

Freeranger Eggs

Freeranger Eggs at Grantville is proving that farm profitability doesn't have to come at the expense of the environment. The whole property covers about 80 hectares but the farming venture operates on about 30 hectares. With less than 1500 chickens, Freeranger Eggs is a low intensity farm that is demonstrating a commitment to protecting biodiversity in the region – as well as supplying local restaurants and consumers with top quality eggs.

Free range egg farming is conducted as part of a diversified farming enterprise - a traditional mixed farm with rotational grazing of sheep, cattle and chooks instead of the monocultures which have become usual. All the hens have 24 hour access to pasture, and are free to roam and roost in open sheds, protected from foxes by Maremma guardian dogs.

All eggs collected, sorted and packed by hand. Chook numbers are kept low to avoid the problems that trouble large, intensive operations. The farm runs less than 750 chickens per hectare even though the industry standard currently allows up to 1500.

Disease, parasites, stress, cannibalism and effluent management are all big issues on intensive farms but the 'low density' approach at Freeranger Eggs avoids the need for chemical treatments, as well as eliminating any requirement to trim the beaks of the hens - standard practice on intensive farms.

No meat meal is used in the chickens' diet, and no colouring additives are used to enhance yolk colour. In many cases those colouring additives can cause allergic reactions.

About half of the Freeranger farm production is sold through Farmers' Markets which provide an effective outlet for sales direct to consumers. Some eggs are home delivered, and others sold to restaurants and small retail outlets such as health food and general stores.

More details on the farm website:

www.freeranger.com.au

and blog:

<http://freerangereggs.blogspot.com>