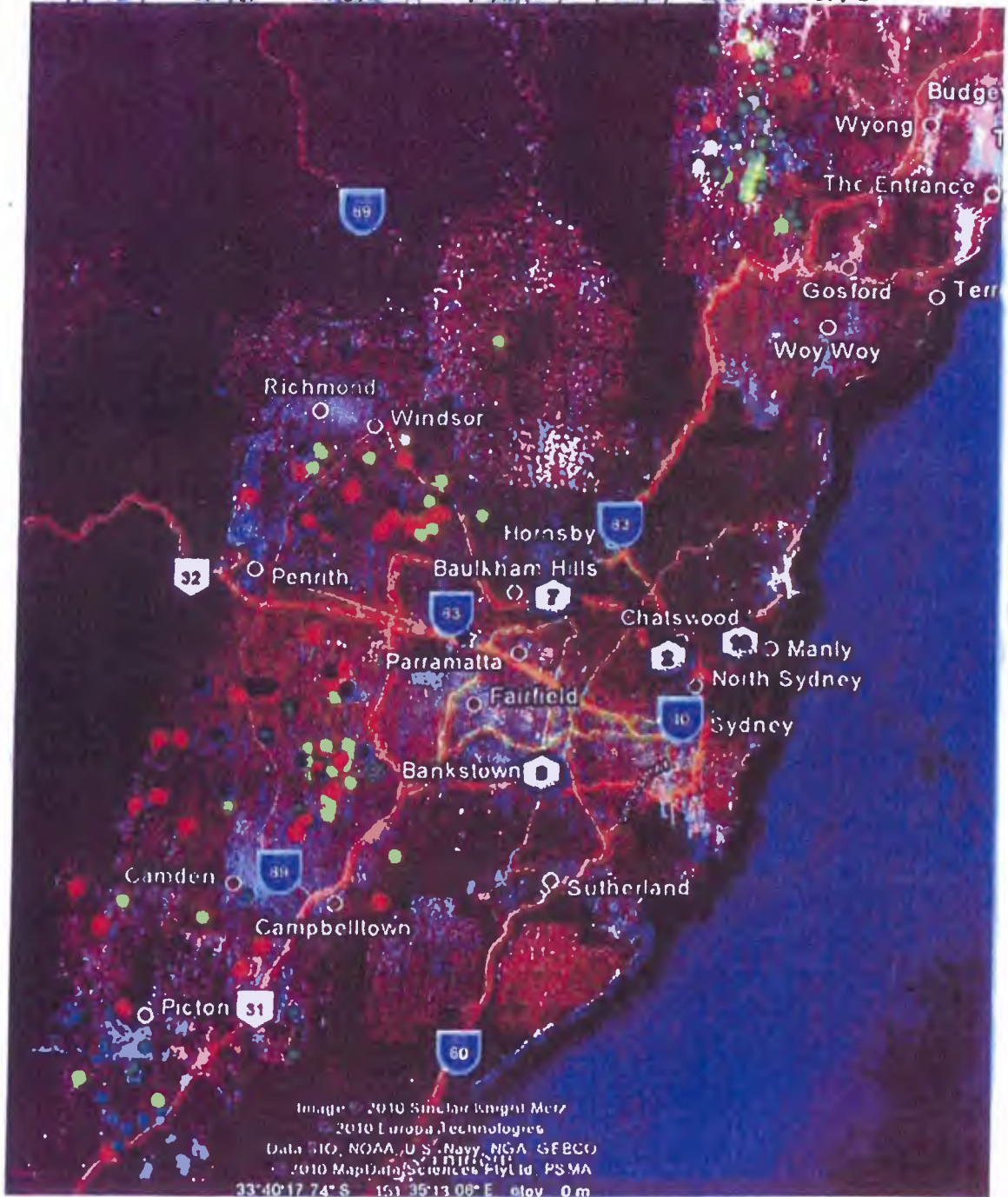


SYDNEY BASIN - BROILER & TURKEY FARM LOCATIONS



- CORDINA
- RED LEA
- BRADA
- INGHAMS
- SYDNEY (TURKEY)
- CENTRAL COAST (CHICKEN)

**INVESTIGATION** | 80% of "perishable" vegetables grown in NSW are grown in Sydney. | \$1b Estimated value of the agriculture industry in the Sydney basin.

# Sprawl eating us out

Debra Jopson  
REGIONAL AFFAIRS

THE body representing 10 western Sydney councils has accused the federal government of ignoring its plans to stop the nation's biggest city from gobbling up its farmland, risking a disastrous loss of crucial fresh food sources.

"The failure to take seriously the need for long-term agricultural land in the Sydney basin will have disastrous consequences for our food supply," Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) president Allan McLellan said.

The federal government needs to realise the agricultural land is the domain of rural areas.

State government macerals estimates the Sydney agricultural industry is worth between \$800 million and \$1 billion annually, with 10 per cent of total NSW produce coming from 1 per cent of the state's agricultural land. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows more than 6500 people are employed in the Sydney industry.

Mr McLellan said WSROC is attempting to get a response from the federal government about its Urban Adapt program aimed at ensuring the availability of fresh produce to Sydneysiders - had failed.

About 20 groups and institutions, including state departments, are working on the plan despite the lack of federal involvement.

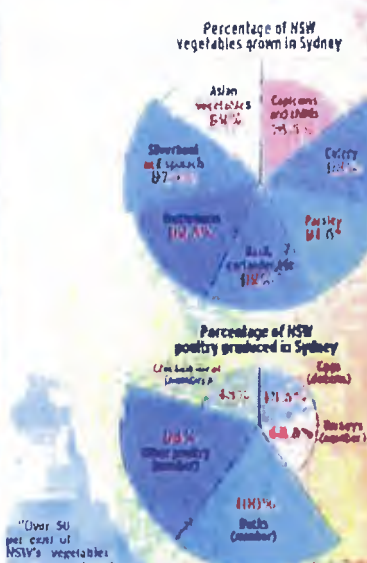
Mr McLellan called on Federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke to immediately pledge to work with WSROC and other bodies to secure the food supply chain in western Sydney.

The Sydney region grows about 15 per cent of the state's vegetables, according to NSW Primary Industries research. It produces at least 60 per cent of perishable vegetables. Those that are fresh have not been processed and have a short shelf life. For NSW, these include, Asian vegetables, capsicums and chilis, celery, parsley, basil, cucumber, mushrooms and silverbees.

It is also the state's most important area for producing chickens, ducks, turkeys and eggs.

The national NSW government analysis has predicted that by 2017 areas cultivated as growth centres to house 1 million more people, only 2010 will cause a 10 per cent drop in production to plummet.

Planned development in the north-west and south-west growth areas will lead to a possible 25 per cent drop in vegetable grown and a 35 per cent drop in poultry meat produced.



## Foreign foods may leave a bitter taste

ARLE WOOD

AUSTRALIAN vegetable growers are concerned imported produce is bad for our health.

Are they a poisonous High Fructose and health problems could result from a diet heavy on the quality control of overseas farms.

"We will be increasingly relying on imported produce that is unreliable in quality and is potentially harmful to our health," he said. Australian produce is grown under strict biosecurity standards to ensure our health is protected. Australian growers are competing to compete with cheaper imported produce that may not be produced under the same stringent quality controls.

"We have a lot of concern that vegetable growers will be under pressure to produce from international markets in the next 10 years." Australian imports of \$642 million worth of vegetables in the 2008-09 financial year, according to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE).

From potatoes and processed tomato to our most important, tomatoes, the same produce from New Zealand, China and Italy. In the same period, we imported \$291 million worth of fruit, according to ABARE.

Australian fruit growers are also concerned about a recent recommendation by Biosecurity Australia to allow the importation of fresh apples from China.

The recommendation would be subject to a quality biosecurity check and checks of the post-arrival of growing areas in China. A trade embargo among apple growers here in the 1980s and 90s could curtail the local supply.

Australia imports far more fruit and vegetables than it exports. In the 2008-09 financial year, Australia imported 1.6 million tonnes of fruit and 207 million tonnes of vegetables.

However, Australia's food growers are not as heavily affected by the level of importation. These latest research shows 2 per cent of 100 of farms reported negative income, down from more than 20 per cent of farms in South Australia and Victoria.

Local growers of the Great Divide were hurt, and losses could be made in rocky areas.

Mr Burke admitted the importance of local being grown locally but would not answer questions about Sydney's farm land being reserved. It would be up to whether the federal government should intervene to protect Sydney's agricultural land.

The food chain by people in Sydney already comes from all over the nation," Mr Burke said.

NSW Primary Industries Minister Steve Whittaker said there was "plenty of good produce" to serve food should continue to be grown here in the Sydney basin.

"The region has the advantage of a mild coastal climate, with a range of suitable soils and access to reliable water supplies, transport, labour and markets," he said.

with Holly Lane

Over 50 per cent of NSW's vegetables are grown in the Murray-Darling catchment region, where water availability is becoming a significant issue, says the document produced by the state department governing agriculture.

According to Professor Bruce Campbell, the focus on the Murray-Darling basin could do more to a trickle by 2010 as a result of climate change. Sydney has good agricultural land and Sydney should be better placed than inland as the sea change occurs. The capacity for Sydney to continue to provide vegetables should be increased - not reduced.

Urban Adapt would weigh up how much farmland should be kept on the city fringe and whether there should be new farming zones along major roads, WSROC executive director Jeremy Goff said.

It would consider how to source land when climate change made the

Runny-Doddy and Murrumbidgee food bowls less viable. And rising fuel prices would increase the cost of freight food.

Twelve new intensive farming greenhouses technology in allow growing food closer to the city and a blossoming movement in environmentally friendly growers were also on the agenda, Mr Goff said.

The aim was to ensure that fresh, equitably priced food would still be available to Sydney people and those in the west in particular. Most of the city's vegetable farms

NSW set to develop as over the next 20 years as housing development is pushed across the north-west and south-west, he said.

David Bourchillon, director of the Institute for Rural Futures director at the University of New England, said plans must be made to ensure the maximum benefit from what little good soil and rainfall areas we have.

"In this country we have very few and they are very precious." The Murray-Darling basin had gone down the drain while much of our system had flown away, he said. Farming in city fringes and in rich

## Fringe farmers feel the squeeze

Debra Jopson

THE SUBURBAN fringe grows the best cherry tomatoes in the world at Rosemead in Sydney's west but when he sells his farmland now worth about \$1 million he cannot imagine how he will get on next.

The practice of farmers buying blocks on the metropolitan fringe, at long-term growing lease for decades, then selling the property for a good profit cannot continue because it is not an investment. It is a commodity.

It means farmers are being pushed up land faster than ever with state government research predicting almost 200 vegetable farms will disappear from north-western and south-western Sydney in the next 20 years.

Mr Hinchman was the spokeswoman in detailed specific areas of

metropolitan land with an agreed fund saving that late Sydney's. This would mean urban residents would not have to wait on the end of tractors, while farmers would feel confident about their long-term investment in infrastructure such as aged care.

"That land is becoming more

**66** Rural land is becoming scarce. If you go too far away, it is hard to get access to the market

scarcity. If you go too far away, it is hard to get access to the market, especially for fresh food. These are the issues we should be targeting," said Mr Hinchman, who is president of the National Vegetable Growers Association (NVGA).

"You don't want to grow lettuce 1000km away. That's not a good production area either," he said. There is plenty of government land that could be set aside for agriculture and greenhouses meet the demand required is minimal.

On any 100 acres, for instance, you could produce that six years you would need 10 or 20 times the volume of land for commercial use," he said.

"You don't need much land to produce vegetables for Sydney, with new technology and a new way of farming. But we still have no production of fresh



Growing concerns... Joe El Bouadi at his Rosemead farm. Photo: Joe Hill

200 vegetable farms will disappear from north and south west Sydney over the next two decades.

60 breeds of livestock have been reported extinct worldwide since 2000.

# INVESTIGATION

# of house and homes



Wife in their head... Cathy Howard with five daughters, Stephanie, 14, of their Cowrie farm, Pokoi, on the left.

## Third crow for chicken industry

MEANTY Sydney poultry industry is under mounting pressure to meet an increased demand for organic and free-range chickens. It is also under pressure to meet a new demand for organic and free-range chickens. It is also under pressure to meet a new demand for organic and free-range chickens.

Residents in new houses are complaining about noise and smells from the farms. The council is investigating the complaints. The council is investigating the complaints. The council is investigating the complaints.

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## Feathers fly over council complaints

IN MY years as farmer and only I know what a million birds in the air can do to a Sydney council. It is not just the noise and the smell, but the sheer volume of birds that can cause a council to have a headache.

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sydney poultry industry was a boom, as council no longer gave development approval for chicken farms. The council is investigating the complaints.

## Growing problem needs radical ideas

Delia Japan. This nation must completely rethink where and how it grows its food, a prominent academic and NSW government advisor says. John Williams, head of the NSW Natural Resources Commission, said we must shift production from the city and into the coast and stop development from decimating farms around our cities and large towns.

While the Murray-Darling basin would produce a lower proportion of middle crops, such as cotton and export crops such as wheat, the salt agriculture must have its water use reduced. The environment could not continue to bear the burden and many areas would become unusable as salinity changes hit. Water in our rivers was over-allocated to agriculture during the 1950s, '60s and '70s when there was more rain, but a decade of drought has shown this wasn't sustainable.

While the Murray-Darling basin would produce a lower proportion of middle crops, such as cotton and export crops such as wheat, the salt agriculture must have its water use reduced. The environment could not continue to bear the burden and many areas would become unusable as salinity changes hit.

MACLEAY COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS FOR 2011 OPEN WEEKS Aug 3 to 10 2010. Includes information about enrollment, fees, and contact details.

Ovp+3Editorial Extra Page 36

comment extra

The Sun-Herald

For health's sake, stop our precious farmland being gobbled up

It has been called suburban sprawl. It has been called the 'hunger for land'...

It is an important part of the federal government's agricultural strategy...

South-west and north-west for the previously neglected hunting and...

fruit and vegetables, and its abundant supply of...

Any hiccup in the chain of supply for fresh fruit and vegetables will...

letters

Nostalgia serves up delicious taste of past

MY FAVORITE reaction to the wonderful photograph of a smiling...

As an Australian of Indian background, I grew up with the whiff of...

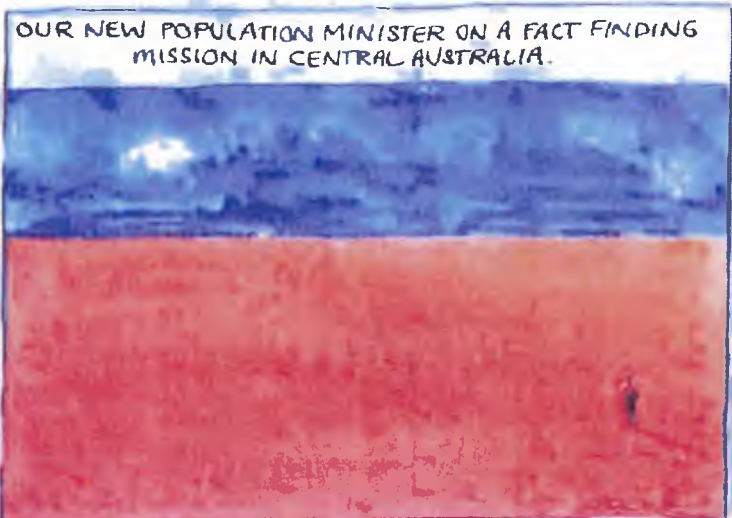
The article is an eye-opener, a painfully honest and heartfelt...

Food for thought

JULIA GILLARD was teased for leaving a kitchen that didn't look cooked...

No mercy

CLARE BAY (WATSON'S COLUMN) Judge for yourself! (Date, May 9)



OUR NEW POPULATION MINISTER ON A FACT FINDING MISSION IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.

It is an eye-opener. Now come pare this judgment to that which Justice...

The judge recorded no conviction and applied no penalty...

I don't understand the justice system. Justice Hinch has a lengthy...

Burden of proof

IN HIS discussion of the adverse judgment in the Martin Hinchfield...

Squall tales

MR HINDGREN complains that Kevin Rudd's...

Watch it, sonny

I WAS appalled and dismayed by the...

Miracle required

ALEX MITCHELL - "Drobnik...

Message for Gretel

AS THE mother of the son, one of whom I...

Courting trouble

A CLASS action against the banks should not be allowed...

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Send words and images. Please give your name, suburb and daytime contact number...



**John Cordina**

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**Subject:** FW: NEWS : ProTen Press Release

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/agriculture/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=16&objectid=10873339&ref=rss](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/agriculture/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=10873339&ref=rss)

<http://www.proten.com.au/index.php?section=1>

ProTen is actively expanding its current operations in Australia. The development programme will see four new twelve shed farms constructed in Griffith, NSW during 2013 and 2014. ProTen's production capacity will increase by 54%, and total 172 sheds across 10 farms producing approximately 42 million chickens per year which is approximately 8.5% of Australia's annual consumption. ProTen has long term extendible contracts to supply chickens to Australia's largest chicken processor, Balada Pty Ltd ("Balada"). Balada markets and sells chicken products under the well established brands - Steggles, Lillydale and Balada.

The contracts are structured on an annual production volume per square metre basis, with growing fees adjusted annually for inflation and a pass through of key operating cost increases. These contracts are unique to ProTen and provide certainty around stable and reliable revenue and earnings margins.