

SA Farmer

TAYLOR
GROUP MEDIA

SUMMER 2022



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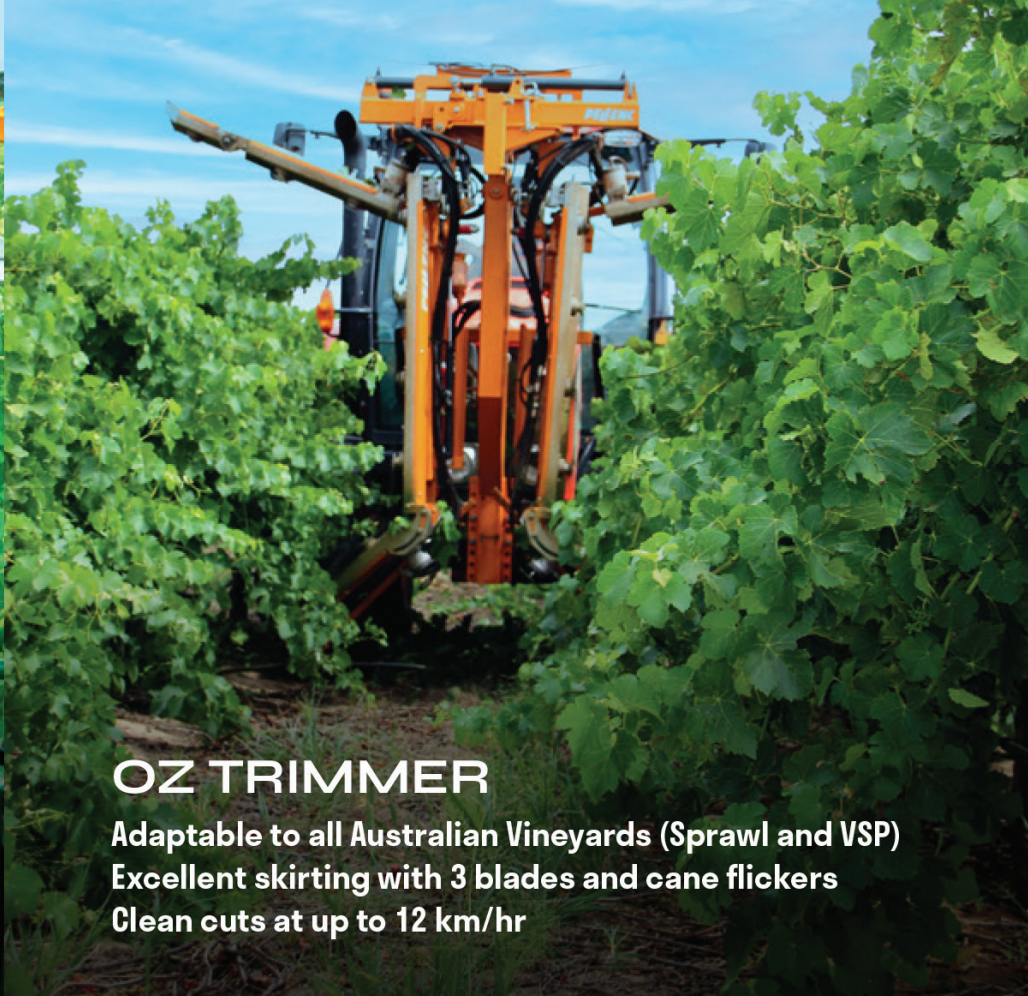
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Welcome to the summer edition of SA Farmer.

TAYLOR Group Media welcomes you to the summer 2022 edition of SA Farmer.

Our team of journalists have worked hard to share the stories of primary producers and business owners from across the Riverland, Lower North and Mallee, showcasing their triumphs, challenges and outlooks for this time of year.

The summer edition begins with a quintessential Australian summer story of Paringa Christmas tree farmers, followed by a rain levels summary and a look at potential blackwater events due to high flows in the River Murray.

Following on with other feature stories in this edition, we look

at a Loxton competitive chicken breeder, Australia's only artisan olive producers operating out of Taylorville, Lamerloo goats, Gawler-based commercial rose growers, Kudla's award-winning herb grower, vegetable growers in Penfield Gardens and more.

As always, journalist Hugh Schuitemaker has rounded up our industry experts to provide an update on almonds, grain, wine grapes and citrus.

Our regular ag news section showcases what is happening at a state and federal level, plus details on the latest in technologies and harvest reports.

It's a mixed bag of ag news in this edition, looking at topics such

as grains research, the threat of locusts, pig biosecurity, farming exports and grain harvests breaking records, a grape grower wellbeing podcast, and new technology assisting in detecting sheep diseases, among others.

The SA Farmer publication and free-to-read stories on the website continue to flourish thanks to our devoted readers, advertising supporters and primary producers willing to share their stories with us.

The Taylor Group Media team hopes you enjoy the summer edition of SA Farmer and, until next time, keep updated online by visiting www.safarmer.com.au.

- The SA Farmer team



Lamerloo woman Amy Eatts has 20 Boer goats and about 80 miniature and pygmy breeds. Cover photo: Deirdre Graham

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INSIDE



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Ed and Marg Simpfordorfer have been providing the Riverland with Aleppo pine Christmas trees for five years now, selling up to 60 trees each festive season.



The Aleppo pine, which is native to Mediterranean region, is well suited to the Riverland climate due to the rich Mallee soil.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY ALEXANDRA BULL

TUCKED away off the Sturt Highway at Woumarra, just outside of Paringa, is the Riverland's only Christmas tree farm.

Run by Marg and Ed Simpfordorfer, the Paringa Christmas Tree Farm has been providing the Riverland with Christmas trees for five years now.

What once started out as a hobby for Ed, has turned into a small farm and business.

"We came here originally in 1980 and we bought a property, which was a mixed farm, so we had vines, stone fruit and pistachios," Ed said.

"When I retired about 10 years ago, we decided to plant some native pines as we had dabbled around in growing Christmas trees for family and friends; we got a bit more serious after that.

"I have always loved trees. I have a green thumb, it's sort of in my DNA."

The farm started off growing native Australian pine trees, which grow well in Paringa due to the limestone in the Mallee soil.

"But then people were saying they like the scent of a real Christmas tree, so we planted an Aleppo pine

tree, which come from the Mediterranean, where they have lots of limestone in the soil," Ed said.

"It's a near perfect climate here for the Aleppo pines, so the soil here works well for them and the trees grow really well."

It takes about five years for the Aleppo pine to grow to a size where it can be cut down and used as a Christmas tree, with Ed planting the next lot of trees in the weeks after Christmas.

"There is quite a bit of work to do with the planting and the maintaining and the weeding and the trimming," he said.

"I just love it, I love being out there and doing things.

"The pines usually end up around two and a half metres.

"It is really funny when people come out and they see a nice tree and they cut it down and it's so big it hits their ceiling and has to bend over.

"We have one lady who comes with her tape measure; so she measures the trees before she takes one home."

However, it is not all roses for Marg and Ed, who are constantly battling with a cute, but annoying little pest.

"Recently we have had rabbits come and ring bark the trees," Ed said.

"The trees are just growing there nicely and the rabbits want to sharpen their teeth I guess, so they start ring barking and we have had to put little cages around the trees.

"The rabbits also came in and started nipping out the central leaders of the trees, which shapes the whole tree, so we put a bigger cage over the base and that seems to be working."

As the only Christmas tree farm in the Riverland, Ed said the business gets customers from Waikerie, Loxton and even from Mildura.

"There used to be a farm in Mildura, so we get people from all over," he said.

"There is real potential if you wanted to grow pine trees in the Riverland; you could sell them to Adelaide quite easily too."

Marg said the best time to pick up an Aleppo pine



It is really funny when people come out and they see a nice tree and they cut it down and it's so big it hits their ceiling and has to bend over.

tree was early December, ensuring the tree was still in good condition for Christmas Day.

"It's better to wait until the first of December, so we tell people don't bother coming before then because then the trees are not really that nice before Christmas," Marg said.

"The second week in December is the best because they will still look and smell nice as long as you keep the water container full.

"One of the customers actually started the tagging idea.

"So, what some people do is they come to the farm in the middle of November and they tag the tree which they like.

"Customers find a tree which is really nice, put a band around it with their name on it and come and collect it

two or three weeks before Christmas."

The farm sells approximately 60 trees each season, with Ed saying he is "really happy with that".

"We have got 300 in the ground here, but they are all at different stages," he said.

"It's not a big business in any shape or form, but we just enjoy it. It's a bit of a hobby really."

While many people may be interested in expanding such a business into a bigger entity, Ed and Marg are happy to keep it exactly how it has always been.

"We have seen websites where the farms are bigger and they have kitchens and eateries and ice cream with 25 people working there," Ed said.

"We don't want that; we just want to keep it small and simple."



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High flows hitting SA water quality

August to October 27, 2022: 200.6mm
Rainfall to November 2021: 321.8mm
Rainfall to November average: 335.9mm

“ Given the scale of natural flooding, prevention is not possible and mitigation options are very limited. ”




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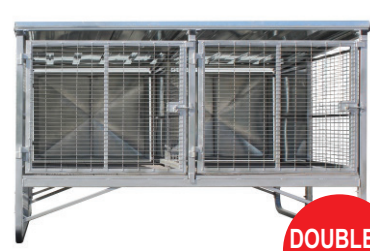


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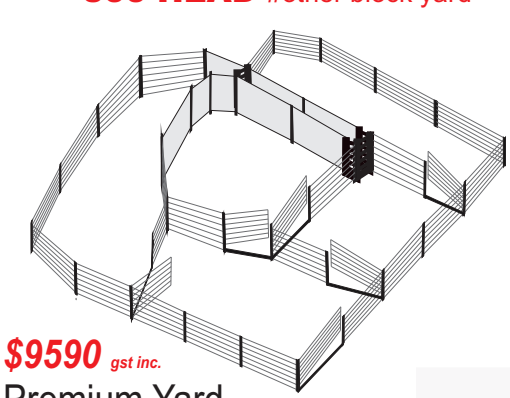
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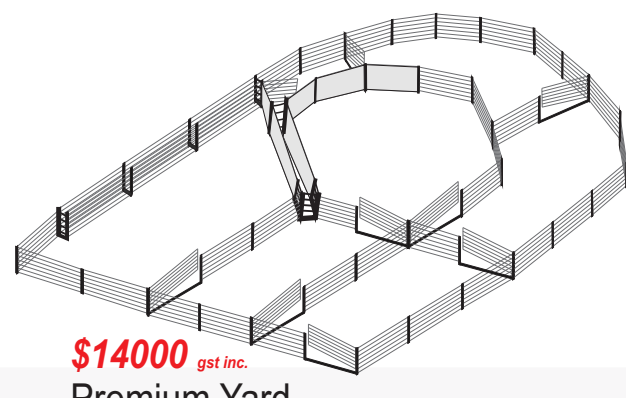
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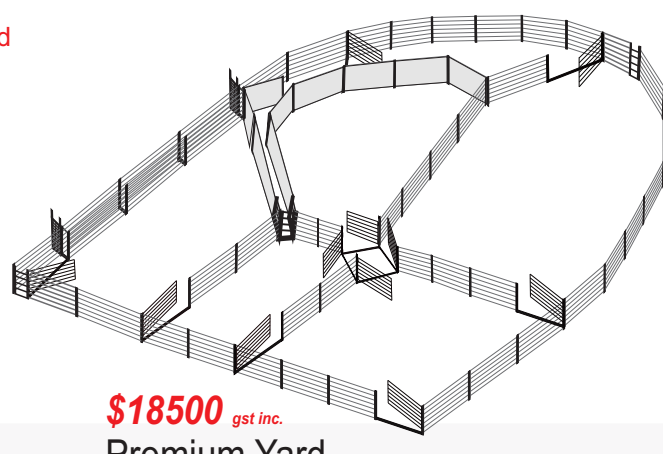
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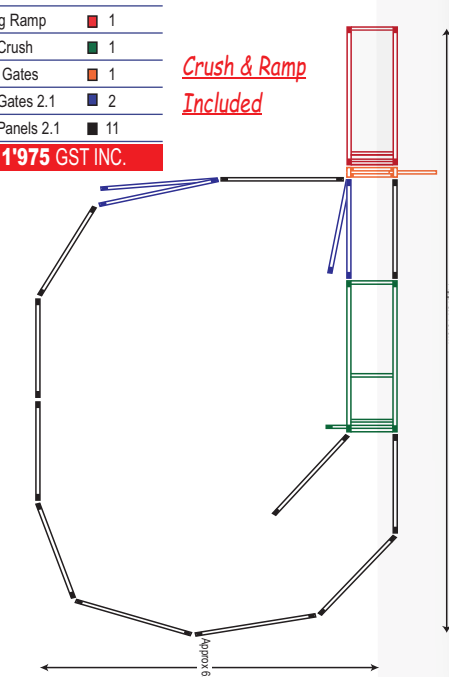
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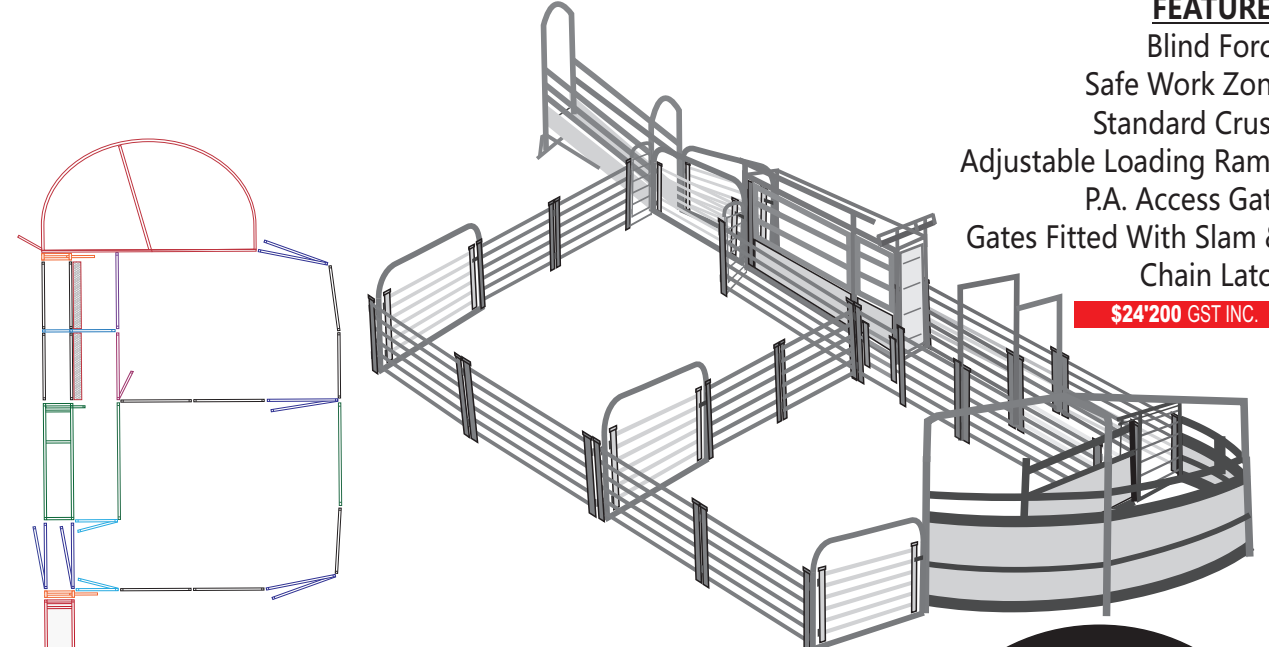
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Take a gander at Fat Goose Fruits

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
ELYSE ARMANINI

FOR more than a century, the Howie family has grown citrus trees in Renmark, and Humphrey Howie has taken the next step into the future: converting his orchard to certified organic.

The five-acre home block is a small snapshot into what the 50-acre block about 3km away looks like, as the main citrus-growing property for Humphrey's Fat Goose Fruits business.

"Our family has been in Renmark for a really long time, since the 1880-90s," Humphrey said.

"My grandfather built our house in about 1910 and we've been on this patch of land for 120 years.

"My father returned from World War II and planted up a lot of citrus here on our home block.

"Originally they had dried fruit. Back in those days fresh fruit was too hard to get to the markets because it was put on a paddle steamer and would've taken weeks to make it to Adelaide."

Fat Goose Fruits grows "pretty well the whole range" of citrus – about 15 varieties – including valencia oranges, navels, four different types of mandarins, limes, lemons and grapefruits.

Other fruits grown in small numbers include avocados and persimmons, which are interplanted between the oranges at the Howie home block.

"The main crop is the valencia because of its long season," Humphrey said.

"We started picking in early October and we will keep picking until about April/May.

"We are planning to increase our plantings on our main block. After going through the millennium drought, there are still areas we haven't replanted.

"We made the decision back then – because water was scarce – to sacrifice a few areas, but now we are starting to replant a few more navels, lemons and avocados."

While his dad, Jim Howie, was still in charge of the citrus operations in the early '80s, Humphrey completed an ag-science degree and worked for a few years with the Department of Agriculture, before moving on to the horticultural side of Loxton Research Centre, looking at salinity and irrigation management for citrus.

During an overseas trip to Europe, Humphrey and Michelle met a fellow traveller who changed the trajectory of the Fat Goose Fruits business.

"You could kind of see that things were changing around the world to becoming more aware of how produce was actually grown," Humphrey said.

"We met one young bloke in a camping site somewhere and we said we were fruit growers and he asked if we were organic. I had no idea what organic was, so that sowed a seed with us. It was after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and that made people more aware of the food they were eating.

"We came back to Australia and started work on this property. We started investigating the organic industry as it was then – which was pretty small –

and there were a few people doing it particularly well, especially in the Sunraysia region.

"We started on a small basis just converting the middle part of the property and trying to convince my elderly father it was a good idea, which was interesting.

"Fifty acres of fruit has taken us about 20 years to fully convert. Even though the markets were there, you still had to look for them."

Humphrey said two main issues faced when growing organic produce were ground-cover management and soil nutrition.

At Fat Goose Fruits, geese – some 10 to 15 years old – and sheep roam both the home block and main block orchards, helping with both ground-cover management and contributing to the nutrition of the soil.

"With ground-cover management, you want the growth because the vegetation helps improve the soil health," Humphrey explained.

"All of the organic matter in the ground feeds the worms, feeds the bacteria, the fungal and it's breaking down all of the material from the surface, and eventually that becomes food for the trees.

"We go through with the whipper snipper from time to time or we get the geese in here. The geese come in – along with a handful of sheep, who are a little more problematic.

"What they're doing is recycling the grass – if you slash the grass it takes longer for it to break down but to put it through a goose or a sheep, it's already done a lot of the breaking down and it will incorporate with the soil quicker.

"I'm not sure how much science is behind it – but the idea is to preserve the nitrogen and the minerals by using the animals to speed up the process."

However, the helpful animals come with

slightly problematic behaviours.

"The geese do actually eat oranges so you have to be on the ball, and we've got about 100 or so at the other property," Humphrey said.

After relying on other packers to pack the fruit, Humphrey decided to build a packing shed on the home block, where "pretty much all the fruit" from the properties is processed.

"About 95 per cent goes to domestic market; the capital cities including Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and Perth," Humphrey said.

"We had a hiccup with fruit fly, and 70 to 80 per cent of our fruit was going to Sydney and Melbourne, so we've had to expand those markets to cope with not being able to sell to WA or Tasmania."

Humphrey and his wife Michelle recently ventured into the red and white wine grape growing industry as members of CCW, when the opportunity to purchase a neighbouring 30-acre block of vineyards was too good to pass up.

"Four years ago, my cousin sold their vineyard to one of our neighbours who – when his father became ill – offered us to buy it and we thought, 'Oh well, it's next door... we'll buy a vineyard,'" Humphrey laughed.

"We're very much amateur viticulturalists at the moment but – even though with CCW it's not organic it's conventional and all goes to Accolade – we have decided to convert the vineyard to organic as well. We're planning to put a few sheep in there to help with the weed control."

Humphrey said he was unsure how long it would take to convert the 30 acres of vineyards to organic status, but was planning to start soon.

"Just before this coming vintage we'll draw a line in the sand and stop using synthetic fertilisers and concentrate more on the different



ABOVE: Humphrey Howie makes sure the oranges on the conveyor belt are adequate before they move onto the sorting bins.

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Bird is the word for local competitive chook breeder

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY JOSH BRINE

WHEN most people are thinking of potential hobbies, breeding hundreds of chickens to lug around to every corner of the country for competitions might top few lists.

But for a lot of his life, Loxton landscaper Dave Adams has made Indian game competitions his passion.

"At about probably the age of 10, Mum and Dad introduced us to poultry at the Loxton Show," Dave said.

"I started getting into poultry then, but I gave it up for about 20 years because of work and all that sort of stuff.

"I got back into competitions in 2012, and I just picked the Indian game because that's the one I truly loved.

"I made the mistake of going to a show, and my partner Michelle said we should have a look at the chooks, and that was it. I told her I had to get back

into chooks."

In the decade since, Dave has won hundreds of awards, trophies and ribbons at state and national shows all over Australia.

"We drove to Dubbo to get my very first trio of Indian game one weekend in about 2010," he said.

"My very first show back was the Mildura Show and we won champion bird and reserve champion bird of show of about 290 birds.

"The older guys, who are unfortunately starting to pass, are the ones you get your knowledge from and know what to do with the birds to improve your breed.

"A guy by the name of Richard Narik is who I first got my birds from when I got back into it and basically he was my mentor.

"He's still called the 'Indian game king', but about six or seven years ago I beat him at the Victorian Indian Game Show.

"To beat your mentor is not bad and you stick your chest out a little."

Dave, who is the largest breeder of Indian game chickens for competition in SA, said it was a "very expensive hobby".

"I breed on average about 350 birds per year, so feed costs a fortune," he said

"I've got a specialty-built trailer that's got caravan vents on the side and the whirly bird on the roof.

"Even on a day of about 42C, inside the actual trailer was 23C.

"I'm probably one of the lucky ones because I can sell enough birds to cover my costs because everyone wants my birds.

"We did the Victorian Indian game show just before Covid and I sold \$6000 worth of birds and my partner said it was like cats following mice.

"There was a line of people behind me seeing

what I had left. We did the same in Queensland, where I sold \$4500.

"That covers all our fuel, our accommodation and all our meals.

"I usually have enough money left to buy three or four months' of chook food as well."

To get started, Dave said he had to do "a lot of reading and gain a lot of knowledge" on how to present the birds for competition.

"I've now bought five books just about Indian game to know that I'm getting it right with things like eye colour, the shape of the bird and its stance," he said.

"In competition, regardless of what kind of bird it is, presentation is number one.

"We clean the birds, trim the birds, trim their nails, clean their beaks, you clean all the scales on their legs and you have to get in there with a toothbrush... and occasionally a toothpick.

"You've got to get them dead clean. People keep asking how I keep winning, and that's how.

"There are judges who actually weigh the birds. The Indian game is a bulky meat bird, so for a bantam the average male will be about 2kg, and the average female will be about 1.5kg.

"The large need to be at an average of about 4kg to 4.5kg for males and about 3.5kg to 4kg for females.

"We've got a team A, B and C, and who's judging impacts which team we'll take.

"That's why we've got so many birds, but it's working, so we'll keep doing it."

Dave said he enters birds in about seven shows each year, including the Royal Adelaide Show, with many of the same competitors heading to each event.

"We all get together and talk before the judging, but then when the judging is on no one talks to each other," he said.

"I sold a bird to guy from Queensland and at the next show we went to he actually beat me with the bird he bought from me.

"I thought that was good because now I know I need to improve on that particular breeding style to beat him again.

"It makes you go home and have a look at your birds and concentrate on it.

"I'll keep doing it, even if I start getting beaten."

I made the mistake of going to a show, and my partner Michelle said we should have a look at the chooks, and that was it. I told her I had to get back into chooks.





Olives of the Murray

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTINE WEBSTER

SOUTH Australian artisan table olive producers Craig McClory and Andrea Chick purchased their Taylorville property almost 20 years ago after falling in love with the tranquillity of the River Murray.

The couple, who moved to the Riverland West from Adelaide, have transformed their holiday property into a successful business, Toolunka Creek Olives.

Craig worked in the executive recruitment industry and Andrea in transport and banking.

They are Australia's only artisan olive producers focusing solely on paddock-to-plate production of table olives.

Toolunka's produce can be found in many of Australia's finest restaurants through its national distribution

network. The couple have a huge varietal range and select their produce from circa 9000 trees across three South Australian properties.

"We were looking for a holiday property on the river and whilst on a houseboat holiday in the area we found Toolunka Estate," Andrea said.

"We fell in love with the property straight away."

The fruit property was a weekend for the former Adelaide corporate couple until 12 years ago, when they decided to make it their permanent home.

Craig and Andrea cleared acres of non-productive fruit trees to make way for more olive trees.

In 2020 they established the Toolunka Estate retail brand and now supply the likes of Harris Farm

Markets in the eastern states and Dan Murphy's nationally.

Craig said the Riverland's Mediterranean climate was "perfect" for growing olives.

"Anywhere along the River Murray is undoubtedly the best place in Australia to grow olives," he said.

"Just simply because of the climate and quality of irrigation water.

"Many olives in Australia are grown with bore water which can be high in salinity and prevent required commercial production.

"We attempted to harvest table olives in the South East in 2014, irrigated from a local bore, which did not produce a quality product."

The couple did however discover Keith, which has become home to their storage and processing plant.

Toolunka Estate's retail olives are also packaged at Orana in Adelaide, as the business is committed to supporting people with disabilities.

Craig said the table-olive-growing season for their properties runs from February to June.

He said having a farms in different areas of the state ensures the harvest is staggered due to the different micro climates in each region.

"We might pick sevilano olives here at Toolunka and a month later we will pick that same variety on another

farm," Craig said.

Toolunka Estate's olive trees are grown without synthetic fertilisers, chemical pesticides or toxic chemicals. Andrea said their hand-picked table olives are naturally processed using a traditional Italian recipe.

"After picking they are placed in a cool room to bring out any blemishes or bruising and then graded within 24 hours, before being placed in a brine solution to process for a minimum of 12 months," she said.

Toolunka Estate has also developed a mix of olive brine and table olives for dirty martini lovers or those keen to try.

Craig said the 250ml bottles of olive brine and 300gm jars of green martini olives are being distributed at liquor stores nationally. He said after producing the olive brine to add to martinis, chefs also became interested.

"Some chefs also are now asking us for olive brine to use for cooking," he said.

Craig said the olive brine taken from the six varieties of green olives they produce has flavours of chilli, garlic, fennel, and citrus.

"It is blended and filtered five times," he said.

To learn how to make a dirty martini visit dirtymartinimix.com.au



Craig McClory and Andrea Chick have developed their Taylorville hobby farm into an artisan table olive enterprise, Toolunka Estate.



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AG NEWS

Co-investment model boosts SA grains research outcomes



(From left) SAGIT trustee Ted Langley, GRDC Southern Region Panel member Michael Treloar and SAGIT chair Max Young pictured at the co-invested Frost Learning Centre trial site at Farrell Flat which is managed by the Mid North High Rainfall Zone Group.

A COLLABORATIVE approach to investing in grains research in South Australia is adding value to the benefits being delivered to Riverland and Mallee growers.

The South Australian Grain Industry (SAGIT) and the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) are currently co-investing in four projects, three of which are new projects starting this year.

SAGIT chairman Max Young said his organisation's strategic collaborations with GRDC were enabling expanded research investment.

"SAGIT and GRDC share a common understanding of the importance and value of the projects SAGIT prioritised for industry funding and we welcome GRDC's additional support for some of these projects," Mr Young said.

"It is a sensible approach to research investment that puts the state's growers first and foremost. With additional investment support from GRDC, we can broaden research efforts and enhance on-farm impact.

"The co-investment model we have established with GRDC is also further supporting the research community through the injection of additional funds, and it reduces the risk of potential research duplication."

GRDC grower relations manager south, Tom Blake, said effective collaboration and co-operation across the research sector were critical to avoid duplication

and maximise efficiencies.

"GRDC is committed to working closely with research partners, like SAGIT, to ensure we invest in research, development and extension, that is informed by growers and advisers and importantly delivers genuine gains at farm level," Mr Blake said.

"In this case we are investing in critical areas such as crop protection and identifying agronomic tools to manage seasonal challenges such as frost, as well as post farm gate market opportunities."

The three new projects which have commenced this year with a 50/50 investment split between SAGIT and GRDC are:

q Developing a new high-value noodle market for SA growers, led by the Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre (\$400,000 total investment).

q Agronomy strategies for frost management in pulse crops, led by the University of Adelaide (\$123,000 total investment).

q Revegetation for enhanced biocontrol of pest conical snails, led by the University of Adelaide (\$240,000).

The continuing co-invested project is the Frost Learning Centre for farmers, advisers and researchers which is led by the Mid North High Rainfall Group, with the \$350,000 project commencing last year and concluding in 2023.

SAGIT is funded by a voluntary grower levy of 30 cents per harvested tonne.



Be on the lookout for locusts

THE Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) is urging landowners and primary producers to be on the lookout for any signs of Australian plague locusts.

A number of regions, including the Riverland and Mallee, have been identified as areas that may be affected by potential locust hatching and banding locusts following surveillance conducted by PIRSA in autumn this year.

The Australian plague locust is a significant agricultural pest which infests large areas, with outbreaks often frequent and the species producing several generations each year.

Swarms pose a major risk to South Australia's \$4.19bn field crop and horticulture industries.

Landowners are required to report any sightings of the pest to PIRSA and include information such as date, location, GPS co-ordinates, life stage (i.e. adult, hoppers), description of location (e.g. paddock, tree line or creek line), the density and size area of the infestation

(e.g. number of hoppers per square metre area infested) and return contact details.

PIRSA can be reached through the Emergency Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881).

To combat the impact of the locusts, Cabinet has approved a \$1.6 million budget to assist with planning and surveillance for the anticipated outbreak.

This financial support will help provide response teams, procure chemicals and have a plane on standby to respond to outbreaks.

However, PIRSA has encouraged landowners to factor in locusts into their current pest control planning.

Adults and hoppers can be controlled with standard Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) registered or permitted insecticides.

On properties where bands of locust hopper nymphs are present, PIRSA recommends to monitor and spray any hopper bands now to prevent feeding damage.

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Pig biosecurity in focus



PIG owners are being urged to be biosecurity aware when feeding pigs, with foot and mouth disease (FMD) and African swine fever (ASF) still close to Australia's border.

Meat and meat products, or human food waste – including cooking oil – that contains or has contacted meat is prohibited as pig feed.

While Australia is currently free of the disease, pigs eating the prohibited or contaminated food is linked to outbreaks of FMD and ASF overseas.

Biosecurity SA chief veterinary officer Dr Mary Carr said pig owners can help ensure animal diseases stay out of Australia.

"The state government takes prohibited pig feeding seriously – it is against the law – and anyone caught feeding or supplying prohibited feed to pigs can face a \$10,000 fine," Dr Carr said.

"Foot and mouth disease and African swine fever are not present in Australia,

however they are too close for comfort right now as they have been detected at Australia's border.

"Foot and mouth disease viral fragments have been found in beef product at Adelaide Airport and in imported pork floss in Melbourne.

"Pig owners are warned not to feed pigs prohibited pig feed including meat, meat products and other food scraps including pies, pizza and deli meats – anything that contains meat or has contacted meat cannot be fed to pigs.

"Play your part in protecting South Australia's \$499 million pork industry and remember that people food is not pig food."

Early detection is essential to minimising spread and assists in achieving rapid eradication.

Call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888 if pigs are suspected to be sick, or to have been fed prohibited food.

Farming exports expected to reach record \$70.3bn

AGRICULTURAL production and exports are continuing to benefit from exceptional growing conditions and high global prices, with earnings to reach a record \$70.3bn for 2022-23.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) September quarter Agricultural Commodities Report forecasted agricultural export earnings to climb almost 50 per cent more than what it was 10 years ago, after accounting for inflation.

ABARES executive director Dr Jared Greenville said the industry's overall forecasted gross value of \$81.8 billion shows it is performing strongly, with cropping leading the way.

"Winter crop prospects in Australia were looking very promising at the beginning of spring – we forecasted a 55.5 million tonne harvest," Dr Greenville said.

"Meat production is also rebounding, with the national herd and flock returning to pre-drought levels.

"Favourable seasonal conditions are expected to persist, but global inflation and rising costs of farm inputs could cloud outlook for demand and farm incomes.

"It's the first time our exports are expected to exceed \$70 billion, showing the ability of our farmers to navigate considerable global economic uncertainty and to make a strong contribution to global food supplies."

The latest ABARES forecast factored in tapering global growth, including the once in 30-year weather event of a third straight La Niña.

"Widespread inflation and a sluggish Chinese economy are the main watchpoints," he said.

"Global food and fertiliser prices

remain very high despite falling from peaks earlier in 2022.

"The World Bank expects high global food prices through to the end of 2024 which will have adverse implications for global food security.

"We're seeing Australian agriculture leaning into this uncertainty, with continued global demand for our food and fibre, another bumper winter crop and the forecast of continued favourable growing conditions."

The report comes as the vegetable growing industry sees significant growth by taking advantage of consumer income and taste changes.

Dr Greenville said the 'Growing the Australian vegetable industry by diversifying products and improving quality' report shows that vegetable industry growth has significantly outpaced the overall agricultural sector over the past five decades.

Over the period from 1969-70 to 2020-21, the nominal value of vegetable production increased by \$4.7bn.

"The vegetable sector has seen growth through a shift toward higher value products and improvements in the quality and convenience of what is provided," Dr Greenville said.

"Improvements in product mix and quality contributed nearly 60 per cent of that growth while general vegetable price inflation contributed 35 per cent and increased volumes 5 per cent.

"We are not eating greater quantities of vegetables, rather we are eating a wider range of higher quality vegetables.

"An important experience of the vegetable sector has been the on-farm value created by effectively responding to changes in consumer preferences and the role that close relationships along supply chains have played."



Podcast series supporting grape grower wellbeing

A NEW podcast series aims to support South Australian grape growers' mental wellbeing, with a different focus in each episode and real-life stories of challenges and triumphs.

Healthy Minds Healthy Vines is a podcast made by growers for growers, supported by the Wine Grape Council of South Australia, sponsored by PIRSA and hosted by journalist and award-winning mental health podcaster Callum MacPherson and Australian wine judge Nick Ryan.

The 10-part series will see growers from all regions around the state engaging in a down-to-earth chat

Health and industry experts share tips and advice, with information about support services like the Family and Business Support mentors available through PIRSA, and the Are You Bugged Mate? website which helps men in the country talk about their mental health.

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Clare Scriven said supporting the wellbeing of South Australian primary producers was "always important".

"During the tougher times, we want our growers to know they're not alone," Ms Scriven said.

"These podcasts are free and easily accessible so people can access help where and when it suits them.

"Although it's been tailored for South Australian grape growers, other primary producers in the state may also find it useful.

"Many South Australian grape growers are facing a tough season. PIRSA continues to work closely with industry and has already facilitated some workshops that include Rural Financial Counselling services, Family and Business Support mentoring programs and technical support to assist industry with some knowledge gaps."

Wine Grape Council of South Australia chief executive officer Lisa Bennier said the council recognises the health and wellbeing of grape growers and their communities "is critically important right now and we're thrilled to be releasing our podcast series".

"Through this podcast, growers can enjoy listening to real experiences from fellow growers, including both inspiring stories and challenging ones," she said.

"Industry experts help shed a light on where we can access support, help a mate and health check our businesses."

The podcast is available to stream through Apple, Spotify, iHeart Radio and Audible by searching 'Healthy Minds Healthy Vines'.

Visit www.wgcsa.com.au/podcast for more information.

AG NEWS

Grain harvest expected to break records



A RECENT report reveals Australia is on track to harvest a winter grain crop of 61.9 million tonnes, with South Australia's sights on record-breaking production.

Specialist agribusiness bank Rabobank's 2022/23 Australian Winter Crop Forecast says some growers will see impacts on grain volume, yield and quality due to recent excessive rainfall.

The newly released report shows, despite the weather challenges, the nation is set to harvest its third consecutive bumper crop – down just 1 per cent on last year's, which broke all-time production records – with the total grain crop estimated to be 41 per cent above the five-year average.

Nationally, Rabobank forecasts wheat production to reach 35.5 million tonnes, barley to reach a record 14.8 million tonnes, and canola to reach a record 7.2 million tonnes.

Report author, RaboResearch agriculture analyst Dennis Voznesenski, said an increase on last year's rainfall across South Australia's Murray Mallee region has set up farmers to harvest all-time record crop yield.

The state is likely to see a harvest of 10.7 million tonnes, 1 per cent above the last record set in 2016/17 and a 27 per cent increase on last year.

The bumper harvest will also see plentiful grain and oilseeds for the export market, according to the report, however the eligibility to supply world markets will be limited by supply chain bottlenecks both in regional areas and with capacity at Australian ports.

The exportable surplus in Australia

from the 2022/23 harvest is expected to exceed the nation's official 2021 export capacity estimation of 47.5 million tonnes.

"When an approximate figure is also added for still unsold 2021/22 crop, the exportable surplus could rise to 53.5 million tonnes, and this does not include an unknown volume of grain owned by the grain trade itself," Mr Voznesenski said.

The report sees the strong local supply of grains and oilseeds limiting the potential of prices moving above current levels for a sustained time.

"With another near-record crop in the process of being harvested, and still significant carry-over from last year, we expect local prices to be pressured below global levels during the key harvest window from now until January and likely into late March," Mr Voznesenski said.

"Growers may see some local price upside between late March and May, ahead of the northern hemisphere harvest. But from late quarter two next year – when northern hemisphere grain starts coming on to the market – and with an expected rise in the Australian dollar, we are likely to see downward pressure on local prices."

Farm input costs – which have risen substantially over the past year – could weigh significantly on farm margins "moving forward", according to Mr Voznesenski.

However, while there is notable risk for urea prices increasing, reprieve may be due for other fertilisers and agrochemicals in the near term.

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New South Australian technology for sheep diseases

WORLD-leading technology developed in South Australia is being used to assist producers in recognising emergency animal diseases, such as foot and mouth disease in sheep.

The Sheep Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) augmented reality (AR) technology has been developed by immersive studio Think Digital in collaboration with Animal Health Australia and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA).

Funded through the state government's Red Meat and Wool Growth program and Animal Health Australia, the tool generates a flock of AR sheep, providing an opportunity for the user to identify the sick animal by looking for signs and symptoms of exotic diseases

such as:

- Foot and mouth disease (FMD)
- Bluetongue
- Scrapie
- Sheep pox

"With the heightened risk of emergency animal disease, the launch of this world-first cutting-edge tool could not be more timely," said Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Clare Scriven.

"This tech will be an extra tool in the preparedness work being done to fight against these diseases.

"The diseases being featured in this augmented reality experience have not been seen in Australia previously, so most

primary producers and agents are not equipped to recognise them.

"Tools like this will help to educate and increase awareness, helping producers to be more vigilant with their on-farm biosecurity practices.

"It is exciting that this technology was developed here in South Australia. It is well timed for our primary industries, but is also generating interest internationally, particularly in Europe."

Animal Health Australia head of program-biosecurity, Dr Rob Barwell, said it is "imperative that workers across the agriculture sector can spot suspicious signs and animal behaviour".

"We believe that this exciting simulation tool along with an associated information package will result in higher levels of engagement and ultimately improve awareness.

"Feedback from user testing has been that the tool is easy to navigate and engaging to use, leading to better awareness of

these diseases and the action required if suspected."

The tool is available on both the Apple App Store and Google Play and can be downloaded by searching for Sheep EAD AR.

For further information on the Sheep EAD AR tool, visit www.pir.sa.gov.au/sheep-ead.



Budget leaving growers on roads to nowhere?



AFTER the 2022 Federal Budget was handed down in mid-October, concerns were raised by grain growers across the nation about certain aspects.

While acknowledging the "stabilising elements" in the Budget, GrainGrowers Australia believed the lack of investment in critical infrastructure would leave many growers without access to safe and effective transport systems.

"Growers in areas affected by recent weather events and those in parts of the country where fortunately, they are still looking at a promising harvest, efficient freight routes to get our clean and green grains off the farm safely to where they need to go is essential," said GrainGrowers chair, Brett Hosking.

"We recognise that the Albanese Government is trying to ensure spending is curbed, particularly in the current economic environment with rising inflation and spiralling costs of living.

"However, our grower and the regional communities they live in can't be left behind when critical infrastructure is in such dire straits.

"Funding for critical first and last mile

rural road upgrades is essential.

"We have some horror stories captured in photos and testimonials from growers across the country that highlight what a dangerous condition the state of many roads are in.

"These roads being used during harvest periods and it's obvious that the safety of those in regional communities is being sacrificed."

The Budget includes ACCC funding to investigate multiple sectors, however – despite calls for it – no movement has been made on an ACCC inquiry into the grains sector.

"The last few years have illustrated that an investigation is needed urgently to ensure the system can function effectively for the whole supply chain," Mr Hosking said.

"When there are comments made about the cost of food and groceries increasing for everyday Australians, let's include in that a discussion about budget expenditure that ensures a robust supply chain and supports our growers producing our world-class grains."



Fast-tracked seasonal harvest accommodation

REGIONAL South Australia will see seasonal work more easily accessible following a change to planning laws to fast-track temporary workers' accommodation.

The seasonal change to planning regulations will streamline the development application process, ensuring short-term accommodation can be set up quickly.

The change follows calls from companies like bulk grain handler Vittera for greater accommodation, with regional hotels and motels booked out in the lead up to harvest seasons.

The planning regulation changes will:

- Remove the requirement for bulk handlers and other farmers to obtain planning consent for temporary accommodation proposals in specified areas.
- Change the approval process, so development applications are assessed by the State Planning Commission, rather than councils, to ensure development approvals granted is appropriately and consistently conditioned.

"These changes are expected to significantly reduce the time it takes to gain approval to build temporary accommodation for the seasonal workers they need – making it easier for those who want to access these jobs,

and farmers who need the workers," said Minister for Planning, Nick Champion.

Companies will still need to obtain building rules consent to ensure any accommodation for seasonal workers is built appropriately and safely.

Minister for Primary Industries Clare Scriven said the SA Labor government was committed to supporting regions.

"This change will provide essential support to our farmers and grain handlers by ensuring that harvest workers can be accommodated nearby," Ms Scriven said.

"This is crunch time for many of our growers and recent times has made it difficult to obtain access to seasonal workers. This year we want to ensure there are no barriers getting in the way of attracting these workers to our regions."

Vittera chief operations officer James Murray said the temporary accommodation approval would "greatly assist the hiring of harvest workers in more remote locations where permanent accommodation is difficult to find".

"We thank the South Australian government for its support of this initiative," he said, "and the acknowledgement of the importance of this year's grain harvest to regional communities and the economy more broadly."

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Waikerie citrus grower Phillip Kroehn hanging a fruit fly lure. PHOTO: Paul McCormick

Growers bank on fruit fly taking the bait

RIVERLAND fruit growers, like Waikerie citrus grower Phillip Kroehn, are accessing free bait and lures to kill fruit flies to protect their crops and support fruit fly eradication in the region.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions' (PIRSA) self-baiting and lure program is available to commercial growers in 1.5km red outbreak areas as part of a spring eradication plan.

Growers have been registering for the program, but more need to get involved to cover areas of land at risk from fruit fly, according to PIRSA's general manager of the fruit fly response Nick Secomb.

"Thanks to the support of 40 Riverland growers participating in self-baiting we have an additional 959 hectares of land being treated to prevent fruit fly," said Mr Secomb.

"Eleven growers have put out 2285 lures that attract and kill fruit flies covering more than 450 hectares.

"The lures are quick and simple to use: You hang them in trees on your property, record their GPS location using a QR code and then leave them to do their work.

"Once deployed, the lures help cover large parts of each outbreak area for around three months."

Mr Secomb said thanks to grower support, PIRSA had been able to focus in a concentrated way on the highest risk areas.

"We have deployed more than 24,000 lures since August," he said.

"Some great progress has been made but there are still large pockets of land in red outbreak areas not being treated or without lures.

"This poses a risk to eradicating fruit fly from the region.

"I strongly encourage all growers in red outbreak areas to speak with PIRSA about the program and register if you can.

"The self-baiting and lure program

will run from now until at least December 2022.

"Registered growers will receive free Naturaleure bait and/or MAT cup lures. Growers can apply for both bait and lures or just one if they aren't able to do both.

"The more growers there are using the lures the better chance there is of reducing fruit fly numbers and allowing sterile insect technology (SIT) flies to be effective in stopping the lifecycle of any remaining wild flies."

Mr Kroehn recently applied for the self-baiting and lure program and has set up 300 MAT cups on his property.

"I noticed PIRSA advertising free MAT cup lures for Riverland growers located in fruit fly red outbreak areas, and thought it was a good opportunity to do something proactive on my property," he said.

"I registered online and then a PIRSA officer contacted me to organise collection.

"It was an easy process from there; I downloaded the instruction form, hung each MAT cup in the tree and scanned the QR code. PIRSA staff were also available for support if I had any questions.

"As a local grower and community member, I can see first-hand how important it is to eradicate fruit fly from the Riverland. The impact of fruit fly not only affects the Riverland's horticulture industry but our way of life, such as the freedom of growing and sharing your home-grown fruit and vegetables with friends and family.

"I encourage my fellow Riverland growers to get involved with the self-baiting and lure program to ensure greater reach to eradicate the pest."

Any commercial growers in a red outbreak area keen to be part of the self-baiting and lure program should visit fruitfly.sa.gov.au, email fruitfly@sa.gov.au or call 1300 666 010 to request a registration form.



Goats abound at Lameroo

“

Some of the ones that I have saved from birth, raised since they were tiny, and had a few struggles along the way, are my absolute favourites.

spring, but Amy sometimes adds an autumn season.

“Each breed is slightly different, but we do look for the conformation of the goat, which is how well they are put together,” she said.

“The does need to have two nice teats and udders, and the bucks have to have correct manhood.

“We look at their testicles to make sure they are not split, and are properly formed.

“We do the same as other stud cattle and sheep breeders do. We just want healthy, well put-together animals and if they have a splash of colour or something else that is a bonus.”

The goats are most popular among hobby farmers or as pets.

“You can milk them, and use them like a mini dairy goat, if you want to go down that path,” Amy said.

“A hobby farmer could breed them, milk them and make cheeses, or if you have got the heavier type you could breed them and eat them if you want to.

“(However), I don’t think that is what many people do.

“I think they are more fun pets – and they are excellent pets.

“They eat weeds, they prefer weeds over lush feed... and they like caltrop.

“My paddock out there when we moved in was horehound and caltrop and tumble weeds, and it is now gone.

“It is not good for them to eat in massive quantities, but if it is mixed in with other things, they eliminate it.”

So far the goats, dogs and donkeys have got along harmoniously.

“The dogs are very handy,” Amy said.

“They are a herding breed so if I need to move the goats around they help out there, and if I have orphaned kids the dogs lick their lips, and clean up the kids’ faces.

“They are quite sweet and they are very good with them.”

Amy is happy with her lot, and her slightly bigger-than-normal hobby farm.

“I am loving it right now,” she said.

“(I would like to) just keep breeding and there will be more and more demand from other breeders to get my lines, and for the pet market as well.

“I have a few being shipped off to New South Wales next week, so lots of interest in the eastern states.”

For PIRSA and livestock laws, goat owners need to have a PIC (Property Identification Code) number, while council permission is needed for a normal suburban backyard.

Amy Eatts says her goats are most popular among hobby farmers, or as pets.



WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY DEIRDRE GRAHAM

ABOUT 10 years ago Lameroo’s Amy Eatts fell in love with goats.

Now, seven years after moving to Lameroo with husband John and her three boys to a 90-acre farm Amy has a collection of 20 Boer goats, plus about 80 miniature and pygmy breeds.

“A friend of mine had some miniature goats which is how it all started,” Amy said.

“Initially Australian miniatures were the goat breed that was being developed.

“The pygmies are actually imported from South Africa and America, and they are a really small stocky miniature goat as well.

“I have some very favourite animals that are

somewhat vocal and a bit annoying, but I love them dearly.

“Some of the ones that I have saved from birth, raised since they were tiny, and had a few struggles along the way, are my absolute favourites.”

Amy has shown her goats to considerable success, including at the Royal Adelaide Show, sold goats to other breeders and hobby farmers for between \$300 and \$2000, and – in the case of the Boer goats – sold for meat.

“They are similar to sheep, they need vaccinations, drenching, and need their hooves trimmed regularly which is probably one of the main (care duties),” she said.

“Other than that, they are pretty hardy.

“I do find they do better here than at my previous property in Mount Compass.

“Mount Compass is very wet underfoot... The

grass is always green and lush, (so) they do better on the drier ground, the drier grasses, and they thrive in the heat which is really good.

“Fences are important. Because they are small and smart the fences have to be good.”

Amy is also Lameroo Regional Community School’s agriculture teacher, juggling her education career with her growing menagerie of animals that now also includes two new miniature donkeys, and a thriving border collie breeding program.

“The students are coming around to my love of goats, because they ask me to bring in the babies all the time,” she said.

“If I have orphans that need a bit more care, need a middle feed, I bring them into school.

“The students ask me nearly daily when they know it is kidding season, ‘have you got any goats here?’.”

The kidding season is normally about now, in



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Andrew Delengas, owner of Gawler River Roses, shows off one of the first roses to bloom this past spring.



For the love of roses, farm blooms

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY ELLOUISE CRAWFORD

SOME roses stand out for their striking colour, some for their pleasant scent and others are favoured for their heritage or hardiness.

But for commercial rose grower Andrew Delengas, all the rose varieties he grows are his favourite.

However, he admits a soft spot for the well-known David Austins roses – for their flower, shape and smell.

Andrew and wife Tass own Hillier-based Gawler River Roses, a wholesale/commercial rose growing business that largely supplies to Bunnings.

Their production area encompasses 15 acres, with another 10 acres for potting, packaging, dispatching and propagating material.

They offer 180 varieties of rose, including 30 David Austins, and others as standards, miniatures, bush, or climbing.

Mr Delengas said he brought the Hillier property with rose-growing in mind, knowing that the region's climate makes for ideal growing conditions.

"I come from Athens and when I came here I didn't have a job, I didn't want to work in a factory and so I did a correspondence course about horticulture," he

said. "I worked in the nursery industry for 10 years... I got involved with roses and I learned how to bud after three seasons and then thought I better start growing some."

The business turns 30 next year and Andrew said the rose-growing industry has not been exempt from hardship.

Skill-shortages, the price of water, and a change in gardening habits have all contributed to a significant decline in the number of wholesale rose growers nation-wide.

"Say the early '90s gardens use to be very big and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

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Gawler River Roses supplies 180 varieties of roses.



Commercial rose growers Andrew and Tass Delengas.



formal, or cottage, and people would plant a lot of roses," he said.

"The drought was early 2000s and when water restrictions were introduced the industry collapsed a bit. But we hung in there.

"Roses have been grown commercially for more than 5000 years.

"All right there's ups and downs, but the thing is we have to change with the times as growers.

"For example, now the houses and yards are getting smaller, or more people live in apartments or units, then we have to grow varieties so they can put a rose in a little pot."

Rose growing is no simple, or quick process.

First they need to be propagated by specialist rose budders – a process involving attaching the new buds onto rootstock.

Gawler River Roses has a South Australian rose budder it employs each year, but generally, rose budding is a dying craft.

"Back in the '80s we used to have a lot of skilled workers come over from Europe and every rose grower would have one or two people budding," Mr Delengas said.

"A lot of growers left and then because of circumstances – flight tickets too expensive,

Covid coming along – the connection was destroyed."

"[Rose budding] is a hard job; bending all day is hard on your body and then there's the technical stuff.

"You are using a surgical knife and you've got to understand the plant, you have to understand the 'bloodflow' of the plant, you have to understand the bud and if it's good or not."

The business employs around 15 workers during its busy 'bagging' season, which usually starts around April and goes through July.

When the roses are dormant the team works to harvest – or dig up – plants and bag them ready for distribution to Bunnings stores in all states, except New South Wales and Queensland.

"To me it's enjoyable," Mr Delengas said.

"I like to do it; I get my hands dirty because you have to with this kind of job."

Andrew said he believes the rose will always have its place in the Aussie-garden.

"Yes, it's a luxury item," he said.

"But the rose will make you happy, it will make you smile. That's the role we play."

I like to do it; I get my hands dirty because you have to with this kind of job.

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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.

Brendan Sidhu Century Orchards

What impacts has recent rainfall had on almond trees?

We've definitely got high pressure for fungal diseases, such as hull rot and shot hole.

Even in some of our bigger bunches of almonds there's some rot, which is something we haven't seen before.

All the fungal diseases will start firing up, and once it warms up they might even express themselves more.

Because of the weather we've also had trouble getting fungicides on, so that's the second part of the issue, but we've been working hard to get fungicides on.

Is it a vulnerable time for the developing almonds?

We're well past pit-hardening, so while the almonds are green, they are almost at full size. You just worry about fungal diseases because it's been such a wet season.

What impacts will this have on next year's harvest?

A wet harvest will be a pain, but the

trees look fantastic and they've put on plenty of extension growth.

We've saved a lot in power costs surrounding pumping, and in water, which is a plus.

We've probably put a bit less fertiliser on then we normally would, because it's difficult getting fertiliser on when it's so wet. You don't want to wash it through.

Will it be a smaller harvest next year?

We almost had a record crop last year, but we don't think this one is as heavy as last year.

There's a long way to go between now and harvest, but the biggest pressure we're under now is fungal disease.

What factors are most important for tree health at the moment?

You just need dry, non-windy conditions to apply fungicide. We just haven't had any warm weather yet... but we'll see what happens.



John Lush Mallala canola farmer, Adelaide Plains councillor

What impact did recent rainfall have on crops?

Most of our crops are still green, so they are still benefiting from the rain. We reckon the 80mm we had put another half a tonne on top of the canola yield.

At this stage it's all good, but in a couple weeks the crops will be ripening off and we'll want it to switch off. That might be a hard call this year.

Most of the hay in the area that's been cut down isn't too good. I don't think there will be much good-quality hay around this year, but apart from that things are looking really good.

I've been at Mallala for 55 years, and these are probably the best crops I've seen in that 55-year period.

Will that result in higher financial returns for growers?

That's going to generate a huge income from the ag sector that will flow through the economy, and that's pretty important really.

We're going to underpin the economy and create employment. When most farmers make a lot of money, they spend a lot of money, and that will be good for the local hardware store and other businesses.

Are you confident in the volume and quality of crops this season?

The volume is going to be enormous, and the quality should be alright provided the rain switches off at the right time. The size of our canola seed and wheat grains is going to be huge.

A lot will depend on how much rain we get during the summer harvest period.

Is there optimism demand and high prices for grain will hold?

If you're looking at what's happening

around the world, I can't see anything that's going to force prices down.

With challenges in Ukraine, droughts around the world, and floods, you would expect demand to only increase.

Do you expect input costs to pose challenges in 2023?

It's going to be a challenge. Fertiliser, fuel and electricity are all going through the roof.

That's ok as long as our commodity prices hold up, but for some reason if the prices go down we'll be in a fair bit of trouble, because our costs have just gone through the roof.

There's 200 or 250 per cent increases on a lot of the costs we're paying.

We're learning to buy fertiliser and everything else nearly 12 months ahead, to make sure we get it.

We bought four new tractor tyres the other day, and they came from four different states.

You've got to do a lot of forward planning at the moment to make sure you can keep things growing.

Is overseas shipping of grain still difficult?

I think that's getting harder too, and shipping costs have gone through the roof. It's not just us alone though, it's the whole world.

That should hopefully keep everything in balance.

Any advice for fellow farmers in the area?

Be prepared for shortfalls in everything. If you think you might need something, order it now.

If that's spare parts, tyres or a new tractor, you've got to order it 12 months ahead to get it.



Adrian Hoffmann Wine Grape Council of SA Region Two chair

How have this year's wetter conditions impacted vines?

Growth at this stage of the season has been quite slow because of the cold and wet.

Disease pressure is at a very high level. A bit of downy mildew and powdery mildew is being found already in vineyards.

Finding the right conditions to do spraying is a high priority. As soon as you can get on the vineyard, you're out there trying to keep things under control.

You're not seeing the same growth you would normally see, just because of the fact it is quite cold. There's the consistent rain events coming through as well.

Most growers use a contact herbicide early in the season and that does the job, but it gets washed off. It means growers will need to go out for another round of spraying.

How will this impact next year's vintage?

We'll still get warm enough conditions, but stylistically it will be a bit different to what we're used to in the Barossa. It will be more of a cooler-climate style wine.

Last year we saw a late harvest because of the cooler summer, and I think we'll see that again this year. I think it's going to be quite a late vintage.

The crop loading that's out there looks quite good, and I don't mind having a bit of extra grass hanging around to suck out a little moisture.

However, when it does dry out, it can dry out very quickly... so you have to be mindful of that from a management point of view as well.

How is the demand for red varieties looking?

Like everywhere, shiraz and cabernet have probably been a bit overdone, and I know there's growers still looking for a home for their fruit.

Growers that were struggling to sell fruit last year will struggle again this year, and pricing is softening-off as well.

I would like to think most of the people who are looking after their vines would already have a market for their fruit, because I would be a bit reluctant to invest money into a patch that hasn't been sold yet.

You don't want to throw good money after bad, but you've still got to maintain and look after your vines if you're trying to sell the fruit still.

Generally speaking you can get away with one or two sprays in a season, but this is the type of year where if you don't look after your fruit from day one, you might be struggling to get through until the end, not just from a ripening point of view but from a disease point of view as well.

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

Get those fungicide sprays on and pre-protect for powdery and downy mildews, because once it's in there there's very few chemical routes you can use.

The chemical is just not available in Australia, because it's been quite wet in the eastern states already and we have to share it around.

It's all the long-term logistical areas where you need to be ahead this year.

Mark Doecke Citrus SA chair

What varieties of citrus are currently being harvested in the region, and which will be harvested over the summer?

Most varieties are finished. There is just some late navels to go, and then valencia over summer.

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

We have had some skin quality problems this season due to the cold spring in 2021 and a very mild summer in 2022.

We could have done with some warming to make the citrus more robust. This problem has been exacerbated by extended transit time to export markets.

What varieties are proving popular in international markets at the moment?

Most of the varieties we grow are popular, from Washington navels to cara cara pink flesh navels and tango mandarins. The world wants what we grow

Is the number of available workers still a concern for growers heading into 2023?

Labour was a lot better than in 2021, with only pockets of shortages in the Riverland.

The biggest challenge was wading through the new Fair Work requirements to meet the new rules for employing piece workers.

Have recent wet conditions across the region been favourable for growers?

Citrus always appreciates rain as long as the drainage is good. It's an opportunity to remove some of the salt build up from

the last five dry years.

Is the shipping of fruit overseas still a challenge for growers?

Ships and container supply were still very tight in 2022, but the outlook is for a more favourable supply in 2023.

What should growers be doing at this time to ensure healthy trees and fruit?

Maintain irrigation infrastructure in case you need it this summer. Be aware that nitrogen can get leached out of soil with heavy rain, continue pruning and control the abundance of weeds we get in a wet period.





Kudla grower Damien Manno was crowned Young Grower of the Year at national and state level earlier this year.

Manno's Quality herbs puts Kudla back on the map

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BRENDAN SIMPKINS

IT has been a big year for Kudla grower Damien Manno.

Quality Harvest was founded by Mr Manno eight years ago, but fast forward to 2022 and he is the talk of the industry having been crowned Young Grower of the Year at national and state level.

In the space of five years, the horticulture business has expanded significantly to become the award-winning operation it is today.

The business started off from humble beginnings, with the brothers operating out of a 300sqm set up.

Mr Manno said his foray into horticulture was a way to make best use of the land.

"Because of where we are, it is such small blocks," he said.

"We looked at ways we could make a living and basically what would generate a profit."

Mr Manno grew up in a winemaking family on the Adelaide Plains but saw an opportunity to branch out and do something different.

Now it spans about 10 acres and produces thousands of bunches of basil, coriander and Asian vegetables, like bok choy, per week.

Quality Harvest produces the Herbalicious brand, which can be found at your local green grocer.

Seedlings are brought in from New South Wales and planted in a climate- and irrigation-controlled setting for about six weeks.

The produce is cut and packed on the same day, ensuring it's at its freshest for the consumer, and is 100 per cent free of herbicides, pesticides



The Native Co was founded about two years ago, teaming up with Quality Harvest not long after.

and insecticides.

And there's no sign of slowing down any time soon.

Or moving away from the area for that matter.

While Kudla is starting to move away from being primarily an agricultural area, Mr Manno said it was the ideal place for Quality Harvest.

"It shows that it can be done, it's just implementing the right thing for the area," he said.

"There is always things that you can do. I really like the area because it has got the natural gas for the heating, it has got good roads – it's only half an hour to the market.

"A lot of people say to us 'why are you out there?'. It's a nice spot."

Quality Harvest also grows native herbs in conjunction with Native Co Australia.

The company was established about three years ago by Mr Manno and former Port Adelaide and North Melbourne forward Daniel Motlop.

They grow about 20 different types of native herbs and fruits sourced from across the country.

This includes warrigal greens, sea parsley, saltbush and native mint and thyme.

Mr Motlop said there were slightly different variations for their products, which are grown in a greenhouse setting.

"We can impart different characteristics that are not found in the wild," he said.

Quality Harvest is one of the first in the country to be certified to the highest level for food security on any native herb or green.

Products from The Native Co. are supplied to some of South Australia's best restaurants but are also available for the home cook at the Adelaide Central Market stall Something Wild and Tony and Mark's direct wholesalers.



Former Port Adelaide and North Melbourne AFL forward Daniel Motlop and cousin Marlon Motlop also grow natives out of the Kudla greenhouse for their brand, The Native Co.



Quality Harvest is one of the first in the country to be certified to the highest level for food security on any native herb or green.

Family at the heart for Marrone Fresh

WORDS LUKE MARCHIORO

LOCATED in Penfield Gardens, Marrone Fresh is a business with family at its core.

Started by Tony and Maxine Marrone more than 30 years ago, Marrone Fresh has grown from simple beginnings to a business employing close to 100 people.

For their daughter, sales and production manager Bianca Marrone, the business beginnings hold a special place.

"Mum and Dad started the business 30-plus years ago on just eight acres with a small tractor with myself and my two brothers," she said.

"My dad used to put the veggies in the back of the boot and got to the market. We did it all ourselves. It was very rewarding."

A boilermaker by trade, Tony Marrone worked throughout the Northern Territory and Western Australia before working in the hospitality industry running restaurants and petrol stations alongside his wife.

However, agriculture and produce has always been in

the family according to Bianca.

"When (Dad's parents) came out from Italy, my Nonno used to do grapes and make his own wine," she said.

"I was about 10 years old, I used to work on the farms with my uncles doing broccolis and cauliflowers and I said to my dad, 'come on let's do this,' so we headed in that direction and we never looked back."

"My parents then purchased 12 acres where their house is and they kept growing and it's just been growing year on year and expanding since."

Marrone Fresh specialises in root vegetables such as parsnips and turnips and bunch lines such as beetroots and spinach, as well as producing soup packs for major supermarket chains Coles and Woolworths to be distributed nationally.

As for her own involvement in the business, Bianca Marrone started working at a young age and has had a variety of roles, including administration, safety and sales. She is now involved in business development and

It's definitely been a partnership and a love for the industry and their family and their employees that has kept them going.

general managing the site.

"I have always loved being on the land, I prefer that side of the business," she said.

"We were out on the land and we had a small pack shed at the back of my parent's property where I used to work on the line with the girls packing vegetables."

As well as being involved in the business, Ms Marrone has also been studying, recently graduating with a degree in business management and is looking to study agronomy in the near future.

She is also a mother of four children and said she had drawn inspiration from her parents' relationship and the bond they have and what they have accomplished.

"It's been a beautiful partnership and they've done it together. My dad has always valued my mum's input and in that generation women weren't seen as business women," she said.

"There was a period where Dad was in hospital and my mum took over for a few months and she really proved she could do it."

"It's definitely been a partnership and a love for the industry, their family and their employees that has kept them going."

While the company has grown year on year from its humble beginnings, there are constant reminders of where the Marrone family has come from, with one of the family's original trucks – and tractors – taking pride of place around the office.

"That was one of the first trucks that my Nonno used to have and my dad likes to keep the history and remind ourselves of where we started," Ms Marrone said.

"My dad likes to keep us humble and remind us where we started from."

It is these humble roots that also see Marrone Fresh place importance on giving back to the community.

The business supports initiatives to help the homeless, victims of domestic violence, providing hampers at Christmas time, with Ms Marrone saying that community outreach was at the heart of what Marrone Fresh was about.

"My parents have a huge heart for community outreach," she said.

"There is always some that needs help and if we are to do it, we will. It makes us happy and that is right at my family's heart: helping people."

As for the future for the business, Ms Marrone said plans were to ensure the business was sustainable for years to come despite recent challenges.

"It's not always easy. The last couple of years with price increases, labour costs, fuel, transport, it's been challenging so we are lucky we are at the size we are we can take those costs and still be here."

"As far as growth, we have a lot of focus on the farm while getting things set up and being as sustainable and efficient as possible moving forward."

"We are investing a lot of time and money to continue to grow a good product."

"It's a long-term business and we are going to be here for a long time."



Founders of Marrone Fresh, Tony and Maxine Marrone on the farm. PHOTOS: Supplied



The original Marrone family truck on site at Marrone Fresh.



A fully restored tractor, one of the first used by the Marrone family on site at Marrone Fresh.

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Rebekah Richardson, of Angaston's Lucid Distilling Co., with her lime and chilli spirits. PHOTOS: Kayla Den Hollander

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You're not dreaming! Hear Me Roar, Lucid Distilling says

WORDS VANESSA ROSE

IT started in a garage and with a love of experimenting.

Add to that a desire to create simple cocktails plus the difficulty of finding two types of spirit on the market and Lucid Distilling Co. was born in Angaston.

The dream of Rebekah Richardson, a winemaker of 25 years and counting, has become a reality.

In what started as a Covid project, working with friend Scott DiSalvo, who was master distiller for E & J Gallo in California where Ms Richardson was employed for seven years, she has taught herself the process.

"Scott offered guidance and learning all along the way. So, from playing around with a small still through Covid, I now play around with larger volumes for various projects," she said.

"I spent most of my winemaking career in large corporate and enjoyed the breadth of these roles.

"A few years ago I realised I wanted

to have more time to do the things I loved, such as spending time with the important people in my life, rock climbing, motorbiking, reading and taking my tiny camper out and about, so just stepped off the merry go round."

From there, Ms Richardson, along with Ed, "the man beside the woman [who] likes to be behind the scenes", decided they loved the idea of lime and chilli spirits.

"We then started to think about what was missing presently in the cocktails market," she said.

"We wanted to make something that showed the beautiful intensity of our chosen ingredients.

"We didn't want it to have anything artificial or any sugar. Most importantly, we wanted it to be versatile and be able to stand alone as a new to world spirit offering."

And then came Lucid, which Ms Richardson said was all about one of the definitions of the word – "showing or having the ability to think clearly, especially in intervals

between periods of confusion or insanity".

"It felt – particularly through the early days of Covid – that we were all trying to think clearly but there was this confusion and insanity," she explained.

"I also love the idea of being in a dream but able to control events. All of it sort of struck home as I was creating the spirit.

Using ingredients home-grown organically in their garden, Ms Richardson produces Lucid Chilli and Lucid Lime spirits.

"They are intense spirits made to be part of the cocktail experience," she said. "I love lime and chilli and couldn't find anything on the market that was natural, not sweetened, intense and flavourful.

"Everything was either really sweet or all the flavour and aroma was not from a natural source.

"I am a huge fan of tequila-based cocktails and I wanted something that would augment those, or stand alone as a tasty spirit to have with just a mixer."

What makes these spirits special compared to competitors is that they are triple-distilled from a wine-base-with-distillation technique Ms Richardson said she has not heard of anyone else using.

"I make the spirit from start to finish. Then, the ingredients are infused into the spirit with a combination of dried and fresh at different times, for different periods and at different alcohols.

"The process is very much small batch and takes quite a bit of time."

Although the brand was created as a "fun project", Ms Richardson said she "wanted to do good with it, so all profits are sent to global re-wilding initiatives".

But her generosity doesn't stop there.

She is also involved in raising funds for women in the wine industry through the 'Hear Me Roar' brand, "to help lift them up and hopefully continue to close the gap on gender and wage disparity".

Hear Me Roar launched in 2019 with a collaborative shiraz to not only recognise women in wine, but also fund opportunities for them to succeed.

"I sit on the Women in Wine Awards board, which is the brainchild of Jane Thomson," Ms Richardson said.

"Her idea was to create the first women in wine awards in the world in an effort to highlight the wonderful women in our industry and continue to raise awareness about the lack of parity both in physical representation but also in remuneration.

"Having reached fairly senior levels in the wine industry, I felt we needed to do more to bring women up to those levels and beyond."

The first Hear Me Roar product, a shiraz wine made by Ms Richardson and three other female winemakers – Sue Hodder of Wynns Coonawarra, Corrina Wright of Oliver's Taranga and Emma Norbiato of Calabria wines – helped raise about \$40,000 which went directly to funding women to achieve developmental opportunities in their chosen area.

"We are hoping to match if not exceed this for Hear Me Roar – the Gin," she said.

"The recipe for the gin was determined by a vote after asking women across the industry to submit what ingredients they thought should be included.

"We then narrowed these entries down to four choices, this went out to vote and with over 200 people placing their vote the final winner was Tracy Taylor from Southwood Vineyards in Tasmania.

"Her winning combination was blackcurrant leaf, native finger lime and Tasmanian pepperberry.

The project has been supported by the Women in Wine Awards board along with companies donating services and products, including Ms Richardson, with sponsorship and distillation.

All profits will go to assist women to flourish and succeed in their chosen profession in the Australian wine industry.

As for her Ms Richardson's own industry plans?

"I am just enjoying seeing where it may take me," she said. "Already it has taken me to creating Hear Me Roar as well as helping out a few friends with their distilling project."



Having reached fairly senior levels in the wine industry, I felt we needed to do more to bring women up to those levels and beyond.

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Hops a plenty
in the Tanunda
garden. PHOTO:
Martin Ritzmann



Western Ridge redefines brewing

WORDS KAYLA DEN HOLLANDER

FULL STORY ON PAGES 40 & 41

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Western Ridge Brewing's Olexij Straschko flanked by barrels of Western Ridge brews. PHOTOS: Phil Williams



Olexij Straschko with some of the breweries' own dried hops.



Western Ridge's David Henderson pulls one of Western Ridge's own brews.

IS it a brewery or a scene out of a Clint Eastwood movie?

The Western Ridge Brewing Collective is the passion project of five beer-loving mates who use small-batch brews in their western-themed cellar door to unleash their creativity.

What once was a common love of brewing and a backyard operation has since become home to a melting pot of individual ideas using hyperlocal ingredients, served cold.

Co-owner Olexij Straschko said the abundance of fresh ingredients within the Barossa region was a muse for their unique brewery creations.

"We really love the Barossa, and proud of the different availability of ingredients in our area," he said.

"It's just such a wonderful talking point to say that some of our beers... the majority of the ingredients

come from a few kilometres away."

This includes home-grown hops, which take centre stage in the collective's creations.

Mr Straschko's two hop plants he purchased from a grower in the Adelaide Hills soon turned into 14 different plant varieties growing in his small block in Gawler.

He said a familial passion for gardening turned into a natural progression toward growing the hops for beer.

"For myself, my family being from Ukraine, we've always spent time in the garden, and my parents and grandparents have always been passionate about trying to grow different things."

"When I got into brewing, as people do with any other hobby, they start off at a very basic level, so I learnt more about the process.

"It basically comes down to 'how can we have more security behind our production and ingredients?'"

He's since downsized, but co-owner Alex Marschall's mum's property in Tanunda is still brimming with hops.

However, the secret behind the collective's range of brews lies in neighbours' backyards and paddocks down the road.

"It's just such a wonderful talking point to say that some of our beers... the majority of the ingredients come from a few kilometres away," Mr Straschko said.

"People are able to come in with bags of fruit and they might say 'hey, have you got a use for all of these prickly pears?', and we're like 'yeah, absolutely we do, come here in a couple of weeks and we'll make a beer together'.



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Young entrepreneur lifts spirits in Barossa

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
IMOGEN EVANS

VINE Vale, a small sub-region of the Barossa Valley flats, has become home to the recently opened Edinburgh Distillery founded by 22-year-old Caitlin Curtis.

Officially launched in June this year, the distillery aims to bring a fresh perspective to Barossa spirits, hoping to show other young people how much the region has to offer.

Having grown up surrounded by her family's love for deep reds and her father's winery business, Ms Curtis is no stranger to the industry.

"When I got to my mid-teens I would come along with my dad to the different wineries and vineyards with other winemakers. I was exposed to the history here," she said.

With her dad responsible for the flavour palettes and distillery process, Ms Curtis focuses her efforts on workshopping ideas and marketing.

"I have a passion for design and am currently studying marketing and design at Uni SA, from that I had the opportunity to do something that I thought was missing to the Barossa," she said.

"The Barossa is definitely the type of place that only your parents come, to which is fine, but there's a viewpoint that is lost from younger generations."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



Caitlin Curtis, founder and owner of Edinburgh Distillery, is excited to share her experimental spirits with The Barossa.



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Products available from Edinburgh Distillery are available online and at selected bars.

Despite struggling with people “not taking [her] seriously” given her age, Ms Curtis thinks being so young in the industry is an advantage.

“A lot of people think you’re inexperienced, but if anything, that means I’m not stuck in anyway, I am completely ready to learn and it’s exciting,” she said.

“If you are confident in what you’re doing and know who heartedly that you’ve done your best that’s no different to someone who’s older than you.”

“This vision is all by a 22-year-old and people should respect that.”

And while Ms Curtis acknowledges her advantage having worked with family on the business, she think her father’s tough love has only pushed her to work harder.

“It allows us to channel that brutal energy into doing something important, so we can create products that are truly made with love.”

Focusing on getting other younger people interested in the area, Ms Curtis says she creates no ‘regular drinks’, with her distillery making shiraz-infused gin, black vodka and even colour-changing spirits.

“I like to experiment and be creative,” she said.

“How else can you be creative than to have products that allow you to try something new every time you drink it?”

Along with the black vodka, the Barossa Valley shiraz gin is a little different than the average on the market, with wine infused within the spirit itself.

With the products being a perfect mix of traditional Barossa wine and gin, Ms Curtis said she was excited to combine to two flavours.

“When you taste it, it does give you that full experience of having a wine,” she said.

“We pride ourselves on combining the two industries.”

The gin’s label, created entirely by Ms Curtis, represents the deep Lutheran background in the Barossa, with a transparent church window that changes colour depending on the day’s weather.

“It gives that literal perspective of looking through a stained glass window in a church. You look in there and see what the Barossa is,” she said.

Another popular spirit created by the distillery, La Tibelle gin is infused with the colour-changing flower butterfly pea, which turns either baby pink or deep purple deepening on the mix-in.

Ms Curtis said her goal was to make products for younger people as a pathway into something more mature.

“If you like vodka at 18, you’ll have shiraz vodka at 25,” she said.

“I want these to be fun, but still appeal to sophistication.”

Ms Curtis hopes to see Edinburgh Distillery as a staple in every locally stocked bar, and wants to eventually finish her degree in time to open her own design agency supporting regional businesses.

However, moving forward as a family business, the Curtis team plans to stay true to their experimental vision.

“If you say ‘I can’t’, the next question is ‘why not?’,” Caitlin quoted her parents.

“If you don’t have a valid reason, why not try it? We tried it and it worked, so it paid off.”

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42

Almond conference makes successful comeback

WORDS HUGH SCHUITEMAKER

METHODS for minimising Riverland almond production waste and increasing international exports were key aspects of a major industry conference in Adelaide recently.

Over 550 people attended the 2022 Australian Almond Conference, held over three days last month at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

Leading international almond agronomists David Doll and University of California Professor Patrick Brown were among keynote speakers at the event, and discussed how to do more with less on local farms.

Updates on aspects of the industry's research and development program, including integrated pest and disease management, whole-of-orchard recycling, water efficiency and growing almonds on

heavy soils were also among the issues covered.

In the state of the industry address, Almond Board of Australia chief executive officer Tim Jackson said despite the recent challenges of Covid-19, varroa mite, an increase of input costs, storms and challenging weather, Riverland almond growers "remained in a strong position to feed the world".

"We aimed to provide delegates with as much information as possible, but ensured we kept it as relevant as possible to growers of all sizes," Tim said.

Tim said a "plant-based food phenomenon" had driven further demand for almonds in overseas markets.

"As a growing proposition the non-perishable attributes of almonds and the returns per megalitre used are attracting

more investors to the industry," he said.

"We are working toward zero waste as an industry and are well advanced.

"To think that every piece of almond harvested is used... changes the whole discussion around water use.

"With every kernel grown there is also a shell and a hull. Not that long ago they were considered waste, but today we are seeing innovative ways to utilise every part of the fruit grown, including energy, fertiliser and even furniture.

"It is an exciting time to be involved in an industry that is embracing its sustainability responsibilities."

Tim said a market update from processing companies including ofi, Select Harvest, Nut Producers Australia, and Almondco provided an insight into current export opportunities.

The half year ABA Position Report, unveiled at the conference, showed China continued to emerge as a key component of the almond export program, receiving more than 40 per cent of all exported almonds.

"Overall exports were back on track with last year's record levels, but domestic consumption was down," Tim said.

The Almond Board of Australia also launched a new purpose-built portal at the event, aimed at assisting growers benchmark their on-farm practises.

Tim said the portal, which is free to

use, would be an "integral tool to help growers, processors and the industry in formalising what is going on at ground level, and also meet consumer demands".

Tim said attendance for the conference had been 40 per cent higher than the event's previous best, with trade exhibits also increasing by 25 per cent for this year.

Doctor Michelle Wirthensohn was awarded a Contribution to Industry Award at the conference's gala dinner, while John Bird was posthumously inducted as a hall of fame member.

ABOVE
Almond Board of Australia's market development manager Joseph Ebbage and industry development officer Josh Fielke with board member Luke Stoeckel. PHOTOS: supplied

RIGHT
Almond agronomists Patrick Brown, from the University of California, and David Doll took part in a question-and-answer session during the conference.



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Agsafe's drumMUSTER Container Recycling Program Reaches 40 Million Drums

Australia's longest-running agricultural waste management program has reached a significant milestone, with the collection of its 40-millionth AgVet chemical container for recycling. This equates to over 44,000 tonnes of plastic agricultural waste that would otherwise have been sent to landfill or have been burnt or buried on farms.

Agsafe's drumMUSTER program, which held its first collection in 1999 at Gunnedah, is an end-of-life product stewardship program that has already saved councils an impressive \$39

million in landfill costs, by diverting eligible, empty containers to recycling schemes.

Agsafe's general manager Dominique Doyle says drumMUSTER was one of the first product stewardship programs established in Australia. "It is now internationally recognised as a leading example of how the agricultural industry and individual farmers and communities can work together to provide a recycling pathway for AgVet chemical containers".

It is through collaborative efforts that Australia's oldest product stewardship program continues its success, with 831 collection sites operated by 356 councils and over 107 other community-based collection agencies around the country. Community groups that take part in the program are able to raise much needed funds for their communities through the inspection of drums as they enter the collection sites for recycling. To date, over \$5m has been raised through the program for such community groups.

"As a voluntary program, the drumMUSTER product stewardship program has adapted to fit the needs of councils, farmers, retailers and manufacturers of the chemicals. We have a flexible approach to collections, this includes engaging with over 100 community organisations to not only maximise collections, but also provide great fund-raising opportunities," Ms Doyle says.

So remember to rinse them out, round them up and run them in to your local drumMUSTER site.

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« Australian Frost Fans Expanding »

Spring season brings unpredictable weather such as frost events. Australian Frost Fans has been at the forefront of premium crop protection to orchards for years. An increase in demand for frost fan installations across the country has seen them open a Service Centre in Griffith, NSW.

The Griffith service centre was opened in May of this year when two new staff joined the team. Having a base in the region allows the team at Australian Frost Fans to keep a fleet of machines and stock available, resulting in a shorter lead time for servicing and installation of machines in the area.

With Griffith being a large horticultural region, FrostBoss® frost fans protect a variety of crops – including citrus for Pacific Fresh. Marcello Mallamace, a grower and shareholder of Pacific Fresh said that "Frost fans are an insurance policy. By saving the trees and gaining a full crop, the fans pay for themselves quickly and provide

supply security and consistent fruit quality for the packing shed and for our customers".

Joining the new Griffith service centre is a depot in the Riverland. This opened in August with an experienced local frost fan technician joining the team to meet local demand. And across the ditch in New Zealand, a new composite blade factory is currently under construction and expected to be finished in March 2023. This will allow for a faster production time of the FrostBoss® machines and significantly increase manufacturing capacity.

If you are in the Griffith or Riverland area and want to learn more about frost protection, get in touch:

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This article was written by Abbie Franklin of Australian Frost Fans



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AG NEWS

Award-winning brandy's just dandy

A RIVERLAND distillery tasted success at the recent Australian Distilled Spirit Awards, held in Melbourne.

Renmark-based St Agnes Distillery won Best Brandy for its St Agnes XO, which an awards spokesperson said had "aromas of citrus and stone fruits open to layers of candied fruits, as well as quince jelly and marmalade matched with integrated sweet oak".

Now in its eighth year, the Australian Distilled Spirits Awards is Australia's first and largest national awards program.

It recognises excellence in Australian distilled spirits, liqueurs, and aromatics.

This year saw a 12 per cent increase in entries from more than 208 exhibitors, with the 863 entries completing a record-breaking year for the awards.

The awards were judged by 42 accomplished experts in distilling, spirits retailing and writing from across the country.

The awards are run by Melbourne Royal, a member-based, not-for-profit organisation that was formed in 1848 with the purpose to celebrate agriculture, cultivate events and strengthen communities.



Gavin Stuart accepting St Agnes Distillery's Best Brandy award at the recent Australian Distilled Spirit Awards. PHOTOS: supplied

"The Australian Distilled Spirits Awards is regarded as Australia's first and largest national award program that proudly recognises the long tradition of distilling in Australia, and the emergence of the new generation of spirits," said Melbourne Royal CEO Brad Jenkins.

"Medal and trophy winners in the 2022 Australian Distilled Spirits Awards now have unique and valuable opportunities to leverage their success and market medal-winning products using the Melbourne Royal seal of excellence."

South Australia was a dominant force at the event, collecting a swag of awards, including the prestigious Champion Australian Distiller crown, taken out by Never Never Distilling Co, of McLaren Vale.



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