



OLIVE groves across the state have had much lower-than-usual fruit yields this season. Tasmanian Olive Groves at Colebrook will be lucky to get 6000 litres when it normally averages around 12,000 litres.

FULL STORY:
PAGES 10 & 11

Chris Dick from Tasmanian Olive Groves at Colebrook and Olive the dog.

LAUNCESTON RATES SLUG - P3

Dairy Diary August

- AUG 12-14

People and Culture Course Block 1 Southbank
- AUG 20

TasFarmers Farm X Conference and Expo Deloraine
- AUG 30

Expressions of interest for the Dairy Farm Monitor Project close

Calf Rearing

For this calving season, find helpful calf rearing resources at the website below or scan the QR code:

www.dairyaustralia.com.au/animals/calf-rearing



Dairy Farm Monitor Project

Tasmanian dairy farmers are invited to participate in the Dairy Farm Monitor Project, which provides valuable benchmarking information to help farmers.

If you are interested in being involved or wish to know more information, please contact Symon Jones on symon.jones@utas.edu.au or 0409 012 366.



ON THE COVER



THE GOOD OIL
PAGES 10 & 11

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Tasmanian Country



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WEEKEND MARKETS

SATURDAY

Tasmanian Produce Market 20
Kangaroo Bay Drive, Rosny.
9 am - 1 pm. www.instagram.com/tasmanianproducemarket
www.facebook.com/tasmanianproducemarket
www.tasmanianproducemarket.com.au

Harvest Launceston Community
Farmers Market Cimitiere St car
park, Launceston, 8.30am to
12.30pm. Details: 0417 352 780
or info@harvestmarket.org.au.

Longford RSL Market, Wellington
St, Longford, 8.30am to 1pm.
Details: Rozanne 0409 014 394

All Saints Market 339 Macquarie
St, South Hobart, 9am to 2pm.
Details: Yvonne 0417 370 819.

Longford RSL Market/Car Boot
Sale 9am - 1pm. 78 Wellington
St. Enquiries 0409 014 394.



SUNDAY

Don Market, 17 Forth Rd, Don.
9am-2pm. Variety of stalls for the
last 49 years. Details: 0438 278
730. sherriff1959@hotmail.com.

Richmond Farmers and Makers
Market Town Hall, Richmond,
10am to 3pm. Details:
richmondvillagemarket.com.au

Growers and Creators Market,
Campbell Town. 55 High St,
10am-4pm

Birrlee Hall, 1355 Birrlee Rd,
Birrlee, 9am to 1.30pm. Heaps
of inside and outside stalls. Food
available. Info: blackie_53@hotmail.com

Latrobe Village Market 169-171
Gilbert St, Latrobe, 7am to 2pm.
Details: 0429 779 990, www.latrobevillagemarket.com.au.

Tasmanian Farm Gate Bathurst
St, Hobart, 9am to 1pm. Details:
Madi Peattie 6234 5625 or 0401
925 439.

Penguin Market Old Primary
School, Penguin, 9am to 3.30pm.
Details: www.penguinmarket.com.

Sorell Market, Community Hall,
Sorell, 9am - 1.30pm. Details:
Mykel Salter 0417 162 311,
salter.c.mykel@inet.net.au

Evandale Market Russel St,
Evandale, 8am to 1:30pm.
Details: Peter Woof 6391 9191.

Is your market not on this list or is it no longer on? Send details by email to admin@fontpublishing.com.au

Bush Telegraph

Email details of your event to admin@fontpublishing.com.au

BLUNDELL AT SCHOOL BUSH
DANCE TONIGHT

Geneva Christian College at Latrobe
will have a country music legend at its
old-time bush dance tonight, Friday,
July 31. James Blundell and his son
Briar will be visiting the school during
the day and will perform during the eve-
ning dance which is from 6pm-9pm in
the school stadium. The event will be a
fundraiser for MND and will feature line
dancing by Fonzie's Dance and Ulver-
stone Bootscooting Devils who will
dance to Way Out West. Tickets are on
Eventbrite and cost is \$20, \$15 conces-
sion and \$50 families. Food and refresh-
ments available.

OLD MATES DAY

The 10-year anniversary of Old Mates
Day is testament to the importance of
connection in rural communities and will
be celebrated at the 2026 Old Mates
Day on Saturday, August 1, 10am-4pm
at 681 Nugent Rd, Wattle Hill. Check in
with neighbours, make a new friend and
debrief with fellow farmers. There will
be a free barbecue and a plate to share
would be welcome. RSVP to Terry White
on 0429 652 927.

HERITAGE AND BULLOCK
FESTIVAL

The streets of Oatland will be alive
with action for the Heritage and Bull-
ock Festival on August 8. It will feature
a Sports Shear Tasmania shearing
and wool handling competition. The
festival begins with the Street Parade
starting at 10.30am, making its way
down High Street, led by the Scottish
Pipes and Drums, with the bullock
team, lion dancers, historic machin-
ery, vintage vehicles, and community
groups all on proud display.

CARBON FORESTRY SESSIONS

Carbon Forestry 101 is coming to
Longford, Brighton and Ulverstone
this August and September, for Tas-
manian farmers and landowners to
learn about all things carbon forestry.
Run by Private Forest Tasmania, event
attendees will work through the basics
of carbon forestry including carbon
science, carbon markets, carbon
project governance and methodol-
ogies including the Plantation For-
estry Method and the Environmental
and Mallee Plantings Method. They
will also receive specially developed
resources which focus on simplifying
the complex science and unpacking
key jargon terms. Longford is August
12, Brighton August 27 and Ulver-
stone September 10 with all session

from 4pm-6pm. Register at <https://pft.tas.gov.au/events>

FARMX CONFERENCE

August 20 at the Deloraine Show-
grounds Tasmania's go-to event for
farmers, agribusinesses, and industry
leaders who want to stay ahead in a
changing world. This one-day confer-
ence and expo focuses on practical
solutions, real stories, and connecting
the people driving Tasmanian agriculture
forward. It's your chance to explore the
latest innovations, engage with industry
experts, and tackle the significant chal-
lenges facing farming today. Unique in
the state, FarmX brings the community
together to learn, share ideas.

AGRONOMY CONFERENCE

Darwin from August 24-28. The Con-
ference will bring together research-
ers, agronomists, advisers, growers,
students, industry leaders and policy
makers under the theme 'Agronomy for
a diverse future'. The program spans
farming systems, crop diversity, horti-
culture, crop physiology, nutrition, soil
management systems, technological
innovation, livestock systems, climate
resilience and low-emissions agricul-
ture. Further conference information
<https://2026agronomy.eventsair.site/>

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THE NORTHERN
COURIER

Chris on solo quest fo

SIMON McGUIRE

WHILE Tasmanian Olive Groves at Colebrook is the state's largest olive grove, it remains a one-man operation.

Grower Chris Dick brings in outside help when the trees need to be pruned, but when it is time to pick the fruit, he is on his own – using a special olive harvester.

Attached to a vehicle similar to an all-terrain four-wheeler, he has a machine that shakes the trees, and the olives are caught in what is akin to a large, upside down umbrella.

Mr Dick said it is the only machine of its kind in the state.

Tasmanian Olive Groves first planted trees at its property near Colebrook in 1996, with Mr Dick estimating there are now 12,000 to 13,000 trees.

"As far as I know, it's the biggest I know by threefold."

It is hard work for Mr Dick as the only person harvesting the olives.

"On a good day, I'll harvest 12 bins of olives – which is about five to six tonnes of fruit.

"That equates to more than 1000 litres of olive oil a day."

All of the fruit from Tasmanian Olive

Groves ends up being used for oil.

"We don't do table olives because it's too much stuffing around to get right," Mr Dick said. "But we don't need to do that because we've got so much volume of olive oil."

Most of Tasmanian Olive Groves' oil ends up in restaurants and boutique stores, with products also available to purchase online.

"What gives me the most satisfaction is the end product," Mr Dick said.

"It's all about the oil."

Mr Dick said he estimated that about 95 per cent of their operations would be classed as organic.

However, he said Tasmanian Olive Groves is not organically certified because it is not 100 per cent organic.

"I've used weed control once under the trees in the last four years.

"But our insect control and other stuff we use is all organically certified.

"We don't use any nasty fertiliser sprays under the trees."

Mr Dick said Tasmania's olive industry was small and boutique.

"The financial return is smaller," he said. "To buy a mechanical harvester is about \$350,000 brand new, so

you're not going to plant 1000 olive trees and go and buy one because the economics don't stack up.

"And you can't contract the harvester out because the smaller groves don't have enough space between the trees to use it."

Another challenge for Tasmanian Olive Groves was the threat of insects.

"We planted another 300 trees last year, but the grasshoppers decided to eat some of the seeds, Mr Dick said.

"We did manage to salvage some of them.

"You can't win with farming."

Mr Dick said he was planning to plant another 200 to 300 trees this year.

"The most important thing we have going for us in Tasmania is our cold climate and higher polyphenol levels in the olives.

"I think that makes it a superior product and people should be buying more local."

Compared to what is sold at supermarkets, Mr Dick said, olive oil made by boutique and specialist producers was not much more expensive.

"Pricewise, it's about 20 per cent dearer, and you're getting a superior quality oil," he said.



Olives being put into a bin after being collected in Chris Dick's special olive harvester. Pictures: CHRIS DICK

The secret of a virgin product

SIMON McGUIRE

FRUIT harvested at Tasmanian Olive Groves is sent to a facility at Moonah where it is turned into oil.

The olives are washed before they go into a hammer mill, where they are mulched and then spun in a malaxer.

After that, the olive oil comes out and goes through a separator before it is put into vats to mature and settle.

The final step is putting the oil into bottles and casks before being sold.

Chris Dick said no part of the fruit is wasted.

"The bits that aren't used in the oil come back to the grove and are used as compost that gets spread back onto the olive grove."

Tasmanian Olive Groves only sells extra virgin oil, which is unrefined and produced solely through cold-press



The oil is stored after pressing.

extraction.

"The world health guidelines on extra virgin olive oil are that the polyphenol

count has to be more than 250," Mr Dick said.

"We're getting a 600 count."

Polyphenols are natural plant compounds that act as antioxidants.

"We're trying to do early harvests to increase the polyphenol count, but that was hard this year," Mr Dick said.

"We want to get the count up to 700 or 800."

Mr Dick said Tasmania's climate and late harvesting season were key to the high polyphenol count.

"I'm still harvesting at the end of July, and if it was a good year, I'd be harvesting for another six weeks," he said.

"Different varieties have different stages. "You need to have that sweet spot when picking.

"If you pick them too late, you might get more oil, but the quality might not be as good."



The oil is bottled by hand.

Grow

SIMON McGUIRE

AN "annus horribilis" is h manian olive producer d 2026 harvest.

Olive groves across th been experiencing much usual fruit yields, with attributed to unexpected v

Last year Tasmanian C produced about 18,000 lit

This year the grove wil get 6000 litres when it no ages around 12,000 litres.

Chris Dick said that th some leftover oil from la they could use.

"We've tested it, and it good olive oil."

Mr Dick said he believ winds were a major facto

For the good oil



Chris Dick reflects on a poor year for his olives.

Growers' woes over poor harvest



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olive harvest decline.

"Those three months of wind we had last year were wild," he said.

"Where we are is a very windy spot at the best of times because it comes straight down the valley.

"Next door is nice and sheltered, but

we cop it."

Wattle Hill Olives near Latrobe picked about seven tonnes of olives last year but this year they only picked one tonne.

Wattle Hill grower Emily Davies said it had been a similar story for other fruit and vegetable growers.

"The average oil we get per olive is about 10 per cent," Ms Davies said.

"So that means we only got about 100 litres of oil to last a year, which is not a lot at all."

Tony O'Neil from Cradle Coast Olives said his yield was down as well.

"It's been a bit of an annus horribilis across the board," Mr O'Neil said.

"I haven't come across a year like it in the 30 or so years that I've been involved in the olive pressing game."

Mr O'Neil said a cool summer could

have contributed to the reduction.

"Everyone was weeks or even months behind on oil and harvesting, which is problematic because you've got the frost to cope with.

"This year the birds – the parrots in particular – have been worse than they've ever been.

"Because the crops are so late coming in and all the hawthorns and cotoneasters are gone, the birds go for the quality olives."

Ms Davies said her grove would have to find ways to diversify operations.

"We'd really like to be able to bring people to the grove, whether it be through tours or the farmgate shop we have.

"We also have accommodation as well, so we're really looking at what's the best way to diversify."

GLOBAL Paddock

Vineyards' fire threat

WILDFIRES burning near Bordeaux have not directly reached the region's famous vineyards, but growers say the blazes are a stark warning about the season unfolding around them. Nearly two months of drought and repeated heatwaves have stressed vines, tightened water supplies and pushed the region towards one of its earliest harvests on record.

Young vines with shallow roots are suffering first, while some growers have sought rare exemptions to irrigate producing vineyards. Chateau Palmer director Thomas Duroux described the season as a "wake-up call", saying water security and more resilient vineyards had become urgent priorities. Bordeaux is also battling falling consumption, weak exports and oversupply.

... and Spain in frontline

FIREFIGHTERS confronting Spain's record fires say some fronts have become so intense that crews can do little more than evacuate residents and defend buildings. A major blaze near Madrid has overwhelmed conventional suppression tactics, while abandoned farmland and declining active forest management have been blamed for allowing heavy fuel loads to build close to rural towns.

Spain's fire season has lengthened substantially, with extended heat and drought turning former grazing and cropping land into connected corridors of dry vegetation. The lesson being repeated across rural Europe is that firefighting aircraft and emergency crews cannot replace year-round grazing, clearing, forestry and access-track maintenance.

Rains hit rice crop

INDIAN farmers have accelerated rice, cotton, soybean and maize planting after revived monsoon rain sharply reduced an earlier sowing deficit. Summer crops covered 78.7 million hectares by July 24, less than 5 per cent behind the same stage last year after the shortfall had approached 25 per cent at the end of June.

The recovery matters well beyond India. It supplies about 40 per cent of internationally traded rice and is the world's biggest importer of vegetable oils. Rainfall remains uneven, however, with some farming districts still recording deficits of up to 40 per cent and maize planting almost 10 per cent behind last year.

Beef market move

ARGENTINA has secured access to Indonesia for beef and dairy products, adding another large supplier to a market important to Australia. Indonesia has been widening its import base as it seeks affordable protein and greater supply security.

The development means competition for Australian producers will increasingly turn on price, reliability, halal accreditation and the ability to supply cuts suited to Indonesian consumers. Argentina's entry does not automatically displace Australian product, but it reduces the comfort of established market access and reinforces the need for exporters to maintain close commercial and government relationships across South-East Asia.

US cattle rebuild

A MID-YEAR survey of the United States cattle herd has produced conflicting signs about whether producers have finally begun rebuilding after drought and years of heavy turn-off. Any expansion would take time to reach beef markets because retained heifers initially reduce the number of animals available for slaughter.

The direction of the US herd matters internationally. Continued contraction supports American demand for imported manufacturing beef, while a genuine rebuild could eventually lift domestic supply and alter buying patterns.