



A recent shot of the Keysborough Egg Farm team.



Founding poultry farmer George Scaunich.

Beloved farm folds

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Starting from a chook farm in Chandler Road more than six decades ago, an iconic Keysborough family business has closed its doors.

Keysborough Egg Farm owner David Scaunich held a "heavy heart" as he closed the business started by his parents George and Rosina. "It's my life. Closing this was the hardest decision that I and the family has made."

The move was made for "family reasons" but accelerated by Covid lockdowns in the past 18 months, Mr Scaunich said.

Shopping habits changed as customers were shut out by the five-kilometre rule. Supermarkets "made a killing" while the egg farm's trade was ravaged.

Last year, the business closed for two weeks' quarantine as eight staff tested Covid-positive. Another staff member was infected on the week before the farm called it quits.

"It would have been a big effort to get the business up again."

In between these famines, there were still some feasts, such as long lines of panic-buyers before a lockdown in mid-2020.

The farm's fridges would be cleaned out by 3pm.

Sometimes more than 400 queued at the gates due to empty shelves at nearby supermarkets.

"Our butcher was leading them through like the Pied Piper."

Mr Scaunich has been steeped in the business and family farm since he was 5.

And seen it grow to the impressive egg-processing facility, butcher and shopfront on

Greens Road and Pacific Drive.

At its peak, up to 25 smiling staff prepared meats, packed eggs and served customers.

It has supplied to cafes, restaurants, supermarkets, grocers and small retail.

The egg farm shunned the trend to pre-packing eggs and produce. It instead favoured a fresh delicatessen and packing eggs in front of customers.

"The major thing has been serving customers. It comes at a cost though."

More than 60 years ago, Mr Scaunich's father and brother started a poultry farm near the railway line at Chandler Road.

It was a time when the area was coated in market gardens, dams and farmsteads.

A chemist now stands on the site.

They shifted to Dingley then to Chapel Road, Keysborough before opening a shop on Perry Road, Keysborough in 1973.

Some of its original customers have stayed the entire 48-year journey. Many reacted with shock and sadness after its demise was announced on 15 October.

One wrote that there was "nothing good left in Keysborough now", another how they made 70 kilometre round trips to buy their eggs.

"The stuff of legend" was how the customer described the eggs.

Now, Mr Scaunich is looking forward to a rest. A Christmas with the family, without the frantic pre-festive orders for pork, chicken, turkey and eggs.

"Christmas was bigger than a Grand Final for the effort that we'd put in."

"We were always about quality and about serving customers."



Keysborough Egg Farm has closed after 48 years. 158710 Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS



The former egg farm shop on Perry Road, Keysborough.