

INQUIRY INTO ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE IN NSW

Organisation: Hawkesbury Harvest
Name: Mr Alan Eagle
Position: Secretary
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Hawkesbury Harvest
P.O. Box 747 Richmond NSW 2753
www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au
info@hawkesburyharvest.com.au

Aspects of agriculture in NSW (Inquiry)

To

Standing Committee on State Development
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000
Fax: (02) 9230 2981

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the 'Aspect of Agriculture'.

Hawkesbury Harvest are committed to ensure Agriculture has a role to play in the Sydney basin.

If you need further information or wish us to address your committee please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Alan Eagle
Secretary
Hawkesbury Harvest
15th August 2007.



Hawkesbury Harvest is a community based association committed to the economic viability and sustainability of local agriculture

Submission to the Standing Committee on State Development on:

THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN NSW

The contribution of agriculture and agricultural-based products to the NSW economy

This submission is specific to agriculture in the urban and urbanising environments. Its reference is the Sydney Statistical Division (SD) and the role of Hawkesbury Harvest because that is where most of the work on which this submission is based has occurred.

- Research suggests that the value of agricultural production associated with urban areas in Australia is in the order of 25% of Australia's total production.¹
- The farm gate value of agriculture in the Sydney SD is estimated at \$1 billion per annum. This represents approximately 12% of NSW's total agricultural production grown on approx 1% of the State's agricultural land.²
- The contribution of this agriculture to the State's economy is at least \$3 billion when a conservative multiplier factor of 3 is applied.
- There are at least 8000 (ABS) and possibly as many as 11,000 (NSW Agriculture) people employed full time in agriculture in the Sydney SD. This represents in the order of 11% of the State's total employment numbers in the agricultural industry.³

Impediments to sustaining appropriate levels of productive capacity and growth in the agricultural industry

- Over 80% of NSW's population lives in coastal local government areas of which 75% live in the Sydney SD, the Newcastle Statistical Sub-division (SSD) and the Wollongong SSD.⁴

¹ Houston, P. (2005). "Re-valuing the fringe: Some findings on the value of agricultural production in Australia's peri-urban regions." *Geographical Research* 43(2): 209-223

² Gillespie, P.D. and D. Mason (2003). *The Value of Agriculture in the Sydney Region: February 2003*. Sydney, NSW Agriculture (Draft)

³ Ditto

⁴ Gillespie, P.D. (2003). *Agricultural Trends in the Sydney Region 1996-2001 – Census Comparisons*. March 2003. Sydney, NSW Agriculture (Draft)

- There was a 10.5% loss of land available to agriculture in the Sydney SD during the period 1997 – 2001. The area available to agriculture in the Sydney SD in 2001 was 76,900 hectares.⁵
- A land-use survey of the rural lands in Western Sydney indicates that 78.3% of all rural lots are designated rural residential. Intensive plant use accounts for 6.8%, extensive agriculture 2.9% and intensive animals .08%. The study revealed that the Councils with highest rural residential uses also had the highest number of intensive agricultural uses scattered throughout their respective local government areas leading to rural land use conflict.⁶
- The coastal zone of NSW is a distinct climatic zone. Fragmentation and sterilisation of agricultural land due to rapid urbanisation and planning that does not cater for agriculture in the urban and urbanising environment is removing a climatic option for the production of food in NSW. It can be argued this situation applies to Australia in general.

International trends in agriculture in urban and urbanising environments

Taken from David Mason's 2006 Churchill Fellowship Report on 'Urban Agriculture' (countries visited were Singapore, the Netherlands, UK, USA and Canada)⁷:

- Agriculture in the urban and urbanising situation is a political issue or is increasingly becoming a political issue in Europe and North America
- Agriculture has the capacity to adapt to changing circumstance brought about by urbanisation where the opportunity to do so is provided
- The creativity/entrepreneurialism of people in being able to grow and market local food to meet market demands comes to the fore when the opportunity to do so is provided and impediments are removed.
- There is a distinct trend of a consumer-driven food system as distinct from a producer (historic) or a globalised supermarket (current) driven one.
- There is an increasing demand trend for local/regional food in urban communities and direct marketing is playing a significant role in that trend.
- There is an increasing recognition of sustainable local/urban agriculture's role and capacity to contribute to urban ecosystems including resource recycling.
- There is an increasing perception there is a positive relationship between sustainable local/urban agriculture and the public health of associated communities.
- Agricultural land preservation is being addressed through a range and combination of processes, structures, policy and strategy which in some countries is being supported by legislation.
- "Traditional economics will tell you that as a society develops into a service and knowledge economy, agriculture is the first thing to go. Not so. The most important thing is for traditional agriculture to regenerate as urban agriculture through its integration with the urban. When this happens, the logistics associated with producing food for health and fashion and plants for fashion, which is where the demand exists (in the Netherlands), also contributes to a

⁵ ABS, 2002

⁶ Edge Land Planning (2003). Western Sydney Rural Land Use Study – prepared for the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources

⁷ Mason, D.W. (2007). Urban Agriculture. Winston Churchill Fellowship 2006 Report - download from: www.urbanagricultureworldwide.com

knowledge industry.”⁸

The scope of agriculture in the urban and urbanising environment:

- Forms of urban agriculture:⁹
 - Social - backyard, community and communal gardens, school agricultural plots, and historical
 - Enterprising – rooftop and wall vegetation, lifestyle/hobby, boutique/cottage/niche, farm gate, agritourism, pick-your-own, and equine (recreational, sport and stud)
 - Production
 - Field/paddock - market gardens, dairies, turf, orchards, fodder crops, and agri-forestry
 - Hi tech – greenhouse horticulture, nurseries, poultry, fix pad dairies, mushrooms, protected cropping, aquaponics, hydroponics.

- Multi disciplinary integration of urban agriculture with:¹⁰
 - Agribusiness generally
 - The wellness industry
 - On-farm care for handicapped and those people in rehabilitation
 - Bio-security
 - Food safety
 - Urban ecology
 - City design
 - Building design
 - Water recycling
 - Organic waste recycling
 - Landscape management
 - Natural resource management

- A strategic resource for positioning urban agriculture in the context of:¹¹
 - Pandemics such as bird flu
 - Food security
 - Global warming
 - Human health
 - Environmental health
 - Natural disasters
 - Immigration
 - Globalisation
 - Terrorism
 - Development of a knowledge economy

⁸ Personal conversation with Dr Peter Smeets, Research Scientist, Landscape Centre, Wageningen UR; Alterra; Innovation Network; The Netherlands; October 2006 -

⁹ Mason, D. and Docking, A. (2005). Agriculture in Urbanising Landscapes – A creative planning opportunity. Planning Institute of Australia Congress, Melbourne

¹⁰ Knowd, I.; Mason, D.; Docking, A. (2005). Urban Agriculture: The New Frontier. State of Australian Cities Conference, Brisbane

¹¹ Mason, D. (2006). Sustainable Urban Agriculture Mind Map ©

- Adaptive innovation eg. Hawkesbury Harvest – www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au

- Research:¹²
 - Smart foods
 - Nanotechnology
 - Other technologies
 - Water use efficiency
 - Micro climate agriculture
 - Local food/human health relationship
 - Efficient micro-organisms

- Planning:¹³
 - Mix of land use forms
 - Built
 - Housing
 - Retail
 - Commercial
 - Industry – traditional
 - Agribusiness
 - Cultural
 - Environment
 - Indigenous
 - Recreation
 - Agriculture
 - Traditional macro approach/responses
 - Policy and regulation
 - Zoning (numerically based)
 - Innovative macro and micro approach/responses
 - Preferred industry uses
 - Land use suitability
 - Land use compatibility
 - Industry resource needs matched with existing and projected resource availability
 - Offsets
 - Biodiversity
 - Native vegetation
 - Development rights etc
 - Carbon credits

¹² Knowd, I.; Mason, D.; Docking, A. (2005). Urban Agriculture: The New Frontier. State of Australian Cities Conference, Brisbane

¹³ Knowd I., Mason D. and Sinclair I., 2006: *Growing Food and Growing Houses – It's a Landscape Thing*. Inaugural World Planners Congress, Vancouver, Canada

Initiatives to address impediments to sustaining appropriate levels of productive capacity and growth in agricultural industry.

Hawkesbury Harvest

A Summary of Hawkesbury Harvest Achievements

Hawkesbury Harvest formed in response to the pressures of urban development and changing market structures in the food system of the Sydney basin. Farmers and community health professionals were concerned to address the issues of health, local food supply, safety, security and equity for producers and consumers. The initial thrust for change sought to 're-orient the food system' resulting in the formation of a Farm Gate Trail (FGT).

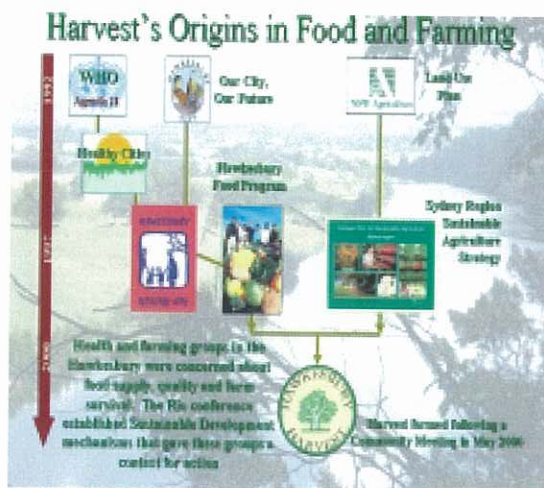
The FGT project was the first of three agri-business development projects that Hawkesbury Harvest has conducted since 2000. In 2002 Hawkesbury Harvest embarked upon its Paddock-to-Plate project which sought to identify and develop other agri-business development strategies. It resulted in the establishment of the first Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Gourmet Food market at Castle Hill showground, the implementation of Open farm days, and the further expansion of the Farm Gate Trail initiative.

A third project, the Food and Wine Coordinator project, was launched in 2006 which will deliver on all of the remaining agri-business development strategies identified under the Paddock-to-Plate project. This project will/has established additional farmers markets, a provedoring service and retail network in the region.

Hawkesbury Harvest is an evolving organisation and its members are an enduring group of committed people playing an increasingly strategic role in the development of alternative food networks for Sydney. It remains an organisation steered by a volunteer Board who have a strategic vision for the Sydney region that sees agriculture in the basin re-gaining its productive and increasingly important role in the cultural richness of the city. This vision is underpinned by valuing what the city owes to the legacy of Governor Macquarie's grand plan for feeding a colony to being an integral part of the contemporary food culture and retailing system of the city. The heritage and diversity that this exploits are core values upon which Hawkesbury Harvest's future depends.

What follows is a summary of Hawkesbury Harvests key achievements for 2000 – 2007.

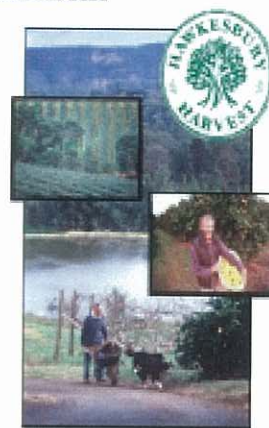
- September 2000 – Incorporation of Hawkesbury Harvest



Mission Statement

Hawkesbury Harvest is a community based Association committed to improving the economic viability and sustainability of local agriculture.

Farm Gate Trail
Grower Directory
Business Development



- October 2000 - publication of the interim Hawkesbury Harvest Farm Gate Trail map with 13 destinations. The map is now in its Fifth Edition
- April 2001 – launch of the Autumn/Winter Farm Gate Trail Map with 20 destinations. This map reflected the regional philosophy of Hawkesbury Harvest by including sites across the local government areas of Hawkesbury, Baulkham Hills and Hornsby. The sixth edition will extend the FGT initiative into the Penrith region.
- Launch of the Hawkesbury Harvest web site October 2001 - the Spring/Summer Farm Gate Trail map was released with 34 destinations.
- The Saturday morning Hawkesbury Harvest segment titled “What’s Fresh on the Farm Gate Trail” on ABC radio 702 and at times 2UE and 2CH are also bringing a significant number of people into the area
- Showcasing the Sydney Region – since October 2001 - Hawkesbury Harvest has showcased the wider Hawkesbury as a food region at the following events:
 - Regional Flavours event at Darling Harbour (2002).
 - ‘Region on Show’ at the Royal Easter Show. (2002)
 - ‘Sydney and Surrounds – The Wines and Food Lover’s Guide’ which features three pages of excellent promotional material on food and wine experiences in the Hawkesbury Valley area, focusing on the Farm Gate Trail. (2002 and 2006)
 - 24 local and overseas TV, film, radio, newspaper and magazine food experts visited the Farm Gate Trail to experience what is on offer particularly how an increasing number of restaurants are using local food in their menus. (2003)
 - Co-hosted a visit to the Hawkesbury of 30 visitors including international trade representatives of 20 countries to view and experience the agricultural produce and value added products of the area (2003)
 - Hosted visits from other regions interested in seeing what Harvest is doing in agri-tourism – eg. Kiama Roadshow (2005)

PO Box 747, Richmond, NSW 2753

ABN 56 907 792 996

Incorporation No. 9875022

- Regional Showcase at Parliament House Sydney (2006)
- Oysters in the House at Customs House, Sydney (2007)
- A number of Open Farm Days have been conducted including The Craft Barn, Geranium Cottage, Fernbrook Botanical Gallery and Garden and Penrith Valley Oranges. Penrith Valley Oranges began the 2002 orange season by having a two-day Open Farm Day event, which attracted more than 6000 people and resulted in on-farm sales in the order of \$20,000. These events have brought many thousands of people into the region.
- Hawkesbury Harvest members have been featured on all the TV life style programs such as Sydney Weekender, Getaway, Postcards, Landline, Gardening Australia, Andrew Ettinghausen's Lifestyle, the Great Outdoors and Totally Wild.
- Hawkesbury Harvest has been featured in articles in Table Magazine, Gourmet Traveller, Sydney Morning Herald, Daily Telegraph, The Land, Sun Herald, and Hospitality Magazine and on a regular basis in the Hawkesbury Gazette, Hills Shire Times, Hills News, Hawkesbury Independent, Penrith Press, Hornsby Advocate and regional newspapers such as the Newcastle Herald-Weekender. All has been free editorial.
- In 2006 the interest in educational and food tours had increased to a level where a local bus entrepreneur had begun regular tour offerings based on the FGT.
- Harvest is invited, because we are seen as representing the region, to participate in a range of special events across the region
- Members of the Hawkesbury Harvest Board present at regional, national and international conferences and conventions in the areas of agriculture, food systems, agri-tourism and alternative marketing channels for producers. Examples include:
 - Australian Regional Tourism Convention
 - State of Australian Cities
 - Biosecurity Australia
 - International Cities and Town Centres
 - World Planners Congress
- Hawkesbury Harvest has made submissions to local, state and federal bodies on issues as diverse as:
 - Agriculture Policy and Agri-industry Adjustment
 - Land Use Planning
 - Liquor Act Reform
 - Cultural Planning
 - Biosecurity
- August 2002 - a sub-committee of Hawkesbury Harvest took the initiative and organized the first Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Gourmet Food Market at Castle Hill Showground. Up to 55 stallholders attend the market and Harvest

estimates it generates approximately \$1.2M per year. Harvest continues to expand the farmers market offering under the Hawkesbury harvest Brand and has entered into a partnership with Lend Lease / GPT to operate a market at the New Rouse Hill commencing in March 2008. Additional markets are in the planning stages for Sydney City and Penrith City.

- Hawkesbury Harvest has now established a suite of initiatives that build greater choices for producers and consumers and additional resilience into the food system of Sydney.
- Reaping the Harvest – Hawkesbury Harvest members who engage with the initiatives enthusiastically have been very successful. The initiatives do deliver what we set out to do as articulated in the Mission, but are also delivering positive social and environmental change as well. An increased awareness of the social and cultural values of food production in the Sydney basin, more jobs in the agriculture, tourism and hospitality industries, and greater direct feedback to growers about their farming and land stewardship practices is creating positive shifts to more sustainable forms of action in our farming communities of the Sydney basin.

John Maguire, Enniskillen Orchard, Grose Vale

Prior to his involvement in Hawkesbury Harvest John Maguire was considering leaving the Hawkesbury. But the Hawkesbury Harvest network and promotion of the Farm Gate Trail has assisted in the rapid growth of his family business catering for local trade and a rapidly expanding tourist business. He now sees a future for his farm with Hawkesbury Harvest being an integral part of that future.



Lee Etherington

Kurrajong Native Foods started at about the same time as Hawkesbury Harvest. Since then Lee's business has experienced exponential growth due in part to the role that Harvest has played in promotion, support of product and also through the combined efforts of Harvest members who stock and sell my foods at their establishments. The various marketing, branding, sales and business opportunities that have come from Hawkesbury Harvest have been far beyond what he thought possible. Lee now is developing export capabilities in native food products.



Karen Borg, Willowbrae Cheeses.

Karen was involved with Hawkesbury Harvest from the time the Farm Gate Trail was born. Having previously never had farm gate sales, Willowbrae would have on any weekend, bus loads of visitors and up to fifteen cars. The Harvest Trail involvement brought increased sales, exposure and a feeling of satisfaction.



Ivan Glover, Penrith Valley Oranges

Ivan is an original founding member of Hawkesbury Harvest who has achieved a level of viability in orange production that was only possible because of the activities of Hawkesbury Harvest.

Farm Gate sales, Open days and the promotional efforts of Hawkesbury Harvest have created the conditions for independence and a secure future for his farm based on local sales and visitors to the Hawkesbury Region.



- Hawkesbury Harvest has been recognized with the following awards:
 - Hawkesbury’s Healthy City Challenge in recognition of activities in achieving better health for the community
 - International Award for ‘Achievement in Regional Development Practice’ from the Australia and New Zealand branch of the Regional Science Association International.
 - Farm Gate Trail Map won the International Trade Map Association – Asia Pacific Cartography Section award for a Free Tourism map
 - Highly Commended in the Most Significant Contribution to Western Sydney by a Small to Medium Enterprise subcategory of the Business and Corporate Services category of the Western Sydney Industry Awards
 - Highly Commended Award and a Special Award for an Outstanding Display at the Royal Easter Show
 - Business Advisory Services Incorporated (BASI) ‘Agribusiness Leadership’ Award
- The potential of Hawkesbury Harvest is represented as follows

The Potential of Hawkesbury Harvest

Agriculture and Agribusiness Development Model

