN LENNON

WHEN Jake Winter made the decision to press pause on a promising professional cricket career in the late 2010s, few people, including himself, could have predicted where the next half-decade would take him.

At 26 years old and working in the Barossa, he is now one of the youngest local winemakers in the game, and the former South Australian Cricket Association contracted player has had quite the journey.

He is the first to admit that his new venture, Winter Wines, would never have been possible if not for the generosity of a renowned Barossa winemaker.

"I've always enjoyed drinking wine, funnily enough," he said.

"I always wanted to own my own winery one day, but it was just a bit of a dream and the winemaking side of things only came to pass post-cricket.

"I changed degrees from commerce over to viticulture and oenology back in 2020, the Covid year, and did some paid placement out at Kies Family Wines.

"After that I started working at the uni at the vineyard they have on campus for the 2021 vintage and then at the end of that, I was out of a contract.

"I had to find a job and luckily Kies messaged me, asking if I wanted to come out and work for them.

"That's where the dream really kicked on."

The past two years have been a whirlwind for Winter who, under the

tutelage of head winemaker Bronson Kies, has been able to learn his craft hands-on.

Winter is now just one year away from finishing his degree, and the release of the first Winter Wines product, the Dragonfly shiraz, marks an important point in his career.

The idea of Dragonfly, and Winter Wines itself, only came about after a discussion between Bronson and Winter during a stroll through the Kies vineyard.

"It was pretty random," Winter said.

"Last march I was having a walk around with Bronson, and we were discussing how the end of the rows don't get picked by the harvester.

"We were saying across the vineyard you could probably get a barrel's worth of grapes, and I posed to him whether I'd be able to go out and handpick those grapes and try to make a barrel of wine.

"So, I went out on a Saturday, got the picking crew together and spent the morning trying to get as many grapes as possible.

"We ended up making a barrel's worth of shiraz, a bit of cabernet and a bit of merlot all in one.

"I tried to make as nice a wine as possible out of that and then this year he asked if I wanted to do it again, and said they could get me some grapes.

"I paid Kies for the grapes and then I processed them myself through the equipment outside of work hours.

"So, that's the arrangement.

"Kies still takes priority and then I fix my wine up outside of those hours, and they've been good at backing me in doing whatever I please and how I go about it."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

PHOTO: Sam Price



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It's pretty crazy to think someone I didn't know three years ago is allowing me to run a business out of their own winery.

Having such a collaborative experience, particularly between two winemakers fresh onto the scene, is a rarity in such a competitive market.

But, Kies is keen to support Winter in his journey as a winemaker, and the former Australian junior cricketer is equally as keen to repay the favour.

"It's pretty crazy to think someone I didn't know three years ago is allowing me to run a business out of their own winery," Winter said.

"He always backs me and helps me out if I have a problem, and he's helped me to make as good a wine as I possibly can, and just taught me the best way to do things.

"If you go to a big corporation or a big company, they're not going to allow you to do that.

"Bronson himself, but the whole Kies family as well has been nothing but supportive and they encourage me to keep going, which is really cool."

The resulting product has been a "great success" according to Winter, who is surprised at how well the Dragonfly is drinking in the early stages.

"I never wanted to make it that big because the market dictates a bit of a lighter wine at the moment," he said.

"You'll always get people that will drink the Barossa shiraz and love a heavier wine, but I feel like with the clientele I'm selling to, they want a lighter-style wine.

"It means I've left it in oak for a little bit less time and let the fruit do the talking a bit more, and it's come out really nice.

"It's only been a month since it's been bottled but

it's drinking really well at the moment, and I can see that getting even better in a couple of years, which I didn't think was going to be the case."

True to the family name, Winter has a number of close friends and family helping him out, with former schoolmates Tate Robins, Peter Ahern and Jed Ballard all involved behind the scenes, alongside Jake's brother Adam.

The family ties continue, with the inspiration behind Dragonfly a beloved member of the Winter clan, who passed away just a few years ago.

"The dragonfly name is in recognition of my pop, who passed away in 2018," Winter said.

"He was the biggest supporter for all us grandkids. He loved us all and we always had so much fun being around him, and it shook the family pretty hard when he passed away.

"It was around the time when I had a bit of a change in my own career and the path I was going on, from playing cricket to winemaking, and I thought it would be a fitting tribute to dedicate that first wine to him.

"He probably would've preferred a beer or a nice stout but I thought, given what I can do, it's a fitting way to do it.

"The dragonfly represents him looking over me and every time I see a dragonfly, I sort of think that's Pop, just checking in and making sure I'm in the right order and doing the right thing."

Wine number one is in the book and Winter is determined to keep the momentum going, with a number of things in the works in the coming months.

Still at the heart of the operation is Bronson Kies and the rest of Kies Family Wines, which Winter remains grateful for.

"We're moving pretty quickly and potentially releasing another wine later this year, which might be a shiraz with a bit of cabernet in it as well," Winter said.

"We'll look at doing a white wine as well and then probably a shiraz and a cabernet too, all backed by Kies.

"They proposed the idea that I should do a cabernet as well, and I was pretty happy to oblige with that.

"It means I'll have to step it up a bit more, but it should be really good learning and working with Bronson to get that done, so it's really exciting."



Winter Wines head winemaker Jake Winter (right), alongside mentor Bronson Kies and Kies Family Wines cellar door employee Lillian Fitzgerald. PHOTO: supplied



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INDUSTRY EXPERT UPDATE

Journalist Hugh Schuitemaker spoke with key Riverland, Lower North and Mallee agricultural industry figures to gain an insight into their respective seasons.



Jason Size

Summerfruit Australia board member

Were Riverland growers confident in the quality of fruit harvested in the previous season?

Overall, quality was good. Volume started low with some impact from rainy weather and gradually improved as the season progressed with some warmer conditions. This improved size and flavour.

Was there any increase in volume of stone fruit harvested in the Riverland in 2023?

Volume was slightly down on previous years. Depending on what growers are doing in regards to replanting will ultimately determine overall volumes to various markets. Overall volume has been similar over the last two years

What stage of flowering/ fruiting etc are we currently at?

As at the end of July we are still in a dormancy period with flowering expected to start in the next couple of weeks. There will be some early season varieties already in bloom, but the bulk of the stone fruit is yet to start moving

Has there been any challenges in transporting stone fruit to overseas markets?

For growers that are set up for export, there is always some logistic issues in moving product, especially as we are restricted due to fruit fly movement controls. Growers exporting understand the requirements and are generally set up to do so as efficiently as possible.

How have the recent colder conditions impacted fruit?

Cold weather is great for stone fruit while it is dormant as each variety needs a set amount of 'chill' to ensure it produces good yield and quality for the upcoming season. We start getting worried when we have flowers or small fruitlets on the tree when we get heavy frosts.

What should growers be doing to ensure tree health at this stage?

Make sure they have pruned their trees back ready for flowering. Be prepared to apply a winter oil and copper spray prior to or just at the beginning of flowering to ensure scale and hibernating pests are controlled as well as peach leaf curl.



John Lush

Mallala farmer, Adelaide Plains councillor

How have recent cool conditions impacted on crops?

The cool temperatures at this time of year don't worry us, and even frosts don't worry us at this time of year.

The canola is flowering now so we wouldn't want frosts in spring, but right now the cold isn't worrying us too much. The crops are growing well and we've got nearly 2m of subsoil moisture.

Is low supply of fertiliser a current challenge for farmers?

We've been able to secure enough Urea (fertiliser) to guarantee our yield. There is a shortage of Urea, but we were able to get a fair bit.

I think most farmers are in the same boat and had their base requirements covered, but anything above that is hard to secure right now.

We used to be able to get everything we needed, but right now the supply of some inputs is more difficult.

It's high risk, and the importers of Urea don't want to get caught out with it because it's a costly item, and it's hard to predict how much will be sold depending on the year.

They import the lowest amount they think they will sell without having leftover stock, so it's a risk-management process.

The lesson for farmers is that if you want a

lot of Urea, you need to order it early and take the risk out for importers.

We believe we always get \$3 back for every \$1 invested into fertiliser, so to sell yourself short isn't a good idea because you're limiting your own income.

Will this season's crops be successful even with lower rainfall?

Our lentil crops were nearly on the point of being too wet, so a bit of a dry spell and sunshine is probably a good thing at the moment.

If we have average rainfall we'll still have an above-average year because of the subsoil moisture.

How are prices for crops holding up?

Wheat has taken a bit of a downturn because Russia is dumping wheat into the market at discounted prices, but I'm not sure they'll be able to keep doing that, so when that stops the price will recover again.

This is generally a low time of year for wheat prices, so hopefully they recover a bit before harvest.

What is most important for the health of crops at the moment?

We need to make sure we're managing pests and diseases in our crops. We've already had to spray for insects because we had an outbreak of aphids.



Adrian Hoffmann

Wine Grape Council of SA Region Two chair

How is the quality of wine coming out of the 2023 vintage?

The wines don't have the same intensity or power, but I think there's a softness and elegance. It's more of a fruit-forward style of wine that has come out of the Barossa this year.

For those that had a bit of patience and got their fruit right, you can see that elegance coming through. It was a difficult growing season, but I think the resulting wines are looking good at this stage.

How were the volumes of fruit harvested in the region?

The Barossa yielded quite well. Most regions were down in volume, but the Barossa was up. That's focused on the sold volumes of fruit, but we also had that hailstorm event in the previous vintage that impacted on yields.

The vineyards have bounced back nicely, and growers that put the effort in... their fruit ripened slightly earlier, and with better quality as well.

Did cooler temperatures over spring and summer have an effect?

We didn't have the same sort of heat we had in previous years and with crops loads being moderate to heavy, it needed that time to ripen on the vines. We just didn't have those hot days that we normally get.

We've had reasonable rainfall up until now. The last couple weeks have been a little drier... but we started the season relatively wet, where we couldn't get the barrel pruners in.

We finished with a reasonable amount of moisture in the soil from this last vintage, so we're not starting off bone dry.

Will we still see growth and expansion in the Barossa industry?

I don't think we'll see too much mothballing, and I'm not talking about anything like that at this stage, but you need to maximise the quality of fruit you can deliver to wineries at the moment.

Unfortunately growers aren't going to get a huge reward for that extra quality, but you'll sell the fruit going forward.

We're looking at another tough season ahead... growers have to batten down the hatches a little bit and be sensible about how they spend their money. Growers need to be having those conversations right now about how we'll sell fruit.

Will focusing on the premium end of the market help?

Growers that have aligned themselves with reputable wineries will create demand for their fruit. That's where growing that slightly better fruit will put them in a good position.

You don't want to be at the bottom of the selection, you want to be as close to the top as possible.

We can't all grow \$100 fruit, but we have to make sure if we're growing that lower-end product, we're growing it the best we can to make it easier for wineries to sell.

What is important for tree health at this stage?

For anyone still pruning, protecting the cuts from trunk diseases and eutypa is key. If you're reworking vineyards, make sure you protect the cuts with wound dressings and take the opportunity to cut back vineyards a bit harder.

Take the opportunity to renew a bit more life into the vineyard, and going into spring make sure you're on top of the remedial work.

If possible don't neglect your soil health. You don't have to buy heaps of compost or fertiliser, but keep that ground cover going as long as possible.

Are input costs still rising for grape growers?

Input costs are heading north all the time, and it's very much a struggle at the moment.

Our commodity prices are on the way down and you're paying more for everything.

Mark Doecke

Citrus SA chair

At What varieties of citrus are currently being harvested in the Riverland?

Mid-season varieties of oranges, including Washington navel, cara cara navel and imperial mandarins, are in full swing.

Are growers confident in the volume and quality of fruit at this stage?

There is plenty of volume of fruit and the SA Riverland will produce around 200,000 tonnes of citrus this year as more new plantings come in.

The quality of some varieties is of a medium standard because of a cold spring in 2022.

The Riverland weather is usually warm but the last growing season saw lower temperatures, so this translates into slightly weaker fruit.

Is the international demand we saw for mandarins earlier in the year continuing?

International demand for all our citrus is good and with shipping availability better than last year, exported fruit is being delivered on time.

Is winter a less challenging time to deal with fruit fly outbreaks?

Fruit fly usually try and find a place to overwinter, like a building structure or similar, and only come out when there is the odd warm day.

Hopefully if we as a region are vigilant and with extra sterile flies available this spring we can finally beat this problem.

Has continued water allocation stability benefitted Riverland growers?

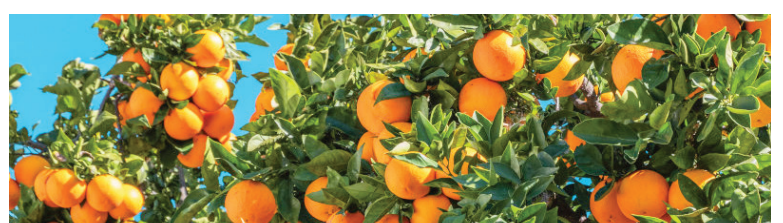
Water availability translates into the price to lease water. At the moment supply is good so that is one thing growers don't have to think about.

What should growers be doing to ensure tree health at this time of year?

Tree health isn't something you can do much about in winter.

Trees use up reserves of nutrition and like us look forward to spring to soak up some sunlight and recover from winter.

Winter is a good time to maintain or modify irrigation systems for a hopefully trouble-free summer irrigation program.





Making every drop count

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY HUGH SCHUITEMAKER

A RENOWNED Riverland horticultural specialist says South Australian primary producers must adapt toward sustainable farming practices to combat growing water supply constraints.

Renmark-based Ian Tolley has consulted in horticultural regions around the world regarding the growing of citrus and other fruit varieties.

Mr Tolley said recent examples of drought in the northern hemisphere showed Australia's water resource security would likely decrease.

"The Imperial Valley, which had been the food bowl for America, no longer exists," Mr Tolley said.

"We have brought a European

agriculture mentality to Australia in an arid landscape, and it's beginning to fail."

Mr Tolley expected Riverland primary producers would need to increase their water use efficiency as supply tightened.

"We know from history that any water remaining in this rapidly diminishing supply will go to the cities," he said.

"They will be charged for it accordingly, but they will pay.

"Farmers won't be able to compete."

Mr Tolley said an increasing number of farmers and growers were adopting sustainable practices, however there were challenges the industry was

still "nowhere near addressing in our heating world".

"There are challenges the farming world is still nowhere near addressing," he said.

"A few are very successfully practising sustainable farming, and doing their best, but it isn't yet becoming widely adopted.

"There are little sparks of light, of sustainability, all around Australia. Landcare has shown examples. The reality of what they do all stacks up, but it has not been widely adopted yet.

"Charles Massy's 'Call of the Reed Warbler' is a stunning account of what can be done..

"There are slowly more and more people in diverse crops and pastures introducing more sustainable practices in farming.

"These examples are spread

throughout Australia but they have urgency to go faster."

Mr Tolley said it was necessary to examine the sustainability of water resources with a long-term approach.

"There's no question you've got to be able to make a profit," he said.

"I'm hopeful the repetitive waves of profitability and disaster might trigger us to look at other crops and other ways of farming.

"The scale is in decades, or more. You might be in profitability now, but what of the future?

"We've got to develop a huge improvement in the sophistication we view water in, not as an unending supply, but as an asset that needs to be nurtured.

"What are we inputting to make a profitable contribution to the sustainability of the country?"

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The success of mini sheep

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY DEIRDRE GRAHAM



CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



IN 2010 Murrayville farmer Sandy Simpkins was struggling with some major health issues, but a purchase of five Harlequin Mini Meat Sheep from a friend made the difference between getting out of bed or not – and launched Sandy on a successful career as a breeder.

“I had been liaising with (farmer) Denis Russell for several years and he was working on a new breed of sheep, and was very keen on promoting it,” Sandy said.

“He talked, persuaded, and demanded that I take some, and that was the start.

“At the time I was struggling and really needed something to motivate me, but I didn’t really know if I could do it.

“I didn’t have any farming background, nor did I have any land, and had never really done much with sheep prior to that.”

The purchase in 2010, and donation of land from Murrayville resident Bill Graham, has led to Sandy becoming one of Australia’s biggest breeders of the Harlequin sheep.

“I came home with four ewes and one ram, and one of the ewes had a ram lamb as well, and his name was Nugget,” Sandy said.

“Nugget is quite famous... he was such a magnificent ram when he grew up, and I used him quite a bit.

“A lot of my original stock that went out to other buyers were Nugget lines.

“To this day, even though it might be third or so generation, you can pick a Nugget ewe in the paddock just by its

structure and conformation.”

Harlequin Mini Meat Sheep were launched in Australia in about 2006 by Denis, and Sandy is passionate about them in many ways.

“They are not a real big animal, they are about two thirds the height of a Dorper sheep, and twice as wide,” she said.

“While they are a meat sheep, and don’t have any wool, they do get a bit of fibre on them at winter time but they shed very cleanly.

“They also have little wiggly tails and you don’t have to take their tails off. They also have all pretty colours.

“While there is no such thing as a no maintenance animal, they are very low maintenance, and are just so easy to handle.

“They train really easy, and you can walk in among them because they are not fiery sheep.”

Bill and Denis acted as mentors for Sandy, and her little herd quickly grew to around 250 ewes.

She is keen to help others who might be considering buying Harlequin sheep.

She and friend Ryan Hamood started the Harlequin Mini Meat Sheep Discussion Facebook page in 2015.

“I think we have 797 members so far, and it doesn’t cost you any money to be a member, it’s just a discussion group,” Sandy said.

“The beauty of it, because it is a discussion page, is the wealth of information from all the different members.

“When it comes to areas, I know the



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Mallee and what the sheep need here, but I don't know the wet country and these sheep are so tough they are even in Tasmania in the snow country.

"Someone in your vicinity will probably know the answer to your environmental questions, but when it comes to the sheep questions such as 'is this ram any good?' or 'what do you think of this sheep?', there is a core of six members on the Facebook page that can more than likely answer those questions."

She said herself and the other main members of the discussion page – Melissa Bell, Lisa Avery, Dalty Cross, Ryan and Denis – hope to set up more studs across the nation.

"I have been to WA to set up studs, and this year we are hoping to set up in Tasmania," Sandy said.

"When I say studs, we are not talking a couple of hundred sheep... Usually a starter pack is six to 10 ewes and one ram.

"The ewes are your priority for breeding, especially for small land holders and orchardists.

"In WA some are actually on a Sandalwood farm to keep weeds down, as it is an organic way of doing it.

"Hopefully we will get into NSW next year. We had one lady from Queensland who drove all the way down with her mum and her little girl to come and pick up her six ewes and a ram."

Sandy said Denis recently ran a classing and judging day, with the hope that by next year they can stage an official Mini Sheep in Show event.

"Denis has retired now and we don't have anybody to take on that role, so if we are going to go into the show arena we will need someone to be able to judge them and class them," she said.

"Registration for Harlequin Mini Meat Sheep will close at the end of the year.

"What that means is that any stock you have had, such as dams and sires

from wherever, if you can prove they came from Genelink, which is Dennis, or Mulcra Downs, which is me, they are the genuine Mini.

"There are a few that do sell crossbreds as minis, and they are asking a lot of money for something that is not the genuine article.

"By registering them, we are getting a really good idea of what is out there too, because let's face it, we have been doing it for a while and you don't always remember how many you have sold, so registration is critical."

Sandy said Melissa Bell was keen on making Harlequin Mini Meat Sheep a global name.

"We have had enquiries from New Zealand and places like that," she said.

"Americans, we don't even have them on our page because it is too hard to get sheep there."

Sandy said the Harlequin Mini Meat Sheep industry had grown exponentially.

"I don't think Denis expected them to take off like they have, because it was really just a private project at first and it has just built up and built up," she said.

Sandy urged new buyers to go to a reputable dealer and make sure the stock was properly registered.



I didn't have any farming background, nor did I have any land, and had never really done much with sheep prior to that.



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Newbold keeping up with the world

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
ASHLEA MILLER-PICKERSGILL

IN an ever-changing climate of increasing cost of living, quickly evolving technology and labour shortages, the livestock breeding industry is no different when it comes to feeling those impacts.

Covid-19 in particular has brought on changes, such as online auctions, different methods of sheering and alternate ways of promoting livestock, leaving the industry with no option but to adjust.

Newbold Studs in Gawler River are no rookies to the industry, with more than 100 years of experience selling, buying, breeding and tending to their livestock in more ways than one.

Ahead of their 79th annual on-property sale in September this year, the family have made some significant changes to how their livestock business is run – some chosen and others forced.

In 2017, Newbold decided to go digital; swapping the manual logging and plastic tags on each animal, for electronic devices and a scanner.

Father Bill Close, daughter Kate McLachlan and her partner Craig McLachlan shared that electronic tagging is a soon-to-be requirement across all states in the country, and are glad they beat the law to the punch.

"That's probably one of the major changes, and the electronic ear tags which is pretty topical at the moment because they've just made it, or are about to make it compulsory in 2025... we've been

doing that since 2017 and it's great for us," Bill said.

Included in this year's State Budget was a \$3.2m spend over two years to implement eID for sheep and goats, helping enable improved response times and reduce the economic and industry impact of any disease outbreaks.

"For us it definitely is a huge advantage because it makes record keeping easy and more accurate. Everything was paper but now it all just records on a machine, I can plug it into the computer and download that straight away," Craig said.

"It was fairly straightforward. We had to go through and give all of our ewes an electric tag, so we just bit the bullet and did our whole flock. Then we could update our data on the computer and from there it was smooth sailing."

Similar to transitioning to electronic tagging, Newbold have transitioned from just in-person and website sales, to the plethora of online platforms needed to keep up with technology.

Another huge adjustment that was instigated by the worldwide pandemic, the family have had to conduct virtual auctions.

And while in person ones are still held, there is a large online presence and expectation in the current world.

"Covid has really brought on auction sales online... previously you'd show your sheep and go interstate to do that, and now they can see them online," Bill said.



Covid has really brought on auction sales online... previously you'd show your sheep and go interstate to do that, and now they can see them online.



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

Craig and Kate McLachlan with children Tess, Hugo and Maggie McLachlan alongside Bill Close.



An error can cause a lot of financial damage given the expensive machinery so it's about finding people who are capable.

"The degree of showing has dropped and it's questionable if it's worth [the travel] but then if we don't show them there's a huge miss out in social interaction and comparing your sheep directly with other people.

"The auction is online, people can bid online during the auction and bid on stock. They can all sit there at their home computer and bid... we'd been thinking about it, then Covid came along so we did it.

"We're in an interesting phase of the stud industry."

Aside from online auctions, there is also expectation that catalogues of stock aren't just on a website or viewed at physical sales.

Now, each ram is filmed and showcased online via video format, to show "the way it walks, the way it stands" and to "demonstrate the structural soundness" of each animal.

"The way people shop for sheep now... it's all online," Kate said.

"A few years ago, it was okay to just have a website whereas now you need to have all of these other platforms. Basically, you're not showing, but all the time you would spend showing is now just spread out over the year doing all of these other activities.

"What we found last year, everyone's got so many videos that you end up getting ram video fatigue. You start saying, what ram did I see? But it does give you access to animals that are in a different state that you may have never seen before."

Lamb prices are currently changing dramatically, labour shortages are still very present and costs such as fertiliser are still through the roof.

"This ram selling season is a bit of an unknown. Certainly, there are other pressures in other farm inputs like fertiliser, chemicals, those kinds of things have increased in price, a lot of it over Covid," Kate said.

Bill said last year's costs were a "lot higher" and fertiliser went from a mere \$600, up to \$1600 during the first year of Covid-19; and only now back down to the \$1000 mark.

"Also finding labour has proved a difficult challenge; labour is an expensive thing," he said.

"An error can cause a lot of financial damage given the expensive machinery so it's about finding people who are capable.

"They don't necessarily have to be trained but have to be alert and responsive, and take an interest in the job so, that's certainly a challenge for most industries but particularly ours."

With so many changes underway, and more to come, Newbold are taking each adjustment in their stride.

This includes a new mobile machine that comes out to your farm, can hold down the rams while they are being sheered and reduce the impact on the bodies involved.

The family at Newbold Studs are excited for the future of the industry, but are ready for any challenges that might come their way.

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Roseworthy unlocking the answer to chronic pain in livestock

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY KAYLA DEN HOLLANDER

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44



Professor Wayne Pitchford, director of the Davies Livestock Research Centre at the University of Adelaide, said newfound understanding of chronic pain in livestock could lead to better outcomes for humans suffering chronic pain diseases.



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Professor Mark Hutchinson is paving the way in quantifying chronic pain in livestock, in a bid to deliver life-altering solutions for humans suffering from chronic pain. PHOTO: supplied

THE town of Roseworthy might be small and unsuspecting, but it could hold the key that chronic pain sufferers have been long searching for.

But would you have guessed it would come from sheep?

Breakthrough research out of the University of Adelaide's Roseworthy Campus has revealed that livestock can experience chronic pain, with hopes it'll bolster medical understanding of chronic pain in humans.

The understanding of pain management in livestock can also lead to improved animal welfare standards in industry practice, by developing methods to minimise the chance of chronic pain in common husbandry practices.

Not only is the discovery a potential game-changer in medicine, but it's a win for livestock wellbeing, which is a key pillar in stewardship and productivity.

Professor Wayne Pitchford, Director of the Davies Livestock Research Centre at the University of Adelaide is at the forefront of the research, alongside Professor Mark Hutchinson, neurobiologist and Director of the Centre for Nanoscale BioPhotonics.

Prof Hutchinson is leading the team that are making waves in quantifying the existence of chronic pain in sheep and developing the appropriate solutions.

"He's already been part of a team that are delivering to drugs to reduce chronic pain in people in the US well, so he's got track record at delivering solutions to people," said Prof Pitchford.

Measuring pain in livestock is a step toward the research team developing a livestock lifetime wellbeing index, similar to the Meat Standards Australia index which determines beef and lamb eating quality.

Prof Pitchford said the way in which humans and livestock feel pain is much similar than once thought.

In fact, researchers weren't sure if chronic pain

existed in livestock animals two years ago.

"Acute pain is really important, so that's the pain we get when we bang our nail with the hammer, we hit our thumb and we get pain straight away. That's a really important protective mechanism," he said.

"If we're doing an operation and we want people to not experience pain, we give them an anaesthetic or an anti-inflammatory to prevent pain, their experience of pain and the actual pain occurring... so that's how we treat acute pain in humans."

"There are no drugs available to do the same in lambs. When we're marking lambs, docking tails or castrating lambs, we can give them a drug called Tri-Solfen, which is a combination of anaesthetics and anti-inflammatories that prevents the experience of pain.

"Unfortunately, what can happen when we experience pain is that the nerves around the area can actually become sensitized to the pain. It's effectively an immune response."

A specialised research team are in the midst of identifying and measuring pain levels in livestock, which will then seek to add an additional compound in pain medication to prevent acute pain from becoming chronic.

"That will actually be able to be applied back to people, so that's a good part of the story as well... it will lead to improved solutions for people," he said.

The team then hope to be able to genetically select livestock for a lower chance of transitioning to chronic pain.

"We'll also start to understand the genetics of chronic pain because we'll be doing it in sheep that have been genotyped, and we understand the genetic variation.

"As we do that, it will actually provide increased ability to be able to target medicines for people with certain genes or certain genetic profiles, so it will actually lead to precision medicine in people."

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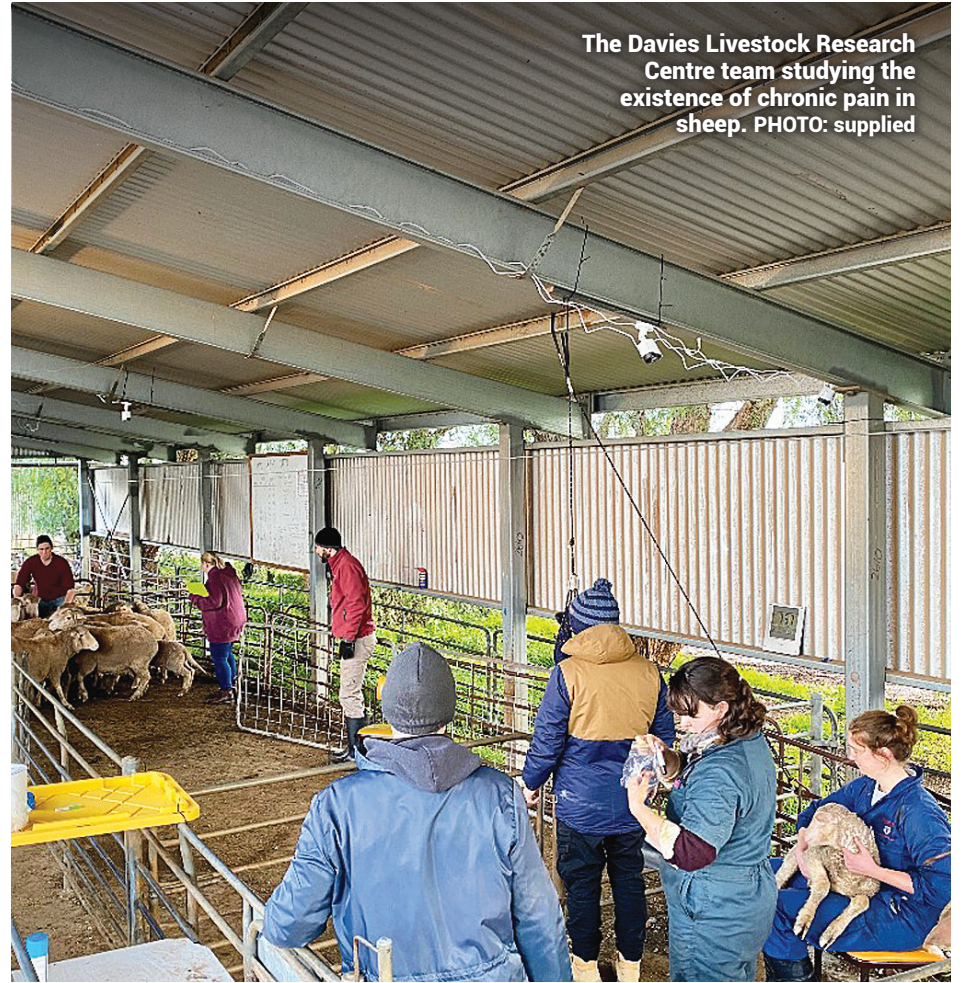
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Sheep and cattle are at the pinnacle of the livestock industry, but could now be the centre of medical innovation.



The Davies Livestock Research Centre team studying the existence of chronic pain in sheep. PHOTO: supplied

With chronic pain affecting a higher proportion of women than men across the world, Prof Pitchford said high rates of chronic pain in livestock could be attributed to livestock production populations being predominantly female.

"As a proportion of livestock, if chronic pain exists, we actually would expect it to be potentially worse in livestock populations or as

high of a frequency as in humans," he said.

While the work is still in preliminary stages, the team are on track to sign a six-year multi-million-dollar contract with a major pastoral company for their pioneering research.

By 2025, the team hope to have deployable tests for pain and livestock wellbeing to steer optimal husbandry strategies.

Though the Davies Livestock Research Centre aren't stopping there, with research into genetic improvement, meat and wool quality improvement and sustainable productivity set to deliver tangible benefits by 2025.

In that same year, their research program is set for a \$10m turnover, one that will affirm the oldest agricultural college in Australia as a leader on the national stage.



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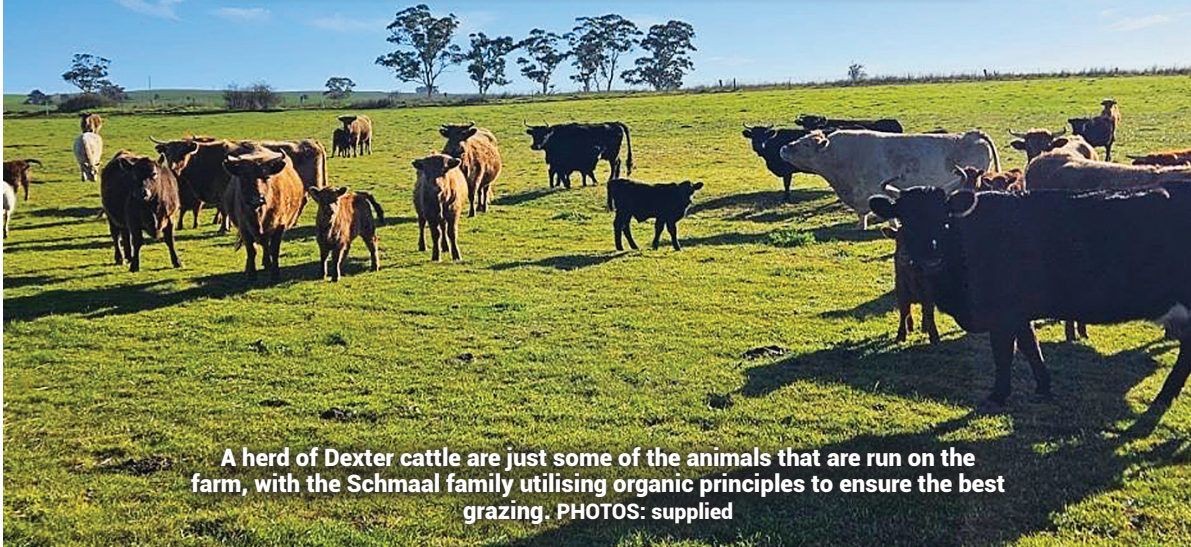
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Harvesting heritage: Wira Lear Farm's fusion of cultures

WORDS IMOGEN EVANS



A herd of Dexter cattle are just some of the animals that are run on the farm, with the Schmaal family utilising organic principles to ensure the best grazing. PHOTOS: supplied



THE Barossa Farmers Market is home to a vast range of different fresh produce businesses across South Australia.

Among the many stallholders are family-run Wira Lear Farm, the self-proclaimed 'new kids on the block' that creatively mix the family's Indigenous and German heritage.

Situated just under a half-hour's drive north of Kapunda, the land has been under the care of the Schmaal family for three generations.

Second generation Stephen is currently at the helm, alongside wife Tanya, utilising organic principles to ensure the best grazing for his animals.

That practice produces nothing but the highest-quality cuts of beef, pork and lamb courtesy of on-site butcher Kob, who also happens to be the third generation of the Schmaal working on the land.

Stephen and Tanya inherited the farm from family members who had been supplying locals with fresh cuts for generations.

But now, they've incorporated their own culture into the business.

Stephen said the combined Aboriginal and German heritage could even be seen in their name.

"We have big old beautiful blue gums on our property that have been here for, goodness knows, hundreds of years possibly, and the Ngadjuri word for gumtree is 'wira'," he said.

"My side of the family has a very strong German heritage, so we thought 'lear' is an old English and old German word for

pasture or meadow, we thought this might be a great blending of culture and history for our little patch."

The Schmaal flock includes Berkshire pigs, a herd of Dexter cattle and Dorper Damara cross lambs.

Berkshires are a heritage breed of pigs originating from England. It is a rare breed in its home country, but has been exported to countries like Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

It is renowned for texture, marbling and tenderness with a different and more noticeable flavouring to other pork.

Dexter cattle, meanwhile, are a small breed hailing from Ireland and are reared for both milk and beef.

As well as supplying in bulk from their property, Wira Lear Farm frequents the Barossa Farmers Market every Saturday, where Stephen said plenty of their customers shop.

Some of the products on offer include beef short ribs, lamb chops, gourmet sausages and roasting joints.

"The markets have a wonderful sense of helping each other out. People will recommend other stalls to customers, or if one person's sold out of something they'll just be redirected to a business who can help," Stephen said.

"There's absolutely no sense of rivalry or competition, the community

is great."

Stephen said the business has always been very family orientated and strives to have the younger generations fall in love with the business and farming community.

"Even last week we had most of the grandchildren up here, which is pretty special for us," he said.

"They love coming to the farm and being on the land around nature and playing with animals and puppies and calves, it's very healthy and vibrant environment."

Looking into the future, Stephen said his family aims to carry on the farm's legacy and are looking to even expand on their available products.

"Kob is very passionate about flavours and experimenting with some of the old German recipes, so we have a selection of gourmet sausages at the market, and that's kind of our specialty," Stephen said.

"Pretty soon, once we get stage two of our facility up and running - which is cooking, curing, smoking - then we'll have some other pretty special yummy things coming."

Every Saturday you'll find Wira Lear Farm at the Barossa Farmers Market, but if you want to buy direct or get in contact with the owners, you can reach them on their email (js.schmaal@gmail.com) or give their Facebook page a visit.



TOP RIGHT: Tanya and Stephen Schmaal combine their Indigenous and German heritage which can be seen in the farm's name. Stephen, left, and Kob with some of their famed sausages that they sell every Saturday at the Barossa Farmers Market.

LEFT: Kob is the third generation of the Schmaal family working Wira Lear Farm as the on-site butcher.

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Cruz and Jove Yacoumis are happy with the newly-installed system.
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AG NEWS

Report details importance of young perspectives

A REPORT has been released to highlight the need to engage the next generation of frontrunners for the agricultural sector, which faces global challenges.

AgriFutures Australia announced the release of its latest report 'Listen up: Young people's perspective on the future of Australian agriculture and rural industries' in July this year.

The report is a compilation of "thought-provoking perspectives and provocations from the future leaders of the agriculture sector", compiled following the 2022 AgriFutures Horizon Scholarship Workshop which attracted 40 scholars.

Horizon Scholar, Jenna Wright, contributed to the report and said the scholars were committed to Australia's food and fibre future.

"We all care about strengthening the industry,

driving change, and including more unique voices," she said.

"We care about ensuring the success of all industry areas, because we all have a passion for Australian agriculture as a whole."

AgriFutures Australia workforce delivery manager, Abbey O'Callaghan, said young people had the power to shape the future of rural industries.

"By harnessing the Horizon Scholars' innovative thinking and fresh perspectives, we can transform the narrative surrounding agriculture and secure a thriving and sustainable future for generations to come," she said.

"In order to achieve this vision, the report calls on industry and decision makers to embrace innovation and diversity, understand that profit and

purpose go hand in hand, and find inspiration outside of agriculture, and Australia."

The report is available to read as a PDF or purchase a hard copy on the AgriFutures Australia website (tinyurl.com/3hkan45h).

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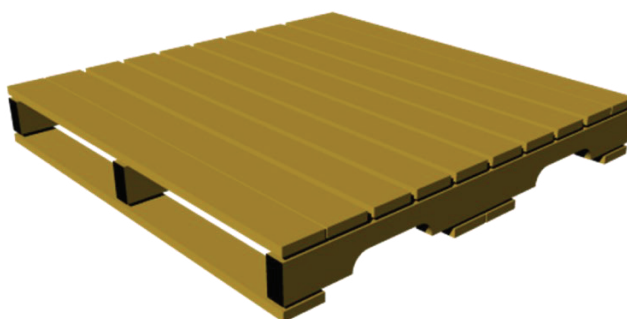
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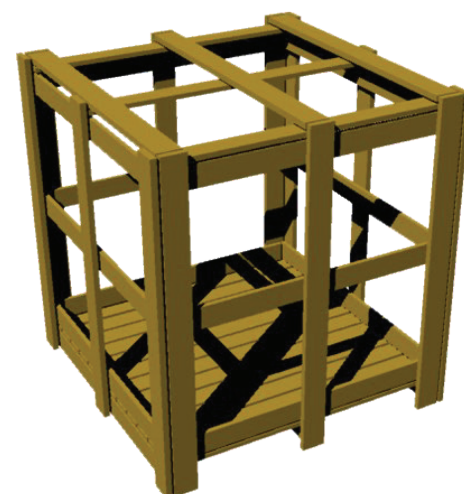
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