



### The "Patting Paddock" goes pink.....

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and we added a definite pink hue to staff, animals and theming for a special day at Floriade 2008.

Many families deal with a loved one who has tackled this disease and the response to our pink Patting Paddock was very moving. It was not only an effective way to raise awareness about breast cancer, but it was a lot of fun as well, with pink ribbons on all the cages, pink flowers springing up amongst the hay bales, staff greeting visitors with very pink faces, and even pink cup cakes for morning tea!

A few months later at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney, we combined with an adjoining display and declared our whole pavilion "pink" for the same cause. This time cows and staff from the Milking Barn, sheep, shearers and fashion models all donned pink for the day. Mind you a hunky shearer wearing a bright pink top while shearing a sheep wearing a pink cap takes a lot of beating in the fashion stakes!

### Our story

Looking back over the hundreds of displays we have undertaken, it is fascinating to recall where it all started. Interestingly, it began by taking a poddy calf and a bottle-fed lamb into our local school when our children were quite little. We lived on a farm some 30kms from Canberra and the children were the only "farm" kids at the small suburban school in North Canberra.

From such humble beginnings f.a.r.m. was created and the name, logo and familiar green and blue colours have undertaken an important journey as we have endeavoured to promote the importance of farming and agriculture to thousands of people over the years.

We are proud of our agricultural heritage and celebrate our connection with Canberra as this city approaches its centenary in 2013. In a time of economic uncertainty and concern about climate change and sustainability, we hope that we can foster an understanding of the value of agriculture through the informative and educational displays that we stage.

### fty!

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*A dash of pink to raise awareness about breast cancer during Floriade. Our three "J"s - Julia, John and Jess with some "pink" friends in the Patting Paddock*

### Our team included

The season just finished saw new faces join f.a.r.m. and several "old timers" move on. We welcomed our Scottish game keeper, John to Floriade, and his highland accent and canny sense of humour charmed visitors every day.

John is currently in Canada chasing bears on his way home to Edinburgh. We have offered airfares and other inducements to try to secure his services again this spring, so let's keep our fingers crossed that he can answer the call.

### Coming Up...

A new milestone for f.a.r.m. is coming up in September. When we finish our Milking Barn display in Adelaide, we will take the whole team over to the Royal Melbourne Show. Our first Victorian event means we will have staged this outstanding award-winning display at all the capitals on the east coast.

We will also be celebrating springtime again with a full month at Floriade. Seems the "Patting Paddock" rated very highly with families visiting last year.

Keep up to date with our events by checking our website regularly. [www.farmarm.com.au](http://www.farmarm.com.au)

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## Henry

Many visitors to the "Patting Paddock" during 2006 will remember our heifer Jodie. As a grown cow, she and her first 2 calves have been used in displays at the MLA Food Farm at the Sydney Royal Easter show, and in February this year her yearling steer, Henry, was transferred to Canberra Grammar School for the Ag students to prepare and enter in various competitions at the Royal Canberra show.

Henry proved to be an excellent choice for the students as his temperament and willingness to cooperate quickly took him from paddock grass-muncher to competent show ring performer.

Congratulations to the students at Canberra Grammar and well done Henry. As commercial beef producers we were more than happy to provide a steer for the school and follow Henry's hoof and hook scores with considerable interest.



*"Henry" with his young handler from the Canberra Grammar School taking part in the Led Steer Competition at the 2009 Royal Canberra Show.*

## Wool - an amazing fibre.

2009 has been declared the International Year of Natural Fibres by the United Nations and perhaps one of the most outstanding natural fibres produced world-wide is wool. Australia is renowned for its Merino wool – a premier export to mills in Asia and Europe – and some of the finest examples of this type of fleece are grown in the regions adjoining Canberra.

At an International Day at the Defence College in February, we staged a small but informative display in conjunction with the Patting Paddock, featuring fleeces and articles made from wool that was 17 micron and finer. Visitors handling the beautiful white soft wool were very impressed and keen to ask questions about its production – from breeding and animal husbandry practices to how the fleeces are harvested, taken to the finished garment and marketed.

## Take the time

.....to appreciate every day as it dawns, hug someone who means a lot to you, get in touch with an old friend. A trendy message heard more frequently as the pace of life increases?

Working with animals and being close to nature might allow time for reflection, but it also shows the reality of life – from the joys of birth to the sorrows of a final parting. On the farm we often find it hard to understand this enigma, so it is very important that we learn from nature's extremes and with acceptance, make the most of every moment, every day,

## You won't believe who I saw.....

There were over 25,000 visitors to the Milking Barn at the 2009 Sydney Royal Easter Show, and amongst them were several celebrity families. Followed closely by "minders" they were easy to spot, but when it came down to crouching in the sawdust and actually getting some milk in the bucket, it didn't matter whether you were famous or not.

"It was fun", "it was cool", "it was what I remember as a kid on my grand pop's farm", "I'm glad my children have seen where milk comes from". Some celebrity quotes that you won't find in New Idea!

## The littlest farmer

Seems our Littlest Farmer has her own fan club, even if it is only an adoring mob of Pekin ducks!

Lots of you met Isabella as the "baby in the pram" at Patting Paddock displays during 2008 and we are often asked about her progress. She is now 18 months old, walking, talking, managing simple farm chores like feeding the chooks and totally charming her parents and grandmother with her antics. She has also started her own small business selling eggs from her bantams – with a marketing slogan like, "Little eggs for little people", she's sure to threaten the more established producers!

## Behind the image

When we put on our uniforms, load the animals into the truck and set off for an event, we are undertaking a journey that brings the farm to the city, a journey that showcases our animals and hopefully educates, informs and entertains our visitors.

Our slogan – "from the paddock to the playground" – says it all. We breed and show farm animals of high quality so that people can learn about the different types and their important role, as well as giving us the opportunity to communicate effectively as farmers.

There is a current move to bridge the gap between city and country by encouraging people to spend a day on a farm, but unfortunately there are very limited opportunities for the hundreds of families wanting to take up the offer.

Each time we set up a display, or stage an educational event featuring our farm animals, we hope we are giving people a taste of what farming is all about.