

BACKGROUND ON *FAT PIG FARM*

Fat Pig Farm is a primary production business operating from a 22-hectare property in the Huon Valley, widely recognised for its small farm holders, their high quality produce and the rural culture and landscape. The farm is also home to *Gourmet Farmer* Matthew Evans, Sadie Chrestman and their son Hedley.

Fat Pig Farm's vision is to be a centre of excellence for Tasmanian artisan food production, a sustainable agri-tourism operation and an inspiring place of agrarian and gastronomic learning. Our business objectives are:

QUALITY

To promote the value and joy of eating locally-grown and prepared, fresh seasonal produce.

To maintain a reputation for excellence in the quality, flavour and presentation of locally-made, seasonal food.

To implement animal husbandry and farming practices that are environmentally sustainable, ethical and minimise waste.

LOCAL

To provide a truly local, singular, practical "paddock-to-plate" experience where on-farm guests, retail customers, on-line and on-screen followers of *Fat Pig Farm* have the opportunity to better understand how to grow, handle and cook food from local ingredients.

To be an active, beneficial member of the community, sharing the outcomes and ideals of the business that have evolved from our genuine philosophy which is based on collaboration, exchange and support.

COLLABORATION

To foster and maintain reciprocal partnerships with Tasmania's like-minded artisan businesses working in food, agriculture, tourism, the arts and culture, amongst others.

To connect farm visitors and food consumers with the output of local artisan producers by promoting and using their range of products in the food made, served and sold by *Fat Pig Farm*.

To be an equal opportunity employer that respects, values, develops and promotes the skills and aspirations of its staff.

INNOVATION

To continuously undertake innovative and creative research and develop new ideas in the areas of natural food production, recipes, alternative products and agri-tourism.

- A. The **potential market advantages and disadvantages** of allowing or not allowing the use of gene technology in Tasmanian primary industries, including food and non-food sectors.

PRODUCTS

1. What products do you sell in domestic or international markets as 'Tasmanian' and/or 'GMO-free'?

All our products are Tasmanian and consequently GMO-free. Approximately 95% of our edible products are grown within the fence line of our business. Our philosophy - promoted locally, nationally and internationally - is based upon sustainable food production and a clear understanding of where food comes from and trusting its source. We are renowned for exceptional produce, dedication to visitor experience and a steadfast approach to the best land management practices possible.

In 2016 the business built and opened a 210sqm. public facility comprising restaurant, cooking school, workshop/demonstration space, commercial kitchen and retail outlet. We run our 45-seat restaurant, providing a food tourism experience for up to 200 people each week. We also run classes and private events on the farm. Our commercial kitchen processes all food grown on the farm as fresh, seasonal meals for visitors or for our on-line sales or external catering at festivals, markets and for private clients.

On the farm, we grow biologically managed crops that are pesticide free. These include 30 varieties of apples and 15 other varieties of fruit or nut trees. We have five varieties of berries and we grow flint corn and red wheat that we use in our bread. We grow up to 220 different varieties of vegetables and herbs each year in one square kilometre of soil, across the four seasons and in all weather. In addition, we have established a bush foods garden in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community.

Our seed stock is sourced from three Tasmanian companies and we save seeds from year to year which reduces our costs and allows us to understand the provenance of the food we grow and serve.

We also raise and sell direct to customers Wessex Saddleback pigs, heritage-breed chickens, a beef herd, goats, honey from our bee hives and dairy products from our small dairy herd milked in our micro-dairy

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

2. What market opportunities have you gained or lost as a result of Tasmania's GMO

Contrary to losing, we, along with many others in our field, have gained substantially from a GMO-free state. Our business brand, although relatively small, is known internationally, and is reliant upon the Tasmanian image of healthy, GMO-free, seasonal and fresh local artisan produce.

Our business is as far from monoculture as possible in primary industry.

The moratorium aligns with the basic reality in Tasmania – our total arable land is relatively small (and beneficially so because other local industries can also flourish), our population is widely dispersed, our transport infrastructure within the state and interstate is small-scale and our proximity to major markets on the mainland and overseas is complicated, expensive and slow.

Lifting the moratorium may well provide an advantage for larger scale farmers in terms of yield, but the state does not have the market or infrastructure to bridge the gap of distance and size.

In addition to the food products grown and raised on *Fat Pig Farm*, other aspects of our business viability rely upon the small-scale production of self-sufficient farming and the healthy, natural food we produce. These include:

- The SBS *Gourmet Farmer* television series with 600,000 viewers per week on national free-to air television, on-line and through DVDs.
- Six published books written by Matthew Evans, distributed nationally and translated for international readers (80,000 sold), plus another two books to be released in 2019.
- Public speaking engagements at corporate and private events, including national tourism and food conferences and festivals.

IMPACT

3. If Tasmania's GMO moratorium was to expire what would be the impact on your business?

We sincerely believe the impact would be catastrophic. We know from visitor surveys that:

1. 85% came from the mainland
2. 74% came to *Fat Pig Farm* as one of the many things they planned to do in Tasmania, whilst 13% list it as their primary reason for visiting the state
3. 81% of our guests have watched *Gourmet Farmer*
4. 51% say their main motivation to come is that they care where their food comes from, the lifestyle they choose when they come here to live.

The 5% of products we do not grow ourselves (oil, flour for example) are sourced from Tasmanian producers. Sugar, not grown in Tasmania, comes from the mainland.

We feed between 50-5,000 people a week, depending upon activities at our property or off-farm markets, festivals and catering. We have over 50,000 followers around the world on Facebook and Instagram, as well as over 8,000 subscribers to our monthly e-newsletter.

Even if our business were able to survive post-moratorium, we know that at least six of our staff could not continue working at *Fat Pig Farm*. They work with us now because they strongly believe what we do is morally right: their involvement is more than just a job, it's a way of life, an ethos.

Ten Tasmanians (the equivalent of 8.5 full-time staff) are employed to fill a range of roles in the areas of food preparation, service, market garden management and maintenance, animal husbandry, retail sales and administration. Staff are trained and encouraged in professional development opportunities, the business takes on interns, apprentices, work experience students and trainees.

Fat Pig Farm is looked upon as a pioneer in self-sufficiency – not just for private small-holder “tree-changers”, but for commercial businesses as well.

The farm has established and built excellent relationships with local contractors who provide a range of services and products, including slashing and baling hay, stock movement, fence-building, construction and provision of equipment and ingredients and exchanges with local restaurants, dairies, coffee shops and wine and cider makers. Our guests stay overnight at local accommodation and frequent businesses in the Huon Valley.

Tasmania's brand is built on the perception of it being environmentally sustainable. The brand works because the island is isolated, gastronomically endowed and environmentally incredible. Without the moratorium, the brand that we and others like us rely on would be devalued substantially

4. If genetically modified crops were grown commercially in Tasmania would this impact on your business and markets? If so, in what way?

Yes, unavoidably. As farmers, even if we were to ban GMO crops from our property, it would be impossible for us to claim that all of our produce is GMO-free due to inevitable contamination from other properties.

Everything about our business is reliant upon the food crops grown and sold by *Fat Pig Farm*. It is rare for us to buy feed for our cows but, without the moratorium, we would have to assume that there would be some contamination of our rye grass in the paddocks from other nearby farms using GMO. Although we would probably never know what percentage of rye in our paddock has been affected, we must assume that it would increase over time. In theory, we could try to purchase only organic feed for the cows, but they would still eat pasture and therefore consume GMO grasses.

The essence of a state-wide moratorium is that we are able to claim with pride that Tasmania is GMO free, a considerable advantage for a growing percentage of people in whatever country they live.

FINANCIAL

5. *Can you provide evidence of the financial benefits or costs to your business as a result of the current moratorium? For example: effects on yield, price premiums or input costs.*

Our entire income is derived from GMO-free products. If the details of our budget are useful to the debate, we are willing to provide them. Our annual turnover is around \$700,000 and about 98% of our annual expenditure is invested in Tasmanian people, services and products.

OTHER EXAMPLES

B. Domestic and international gene technology policy relevant to primary industries;
Are there any examples of innovative GMO policy and regulation from other jurisdictions that Tasmania could adopt or learn from?

The most "innovative" GMO policy seems to be giving the businesses that rely upon GMO-free trading a choice.

The European Commission (EC) reports that nineteen out of the 28-member state countries of the European Union have voted to either partially or fully ban genetically modified organisms and, of these, France, Germany, Austria, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Poland, Denmark, Malta, Slovenia, Italy and Croatia have chosen a total ban.

Two hundred and fifty kilometres of sea separates us from the mainland, providing a natural buffer for GMO-free status without the risk of cross-contamination. It is this natural buffer that provided impetus for the federal government to grant Tasmania an exclusive license to grow poppies yet it seems that some of the most ardent and vocal pro-GM advocates are from the poppy industry.

Malta, Corsica (France), Sardegna (Italy), Madeira and Canary Islands (Spain) and the San Juan Islands (USA) are just some of the island states and nations that have chosen to be GMO-free. San Juan brands itself as “GMO-Free San Juan - Preserving the integrity of food and the freedom to grow it.” It goes on to say:

“The isolation of our county provides a unique economic opportunity to produce uncontaminated seed and plants. The initiative protects our farmers’ rights to grow and maintain pure, natural seed, produce, and livestock feed.”

R & D

C. Research and development relevant to the use of gene technology in primary industries.

1. Are there new GMOs that would provide positive benefits to your business or the State as whole?

What are they and what would the benefits be?

No

2. What impact has the moratorium had on the research and development in Tasmania? If possible, please provide examples.

Not able to comment on this.

OTHER MATTERS

D. Any other relevant matters raised during the review

Apart from issues related to human health, food security, labelling and other issues that are beyond the scope of this call for submissions, the major issue must surely be perception and image. Countries around the world are turning away from GMO, banning GM crops from being grown in their countries.

In the USA, where around half of the harvested cropland is covered with GM crops, legal claims over Glyphosate health damage are set to reach \$31 billion. Yet, 72% of Americans do not want to eat GM foods.

Choice Australia reports that “84% of Australians are concerned about eating food with GM ingredients”.

Fat Pig Farm largely relies upon the image of Tasmania being GMO-free. Currently, we do not need to promote our business as GMO-free because of the moratorium and the publicly available information, such as that from Biosecurity Tasmania which states under “Product Integrity”:

Ensuring food produced in Tasmania's primary production and processing sectors is safe to eat is an important step in ensuring the well-being of consumers. It is also important to the protection of Tasmania's reputation as a producer of safe and clean food to allow ongoing market access and premium prices for Tasmania products.

GM foods were not subjected to human trials before being released into the food chain and the health impacts of having these substances circulating and accumulating in our bodies are not being studied by any government agency, nor by the companies that produce them. As Paul Hawken, author of *Drawdown* and a pioneering architect of corporate reform relating to ecological practices, says: *“No evidence of harm is not the same as evidence of no harm. The science is not there to prove no harm.”*

The closed-cycle of seed sales, pesticide and herbicide production is an economic spin that has no benefit to Tasmania other than for a small number of poppy and canola producers who surely cannot hope to compete with the vast land and proximity to markets of the other states of Australia. It seems

too obvious that their market is in the clean product they provide now, that stands it alone from their competitors.

IN SUMMARY

The fundamental issue for *Fat Pig Farm* is that any GMO in Tasmania will affect us, regardless of where it enters the system. It could come from unavoidable contamination of our produce grown or reared on the farm, or from the products we do not grow on the farm, such as wine, beers and ciders, olive oil, flour and sugar.

In 2013 when submissions were last called, we said that our task over the next 10 years is to build our niche products and figure out ways to connect consumers who want them but who live far away from our farm gates. In 2019, we can say that we have successfully created food products and tourism experiences that attract consumers – to our farm, to our events, to our on-line shop, our social media and other digital platforms and to our television program.

We would welcome further consultation. If you would like further information about *Fat Pig Farm*, please do not hesitate to contact: Jo Duffy, Business Development Manager, jo@fatpig.farm .