

23 January 2018

To all SAGE Farmers Market Stall Holders

### **5th Birthday**

As you all know, our market turned 5 on New Year's Day this year. Wait, what? That went so quickly! We also ran out of time (and steam) to organise a celebration on the day, so we decided to have a celebration after school goes back and the tourists ease off a bit.

It will also be nice to wait until Sandra gets back from overseas, so she can be part of the celebrations (and help us organise them!). Stay tuned for that.

### **Changes to the market**

Sadly, Tilba Dairy have made the difficult decision to leave the market. The growth of their business has been spectacular to watch and they are an inspiration to small scale farmers in this region. However they now have so many demands on them, Nic and Erica are unable to keep coming to Moruya on Tuesday afternoons. This is a great blow to the market, but I'm trying to see this in a positive light. Whatever small part we played, we have helped a local agricultural business grow – in fact, outgrow – and that's one of the very important roles a farmers market plays. The gap they leave presents an opportunity for another business to develop and I look forward to seeing what comes next, both for Tilba Dairy and for our market.

The other sad news is that Luke and Ebony Hemler are also leaving the market, at least as regular stall holders. Luke's dad has retired, increasing the demands on Luke's time at the orchard, so the veggie growing side of the operation is being rationalised. They will return seasonally with their fruit and with new crops of apples and other trees coming into maturity next year, we hope to see them with more often than just in summer with stone fruit.

The SFM Committee wishes both of these stall holders the very best.

But some good news! I have spoken to Mary and Peter Connolly and while Pete's recovery from his operation took longer than expected, they should be returning to the market later in February!!

### **Paper bags**

Part of our plans to remove single use plastic grocery and produce bags from the market is to provide "wet strength" paper bags to stall holders, who can then make them available *at a cost of 50c* to the customer. These will be the same bags as used in bottle shops for 2 and 3 bottles.

Can you please let me know if you want to have these bags available on your stall and if so, how many you would like to have on hand, so I can purchase the bags. Please remember, these are to be *sold* to the customer (you keep the 50c), *not given* and they are not to be used at other markets or for other purposes (unless you reimburse the market committee for the bags, at cost).

Reminder: we have publicly announced that the autumn equinox is our deadline for single use plastic bags at our market. We will start increasing our public awareness campaign from now until the equinox to help customers adjust. It will also help if you could keep mentioning it to your customers that arrive unprepared.

## **Farmers Markets Alliance of NSW**

A reminder to please consider joining the FMANSW as a stall holder member. The committee (which I'm on) will start researching and developing a system of accreditation for NSW markets and it would be great to involve as many farmers and stall holders as possible in the process. You need to be a member to have a say. Only \$50 a year. Details on the website [fmansw.org.au](http://fmansw.org.au).

That's all for now.

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