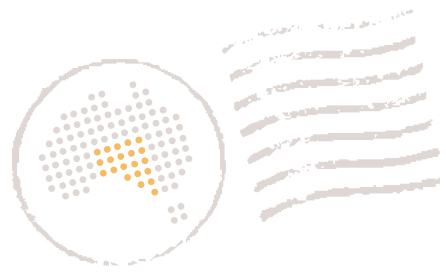


FUTURE Food



reviewing south australia's food industry and future opportunities

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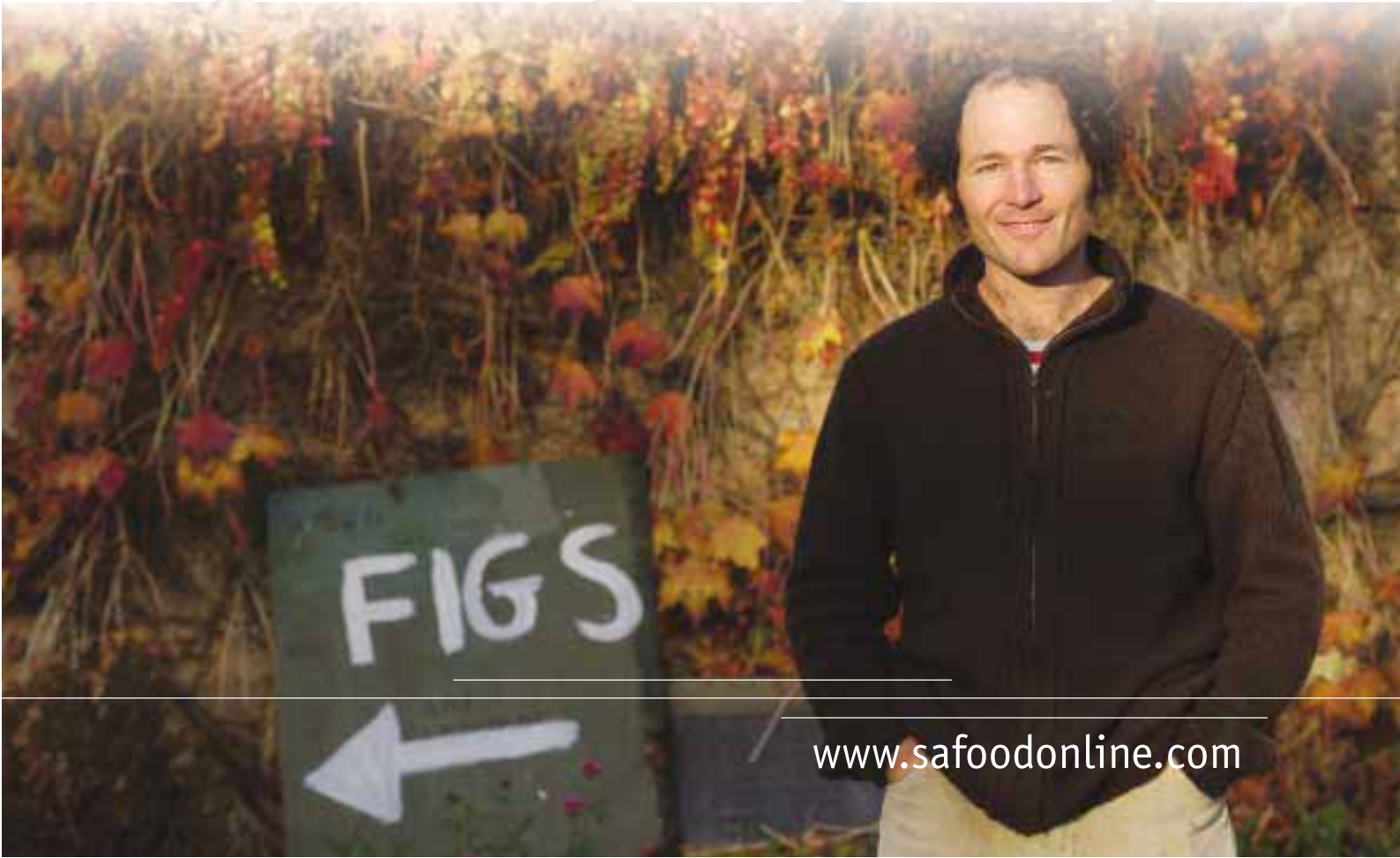
The Face of Food –
Willa Wauchope shares
his passion for figs.

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South Australian
Seafood showcased
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Two new
Regional Food
Groups launched.
Ferguson Australia wins
prestigious European
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MEET THE MINISTER FOR FOOD **Rory McEwen**

Getting his hands on South Australia's top job in agriculture was not a career ambition of Rory McEwen's, but it seems the recently appointed Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries was destined for the position.

"I don't see it as the top job, I just see it as one of the team that brings a political dimension to the decision making process. It's only one of the dimensions," Minister McEwen believes.

Born on his family's farm and then later owning and operating his own in South Australia's South East, Minister McEwen is

no stranger to food production.

He started out growing onions and was later one of the biggest snow pea producers in Australia which he says was "as much about packaging, distribution and marketing as it was about growing."

Then he moved onto perennial horticulture, growing lemons and cherries, a business he's still involved in today.

"It's been my view that you've got to be close to your customer and certainly be participating along the demand chain, even in terms of packaging and presentation and branding and all those things," Minister McEwen says.

The Minister believes the food industry will play a crucial role in reaching the goal of tripling the state's exports by 2013.

"We've got to always be at the premium end of the market, like the food service platform into Dubai which is targeting hotels that are five star and above."

"It's not about larger volumes, it's about more sophistication."

Before being elected as an Independent for the Seat of Mount Gambier in 1997, Mr McEwen had a long involvement with local government and held a range of management positions with TAFE.



FOOD INDUSTRY REVIEWS PLAN to reach \$15 billion Target



A Summit of food industry leaders has been held as a key step in the process of updating South Australia's State Food Plan for 2004 to 2007.

Food industry leaders were invited to participate in a State Food Plan Summit in March.

Food South Australia Executive Director Dr Susan Nelle said the State Food Plan Summit brought industry and government together to determine issues that must be

addressed for continued growth of the food industry.

By 2010 the goal is to increase the food industry's contribution to the South Australian economy to \$15 billion.

"The State Food Plan is a "road map" providing a pathway for industry participants to achieve a greater level of innovation and international competitiveness," Dr Nelle said.

"South Australia's food industry is currently generating \$8.9 billion per year, with some \$2.3 billion

in exports to 120 countries.

"We are committed to growing that figure and working with food industry leaders to achieve our goal."

Summit participants identified priority issues that must be tackled to ensure the continued development of the food industry in South Australia and recommended priorities among potential initiatives for the next three years.

The State Food Plan (2004-07) will be released following its endorsement by the Premier's Food Council.



HISTORIC ORCHARD sparks a passion for figs

For Australia's largest fig grower, Willa Wauchope has done surprisingly well out of wine.

In 1885 George McEwin, reportedly beset by religious reservations about alcohol, pulled his vines to replace them with figs for his Glen Ewin Jam Factory in the Adelaide Hills.

More than 100 years later, CSIRO's Loxton base pulled its fig trees of three almost-unknown varieties to plant vines for viticultural research.

The decisions have shaped both a career and a passion for Willa, whose family bought George's property in 1991 after the Glen Ewin business was sold, and who happily received the CSIRO's cast-offs.

Willa has now become Australia's flag-waver for the fig, single-handedly dragging the ancient fruit back into fashion and introducing it to a new generation of food lovers.

Under the label Willabrand, he now produces about 35 tonnes of fruit from 4000 trees, however a plan to greatly increase plantings will see the annual harvest rise to 600 tonnes within 10 years.

As well as supplying the fresh fruit to restaurants and retailers, Willa has developed a range of value-added products including jams, puddings and chutneys, and glace, dried and chocolate figs for markets around Australia and in Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. His endeavours earned him the Malaysia Airlines Young Leader Award at the Premier's Food Awards last year.

Not bad for a city boy who grew up in North Adelaide, studied geology and environmental sciences at

university, and then spent the next few years working the ski slopes of Europe.

His parents Bill and Wendy Wauchope bought Glen Ewin, near Houghton, in 1991, seduced by the history of the site – its cluster of stone buildings and homestead set among English park-like grounds.

"Glen Ewin became my home when I returned from Europe, so I fell into the fig industry by default," Willa says.

"In 1994 I started resurrecting the orchard, which had languished into an incredibly dilapidated state over many years."

There were only 200 trees, but that was enough for someone with no horticultural training. Willa applied himself to researching not only fig growing, but also progressive agricultural practices around the world, taking the best ideas and applying them to the steep Glen Ewin site.

Three years later, he decided to really "give it a go" and set about carting his fresh figs to restaurant doors and greengrocers around Adelaide.

"Thankfully the response was positive and hugely encouraging," he says.

"The fig had simply fallen out of fashion so there was a need to educate consumers. I thought if restaurants could use the fresh fruit in new and innovative ways, it would inspire consumers to do the same at home."

In 2000 Willa introduced the first Willabrand value-added products; a range aimed at the higher consumer end of the market and manufactured under contract by several South Australian businesses.

The characteristics of the five varieties grown by Willa – 'Brown Turkey', 'Black Genoa' and the

CSIRO's three, 'Archipal', 'Deanna' and 'Spanish Dessert' – will allow the development of a diverse range of products.

"At the moment we are only limited by the quantity of fruit, because the demand is there."

However an ambitious planting program will solve the dilemma. By year's end Glen Ewin will have 10,000 trees, with a further 10,000 under contract off-site, and another 20,000 to be planted at the same site within seven years.

Willa is determined that the growth will not undermine the sense of history surrounding the old Glen Ewin orchards and jam factory. "Glen Ewin is the heart and soul of Willabrand," he says. "We want some regional tourism to develop, for people to visit and experience the figs and some of the other family activities that happen here, such as events and dinners."

With the only fig orchard in the Adelaide Hills, and one of few in Australia, Willa has felt a sense of isolation and frustration in his search for knowledge at times, despite the support and encouragement of several South Australian Government departments and other local Hills food producers.

"It's one reason I am passionate to start an Australian association of fig growers, so the industry can be developed in a coordinated, informed and sensible manner," he says.

"My vision is to position Willabrand at the centre of the fig trade in Australia, with the largest range of fresh fruit and value-added products on the market.

"So when people think figs, they think Willabrand – not only locally but also interstate and overseas."



Front cover and above centre: Willa Wauchope at Glen Ewin

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SA SEAFOOD TARGETS **The World's Most Discerning Consumers**

South Australian seafood has been showcased in Japan as part of an 'in-market' promotion to tempt the world's most discerning consumers.

The Food Adelaide event, which was co-sponsored by Food South Australia, raised the profile of South Australia's first class seafood industry amongst the food service and retail sectors.

Food Adelaide's Japanese representative Craig Deamer says the promotion introduced Japan's leading chefs to Australian flavours and recipes for preparing seafood.

"It's the first time an Australian state has gone out to target the enormous food service sector by presenting them with new ideas on how to use our products and the

Japanese chefs loved it," Mr Deamer said.

Sydney chef Alex Herbert (pictured above) prepared a series of dishes using the best of South Australia's seafood products such as tuna, yellowtail kingfish, mussels, Western King prawns, farmed abalone and lobster.

The promotion began with a seafood dinner at the Australian Ambassador's residence in Tokyo for key influential people such as the Presidents of leading Japanese seafood companies and the Japanese media.

"There were also three presentations highlighting the quality of our seafood with more than 150 Japanese chefs, from Tokyo's major hotels, which were supported by the country's leading wholesalers and distributors such as Fuji

Bussan, Daiei Taigen and Nosui," Mr Deamer said.

"We're hoping that a large percentage of these chefs will adopt these new ideas on how to use South Australian seafood and then include it on their menus."

Mr Deamer said the promotion is an example of the partnership that exists between the South Australian food industry and the State Government and is hopeful it will provide an edge for the state's seafood industry.

"We must remember the Japanese can get these products from anywhere in the world."

"It is important that we continue to increase awareness amongst key Japanese decision makers of the superior quality of our seafood and highlight our

clean green environment as well as our high level of product traceability."

Nine of South Australia's leading seafood companies supplied product for the promotion including:

- Tuna Boat Owners Association of Australia (tuna)
- Australian Bight (Western King Prawns)
- Ferguson Australia (value added lobster products)
- Abalone Cooperative (abalone)
- Australian Hiramasa (yellowtail king fish)
- Kinkawooka (mussels)
- OYSA (oysters)
- Raptis (gemfish)

SA'S VIRTUAL EXPORT one-stop shop up and running

South Australia's virtual export one-stop shop – Exporting SA – is now up and running.



Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development, Paul Holloway says the Exporting SA website at www.exportsa.sa.gov.au will target producers and buyers of South Australian goods and services.

“The site aims to help South Australian companies build their export capabilities, while showcasing their products to the world.”

“The site's main clients will be local exporters and potential exporters, overseas and interstate buyers, SA's overseas offices, Austrade and state government agencies,” Mr Holloway said.

Businesses listed on www.safoodonline.com are automatically linked to the Exporting SA website.

The website has three distinct sections:

- **The exporters' database**

This is an extensive list of the state's exporting and export-ready companies.

- **The exporters' road map**

This is an 11 step 'how-to' guide for the state's exporters and potential exporters.

- **The export and trade information service**

The website also contains general information including news and upcoming events, and links to other trade and export sites.

FOOD IMPORTERS CHOOSE Adelaide for National HQ

Adelaide has been chosen as the Australian headquarters for one of Dubai's leading food importers.

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister, Rory McEwen officially welcomed the Barakat Vegetable and Fruit Company, which will trade as Australia Quality Plus, at a reception at Old Parliament House.

“The company will source and consolidate premium produce in all categories from across Australia for the lucrative 5-star hotel and food service market in Dubai.

“This is a venture of national significance specifically designed to give Australian food and

beverage producers and suppliers a sustainable competitive advantage in the Middle East,” Mr McEwen said.

After rigorously taste-testing Australia's premium produce the Dubai-based importer signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March with the National Food Industry Strategy to position Australian food in the Middle East.

Barakat, which has been operating in the United Arab Emirates and beyond for more than 20 years has a proven track record with the 5-star hotel market.

The company's clientele includes royal palaces and some of the world's most luxurious hotels,

such as the Royal Mirage and the Burj al-Arab.

“This venture will enhance the international profile of the South Australian and national food industry in the UAE under an overall brand image for Australian food,” Mr McEwen said.

Australian premium meat products and seafood have been introduced to the Dubai market with more food categories to follow.

The total value of the food service market in Dubai is estimated at up to \$US300 million with anticipated annual growth of 10 percent over the next five years. More than 1.2 billion meals were



(L-R) PIRSA CEO Jim Hallion, Barakat General Manager JR, and Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Rory McEwen at the official welcome.

served by the UAE food service industry in 2000.

Australian food exports were valued at \$26 billion in 2002. Food exports to Dubai in 2002–03 were valued at \$130 million.

The company's new Australian headquarters and office facilities are based at Adelaide Airport.

For more information:
 Nick Brunsgard
 Australian Business Manager
 Australia Quality Plus
 Telephone (08) 8234 3888

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MAKE FOOD Your Future

South Australia's leading food and beverage producers are helping to promote the industry as an exciting career opportunity.

The group, which included artisan cheese maker Sheree Sullivan, fig grower Willa Wauchope and Adrian Clarke from Coopers Brewery, spoke with students at the Careers and Employment Expo, which is South Australia's largest careers, education and employment event.

Over 7000 secondary school, TAFE and university students attended the event.

Food South Australia is working with the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, and education providers such as TAFE to raise the profile of the food industry and promote food careers and training opportunities.

BE PART OF THE

BigPicture

The 7th Premier's Food Awards are now open for entry and this year the focus is on the 'Big Picture'.

You're part of the many pieces that make the whole food industry great. Celebrate your contribution by entering the 2004 Premier's Food Awards.

Register your details now by downloading an application pack from www.safoodonline.com/premiersfoodawards or emailing us at apply@safoodonline.com.

Applications close on Friday, September 10, 2004.



For more information:

Sonya Humphrey
Premier's Food Awards Coordinator
Telephone (08) 8226 1905

Sharon Manuel
Premier's Food Awards Manager
Telephone (08) 8226 0468

KANGAROO ISLAND launches Regional Food Group

Kangaroo Island food producers are joining forces to support the development of food businesses and increase the profile of the island's world-class produce to both locals and visitors.

Food Kangaroo Island, which was officially launched in May by The Advertiser's Food and Wine Editor Tony Love, is the state's newest regional food group.

Premier's Food Council member and Island Pure Cheese producer Susan Berlin says the group will be instrumental in increasing awareness and use of Kangaroo Island produce.

"One of the main goals of Food Kangaroo Island is to encourage value adding and to help all food producers on the island to get their products to a 'retail-ready' state," Ms Berlin says.

"There are some exceptional products being produced on the island. Our challenge now is to make them more accessible to locals and visitors."

As part of the launch, Food Kangaroo Island hosted local food retailers, restaurateurs, waiting staff and tourism operators on a tour of food producers on the island.

The food group is working with island retailers and restaurants to encourage them to incorporate local produce on their menus.

"Kangaroo Island is recognised as one of South Australia's key tourist destinations."

"It is important that we build these relationships so that it is easier for locals and visitors to buy and experience local food."

In conjunction with the South Australian Tourism Commission, Tourism Kangaroo Island and the Regional Development Board, Food Kangaroo Island will produce a Food and Wine brochure, which will be a quick reference guide to buying, consuming and experiencing Island produce.

"The brochure is due to be released in September and it will include information on the Island's regional food trail,



Island Pure cheese producer Susan Berlin with The Advertiser's Food & Wine Editor, Tony Love

a produce directory and restaurants serving local food," Ms Berlin.

"There will be benefits not only for producers but also for the economy of Kangaroo Island."

In conjunction with Regency TAFE, the food group will also provide training opportunities for members.

Anyone interesting in joining the food group should contact Kangaroo Island Development Board Food Officer Justin Harman on (08) 8553 3211 or email food@kangarooisland.org

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CLARE VALLEY Cuisine makes debut

The name rolls easily off the tongue, but the flavours of food served at the launch of Clare Valley Cuisine lingered long.

After more than a year in the planning the Clare Valley Cuisine food group celebrated its debut in April.

"You are probably surprised there is so much food in the area," Clare Valley Cuisine food officer Angela Ruddenklau said during the official launch at Thorn Park Country House.

The menu included Tarlee Oatcakes, McPhee's Burra Saltbush Lamb Medallions with Greenslade's Chicken Mousseline,

Macarob Shiraz Sorbet and much more.

Better known for its vines and wines and broad acre farming, Clare Valley Cuisine already has 20 members, ranging from producers of free-range chicken, Murray Cod, olive oil, carob, meat and honey to caterers and restaurateurs.

"Producers in the Clare Valley recognise there are opportunities for them to value add to what they produce," Ms Ruddenklau said.

Clare Valley Cuisine is encouraging restaurateurs in the Valley to introduce regional produce onto their menus.

The group's goal is for food to gain the same reputation as the region's world-class wine.



(L-R) Geoffrey Gray (chief executive officer, Mid North Regional Development Board), Laurie Sullivan (chairman, Regional Council of Goyder), Convenor of the Premier's Food Council, Carmel Zollo MLC, and Tamara (waitress)



(L-R) Clare Valley Cuisine food officer Angela Ruddenklau with State Opposition Leader Rob Kerin, who officially launched the group, and group Chairperson Jen Gebhardt
Photos courtesy of Northern Argus

TASTING SUCCESS in Interstate Markets

Promotion of South Australian food under the 'Taste SA' banner continues to be successful for producers seeking new markets interstate.

Fleurieu-based Liz Pitman who produces dips, pates and condiments under 'The Goods' label says the promotion has helped her establish distribution in both Melbourne and Perth.

"I've only been in business for just over a year and without the help of Rachel Gemmell from Food South Australia (who runs the promotion) there's no way I would

have gotten into those markets," Ms Pitman says.

"It's so important to go to the market because people like to meet the producer and see that you care about your product."

Ms Pitman says her products complement the climate and lifestyle in Perth and the Taste SA promotion has given her an opportunity to enter the market.

The promotion assisted twelve South Australian producers to establish their products in the Western Australian market.

Many producers travelled over to personally present their products to distributors and provide in-store tastings.



For more information:
Rachel Gemmell
Food South Australia
Telephone (08) 8300 0116



REGIONAL FOOD Workshop

Building partnerships between the food and tourism industries was the topic of discussion at the 4th Regional Food Group workshop held at Sevenhill Winery in the Clare Valley.

Keynote speaker Dorinda Hafner (pictured above) who is a chef, self-proclaimed food anthropologist and South Australian tourism ambassador, encouraged producers to celebrate and share their food with the world.

"South Australian food on the international scene is just phenomenal," Ms Hafner said.

"We have a lot to crow about and the power lies with you because you are the roots that hold up the tree."

Thorn Park Country House, the Eyre Peninsula Aquaculture Trail and Kangaroo Island based sheep milk dairy Island Pure were used as case studies, highlighting the benefits of gastronomic tourism.

Food South Australia and the South Australian Tourism Commission recently signed a memorandum of understanding to further develop gastronomic tourism in the state.

FERGUSON AUSTRALIA wins prestigious European Seafood Award

Adelaide-based lobster company Ferguson Australia has won the grand prize for a new product at the world's largest and most prestigious seafood event, Seafood Prix d'Elite in Brussels.

The company's Australian Premium Rock Lobster Medallions won the top prize in the food service category as well as the Seafood Prix d'Elite special award for health and nutrition.

Ferguson Australia owners, Debra and Andrew Ferguson (pictured) say they're already feeling the effects of their win.

"We've been swamped with enquiries about our products and there has been amazing interest from distributors and food service around the world," Mrs Ferguson said.

"It's really quite exciting."

The Ferguson's winning product, which was chosen from a field of 48 finalists, received high praise for its innovation, exceptional quality and superior packaging which has been designed to provide information about the product and the company.

The product was also chosen as the winner of the health and nutrition award because it does not use extenders, preservatives, flavourings or colourings.



The Australian Premium Rock Lobster Medallions are designed for the high-end foodservice market. They are cut from fresh southern rock lobster tails using state-of-the-art technology that slices the meat and shell cleanly, leaving no shell fragments with the meat.

"It's been a lot of hard work developing and introducing our value added product to the market place."

"We've spent well over \$1 million just developing the product, which is a lot of money for a small company like ours."

The Ferguson's began developing their range of value added, ready-to-use lobster products five years ago to guarantee price, quality and year round supply as well as the long-term sustainability of the South Australian lobster industry.

"The live lobster industry's main customers in China and Hong Kong are very specific about what they want in terms of size and colour, which means a lot of lobsters are rejected," Mrs Ferguson said.

"That's why we started looking for other markets to take the pressure off and better manage our stocks."

Ferguson Australia received assistance and advice from Food South Australia employees, formerly from CIBM, to develop its branding, cold chain systems and export markets.





MMMM, Mushroom Mania is the word

Mushroom mania has hit town.

The fungi was centre stage at the launch of the 2004 season at the Adelaide Hilton in May.

The newly crowned Mushroom Mania Ambassador Chef Cheong Liew (pictured) and his team at the Grange restaurant cooked up a feast of mouth

watering and moreish mushroom dishes.

Among the more memorable were the rich and intensely flavoured mushroom tea, mushroom and scallop dumplings, salt-baked chicken filled with mushroom and liver in a mushroom broth and to finish spiced mushrooms with bitter chocolate.

"Anything is possible with mushrooms," says Cheong Liew.

"I use white mushrooms to enhance and enrich my dishes or as a vegetable accompaniment.

"I like to braise or slowly saute white mushrooms because this brings out the earthiness and flavour of the mushrooms. I use as little liquid as possible and then add cream.

Or I combine them with chicken fillet, or with rabbit and pickled lemon in a casserole or I just cut them into halves and stir-fry with Gai-Lan (Chinese broccoli) and young ginger."

Expect to find mushrooms popping up on the 'specials' menu at restaurants across the country.

GM CROPS BILL passed by Parliament

South Australia now has legislation in place to regulate the cultivation of GM crops following passage of Genetically Modified Crops Management Bill 2004 through both houses of State Parliament.

The legislation ensures South Australia does not place at risk its annual \$2 billion field crops industry in the national and international marketplace by cultivating GM crops in the state before it has appropriate secure segregation and identity preservation systems in place.

"The regulations designate

the whole of the state as an area in which the cultivation of genetically modified food is prohibited," says Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister, Rory McEwen.

"These regulations will stand for three years at most and the government remains committed to protecting the state's 'clean, green' reputation by preventing the introduction of GM crops until it's clear that they can co-exist with our conventional production systems," Mr McEwen said.

"The legislation gives all the major players, including government, the farming sector

and small business enough time to ensure that none of our agricultural products are contaminated, either directly or indirectly with produce from GM crops."

The Act provides for exemptions to allow field research trials and limited scale, closed loop production under conditions similar to the restricted license arrangements specified by the Gene Technology Regulator.

Any exemptions will have stringent containment conditions monitored by Primary Industries and Resources SA.

But the Minister says these

exemptions are not a back-door to broad scale farming of GM crops.

"The next stage will be for me to appoint a GM Crop Advisory Committee which is established under the Act. This Committee will play a key role in providing technical advice on segregation and identity preservation systems and market impacts."

"Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island still have the opportunity to consider pursuing GM freedom over a longer term than the three years established by the new regulations", Mr McEwen said.

Photo courtesy of SATC

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A SLOW JOURNEY through the Barossa

Mention the word Barossa and most people think wine. It's little wonder given that vineyards now cover much of the valley.

But as food enthusiasts who converged on the region in April for the inaugural Barossa Slow event discovered, there are also many precious food secrets and traditions to be discovered amongst the vines.

Throughout the weekend, visitors travelled to orchards and wineries, experienced early morning market life, discovered

a newly developed trail of Slow Food and wine delicacies and took part in a number of cooking and tasting sessions using traditional wood ovens and a working smokehouse.

Angela Clifford, one of the key players in the establishment of the Barossa Farmers' Market, took Barossa Slow goes on a journey to an "endangered species" – the orchard.

Once the source of a thriving industry in the Barossa Valley, the orchard is now under threat.

"Before the incredible surge in wine grape plantings the

Barossa was home to hundreds of fruit orchards and drying fruit was one of the great specialties of the valley," Ms Clifford said.

"Today, only a handful of commercial orchards remain in the region."

Trevallie Orchard owners Jim and Margaret Ellis are one of the few who've resisted the temptation to turn their fruit trees over to vines.

The sweet scent of fruit, drying on racks in the autumn sun, perfumes the air at their Angaston property.

It's a scene imbued with the region's history, but the Ellis' decision to maintain the tradition hasn't been easy.

"We're not making enough money out of it (dried fruit) but I don't want to make a big thing of it because things go in cycles," says Jim Ellis.

Indeed they do and the Barossa Slow weekend was proof that food heritage, produce, flavours and rituals will live on. Organisers hope Barossa Slow will be on again in two years time.





UPCOMING EVENTS 2004

July, August, September

www.safoodonline.com



LIMESTONE COAST FARMERS' MARKETS – MT GAMBIER
11 July 2004

Watson Tce, Mt. Gambier, SA
The markets are an opportunity to buy local produce and value-added food and meet the local food producers.



JAPAN INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD & TECHNOLOGY EXPO
16 – 17 July 2004

Japan
For seafood buyers, seafood users and for those in the domestic fishing business.



FLAVOUR SA NETWORKING NIGHT
28 July 2004

Adelaide, SA
Networking Night with Simon Burr.



THE INTERNATIONAL SHIRAZ ALLIANCE
30 July – 2 August 2004

Barossa, SA
It is not a conference...
It is not a challenge...
Or a competition...
It is a celebration of the world's greatest grape variety.

DOING BUSINESS IN DUBAI
3 August 2004

Adelaide, SA
For any producer, supplier or manufacturer of premium quality food interested in a new export pathway to the five-star hotel market in Dubai.

EXPORTERS' GUIDE TO INDONESIA
4 August 2004

Adelaide, SA
Exporters' Guide to Indonesia – the seminar.

LIMESTONE COAST FARMERS' MARKETS – MT GAMBIER
8 August 2004

Watson Tce, Mt. Gambier, SA
The markets are an opportunity to buy local produce and value-added food and meet the local food producers.

FOOD EXPO 2004
12 – 16 August 2004

Hong Kong
With a multitude of delicious east-meets-west delicacies on display, Food Expo has become a popular fair for food lovers.

FLAVOUR SA NETWORKING NIGHT
25 August 2004

Adelaide, SA
Networking Night with David Medlow.

TASTE SOUTH AUSTRALIA
3 – 11 September 2004

Royal Adelaide Showgrounds, Adelaide, SA
Taste! South Australia 2004 is back ... bigger, brighter and better than ever and we're promoting SA's valuable aquaculture industries.

FINE FOOD & HOTEL AUSTRALIA
6 – 9 September 2004

Melbourne, VIC
Fine Food & Hotel Australia form the largest food and hospitality industry event ever staged in the Australasian region.

INNOVATIVE FOODS CENTRE CONFERENCE AND NON-THERMAL FOOD PROCESSING – Technologies Workshop
14 – 17 September 2004

Sydney, NSW
The annual IFT/ EFFoST (Institute of Food Technologists USA / European Federation of Food Science and Technology) non-thermal food processing technologies workshop will be hosted by the Innovative Foods Centre of Food Science Australia in 2004.

PREMIER'S FOOD COUNCIL
17 September 2004

Parliament House, SA
September meeting of the Premier's Food Council.

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ARE YOU misleading tourists?

Emanouel Gaganis, Minter Ellison Lawyers

Food and tourism are indeed a natural blend as holiday-makers sample our state's great local produce and purchase its culinary delights. All food businesses, whether they are restaurants or manufacturers, have a legal responsibility (and a moral duty in my opinion) to ensure they accurately describe the food they sell or serve to tourists.

How can tourists be misled?

Tourists, like all consumers, are entitled to purchase and devour food that appears to be of a particular character or origin. For example, if a restaurant offers cheese from Kangaroo Island, then the cheese served or used in cooking, must be from that location.

Similarly, food-markets are a huge draw card for tourists. In the Sydney Fish Markets last year, food inspectors found that about four in five fish merchants were not complying with the country of origin requirements for food. For example merchants were either attempting to sell imported prawns as Australian prawns, not declaring that certain varieties were imported or passing the prawns off as Australian species.

What are the consequences?

Such conduct by businesses can only dampen the strong reputation of local tourism. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) takes these business practices seriously. Recently, the ACCC publicly warned souvenir producers and retailers to be careful about how they market Aboriginal-style souvenirs. The Federal Court of Australia made various orders in relation to a company that had falsely represented Aboriginal-style souvenirs including art, boomerangs and didgeridoos.

The company in question claimed that their products were "Australian Aboriginal Art" and "authentic" and produced by artists who were "Australian, Aboriginal by descent and Aboriginal". In fact, the works were made by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

artists. The ACCC considered these claims to be misleading and the businesses were sued (including the directors).

Marketing South Australian food

The ACCC's comments can be applied to food tourism. In marketing South Australian food, it is important to accurately describe your products. Care should be taken in making the following statements about food:

- Origin – eg, are all the significant ingredients from the Adelaide Hills when describing your food as "Hills Produce"?
- Nature and quality of food – eg, are your hens really "free range" and is your seafood genuinely "fresh" when it may have been frozen?

- Style of manufacture – eg "home-made" or "freshly squeezed" or "hand picked" are these statements accurate for your food?

What to remember

Use accurate and clear descriptions about your foods and souvenirs. Unintentional deceit is no defence under the law so an unbiased description needs to be made. Your descriptions can extend beyond labels and include brochures and catalogues, signage and menus. Outdated documents and signs should therefore be removed. Consumers can also rely on verbal descriptions about foods and all staff need to be educated on the business and its products.

Please contact Emanouel Gaganis, Senior Associate at Minter Ellison Lawyers if you would like further information about this topic. Telephone (08) 8233 5514 or email emanouel.gaganis@minterellison.com

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