

Heather Osborn, meat goat breeder, Giffard

Heather Osborn, Gippsland goat breeder of 33 years, is passionate about the industry which she says has a fantastic future because of the insatiable demand for goat meat.

Heather, who runs about 1200 goats on her Giffard farm, imported Boer genetics from South Africa in her bid to produce the best possible goats for sales of stud and commercial breeding stock into export and domestic markets.

She also supplies prime meat goats on a weekly basis to butchers and restaurants in Melbourne, the Yarra Valley, Mornington Peninsula and Gippsland outlets.

Goat meat has for centuries been greatly favoured by people of many nationalities and it is only in more recent years that Australians have begun to appreciate its virtues.

Of particular interest to health-conscious consumers is the extremely low-fat and cholesterol content of goat meat, in comparison to more traditional meats.

Alongside the growth of goat meat trade is a significant trend among graziers to utilise goats in chemical-free weed control programs.

Goats have an amazing capacity to consume a great variety of prickly vegetation such as blackberries, thistles, briars and many more that are quite unpalatable to other stock.

Their preference for browsing plants and moving across their grazing area, rather than eating everything to ground level, means that they are most beneficial in pasture improvement programs.

Heather has long been involved in industry promotion and in assisting newcomers to become successfully established in goat farming.

She has for some years been building a network of breeders committed to producing superior quality goats to establish a reliable supply-chain for servicing the ever-increasing domestic market.

Many farmers have achieved this outcome on weeds and rough pasture, resulting in a most sustainable and economical production system.

Heather's vision is for even-greater expansion of the goat trade to benefit more farmers across Gippsland and she welcomes enquiries about all aspects of the industry.