

No kidding

Buronga Organics – having a ‘go at’ it

Buronga Organics, near Cootamundra, NSW, is a 1620-hectare property and home to the beautiful Gardiner’s Look out, part of about 500ha dedicated to private conservation of native vegetation.

David and Mary Booth and their seven children have a hands-on role in running the certified organic property, producing certified organic Angus cattle, Dorper sheep and Boer goats as well as growing wheat, rye, triticale and spelt.

When the Booths began Buronga Organics three years ago, they produced goats with a double motivation. Goats are an important management tool in the holistic farm system as convenient weed control agents and, with careful genetic selection, the meat, ‘chevon’, is also extremely palatable. Goat is popular with the Muslim community and the Booths supply goat meat to the US market as well as to a growing domestic ethnic market.

The family has become passionate about promoting goat for wider consumption in Australia for its taste and health benefits. Their catchphrase “have a go-at it” has led to many people trying and raving about the meat.

While goat is becoming more popular, it is still Buronga’s lamb that is most in demand. Since the move to Bethungra three years ago the Booths started to experiment with South African-developed Dorper and White Dorper breed sheep. These breeds are particularly well suited to producing a prime lamb in harsh rangeland conditions and have a natural disease resistance and hardiness. It makes them easy for organic production, being less dependent on drenching and conventional inputs. The sheep took well to their less than harsh conditions at Bethungra and within a year of production the Booths had won a grand champion carcass award in the tough Illabo Prime Lamb Competition.

Some of the markets the Booths supply to include Eco Meats at Belconnen in Canberra (15 lamb and goat carcasses a week) as well as a Halal butcher (40 goat carcasses a week), Rural Organics in Wodonga, Victoria, and Cleavers Organic Meat in Sydney. They sell mostly goat at the monthly farmers’ markets at Wagga Wagga. Networking with foodies groups has also led to some exciting opportunities including inquiries from the Royal Automobile Club in Sydney.

Recently at a farmers’ market they met celebrity chef



Goats were the first domesticated animals and still provide possibly the healthiest red meat. Goat, with its low saturated fat and low cholesterol, may be an answer to the developed world’s obesity crisis. So, have a go-at it! Goat is sold as an age-specific product: capretto (milk fed), chevon (lamb) and goat meat (older).

Graham Terrey, who used some of their lamb in a demonstration and loved it. Through Graham they were introduced to Strictly Gourmet, a marketing company that works to form networks with producers and others to create niche food markets.

They decided to join forces with Strictly Gourmet and the resulting joint venture is called Strictly Buronga. Its aim is to market 60 carcasses a week to high-end retail outlets in Sydney and elsewhere.

David says he will not begin marketing under the new label until they are confident of having six months’ lamb supplies. The challenge now is to find it. David says: “We wish to operate as a finishing depot for Western store lambs and are confident of forming alliances with some lamb producers, although more organic graziers are needed.”

In Sydney alone the demand for organic lamb is more than double the supply. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) at Rutherglen, Victoria, is putting resources into researching and developing organic lamb production to satisfy this untapped demand. (See the R&D section of this journal). Geoff Duddy, DPI, Yanko, is also working with the Booths to create a network with other producers on a supply chain model.

To contact Buronga Organics, phone David or Mary on (02) 6942 2115 or email < info@burongaorganics.com.au >.

Spread the word

If you would like more information on organic supply networks and market opportunities, some contacts include:

BFA Livestock Sub-committee

email: < livestock-broadacre@bfa.com.au >, phone: (07) 3350 5716

Australian Certified Organic

email: < info@aco.net.au >, phone: (07) 3350 5706

Viv Burnett, organics co-ordinator, DPI, Rutherglen

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Geoff Duddy, sheep and wool officer, DPI, Yanko

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Graham Terry, Strictly Gourmet

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