

Riverland Innovation Trail – Project Summary

Riverland Local Action Planning (LAP) Groups have worked together to host the 2015 Riverland Innovation Trail, held 12-16 October 2015. This event gave producers the opportunity to attend farm visits and hear discussion from some of the Riverland's most innovative farmers. A short forum provided attendees with ideas and examples of innovation which had been highly successful. Forum goers were treated to premium food and drink prepared by local businesses, using quality fresh Riverland produce.



Plenty of interaction amongst guests during the lunch at the forum

What has happened?

Four Riverland LAP groups; Berri Barmera, Loxton to Bookpurnong, Renmark to Border, and Riverland West Landcare each hosted farm visits in their region. The farm visits highlighted innovative businesses and invited producers to hear their stories.

Berri Barmera LAP group hosted;

- Bella Lavender; showcasing innovation on a range of levels, this business has merged primary production with tourism, niche crops and value adding products and services.
- Cobdogla Fodder; a diverse business on 50 hectares growing wine grapes, lucerne, cereal and pasture hay under irrigation while producing wool and fat lambs.



Something interesting for all ages at Bella Lavender's Glossop property

Loxton to Bookpurnong LAP group hosted;

- Gurra Downs Date Farm; in response to salinity, and threats to water quality and availability, Gurra Downs has moved from grapes to dates in an attempt to focus on an emerging opportunity.



Numerous types of date palms were on display at Gurra Downs Date Farm

- Zest Fruits; in 1994 a group of like-minded growers grouped together in an attempt to move from price takers to price makers.

Renmark to Border LAP group hosted;

- Brenton Parker’s Fish Farm; previously reliant on wine grapes, but experimenting with aquaculture since 2010 growing plate sized Murray cod for the restaurant market.



Guests saw first hand the production tanks at Brenton Parker’s Fish Farm

- Fat Goose Fruits; a family owned, certified organic fruit growing and packing enterprise on 23 hectares.

Riverland West Lancare group hosted;

- Golden Hill Packing/Thiel Orchards; an established avocado farm since 2002, the two brothers have developed Golden Hill Packing in 2012 to increase their share of the market supply chain.
- Illalangi Gourmet Foods; successfully growing wine grapes for 20 years, this business showcases the best Riverland produce and Australian native foods in its retail shop.

The short forum held on 14 October exposed attendees to innovative guest speakers who included;

- Barry Porter, Kalophon Caper on his award winning caper.

- Colleen Johnson, Backyard Breads on what inspired her to form this business.
- Mark McNamara, The Food Luddite, who is an award winning chef gave his perspective of the need for quality produce.
- Keryn Gorman, Illalangi Gourmet Foods on the business success by focussing on eat, live and love local.
- Alex Milner-Smyth, Media Roo Communications focused on understanding the power of marketing.
- Sharon Starrick, Kongolia Farms on innovation and its ability to create a healthy landscape.
- Ella Winnall, Berri Barmera Council spoke about how agriculture and tourism can work together.



Gurra Downs Date Farm, Dave Reilly shows developing fruit on one of the date palms

The 2015 Riverland Innovation Trail was considered a huge success and the Riverland LAP Groups have banded together with local government to host a repeat event in 2016. This is sure to inspire creativity and innovation amongst attendees.

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