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## A DIVERSIFIED FARM BUSINESS

Around seven years ago, Gerangamete suppliers Paul and Wendy Troughton took the unusual step of diversifying their farm business by growing shiitake mushrooms, with the aim of providing a good second income stream.

The idea was sparked when Paul saw mushroom farming at a property he worked on in England, as well as through their involvement in the Otway Agroforestry Network, which once trialled growing mushrooms on native gum logs.

After a lot of hard work, a climate-controlled shed on their nearby Barongarook outblock is now home to production of shiitake mushrooms.

The mushrooms are grown on short, lightweight logs of oak and apple wood, which are pre-inoculated with the shiitake mycelium (the white substance you can see on the logs in the photo above). Each log fruits three times before it is composted and used back on the farm.

Around five local staff are employed to pick the mushrooms, while the processing of the farm's preserved products is outsourced. One of their previous workers, an Irish backpacker with good graphic design skills, came up with the label artwork for their products, which are branded under the name Forrest Foods.

Forrest Foods has three key products: fresh premium shiitake mushrooms, pickled baby shiitake mushrooms and Forrest Foods Master Sauce. Shiitake (umami) butter is also being trialled. The products are sold to a range of restaurants, regional and city markets and gourmet outlets, including Cheese World, and are gaining widespread recognition.

In 2015, their fresh shiitake mushrooms featured on television in an episode of *MasterChef*.

'It was an awesome experience and we were lucky to be part of it', Paul says. He adds that the experience made them think about their marketing approach and prompted them to get organised with their website and Facebook page.

Establishing and running the business has been a lot of hard work and has been a big commitment, but Paul and Wendy are excited to see it all coming together.

The Troughtons' three children have also been learning the mushroom-growing process and are involved in the business, particularly on weekends. Paul says it has been a bonding experience for the family.

'They are learning how to work', he notes. 'They know how to get in and get things done, and that's important.'



*Paul and Wendy Troughton at their picturesque farm near the Otways, holding logs growing shiitake mushrooms.*

Paul and Wendy explain they are extremely fortunate to have Stuart Crabbe, who is a Gerangamete local and has excellent knowledge of the area, to keep the dairy farm going while they spend time on the mushroom enterprise. Stuart has worked with them since they first bought the dairy farm and has become integral to the business.

'We wouldn't be able to do the mushroom part of it if we didn't have Stuart here', Wendy explains.

Paul and Wendy bought the picturesque Gerangamete dairy farm around ten years ago, moving from Paul's family's 850-cow dairy farm at Matamata on the north island of New Zealand, close to where *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* were filmed.

The Gerangamete farm runs 320 cows, milking in a 16-a-side rapid-exit dairy. Until last year they were milking 400 cows, but Paul says this was 'pushing it too much', and dropping to 320 cows has made things a bit more comfortable.

'It's working well with 320 cows', Paul says. 'And it suits the dairy.'

They are aiming to focus on home-grown feed through perennial pastures and summer crops and to reduce their reliance on bought-in feed. They have recently backed off the amount of grain cows receive each day by about 4 kg and have since noticed a reduction in health issues, particularly LDAs.

'They are a bit fuller and a bit happier', Paul adds.

As members of Gerangamete Landcare Group, they have planted lots of trees on the farm, including agroforestry species. They also have a few wet areas on the farm that are favoured by birds such as pelicans and swans.

The Troughtons feel the dairy farm and the outblock have benefited greatly from the use of compost. They were among the first 20 properties to start on-farm composting working with Camperdown Compost. At the outblock they are also able to make their own compost using the spent mushroom logs and bought-in chicken manure. Here, the soils are much lighter and sandier than at the dairy farm and the compost helps to build organic matter, enrich the soil with nutrients and increase its ability to hold water.

Both the dairy farm and the outblock are in idyllic settings with the Otways as a backdrop, and Paul and Wendy are very appreciative of the local environment and its wildlife.

'In New Zealand you don't hear the birds', Paul says. 'But there's always something to see here. It's a nice place to live and we're lucky to have the bush.'

At the sheds, the mushrooms are not the only things that enjoy the damp climate. Paul says they often see little frogs hopping about.

'I like having them around', he adds.

# BULK MILK CELL COUNTS Top 25 February 2017

*The Top 25 recognises the efforts of suppliers in keeping their average monthly BMCC to low levels.*

1	Triple T Farms	44,000
2	Ian & Jenny Rhode	53,000
3	Howard Partnership	58,000
4	Glenmead Pty Ltd (I,V & N Smith)	62,000
4	Tim Taylor	62,000
5	The Claine Farm Trust	63,000
6	Peter & Joy O'Keeffe	64,000
8	Craig & Andrea Duro	65,000
9	Hans & Susanne Vogel	66,000
9	Tyson & Vanessa Sinclair	70,000
9	Gerard & Jo McNamara (Nathan)	70,000
10	Craig & Annette Smart	72,000
11	Powell Dairy Farms	74,000
12	David, Nareda & Owen Simpson	75,000
13	Rohan & Jayde Smith	77,000
14	Des, Belinda & Simon Roche	78,000
15	Balpat Pastoral	79,000
16	Cyril & Marjo Nijskens	80,000
16	TR & KM Foote	80,000
17	Carl Walder	81,000
18	Trevor & Carolyn Beasley	83,000
18	T M Dodd Nominees Pty Ltd	83,000
18	AJ & HL Ferrari	83,000
19	Shane & Raina Bushell	85,000
19	Kippers Family Trust	85,000
20	Jarrah Farms 2 (Brett and Cherie)	86,000
21	Lance & Lynette Greenwood	87,000
21	WEJ Kampschoer & CL Bell	87,000
21	Rod & Libby Swayn	87,000
22	Lyndon & Joyce Cleggett	88,000
23	Paringa View Park	89,000
24	Doug & Karren Hunter	90,000
24	AF & EM Darcy	90,000
25	Donna Weller	91,000
25	Stephen & Anne Watson	91,000

**Factory Average BMCC February: 192,000**

## QUALITY MATTERS

*By Anne Prince, Farm QA Manager*

With many herds starting to calve this time of year, now is a good time to revisit your mastitis control program. On request, WCB will test milk from fresh cows for you, so that before it goes in the vat, you can be sure that the milk is free of antibiotics from dry cow therapy and colostrum. WCB also tests for Individual Cow Cell Count on request, with a limit of ten samples per supplier per day. This can show you if dry cow therapy has been effective. Normal healthy levels of somatic cells in milk are up to 200,000 cells per ml, while subclinical mastitis produces cell counts of over 250,000 and clinical mastitis over 1 million. High individual cell counts make it hard to keep milk in premium and below 400,000 cells per ml, geometric mean. Check your milk supply handbook for WCB policy on high BMCCs.

Consider best practice when you have fresh cows with clinical mastitis or cows that have had three or more cases of mastitis in the last season or cows that always seem to have high cell counts. Is it more effective to keep treating them or to cull them? Do you have good heifers ready to bring into the herd? Your Field Officer can help with a cost-benefit analysis. If your staff would benefit from some training on managing mastitis, look for a 'Cups on Cups off' course run in your area by your local Regional Development Program, such as WestVic Dairy.

Over recent months WCB has been reviewing the Farm QA Manual (the blue book/folder) to ensure all content is current and contact details are correct. This document is the state dairy authority approved food safety program for all WCB suppliers. Field Officers will provide a new folder (version 4) to all suppliers, and will discuss areas of importance relevant to conditions on your dairy licence. There have been some other changes to the content, so please read all the sections and sign the activity pages as for the previous version. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or your Field Officer. All contact details are provided in the folder and in your WCB diary.

## 2017 WCB ADRIAN MEADE DAIRY INNOVATION PROGRAM

Warrnambool Cheese and Butter is now inviting applications for the 2017 WCB Adrian Meade Dairy Innovation Program from Year 10 and 11 students aged 15 or over who have a strong interest in working in the dairy industry supply chain. This is a six-day structured workplace learning program in the July school holidays for up to 12 students from across WCB's milk supply area.

It will appeal to students who might be considering careers in food technology, food processing, process engineering, agriculture/agribusiness, sales and marketing, trades associated with manufacturing, and supply chain logistics. Selection is by interview at the school. For more information and a copy of the application form see [www.wcbf.com.au](http://www.wcbf.com.au) or contact coordinator Louise Thomas on 0418 443 433 or [Louise@Lthomaswriter.com](mailto:Louise@Lthomaswriter.com). Applications close 28 April.



## FIELD SERVICES WELCOMES STUART

In early March, the Field Services team welcomed new Field Officer Stuart Hose.

Stuart will be looking after suppliers in the Cobden, Boorcan, Camperdown and Timboon areas, and has been spending a lot of time out and about with other Field Officers meeting many of our suppliers.



He brings a wealth of experience in the dairy industry that will be invaluable to the team. Stuart sharefarmed at Princetown for ten years, where he also enjoyed his involvement with the Port Campbell Discussion Group.

'They are very progressive', he says. 'Discussion groups are there for you to learn, but they are also a reason for farmers to get off the farm and socialise, and you find that other farmers are dealing with the same things, which is reassuring.'

He then worked for Wesfalia, initially as area manager in milking machinery sales and then went on to manage their milking machine business in Warrnambool. He also has recent experience working at Ecolab with dairy chemicals.

He is keen to help farmers to improve their business performance.

'I'm looking forward to assisting farmers with milk income estimates, milk quality, animal health and through my milking machinery background', he says. 'I'm familiar with what a modern dairy farm requires and what the pressures are.'

Stuart will already know many of our suppliers through growing up in Cobden and through his time dairy farming at Princetown. He now lives in Warrnambool. In his spare time he likes to go mountain biking on designated tracks at Forrest.

He is enjoying learning about the WCB business and all the elements of milk supply. Stuart can be contacted on (03) 5565 3806 or 0409 728 541.

## FEEDING PASTURES FOR PROFIT

This valuable program helps farmers to make a profit through getting the most out of their pastures and their cows.

The two-day course is being run in the following locations in April/May:

- Timboon area 24 April and 1 May 2017
- Alvie area 26 April and 3 May 2017.

The program is fully funded by Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Foundation. Contact Janet Sloan on 0428 520 350.

## COWS CREATE CAREERS AT TIMBOON

By Andrea Vallance

As part of the Timboon Agriculture Project (TAP), Timboon P-12 school is running the Cows Create Careers unit as a science elective for students in years 7 and 8. This unit introduces students to the dairy industry and the many careers it offers, while incorporating dairy concepts into their science studies.

During February, the class was studying the role of nutrition for dairy cows. The school invited WCB supplier Andy Powell and Field Officer James Maxwell into the classroom to explain about the role of starch and fibre in a cow's diet and how it is balanced in a dairy cow's daily ration. Andy and James described the different feed requirements of a cow at various stages of her lactation and the importance of fully feeding cows. Students determined balanced rations for a milking cow including the dry matter of grass, turnips, wheat, silage etc. and even balanced the rations for a student's dairy herd to reinforce their understanding of the topic.



*Field Officer James Maxwell explains the feed value of turnips to science students at Timboon P-12 school.*

## DAIRY EMPLOYMENT ADVICE

Employing staff for the first time (or being a new employee in the dairy industry) can present some difficulties and sensitive issues. However, help is at hand. It can be very beneficial to talk to someone face-to-face about areas of the employment process you are unsure or concerned about, and there are at least two excellent free avenues for advice in southwest Victoria.

WestVic Dairy's Michelle Muir is a farmer and qualified lawyer, employed to work with dairy farmers on workforce planning and employment issues. Michelle is available to facilitate small 'kitchen table' discussions with interested employers and can be contacted on 0428 675 477.

In the WCB Field Services team, we have a few Field Officers who have experience and training in this area, and are available to help suppliers. Areas of advice may include the recruiting process, legal documentation requirements including contracts, pay rates, superannuation and WorkCover, performance management, training, sharefarming agreements, and employing backpackers. Call James Maxwell on 0437 921 162, Joy Coulson on 0408 529 908 or Rowan Ault on 0439 356 952 to arrange a meeting, or speak to your Field Officer to see how WCB can assist.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### TO PLACE OR CHANGE AN AD IN THE CLASSIFIEDS:

Please email your ad to james.maxwell@saputo.com or contact your Field Officer before the 24th of the month to place an advertisement.

### FOR SALE:

Lucerne hay: 23% CP, 9.3 ME, 42% NDF, all shedded, experienced, professional owner operators. Located south of Keith SA. Ph Joe 0409 041 825.

Windmill tower, 9 m high 3-sided, very solid \$350 OBO. Ph David 0409 093 503.

Cereal hay, feed test available, sourced Murtoa area, \$158/t delivered Warrnambool area, Ph 03 5385 2236 or 0429 391 206.

Reeves 2-inch effluent pump with 7.5hp/5.5kw electric motor plus extension lead \$2000; Dada PTO-driven three-point linkage effluent pump with choppers on frame \$5000, Ph Danny 0429 950 310.

ADF teat-dipping/back-flushing system. Currently on a 50-unit rotary. Purchaser to organise removal. Will easily adapt to herringbone or rotary. \$25,000 plus GST. Ph Brad 0418 857 541.

Hay for sale, approx 20,000 big squares, discounted with payment plan available over several months; feed test available. Ph Westwind Farming & Trading 0417 354 703.

11000 litre vat 15HP compressor and Packo vat wash \$20,000; 2X DeLaval Plate coolers \$850 each; 18 X Waikato pulsator and power supply, near new condition, \$4500; RVS M7000 vacuum pump \$2000; 2 X Nupulse double-ended diaphragm milk pumps coupled together, \$500 each. Ph Nick 0419 316 850.

Herringbone dairy plant: Waikato milking plant with DeLaval cup removers. Complete 32 swingover Hi Line dairy. Some items can be sold separately such as cup removers, hot water service and teat spray unit. For details Ph Jos 0428 606 290.

500+ tonnes red wheat for sale ex-farm. Peshurst area. Ph Keri 0400 062 054.

Herringbone dairy plant: complete 30-unit DeLaval milk plant (no filter or plate cooler), automatic cup removers including swing arms, 3" loop milk line, electronic pulsators, harmony plus clusters, wash jettors, vacuum pump, milk pump. \$17,000 + GST. Ph Phil 0428 988 134.

Hay: vetch, oats and barley/vetch mix. Squares and rolls. Feed test available. POA. Horsham. Can arrange freight. Ph Anthony 0427 056 886.

Contracting: Power harrowing with air seeder & rippers for autumn pasture renovations. Simpson-Cooriemungle area. Ph Colin 0429 206 180.

New season vetch, oats & vetch-oats mix, and straight oaten hay available with feed tests, sourced from Nhill area, also feed barley available. POA and freight available; Ph Mont 0428 861 159 or Syd 0428 504 487.

Heifer growing operations near Peshurst and Camperdown seeking clients. Professional and experienced operators. Ph James Whale, Meridian Ag, 0428 374 046.

Dairy effluent spreading & pasture renovation, over 20 years' experience. Ph Dominic Gorringer 0418 581 262.

FREE: Quantity of PVC pipe. 6 mm thick walls 2 m lengths & 6 m lengths/150 mm diameter. Some are filled with sand & some are filled with concrete & some are hollow. Could be used for holding down tarps on hay stacks or silage pits or used as culverts. Please contact your Field Officer.

Vat, Frigrite 4800 L \$6500 + GST. 26-a-side Coweld feed system, 40 kg bins, 610 mm, with roller mill. \$4500+GST. Ph 0438 376 433.

Feed testing services for hay, grain, pasture, silage, total mixed rations & feed pellets. \$60 per test. Free sample postage bags available. Ph Feed Central 1300 669 429.

### WANTED:

Dairy Farm Wanted: Experienced farming family with over 20 years' experience are looking to expand their business. Looking for approx. 250 cow farm to lease with option to buy or purchase with vendor terms. Prefer east of Warrnambool and west of Colac. Ph Anthony Cook WCB 0400 856 467.

Calf pellet silo. Ph 0400 419 838.

## SUPPORTING LOCAL GOURMET PRODUCERS

As well as promoting and selling our WCB products, Cheese World proudly supports small local producers of fine foods. Among the local products available in our cellar are chocolates and wine from Cooriemungle; Timboon Honey, whiskey and cheese; mushrooms from Forrest; chocolates and wine from Port Fairy; Simpson fudges; and jams and sauces from Warrnambool.

Located near the start of the Great Ocean Road, Cheese World is a great place for you to take visitors to showcase the products you help create, as well as other local gourmet foods.

Don't forget the supplier discount of 25% off the retail price of Warrnambool Heritage, COON, Cracker Barrel and Mil Lel brand cheeses and Warrnambool butter, Enprocal powder and Sungold Milk varieties. Please quote your supplier number at the checkout to receive the discount. SA suppliers can call (03) 5565 3127 to place cheese orders, which will be booked to the supplier's account and sent for collection from the Mil Lel factory.

We look forward to seeing you soon.



Proudly working together to bring you  
**FRESH**  
**LOCALLY PRODUCED MILK**

