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UK comp kudos for Coonawarra

THE International Wine and Spirit Competition is one of the world's premier judgments.

First staged in the UK in 1969, this year's judging involved 250 wine experts and attracted more than 6500 entries from 80 countries.

So you can appreciate Leconfield winemaker Paul Gordon's delight when he was informed his 2006 Leconfield Cabernet Sauvignon (\$30) won the gold medal as the best wine in its class at this high-brow competition.

"The international significance of the competition makes this gold medal very special indeed," Gordon says from his Coonawarra bunker.

The wine has magical charm, its rich, exquisitely balanced flavours underlining Coonawarra's global standing in this regal variety.

Eight years ago, after a 12-year career as Rouge Homme's winemaker at Coonawarra, Gordon joined Leconfield, which was established by noted oenologist Sydney Hamilton in 1974 and has been owned by his nephew Richard since 1981.

Gordon is the first to concede that unless he's got quality fruit at his disposal it's impossible to produce first-class wine. The 2006 vintage provided him with the means to do so.

"The award underlines the excellence of our cabernet and the high calibre of fruit produced here in 2006," he says.

the wine list



ANGULLONG

2008 Orange Sauvignon Blanc (\$14)

This variety is well suited to cool-climate viticulture, which explains its success at Orange. You won't find a fresher, more appealing drop than this beaut.

TIM ADAMS

2008 Pinot Gris (\$22)

This Clare Valley wine has it all. It has super tropical flavours with strong citrus overtones, a passing level of sweetness and a clean, crisp, dry finish. Enjoy it young.



MOPPITY VINEYARDS

2006 Reserve Shiraz (\$35)

Another winner from the International Wine and Spirit Competition, for best 2006 shiraz.

This rich, peppery Hilltops red sets a benchmark for the region.



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WATT'S WHAT

with **BRUCE WATT** Central Tablelands RLPB



Meat Profit Day well supported

I recently attended the MLA Meat Profit Day held at near Orange.

It was a well-organised, well-supported meeting with a very good range of speakers.

One session was on meat goats, under the title "Goats — never Boering".

I know there is something about goats that calls for a pun, but "never Boering" ... were they kidding?

We heard that there are about three million goats in Australia.

Most are feral (2.6 million) while 300,000 are Boer goats and the remainder Angoras, Cashmeres and Dairy goats.

The speakers gave us mixed messages about whether we should refer to those goats running free in western NSW as "ferals".

After all, it is a challenge running a slick marketing campaign based on selling feral animals.

One speaker told us they were not feral goats but "rangeland goats".

Another thought that

the horse has bolted and the name "feral" is now accepted in Asia.

My suggestion is that we call them "Fair Isle Goats" as a compromise.

While there will always be producers with a special interest in goats, the question for many is can meat goats complement existing grazing enterprises and be profitable in their own right?

I sought the opinion of Bill Crossing.

Bill and family run a large cattle and wine grape enterprise at Angullong, near Panaura, southwest of Orange.

Bill has carried up to 4000 breeding does for nearly 30 years.

He now runs 500 Boer does as a sideline to his cattle grazing operation.

Bill regards his goat enterprise as complementary to his cattle business.

He runs small mobs especially in "problem paddocks" for weed control.

He said they are great on blackberries although he still sprays

the larger bushes first.

Bill said his goats also suppress saffron thistles by eating out the seed heads, will graze variegated thistles and Paterson's curse and regard briars as "ice cream".

We agreed that goats are less complementary to a sheep enterprise.

Goats and sheep share a few animal health problems especially worms.

Shedding fibres are also a headache if you run merinos.

Bill commented that his Boer goats are easy to muster and manage although fencing needs to be good.

He prefers an eight line prefabricated (ringlock or hingejoint) fence with a couple of barbs on top.

A hot wire about a foot off the ground helps the goats develop a positive attitude to the fence.

However, is the meat goat business profitable?

At the Meat Profit day, several speakers described the markets for goats.

We heard that while

Australia was the largest exporter of goat meat, largely as a commodity product from the "Fair Isle" population, the domestic market is also growing slowly.

Marie Barnes, chair of the MLA session and Boer goat breeder from Cudal told me that some producers were building a strong following at farmer's markets and by direct selling to specialist butchers and restaurants.

She said however that now the most profitable segment of the market is exporting breeding stock to Asia.

Bill thought his goat enterprise, hampered by fluctuating and less sophisticated marketing options, was less profitable than his cattle enterprise.

However, he feels their weed control abilities compensate for this.

Nice to know that with more attention to marketing from the MLA and committed producers there could be more bucks in the goat business.