

Thursday, October 12, 2017

## Growers Invited To Find Niche Markets

*Farmers are invited to a tour of the farm of Goanna Brewery to explore niche and local opportunities*

We can grow a wide range of produce here in the sweet spot on the edge of the tropical and sub-tropical growing zones. Farmers and business owners in the Greater Whitsunday Region are taking advantage of this opportunity by sourcing seasonal produce to cater for a niche and local market.

Reef Catchments is hosting a bus tour to show local growers and any future farmers an example of a local business owner who is utilising their own farm produce as well as other local produce to create a unique product, with their locally sourced and seasonal cider.

The Palmer's farm and Goanna Brewery is a showcase operation embracing closed loop farming, and reusable bottles, as well as composting the hops from the brewery to fertilise their farm crops which they use in their seasonal ciders. They also support other local farmers by sourcing seasonal produce that may not have had the shelf life to sell to the everyday shopper.

Chief Bottle Washer (co-owner) at Goanna Brewery, Linda Palmer said, "Our seasonal, local produce ciders were born of our passion for food and a rural way of life. We integrated the fresh produce available on our farm, and within the community to create ciders that outsell our beers.

"It also makes sense to take waste product back to the farm for composting and animal feed.

"It's important to concentrate on what you do best and keep it simple. Don't be scared to share your passion for things, it's infectious."

Reef Catchments Project Officer, Sophie Glasser said, "I hope that people who attend the day will be inspired to think outside of the box when it comes to both their business ventures as well as farming practices. The Palmer's are a wonderful example of a successful business that has identified a niche market opportunity that fully integrates a brewery business with a farming operation."

Our understanding of soil health in the region is growing through the demonstration of local businesses and farmers who are using sustainable or holistic farming practices to create both environmental and economic benefits. Local businesses, like the Palmers', have found a way to market local and seasonal produce in a different way, keeping resources local and strengthening our regional economy. These field days also showcase that we're able to grow profitable produce without the use of chemical fertilisers and fewer pesticides.

**ENDS**

**Media contact:** Tegan McBride | 07 4868 4213 | 0438 726 226 |

[tegan.mcbride@reefcatchments.com](mailto:tegan.mcbride@reefcatchments.com)