



Gippy AGchat

March 15, 2010 – Issue 24

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Have you visited our website? <http://agribusinessgippsland.com.au>

Become an Agribusiness Gippsland member in March and you go into the draw for five new-release books from Wilkinson Publishing including Vasili's *101 Ways to Grow it and Eat It* ... penned by the Channel 31 gardening superstar. ... *Unspoil Your Kids* by Herald Sun columnist Cheryl Critchley and *Gangsters' Women* – about the matriarchs of Melbourne's underworld. We'll draw the winner on April Fools' Day ... Only \$50 (+GST) for individuals/farm businesses or \$200 (+GST) for businesses (and we'll sling in an ad in GippyAGchat). Email office@ptarmigan.com.au, visit <http://agribusinessgippsland.com.au>, www.aginc.wordpress.com or ph 9456 9791.

No joy on ag commodity prices: Professor

The continuing strength of the \$A does not suggest any upswing in ag commodity prices short-term, Prof Ian Harper warned at a Telstra business breakfast in Traralgon last week.

The academic economist who chaired the Australian Fair Pay Commission was responding to a question from Agribusiness Gippsland chair Alex Arbuthnot. He predicted national growth would reach 3% to 3.5% in the coming year, with interest rates reaching 5% within 12 months. Sales will rise, costs will start upwards again, labour shortages and, post-changes to awards, higher labour costs.

He also warned of a credit drought ahead, saying: "We are being swept up into the vortex of regulation. You need to make sure you have a good relationship with your bank manager because banks will be looking at ways to ration credit."

He also expressed concern that Australia's financial structure was not yet ready for the demands that China's economic drive. "Our foreign investment structure is 30-40 years out of date," he said. "At the moment we're fluffing around. And we need to do something because otherwise we'll find China doing something we don't want."

A great time had by all...

Fab atmosphere at South Gippsland Shire's Sustainability Festival at Coal Creek on Sunday. Congrats to Christine and her team for the smooth operation.

Agribusiness Gippsland ran a family-friendly stand with farm-themed colour-ins and quizzes and origami (NOT oregano!) lambs. We chatted with a large number of smallholders. Almost all were former Melbourne folk who moved for retirement, work or lifestyle choice onto "an acre or two" in the shire. Fruit and vegies production, together with poultry, were the norm. A few ran four-legged lawn-mowers and some were into bush food production. Some were interested in growing medicinal herbs but wanted to latch up with others to get critical mass. Email office@ptarmigan.com.au if you're interested, and we'll link you. Our book prize went to Geoff Harris, Meeniyán.

Interested in converting your car or van to electric?

A practical workshop on converting cars, vans and farm vehicles to electricity is being held as part of the Energy Innovation Festival at Wonthaggi Recreation Reserve, Friday, March 19, from 10am to 4pm. A recently converted vehicle will be on display and an expert panel will provide information on how to convert a car. The workshop costs \$60 including lunch, morning/afternoon tea and notes. Bookings are essential.

More? Gil 5659 8238 or gilmem@dcsi.net.au

Flies get the flick!

Using sodium bisulfate on dairy flooring and bedding reduces flies, according to US research. Acidifying calf bedding with the chemical curbed bacteria and maggots, according to experiments conducted by the University of California and the USDA Agriculture Research Service. They treated hull calf bedding and calf slurry with the chemical and compared the results to those of a control group. "Larval house fly survival was significantly reduced in all pans with the chemical compound where the knockout rates rose to 100% of larvae," researchers said.

Opportunity knocks for Gippsland's young farmers

East Gippsland TAFE is giving 15 young Gippsland farmers a free opportunity to be a part of the Young Farm Managers for the Future Program. The program includes three sessions, including two overnight stays, during April and May at The Summit in Trafalgar East. Participants must be aged between 18-25 years and living and working in the primary industries sector in Gippsland. Applications close March 20.

More? Karen 5142 2529

Organic certification for your smallholding?

An organic certification workshop in Meeniyán on April 19 will kick-off a national series of 22 events staged by the Biological Farmers of Australia.

The free workshop aims to help anyone seeking information on the organic certification process, with a focus on supporting small-scale growers.

The Organic Growers of Australia (OGA) Small Producer Program is Australia's first certification program to specifically cater to the needs of the small-scale producer.

Growers certified under this program have reduced costs and simplified certification.

The 2010 program also includes workshops in value-adding for organic food and cosmetics processors, manufacturers, retailers and marketers. Visit www.bfa.com.au

More? 07 3350 5716 ext 232 or events@bfa.com.au

Disease-fighting soils study

How soils resist disease is the subject of new Victorian-based research. Victorian DPI's Associate Professor Pauline Mele is studying what makes some soils disease-suppressants. Scientists suspect microbial activity gives soils suppressive abilities, and hope to discover how to broaden that capability. Hear about her GRDC-funded project at <http://www.grdc.com.au/uploads/documents/mele.mp3>

More? 03 9210 9219

Eating is an agricultural act

Join the second Growers and Eaters forum at the Masonic Hall, Korumburra, to discuss the connection between farming and eating and vital communities.

On Monday, April 19, from 9am-5pm, participants will:

- hear about community-supported agriculture and other alternative models for food production and distribution that not only feed people good food, but strengthen and enliven local communities.
- explore projects such as community kitchens, farmers' markets, community gardens and school gardens.
- learn about why our lives and livelihoods depend on healthy, living soils and hear from people who are changing how we grow, cook and distribute food.
- delve into some big questions about food – Are we legislating against a diverse agricultural future? What does it mean to eat locally? How can we create food systems that are good, clean and fair?

The event costs \$25 full/\$15 concession and includes lunch and refreshments.

More? Peta Christensen 0411 899 618 peta@cultivatingcommunity.org.au or Kelly Donati 0402 081 832 kdonati@internode.on.net

Grand performance by Gippsland dairy

Gippsland dairying featured in the finalist line-up in the recent Australian Grand Dairy Awards. Trampoline Chocolate – an ice cream created by Burra Foods of Korumburra was a finalist in its section. Maffra Cheese finished well, being named a finalist in the cheddar-style section with its cloth-aged cheddar, and in the semi hard/eye cheese section with its Raclette. In the blue cheese section, a finals berth was won by Berry Creek's Tarwin Blue. Yarra Valley Persian Fetta again earned honours in the flavoured cheese category and a special win went to employee Jack Holman who received the \$20,000 Dairy Manufacturing Innovation award. He will use the winnings to investigate lactic curd-style cheese.

Milking the weather

The "Milking the Weather" newsletter will be launched at a series of forums discussing the key drivers of Gippsland's weather, the 'Rainman' program which looks closely at local area weather patterns, the BOM website and opportunities and limitations of forecasting. The sessions will be held:

- Poowong, Public Hall, March 18, 11-1pm
- Fish Creek, Fishy Pub, Oberon Room, Old Waratah Rd, March 18, 7.30-9.30pm
- Yarram, DPI Yarram Office, 310 Commercial Rd, March 22, 11am-1pm
- Maffra, DPI Maffra Office, 1 Stratford Rd, March 22, 7.30-9.30pm

More? Bree Walshe 5147 0834 or bree.walshe@dpi.vic.gov.au

Get paid to improve the environment

Landholders living in West, Central or South Gippsland are now able to bid for a share of up to \$2m to improve the environment on their own properties. The Victorian Government's new EcoTender program opened on March 1 and is available to landholders within the West Gippsland CMA from Korumburra to Sale, and from the Alpine National Park to the coast. The work carried out by landholders can include restoring wetlands, fencing, planting native vegetation and removing grazing stock from part of their property. Landholders competitively bid for funds, and successful bids are those that offer the best environmental value for money.

More? [DSE 136 186](tel:136186) or customer.service@dse.vic.gov.au

Technical updates for service providers

A technical update for service providers being presented by the Dairy Extension Centre at DPI Ellinbank on March 30 will look at:

- The national antibacterial residue minimisation program – bobby calves, which encourages cattle producers to use antibacterials responsibly and be aware of the risks and consequences of residues in veal and beef
- The knackery surveillance project which aims to determine why cattle are sent to the knackery to help industry management of animal health issues.

The seminar will go from 4-6pm. Afternoon tea provided. RSVP.

More? [Ashleigh Michael 5662 9901](tel:0356629901) or ash.michael@dpi.vic.gov.au

Water hyacinth is unwanted prize at Mallacoota

One of the world's worst water weeds, Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), has been found in Mallacoota. Capable of doubling its size within two weeks, it can devastate native waterways and aquatic flora and fauna. It can be distinguished by its purple flower spikes and fleshy round leaves that sit on the water's surface

More? [DPI website www.dpi.vic.gov.au/weeds](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/weeds)

Bush as beneficial insect haven: CSIRO study

New GRDC research seeks to better-understand how remnant native vegetation harbours insects beneficial to crops. CSIRO's Dr Nancy Schellhorn is leading the research. Hear her at <http://www.grdc.com.au/uploads/documents/schellhorn.mp3>

More? [07 3214 2721](tel:0732142721)

Update on pasture advances

The role of two new sub-clover species and the introduction of new pasture selection and phosphorus assessment tools will be outlined at a seminar run by the Grasslands Society on March 23. The two new subterranean clover varieties, Bindoon and Rosabrook, have increased resistance to red-legged earth mite. The update will be held at the Airport Motel and Convention Centre, Attwood.

More? [5480 3305](tel:54803305) or office@grasslands.org.au or www.grasslands.org.au

Adaptive to conditions with night meeting

The Adaptive Forage Planning project explores a range of possible crop species and varieties more suited to future variable seasons. DPI is holding a night meeting at Yarram to share the results of the Adaptive Forage Planning demonstration plots, to discuss implications for local farmers (dairy, cropping and graziers) and raise the possibilities for future demonstration plots. Service providers are welcome too, on March 15, 7-9.30pm at the Yarram and District Health Centre, 85 Commercial Rd.

More? [Frank Mickan 5624 2259](tel:56242259) or frank.mickan@dpi.vic.gov.au

National wool declaration

The Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX) announced that the review process for the National Wool Declaration (NWD) for mulesing and chemical usage status has been finalised and signed off by the AWEX Board. The revised form:

- Uses a definition expected to be adopted by Animal Health Australia, ie “the removal of skin in the breech and/or tail of a sheep using mulesing shears”
- Some minor modifications to the layout and simplification of other definitions.

The new version (NWD V3.0) will be released this month.

New timber strategy released

The state government has launched a new Victorian Timber Industry Strategy, available for download at: <http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/forestry/timber-industry-strategy>

Inquiry into soil sequestration in Victoria

The Victorian Parliamentary Environment and Natural Resources Committee launched an inquiry into soil carbon sequestration and will report its findings by August 31. The committee will:

- explore possible benefits to the agricultural industry
- explore possible environmental benefits of soil sequestration
- consider methodologies for measurement of the effects of carbon sequestration
- identify any possible harms or detriments
- identify linkages with the proposed carbon pollution reduction scheme and other relevant Federal Government policies
- identify linkages with existing Victorian Government policies
- explore options for the Victorian Government to support the benefits, if any, of soil sequestration

More? [Committee Secretariat 03 8682 2803 or http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc/inquiries/soil_sequestration/default.htm](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc/inquiries/soil_sequestration/default.htm)

Bioenergy sustainability frameworks reviewed

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) recently launched a major new study report, ‘Sustainable Production of Bioenergy – A review of global bioenergy sustainability frameworks and assessment systems’.

The report uses Victoria as a case study. Download the free 165-page PDF (1.2 MB).

More? <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/downloads/09-167.pdf>

No-till big gains

A survey of Australian grain growers has found between 70 and 90% use no-till to some extent. GRDC has prepared an MP3 looking at what could potentially threaten the use of no-till and drive farmers back to more cultivation. Click here to [listen](#).

Educating for sustainability

An open space forum to discuss furthering education for sustainability in Gippsland will be held at Kallioota Park, 93 Morgans Outlet Rd, Narracan on March 24. The forum, presented by the Gippsland Climate Change Network, the Gippsland Education for Sustainability Network and Sustainability Victoria, will be facilitated by Dr. Andrew Rixon from Babel Fish Group from 12-5pm. RSVP for catering.

More? [Scott Ferraro 5173 9800 or scott.ferraro@epa.vic.gov.au](mailto:scott.ferraro@epa.vic.gov.au)

All aboard for the Tarwin canoe tour

A canoe tour of the Lower Tarwin River is being run by Waterwatch in West Gippsland on Saturday, March 20. Departure is at 9am from the Tarwin Lower boat ramp car park then by bus to the starting point. The day concludes at 1.30pm. Lunch and refreshments are included. Bookings are essential.

More? [Marni Speed 1300 094 262](tel:1300094262) or marnis@wgcm.vic.gov.au

Revitalisation grants available

Grants of up to \$500 for land protection work are available from the South Gippsland Landcare Network for landholders joining their local Landcare group before May 14. Funding can be used for remnant protection, revegetation, waterway protection and weed control.

More? [Jill jillv@wgcm.vic.gov.au](mailto:jillv@wgcm.vic.gov.au)

WorkSafe Victoria award nominations open soon

It's time to register for this year's WorkSafe Victoria Awards which open next month. WorkSafe is looking for companies and individuals that go the extra distance and whose innovation and leadership raise the standard of health and safety for all. Information packs at worksafe.vic.gov.au/awards. Applications close May 7.

More? [WorkSafe Awards Coordinator 8663 5033](tel:86635033) or awards@worksafe.vic.gov.au

Rabobank opens executive development program

Applications for Rabobank's 2010 Executive Development Program are open until May 28 and only 36 applicants will be accepted from across a range of commodities and geographical locations in Australia and New Zealand. The first module runs from August 22-27 in Sydney, with the second module taking place in July 2011.

More? [Skye Ward 02 8115 4139](tel:0281154139), bmp@rabobank.com or www.rabobank.com.au/bmp

Into ag? Under 35? There's \$10K up for grabs

The George Alexander Foundation, administered by the ISS Institute Fellowship, is offering fellowships to help talented young people. Applications are invited for fellowships in the areas of environment and sustainability or alternative energy.

Submissions in other areas will be considered including:

- Manufacturing
- Food
- Automotive
- Engineering Trades
- Building and Construction
- Marine
- Furniture
- Heritage
- Primary Industries
- Specialist Trades

Applications to be received at the ISS Institute office by 4pm on Monday June 28.

More?

<http://www.agrifoodskills.net.au/uploads/file/10%20GEORGE%20ALEXANDER%20FELLOWSHIP%20APP%20FORM.pdf>

Website revamp brings fresher look

The WGCMA website has recently been re-vamped. The updated site provides improved, user-friendly navigation pathways and a fresher design and 'look'. The website address remains the same www.wgcma.vic.gov.au.

More? vanessaf@wgcm.vic.gov.au

Wellington planning scheme amended

There is an amendment to the Wellington Planning Scheme (WPS) as a result of new flood extents being established by the East and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authorities (EGCMA and WGCMA) in association with the Wellington Shire Council (WSC). The extents are based on recent studies and projects, as well aerial photography and video footage of the 2007 flood event.

More? www.wellington.vic.gov.au or 1300 366 244

Incentives offered to MID irrigators

A DPI program for MID irrigators offers financial incentives to help with farm planning, constructing reuse systems and converting flood to spray irrigation. Closing date is March 31. Existing or completed projects will not be eligible for funding.

More? Sarah Killury 5147 0800

Coal security plus riverine charm

International Power Hazelwood (IPRH) has opened a 10km section of the Morwell River south-west of Morwell after a 38-month construction program. It will provide Hazelwood with access to coal reserves for the expected life of the station to 2036. The new section of the Morwell River takes the watercourse out of an old concrete pipe and into a natural riverine environment.

More? WGCMA 1300 094 262 or westgippy@wgcm.vic.gov.au

Fish given thoroughfare

Construction of a fishway on the Tarwin River downstream of the South Gippsland Highway bridge outside Meeniyan is now complete. The fishway, a partnership between WGCMA, South Gippsland Water, the Arthur Rylah Institute and DSE Statewide Services, enables fish migration upstream during low and medium flow.

All aboard the new work-safety eNewsletter

WorkSafe has re-launched its eNewsletter for the manufacturing, logistics, agriculture and retail industries. The Safety Express (formerly Safety Matters) is a free fortnightly eNewsletter designed to keep you in-the-know about workplace health and safety.

[Subscribe here](#)

More? www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Hazel Creek on the radar

Baw Baw Council and WGCMA are developing a plan to better manage and enhance Hazel Creek and associated tributaries that flow through the urban area of Warragul. Interested residents are asked to complete a survey on the council's website at www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au or attend a meeting on Tuesday, March 23 at Council Chambers, Civic Place, Warragul 7-8:30pm.

More? John Crosby 5175 7841

Don't come the raw prawn with bait nets

People prawning in estuaries around the Mallacoota area are reminded of regulations concerning recreational bait nets, also known as hauling nets. They must not exceed 6m in length and hauling ropes attached to each end must also not exceed 6m. Several offences were detected in the area this month, resulting in all nets and prawns being seized. A Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence is also needed. To report suspect or illegal fishing call the 24-hour hotline 13 FISH or 133 474

Baw Baw community development grants available

Groups and clubs interested in applying for community development grants from Baw Baw Shire Council are urged to attend one of three information sessions to be held at the West Gippsland Arts Centre Fountain Room in Warragul on March 18, April 28 and May 25. Applications close on June 30. Application forms can be downloaded at www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au.

More? Community Development Grants Coordinator 5624 2483 or grants@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au

Sign up to improve your farm's biosecurity

Free fence signs are now available to help farmers and businesses in the grains industry protect themselves against new and emerging biosecurity threats. Fence signs at main access points remind people entering the property to contact the owner first to advise of any access restrictions, vehicle wash down bays, boot wash stations, visitor registration and other quarantine initiatives. It is also recommended that grain farmers read the new Farm Biosecurity Manual for the Grains Industry and work through the farm biosecurity self assessment to determine where risks lie. The biosecurity fence signs and the Farm Biosecurity Manual for the Grains Industry are available for free.

More? Jim Moran 5430 4479 or jim.moran@dpi.vic.gov.au

Options for reducing carbon emissions

With all of the changes made to Government and Opposition schemes to reduce carbon emissions, here is your chance to make sense of it all. A day on Tuesday, March 23 at Macalister Demonstration Farm includes an update of Government and Opposition positions and expectations as well as the options available to dairy farmers to reduce emissions and their potential impact on production and finances. The event will be held from 10.30-12.30pm with lunch provided. RSVP for catering.

More? Neil Baker 5141 1712 or neilbaker@aapt.net.au

Dinner and bowls for young dairyfarmers

West Gippsland YDDP and the UDV DC 7 invite young dairy industry participants to a dinner and ten pin bowling on Friday, March 19. Meet for dinner at 59 on Queen (formerly Markquay) Queen Street, Warragul at 7pm. Cost is \$10 per person for dinner. There will be a UDV and YDDP presentation. After dinner it will be time to chill out and have a fun night ten pin bowling. Please book for either dinner or dinner and bowling. The meal has been subsidised by the Gardiner Foundation. RSVP by Wednesday, March 17.

More? Kylie Barry 5624 3900 or yddpgipps@dcsi.net.au

Just Released

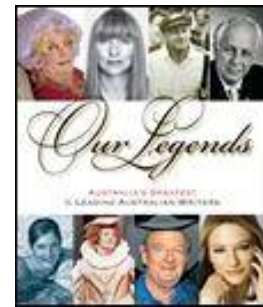
Our Legends

Australia Post's Australian Legends Award was launched in 1997 to honour living Australians who have made a unique contribution to the Australian way of life, have inspired the community and influenced the way Australians think about themselves and their country.

Each Australian Legends Award is commemorated by the release of a set of Australia Post stamps. Forty-two famous names were honoured as Australian Legends over the first 13 years that the Award was presented.

Our Legends Australia's Greatest by Leading Australian Writers brings all of these great legends and their stories together for the first time in one collection. From sporting heroes Don Bradman, Dawn Fraser and Rod Laver, to our ANZAC heroes, pioneering individuals in the world of fashion, philanthropy, medicine, music and entertainment; the best of the best are on show in this commemorative book.

You can order online at www.wilkinsonpublishing.com.au – Click [here](#)
Every order is backed with a 100 per cent money back guarantee.



Agritourism dossier available

What are the common factors that determine a successful agritourism venture? What do the failures always do wrong? Agribusiness Gippsland has completed a literature review as part of last year's study of Gippsland's agritourism sector. We have compiled the findings into a fascinating, easy-to-read dossier. Drawing on local, Australian and overseas studies, it presents the financials of agritourism, the trends in Gippsland, the challenges, and some early data on regional agritourism operations, along with ideas from existing successful operators. The cost is \$30 plus GST. Email orders at susanw@ptarmigan.com.au or via www.aginc.wordpress.com

Farm World Field Days focus on informed farming

Victoria's largest regional agricultural event, Farm World 2010 will be held at Lardner Park from March 25-28, with more than 650 exhibitors.

The new Lardner Park Exhibition Centre will be the focal point of the Farm World 2010 theme 'IT in Agriculture'. About 30 exhibitor sites in the new centre will focus on hardware, software, GPS, internet and telecommunication options. It will also include an auditorium for special demonstrations including the Australian Stock Horse, butchery, bread making and sheepdog work. The farm machinery demonstrations will focus on cultivation and GPS-controlled equipment. There will be focus on pasture management, an expanded fertiliser, pasture seed and irrigation display area and a bigger animal nursery. A Vline bus will run from Drouin Station.

More? Farm World 5626 1373 or www.lardnerpark.com.au

2010 National Landcare Awards

The 2010 National Landcare Awards will be held in Canberra on Thursday June 24. The Awards ceremony will be a dinner at Parliament House.



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breed associations, wineries, tourist organisations, local government, family companies and individuals. Even if it's not on our website, we'll hunt it up for you because, like you... we mean business.

CONTACT US: Ph (03) 5623 4369 Fax (03) 5623 4575 Visit our shop ... 1a Barkly Street, Corner Smith St, Warragul 3820 [see map](#) Or browse <http://www.portphillipshop.com.au> ...



Landcare celebrates and looks to future challenges

Delegates are invited to attend the 2010 National Landcare Forum to be held in Morphettville, SA from March 23-25.

More? www.nationallandcareforum.com.au or events@hievents.com.au

Get out for a day at Lardner Park

Regional arts and fresh produce feature at A Day Out at Lardner Park on April 25.

More? [5974 4710](tel:59744710) or visit www.craftmarkets.com.au

Festival of community values

Tarra Festival is a country festival highlighting community values and attractions of Yarram and the region. The festival boasts events and activities for all age groups from April 2-5, with the feature event being the Saturday morning street parade.

More? [5182 5619](tel:51825619) or visit www.tarrafestival.com.au

Training in soil management

Four-day soil health courses will be held from March to April in south and west Gippsland. The courses, offered by Vital Soil Consulting, focuses on the chemical (nutrients, fertilisers, amendments), physical (soil structure, compaction, water holding) and biological aspects of soil management.

The cost of the four-day course (one day/week) is \$1200 plus GST, however full reimbursement is available to primary producers, their families and management teams under the FarmReady scheme. The training will be held:

- Fish Creek, Wednesdays: March 17, 24, 31 April 7 (9.30am-4.30pm)
- Drouin, Fridays: March 19, 26, April 9, 16 (9.30am-4.30pm)

Places are limited so book early.

More? [Sonia Lee 5674 1543](tel:56741543) or vital.soil@internode.on.net

Re-tooling for Climate Change

Round six of the Re-tooling for Climate Change program is open for applications from small to medium-sized businesses until March 22. The program provides grants of between \$10,000 and \$500,000, up to a maximum of half of the cost of each project.

More? AusIndustry hotline on 13 28 46 or hotline@ausindustry.gov.au

Looking for a venue for 20 people? Or 20,000?

Look at Lardner Park, near Warragul.

We have a reputation for large-scale events, such as Farm World, Trucks In Action and the Civil Works Expo.

We also have flexibility for smaller meetings, conferences and workshops. The Lardner Park board room and pavilions are ideal for equipment and product launches.

Our location is convenient for Melbourne and Gippsland attendees.



For further information

email mark@lardnerpark.com.au, visit www.lardnerpark.com.au or phone 5626 1373

Food awards on again

The annual Food Challenge Awards competition allows companies to showcase their innovative products. Categories include: baked goods; confectionary; alcoholic beverages; dairy; health and wellness; meat and small goods; non-alcoholic beverages; pet food; ready meals; snack foods; soups and prepared foods and sustainable manufacturing. Applications close May 1.

More? Visit: <http://www.foodmag.com.au/awards.aspx>

Snapshot of what the community values

Baw Baw Shire Council is asking residents and visitors to take a photograph and explain what it is they most value about the shire, with an exhibition of photos at Farm World. Deadline April 9. Email image with caption to stf@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au.

Country racing is off and ... well ... racing

Meetings this month are:

- Mar 19: Sale
- Mar 20: Woolamai
- Mar 29 Moe Racing Club

And next month:

- Apr 3: Bairnsdale
- Apr 4: Stony Creek
- Apr 15: Sale
- Apr 25: Moe
- Apr 29: Sale

More? Call 1300 139 402 or visit www.countryracing.com.au

Clusters meeting offers brainfood

Agriculture, government, unions, conservationists came along to two Gippsland sessions with Rodin Genoff – an international expert on economic clusters. Last week saw meetings at Leongatha and Morwell organised by South Gippsland Shire. Regions and cities facing a downturn in manufacturing industries have used Genoff's 'cluster' strategy to evolve into whole-supply-chain companies. He explained the strategy that distils the regional skills base, creates collaboration across companies develops an investment possibility and attracts JV capital.

He cited his successes at the City of Playford, north of Adelaide, as well as projects in north Queensland and Denmark.

Among the possibilities raised at the Morwell meeting were:

- developing a company offering 'smart' packaging technologies for the food industry;
- developing a company offering fouled water treatment technologies;
- attracting investment capital into the region from Melbourne;
- seeking investment from firms in Newcastle and the NW Shelf to develop mining/gas technology companies in the LaTrobe Valley;
- greater use of regional universities to provide skills in governance and commercialisation.
- a Gippsland 'food cluster' with matched branding
- an annual regional conference ... held in the Melbourne CBD

The European experience had proven very successful, albeit driven by "the blunt instrument of tax concessions", he said. The Austrian region of Styria had gone from "a metal-banging manufacturing base" of 18% unemployment prone to economic downturns, to a high-end producer of medical instrumentation by using its basic capabilities, increasing its knowledge of electronics and adding some higher-level technologies.

Hallmarks of companies best-suited to the model are SMEs of up to 650 staff; Australian owned or in charge of their own cost-centres; already operating with an open and collaborative structure and often acting as leaders in the business and wider community.

He said candidate companies tend to be long-established and headed by CEOs aged 40 to 45 who want to boost ongoing company revenue or by older CEOs who want to optimise the books.

He favours working with companies led by MDs from accounting, engineering, science or sales backgrounds. Generalist MDs, including the MBA-brigade, generally are less-responsive to the challenge of forming clusters, he said.

More? www.rodinogenoff.com

Making cheese online

A new report into the Italian way of small-scale cheese-making, and its relevance to Australia, is available online at:

<http://www.agrifoodskills.net.au/uploads/file/ISS%20FEL%20REPORT%20VAZZOLER%20low%20res.pdf>

Victorian Sandra Vazzoler received a scholarship to study cheese-making in a rural area of Italy and has detailed production methods, regional accreditation and marketing methods.

JOBS: A free feature in GippyAGchat

Times being what they are, we are running free job ads. If you're seeking work, or workers, please flick an email to susanw@ptarmigan.com.au and we'll give you a free plug to our 1800-plus readers. No large files, no photos, no sales pitches and full contact details, please.

RECRUITING:

Want hands-on experience in real-life farming?

Volunteers are wanted to gain practical experience in harvesting, mulching, watering, feeding animals and helping train horses on a Bruthen organic smallholding. Accommodation is available.

More? Tanya or Mike at Oasis Organic Food Gardens 51575183 or tancode77@yahoo.com.au

WORK SOUGHT:

International student seeking a six-week internship

Gregor Heinrich is studying renewable resources and bioenergy for a Bachelor of Science with a focus on plant cultivation and engineering at the University of Hohenheim in south-west Germany. He needs to undertake a six-week internship during the European summer which he is keen to do in Australia on a farm that grows and processes renewable resources. Contact Gregor.heinrich@uni-hohenheim.de

Fire management planning

Consultant available to prepare sustainable fire management plans for your property or small reserve.

For a quote please contact Helen Bull 0400 310 188 or h.bull@bigpond.com

Work wanted

Teacher Prue McNaughton from Seaspray is looking for rouseabout work prior to travelling overseas in March. Contact Prue on 0419 355 036

Need staff?

Try 12 or six months of cost-effective undergraduate recruits from accounting, sciences, marketing, HR and PR/comms/media. Candidates available from early December for paid full-time or half-time 2010 placements.

More? Annette: Issibl@swin.edu.au or ph: 9214 8753 or Karen: kpomeranz@swin.edu.au or ph: 9215 7136

Positions wanted

For any type of administrative/ clerical type work (consulting, part time or job share – even if it is only a few hours per week). I have tertiary qualifications in business studies, taxation and financial planning and am looking for work in these areas.

More? Greg Lewis on 0439 523 871 or gippswealthadvice@bigpond.com

Consultant available to undertake:

- vegetation assessments, net gain assessments or offset reports
- whole farm plans
- environmental management plans
- facilitation of meetings, planning sessions, or any group process
- education and training sessions

Please ask me for a quote! Cassie Wright cassiewright@alphalink.com.au
Ph: 5674 8242/ Mob: 0429 061 161/ 35 Sail Street, Cape Paterson, VIC 3995.

Information published is intended to provide general information only. Agribusiness Gippsland Inc (AGInc) does not endorse or recommend any of the listings, nor does it guarantee every advertisement represents an actual job vacancy. AGInc reserves the right to refuse an item. In no event will AGInc be liable for any decision made or action taken as a response to information contained on or omitted.

Hunting in AGInc hyperspace

Recent top searches on our blogsite (www.aginc.wordpress.com) have been: RDA Gippsland, regional development victoria, "dairy Australia" field day, cropmark, ahc10 training package qualifications, www.akinc.wordpress.com, bushwalkers wild dog attack, Bill Bolitho.

Filling in the Gippy-gaps

The rapid growth of GippyAGchat has left us with a data gap ... we don't know who you all are! Could you please underline which of the following best describes you, and forward this message to madfuj@yahoo.com.au. No prizes, no steak knives, just our thanks...

1. Farmer/landowner/agri-tourism operator
2. Consultant/service provider
3. Government employee or agency
4. Food processor/manufacturer
5. Other



Want to reach the right audience? More than 2000 'yes-please' subscribers read GippyAGchat. Farmers, farm consultants, agronomists, stock agents, catchment management and DPI staffers, local councils, regional and federal politicians... everyone who makes agribusiness grow across Gippsland. And you don't get lost in the display advertising crowd. GippyAGchat offers a good-value, targeted ad medium with a stand-out factor. Corporate membership is only \$200 plus GST and that gives you a free ad in the readership that matters to your business. Phone 0402 267 802 or 9456 9791

The most important item in this entire e-newsletter

Annual subscriptions to Agribusiness Gippsland Inc are due, only \$50 plus \$5 GST individual/or a farm business and \$200 plus \$20 GST corporate. Our postal address is PO Box 1312 Warragul 3280.

More? 9456 9791 or visit www.aginc.wordpress.com

Anyone we've forgotten?

Gippy Agchat is prepared by Sue Webster (0402 267 802 or 9456 9791) and Madeline Toner for Agribusiness Gippsland Inc and circulated in Word format to subscribers and supporters. Please circulate this newsletter by email or printout/fax to your colleagues. GOT NEWS? Phone/email news to office@ptarmigan.com.au

Gippy Diary

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Mar 15	Adaptive Forage Planning	Yarram	Frank Mickan 5624 2259
Mar 17, 24, 31 Apr	Soil Management Training	Fish Creek	Sonia Lee 5674 1543

Mar 18	Milking the weather	Poowong	Bree Walshe 5147 0834
Mar 18	Milking the weather	Fish Creek	Bree Walshe 5147 0834
Mar 18	Baw Baw Community Development Grant information session	Warragul	5624 2483
Mar 19	YDDP and UDV dinner and ten pin bowling	Warragul	Kylie Barry 5624 3900
Mar 19	Country Race Meet	Sale	1300 139 402
Mar 19	Electric car conversion workshop	Wonthaggi	Gil 5659 8238
Mar 19 – 20	Energy Innovation Festival	Wonthaggi	Susan 5657 3108
Mar 19, 26, Apr 9, 16	Soil Management Training	Drouin	Sonia Lee 5674 1543
Mar 20	Country Race Meet	Woolamai	1300 139 402
Mar 20	Lower Tarwin Canoe Tour	Tarwin Lower	1300 094 262
Mar 22	Milking the weather	Yarram	Bree Walshe 5147 0834
Mar 22	Milking the weather	Maffra	Bree Walshe 5147 0834
Mar 23	Hazel Creek Management Plan community meeting	Warragul	John Crosby 5175 7841
Mar 23	Options for carbon emission reductions	Maffra	Neil Baker 5141 1712
Mar 23	Pasture Technical Update	Attwood	GSSA office 5480 3305
Mar 24	Educating for sustainability –open space forum	Narracan	Scott Ferraro 5173 9800
Mar 23-25	2010 National Landcare Forum	Morphettville, SA	www.nationallandcareforum.com.au
Mar 25-28	Farm World 2010	Warragul	5626 1373
Mar 29	Country Race Meet	Moe	1300 139 402
Mar 30	Technical Update for Service Providers	Ellinbank	Ashleigh Michael 5662 9901
Apr 2-5	Tarra Festival	Yarram	5182 5619
Apr 3	Country Race Meet	Bairnsdale	1300 139 402
Apr 4	Country Race Meet	Stony Creek	1300 139 402
Apr 15	Country Race Meet	Sale	1300 139 402
Apr 19	Growers and Eaters forum	Korumburra	Peta Christensen 0411 899 618
Apr 19	Organic Certification Workshop	Meeniyan	07 3350 5716
Apr 25	Country Race Meet	Moe	1300 139 402
Apr 25	A Day Out at Lardner Park – market	Warragul	5974 4710
Apr 28	Baw Baw Community Development Grant information session	Warragul	5624 2483
Apr 29	Country Race Meet	Sale	1300 139 402
Apr 30-May 1	East Gippsland Field Days	Bairnsdale	Ian Rees 03 5153 1398

May 1	SGLN Landcare Open Day		
May 1-31	Gippsland Festival of the Arts		Josephine Kent 1300 226 278
May 25	Baw Baw Community Development Grant information session	Warragul	5624 2483
Jun 24	2010 National Landcare Awards	Canberra	www.landcareonline.com
Jul 21-23,	6 th biennial Enviro Conference and Exhibition	Melbourne	Veronica Dullens 02 8746 5055
Jul 22	Food Challenge Awards	Sydney	
Aug 1-6, 2010	19 th World Congress of Soil Science	Brisbane	www.19wcss.org.au
Sep 29-30	South Gippsland Dairy Expo	Poowong	Deanne Kennedy 0419 878 055

This regular news digest comes from **Agribusiness Gippsland Inc** which works with farmers, local councils, state and federal government, catchment management authorities, community groups and others to support regional agribusiness and work in partnership with existing regional organisations. Visit <http://agribusinessgippsland.com.au> or www.aginc.wordpress.com.au