

Food Connects'
'Fabulous Farmers'

FARM CHARACTER IDENTIFICATION

It is a guide to some of the practices and philosophies that are and will be implemented on the farms to assist us in evaluating the farm's unique character.

◆ **Number one criteria is TASTE**

It goes without saying, but does the produce taste like it should. (a quick test is to ask someone 50 years or older to hark back to old times and then get them to taste the produce)

◆ **Guiding philosophies**

This gives us an idea of the broader or deeper motivations, inspirations, philosophies that are guiding the whole farm operation. It may include courses, book reading, retreats, support development, tours or other programs not yet invented

Some examples

- Holistic Farm Management program
- Biological Farmers tour
- Environmental Management System (EMS) program
- RCS, Nutri-Tech, BD, etc, training sessions
- Permaculture Design Course
- Churchill or Nuffield scholarship
- Self guided holiday or tour
- Joining a peer support group
- Organic growing courses
- Book reading program
- Joining a eco email discussion group

◆ **Farming methodology**

These are some of the growing practices that may be implemented to illustrate that the produce has been grown or raised in a highly healthy and sustainable way

- Organic
- Bio-Dynamic
- Bio- Intensive
- Chemical free
- A true poly-cultural or mixed farm (Have three or more types of 'crops', i.e. Vegetables, cereals and beef or Dairy, herbs, fruit and timber)
- Biological systems management
- Minimum or no till cultivation practices
- A primarily pasture based feeding regime (90% or more)
- Cell grazing
- Controlled traffic
- Raised beds
- Other
- Open pollinated and/or non hybrid seeds

◆ **Recycling and waste disposal**

There are measures in place to separate, reuse and dispose of waste

- Produce and stubble
- Paper
- Timber
- Plastic
- Iron
- Other

◆ **Environmental responsibility**

There is good planning and implementation to address environmental challenges where appropriate.

- A Whole farm plan completed or in development

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- Address of salinity areas
- Establishment of green belts / wildlife corridors
- Erosion control
- Wetland protection or renewal
- Wildlife protection or control
- Enhancement of biodiversity
- Creek bank re-stabilization

◆ **Water efficiencies**

The measures that have or will be implemented to improve water use? i.e.

- Advanced irrigation technologies
- Recycling capabilities
- Soil water holding capacity
- Irrigation timing
- Reducing evaporation

◆ **Energy efficiencies**

The alternative practices that may be in place to reduce use of fossil based fuel and coal based electricity

- Energy Audits i.e.
 - (internal) Matching machinery to need
 - (external) Sourcing inputs closer to farm
- Use of bio-diesel
- No till cultivation practices
- Use of Passive / Solar building design and use of renewable technology

◆ **Human resources**

How the workforce is encouraged to contribute to the sustainability of the farming operation.

- They are involved in regular planning meetings and discussions
- They are involved in external discussion or focus groups
- Some career or ownership (custodianship) pathways are in place or encouraged
- There is a healthy way of dealing with conflict

◆ **Other illustrations of the 'character' of the farming operation**

- **Community involvement**
- **'Land for Wildlife' accreditation**
- **Regular Landcare involvement**
- **Diversity of operation, i.e. Farm stay / B&B**
- **Involvement of whole family**
- **Partner or children is / are involved in off farm activity that contributes to a more peaceful and healthier world, etc.**

(In the case of some chemical use)

Some of the practices that are in place to reduce reliance on chemicals and the seeking appropriate alternatives

- Natural Fertilizers and / or Composts
- Use of well thought out weed management strategies.
- Use of naturally derived or biological Pesticides, Fungicides and IPM strategies
- Reducing use and replacement of Drugs (hormones, antibiotics, etc)
- Use of buffer zones for potential contamination control
- Checking processes for brought in materials