

BUSINESS IN FOCUS

Family lays firm foundations

By Casey Neill

George and Rosina Scaunich started Keysborough Egg Farm more than 40 years ago with about 40,000 chooks.

Today their son David is at the helm, the business is 900 metres from the original farm, and they have half a million chickens.

David said a third generation of the Scaunich family was now making its way into the business.

"Maybe one day they might want to take over, too," he said.

"As a family business we just want to give that service to our customers, to our community.

"We've been here a while, we want to be here a long time."

He officially got involved about 30 years ago.

"I've been involved all my life. I grew up in the business, I was born in the business," he said.

"Mum's still very much involved. Dad likes to overlook the week-to-week bits and pieces."

Keysborough Egg Farm is at Greens Road and Pacific Drive.

"Our core business on-site is supplying the general public with the finest quality produce in the area," he said.

"We distribute eggs state-wide and we distribute meat and poultry to local businesses - cafes, restaurants, takeaways, other butchers.

"This place has been here for five years.

"We had a farm there with well over 150,000 chickens laying eggs.

"It was established in 1973, 900 metres down the road.

"We had a shop there which was up and running. Many people knew of us.

"Suburbia's caught up with us. We no longer have the farm there.

"We had to shut down pretty quickly."

When they reopened eight months later, most



Keysborough Egg Farm staff member Nikki serves up fresh eggs. 158710

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

customers came back.

"We re-opened with the same staff, with the same friendly faces," David said.

"The farm is at Bendigo."

The chooks are housed in free range, barn laid and cage conditions.

"The market dictates what we produce," he said.

"We are moving away from cages on farm and going towards more barn laid.

"We have to produce what the people want."

Fresh eggs arrive from Bendigo daily.

"Our supply of meat and poultry is local, from the Gippsland area. It comes in daily, so it's fresh," David said.

Initially Keysborough Egg Farm just produced eggs.

"To sell more eggs we decided we'd like to sell chicken. The customers were happy," he said.

So they added beef, pork and lamb.

"We make most of the product in store ourselves. The schnitzels, Kievs, marinades..."

he said.

"We do dry-aged beef. That's hugely popular.

"It's 42 days old and aged on-site. People can see it in the cabinet downstairs as it happens."

David said 60 per cent of customers were local and the rest travelled from further afield.

"I trust the customer to come in and try the stuff," he said.

"If they're happy, they're going to come back."

He said food-themed television shows like MasterChef and My Kitchen Rules were inspiring home cooks.

"We really do take notice of the cooking shows and try to supply what these shows are producing," he said.

"In future, we're going to have our own cooking demonstrations in-store and recipes."

He said the local culinary landscape was evolving and that Greater Dandenong's growing multicultural population was playing a part.

Customers and staff reflected the evolution, he said.

"My parents are migrants as well, so we wouldn't have it any other way," he said.

Keysborough Egg Farm employs up to 20 people on weekends.

"It's pretty much the same staff that we've had over the last 10 years," David said.

"It's a family business. It's family.

"You spend three quarters of your week at work.

"If you're going to turn up to work and you're not going to be happy it's not going to work for you."

David hinted that some exciting in-store changes were on the way, but wasn't ready to reveal exactly what they would be.

Keysborough Egg Farm is at 2-8 Pacific Drive, Keysborough, and is open 7am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 1pm Saturdays. Call 8769 4111.

2-8 Pacific Drive. Keysborough
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