



CROSS POLLINATE 2025

FARMING THROUGH THE SEASONS

A YEAR ON A SMALL FARM



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry



Future
Drought
Fund



TAS FARM
INNOVATION HUB

Growing Climate Resilient Communities

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

TIA

Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

This program received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund

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Who Is Sprout Tasmania?

Sprout Tasmania is a volunteer supported not-for-profit, non-government organisation, operating statewide in Tasmania.

We support small-scale farmers to farm ethically and sustainably for their community & the environment, and exist to grow the industry through advocacy and capacity building.

Our vision is of a strong network of well-resourced and productive small-scale farmers, who are recognised for the role they play in a fair, resilient food and farming system, where communities thrive and landscapes are regenerated.



Do You Need Our Help?

Sprout is your voice to government. By contacting us you can share with us details about what is important to you, your ideas, or any challenges you are experiencing.

Join Us In Making A Difference

Your support can help us continue to make a positive impact on small-scale farming communities. Here's how you can get involved:

- Join: Become a Sprout member today.
- Donate: Your contributions fund our programs and advocacy efforts.
- Partner with Us: We are keen to hear from potential corporate or philanthropic sponsors that are willing to help fund us through sponsorship.

Together, we can create a future where small-scale farmers are recognised, rural communities prosper, and sustainable practices are the norm. Join us in advocating for the heart and soul of Tasmania's agricultural landscape.

Visit www.sprout.org.au or email us at info@sprout.org.au to find out more about our work and to become a member today.

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What is Cross Pollinate?

Cross Pollinate is a grassroots conference, which gathers together small-scale farmers and supporters of a resilient and local food system to share ideas, feel connected and learn.

Event Summary

June 2025 will see Cross Pollinate bring the year's farming calendar to life, one month at a time, following the real-life rhythms of small-scale farming in Tasmania.

This innovative event features 12 farmer-led presentations, each representing a month in the year. Each session features speakers sharing lived experience, practical knowledge, and lessons learned from their work on the land. The goal is to offer transparent, diverse, and seasonal insights into the realities of small-scale farming across a full calendar year.

Event Mission

To provide an immersive event that brings small-scale farmers together to learn from one another, share knowledge, and deepen their practice. It aims to showcase real stories, honest challenges, and grounded expertise from farmers working across diverse climates, enterprises and landscapes.

This event exists to honour the depth of experience in our local farming community, spark new ideas, and foster collaboration between those growing food at a human scale.

Farming Through the Seasons

The aims for this year's event are:

- Share practical insights from small-scale farmers that reflect the real operational cycles of the farming year.
- Highlight the challenges and opportunities that arise in different seasons, helping farmers improve their planning, resilience, and adaptability.
- Celebrate diversity in farming approaches—from market gardening to livestock, Indigenous practices, and flower farming.
- Create space for transparent conversations about the economics, social realities, and emotional demands of small-scale farming.
- Support peer-to-peer learning, mentorship, and collaboration within the local farming and food system.
- Engage both new and experienced farmers, as well as supporters of small-scale agriculture, by offering accessible, farmer-led knowledge.
- Strengthen Sprout Tasmania's commitment to supporting farmers and shaping a vibrant, values-driven food future.



SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS



Janneke Scheeres - *Small Bugs, Big Impact*

Janneke has a background in ecology, forest and nature management, and geo-information science, with a passion for exploring how farming and biodiversity can thrive together. Her research has taken her from Dutch farming landscapes, where she studied how to improve habitat for native bees, to a more technical 3D LIDAR dataset of the Brazilian Atlantic forest, to monitor forest recovery.

Now based in Southern Tasmania, Janneke works with NRM South to support landholders in managing landscapes that are both productive and rich in natural capital. She's especially interested in increasing habitat for the small but mighty insects and animals that keep ecosystems ticking. Outside of work, she's usually in the garden, out on a hike, or swimming in the Derwent—often pausing to admire a bug, bird, or flower along the way.

Janneke's presentation is called *Small Bugs, Big Impact*, examining how biodiversity and insects are fundamental to long-term farm resilience. With practical steps to foster healthy populations of bees, birds, and bugs, and how to monitor and measure their impact, Janneke will demonstrate how a range of pollinators ensures stable crop production, and that rich biodiversity acts as a buffer against shocks, be it drought, flood, or disease pressure.



Fraser Bayley & Stan Robert - *If We Were Starting Again*

Fraser Bayley runs a small mixed vegetable farming business with his partner Kirsti Wilkinson and their family at Old Mill Road on Walbunga and Brinja Yuin country, on the South Coast of NSW. The pair are driven by a desire to run a farm on ecological principles connected to both the local environment and the local community. For their most recent season of veg boxes, resilience in supply and excellent flavours came through collaboration nearby BooBook Hill Farm and with regular and special contributions by colleagues around Moruya.



Stan is a small-scale vegetable grower at Fat Carrot Farm in Oyster Cove, Tasmania. With his partner Briony, they grow with deep care for all the biological systems on their property and admiration for the long line of people who bred and grew the vegetables before them. They supply restaurants and a CSA subscription. Prior to becoming a farmer, Stan led the microbial ecology research group at CSIRO in Hobart. Prior to that, in the early 90's, he was a cook and was most influenced by a stint at the Uraidla Aristologist, one of the first farm-to-table restaurants in Australia.

Stan and Fraser will come together for an informal chat between two experienced market gardeners. Casual, candid, and full of well-earned wisdom, like pulling up a stool in the packing shed for a yarn, Stan and Fraser will present 'If We Were Starting Again' where they reflect on their journeys, the wins, the faceplants, and everything in between. With a spirit of generosity and honesty, they'll talk through what they'd do differently if they were starting again today, and what they think the next generation of growers needs to know to build successful market gardening enterprises.



Jason Smith - *What Can I Do Today To Heal Country?*

Jason is a Palawa man, traditional fire practitioner and descendant of Fanny Cochrane Smith. He is a land-healer and has been putting the right fires back on Country for 13 years. He runs a not-for-profit in southern Tasmania called Patrula Nayri, meaning 'fire good'; teaching all comers the techniques of burning Country the old people's way. He is adept at reading landscapes and a strong believer that traditional methods can increase the health of Country and those that inhabit it.

Jason will be joined on stage by Jen Robinson, as he answers 'What Can I Do Today To Heal Country'. Where he will provide information on daily practices for healing and caring for the land and how indigenous knowledge and land stewardship can lead to changes in landscape function.



SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS



Hayden Findlay, *Diversification and Back Again*

Hayden Findlay runs Ravens Creek Farm, in Moriac, about 20 minutes outside of Geelong. Having had a passion for farming and working on the land for as long as he could remember, in 2009 he decided to pursue a dream of making a living off his small family farm. He knew that in order to make the farm a viable business he had to think outside the square, using alternative, regenerative farming techniques in order to restore the land as well as earn a profit from it. Having converted a humble beef farm providing minimal income, into a bio-diverse, naturally regenerating environment with a wide variety of stacked enterprises, he now focuses on two main enterprises, pastured eggs and free range pork.

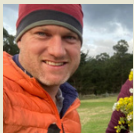
Hayden will be joined by Ollie, to have a look back at their adventures farming together. The theme will be diversification, examining the pros and cons of stacked enterprises and why, ultimately, Hayden chose to strip everything back and focus on two enterprises.



Will Bignell - *The 80/20 Farm: Working Smarter, Not Harder*

Will is a seventh generation sheep and cropper from Thorpe Farm, Bothwell in Tasmania's Highlands. An agricultural scientist by trade, Will has a PhD in improving omega 3 fats in sheep, runs a drone business, and is focused on promoting soil health using precision technology in agriculture. Will is a strong believer that farming has to increase yields while maintaining or improving land, all while making a decent living, and is passionate about the value of community and family in ag, helping run events that bring hope and support to farmers in his district.

At Cross Pollinate, Will's presentation will focus on the 80/20 rule, or Pareto Principle, unpacking it in the context of farming and demonstrating how to analyse your enterprise mix, time use, and income streams to focus on what really works. He'll also explore the mental and emotional shift required to stop glorifying 'busy', and the tools he uses to carve out whitespace – the intentional blank space in a calendar that isn't work.



Thomas Botha - *Cracking the Code: Getting Accreditation as an Egg Producer*

Thomas together with his wife Nanette run Appinoka Regenerative farming. Before arriving in Tasmania, they lived in countries where food is produced for the masses. Fresh produce often tasted like nothing and you couldn't really blame children for not wanting to eat it. Their vision is to produce food that they and their children love to eat and to share it with those who want the same for their families. At the same time they continue to make conscious decisions to apply lean practices to their farm that will enable them to excel in farming practices, be more efficient, eliminate waste and produce good growth.

Thomas will be taking us through the journey of getting accreditation as an egg producer, in a presentation called Cracking The Code. With egg shortages, and long lead times for producers to become accredited, understanding what it takes to get an egg stamp has never been more important. Jen will join Thomas on stage, to discuss the steps it took for Appinoka to receive accreditation, and to look at whether more scale-based regulatory approaches are necessary.



Kate Field - *The Mayhem of Goat Kidding Season*

Kate is half of Leap Farm/Tongola Cheese, which is located in Copping. She and her husband, Iain, have a small herd of cattle for beef, and a herd of Swiss Toggenburg dairy goats that they milk and then manufacture cheese. She also manufactures Leapful Skin products from the whey leftover from cheese making and is President of the Bream Creek Farmers Market. In her spare time, Kate works as an Emergency Specialist at the Royal Hobart Hospital, and also oversees the training program in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand for doctors becoming Emergency Specialists. Kate is passionate about small producers' role in food production and food security, in addition to how farmers can be part of the climate solution utilising agroecological principles.

Kate will be drawing back the curtain on her favourite subject - The Mayhem of Goat Kidding Season. A behind-the-scenes look at the bustling chaos of kidding season on a small goat dairy farm, this presentation will look at the operational challenges of managing a goat farm in October, such as the handling and care for newborn kids, early health checks, vaccinations, and feeding, and ensuring the health and wellbeing of mother goats during and after kidding.



SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS



Emma Horswill - *Garden & Gossip: Building Community through Volunteer Programs*

Emma Horswill is a farmer-florist and co-owner of Earthenry Farm at Lower Snug in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Growing over 100 different varieties of field grown flowers across their 9 acre landscaped gardens and farm, their main offering is a 'pick your own' flowers experience. They also offer floral and farming workshops, dahlia tuber sales and cut flower specialty plants, bulbs and seeds. In the 'off-season' they run a community volunteer farming program called 'Garden + Gossip'. They also offer free farm tours to visiting school groups and free nature craft sessions during school holidays.

Emma will be taking us through Earthenry Farm's hugely successful volunteer program, Garden & Gossip, highlighting the importance of building community and education is to her business. The program provides opportunities for learning and making new friends, but also has benefits for the farm itself, all of which Emma will demonstrate on stage.



Belinda Hagen - *From Farrow to Festive: The Christmas Ham Countdown (video presentation)*

Belinda and her husband Jason are third generation farmers working the land with their two children and small team on the family farm in Tooborac Victoria, about 1 hour north of Melbourne. They started their lifelong farming careers in industrial agriculture - high input, high output with the focus on profit at all costs. After a family health issue and passing of a close family member in a short amount of time they began to question many aspects of lifestyle, food, and industrialised systems. It was to be a pivotal point in their lives and became a catalyst for lifestyle, values and career changes. This is where the story of McIvor Farm Foods began.

In a recorded interview, Belinda spoke to Ollie about the full seasonal cycle of producing pastured pork with Christmas in mind. From Farrow to Festive: The Christmas Ham Countdown looks at what it takes to get a ham on the table at Christmas time. From breeding timelines to liaising with processors, curing to pre-order customers, this session looks at what it takes to make holiday hams happen.



Glenn Morris & Martin Royds - *Climate Smart Stories (video presentation)*

Under a shifting, yet uncertain climate we must push our agricultural systems to evolve. In finding the best way forward, where farms remain profitable while benefiting the environment, we need to understand the diversity of impacts. Equally it will require a lot of practical know-how from landholders.



Thanks to NSW DPI, we have permission to showcase the stories of two farmers, whose own experiences in adapting their land, farming systems and businesses demonstrate how positive steps can be taken on farms to prosper as climatic conditions shift across Australia.

Glenn Morris, a cattle farmer and climate advocate, manages his cattle operation using a regenerative approach that creates resilient farmscapes and addresses the bigger picture of climate change. He has implemented a range of adaptations on his farms to address the challenges he faces, focusing on water storage in the landscape for water and soil security.

Martin Royds is a fifth-generation farmer, predominantly running beef cattle, and small enterprises with eggs, yabbies, grasses and truffles. He has focused on creating a functioning water cycle that prevents erosion and stores water on his property. He reinstated a permanently flowing chain of ponds by constructing a series of 14 weirs that connect to the floodplain and divert water across his paddocks.



Felicity Richards - Panel Facilitator

Felicity grew up on a livestock property on Flinders Island and now manages a beef enterprise spanning Wynyard, the Tamar Valley, and Flinders Island with her husband. After a decade working in policy and regulation following a law degree from ANU, she returned to farming in 2013. Alongside hands-on work with livestock, she leads areas of the family business including compliance, WHS, HR and biosecurity.

Felicity currently chairs the Tasmanian Biosecurity Advisory Committee, Farmsafe Australia, and the Tasmanian Livestock Processing Taskforce. She has helped develop animal welfare guidelines for Tasmanian meat processing and works closely with industry and government on safe, sustainable food systems. She's passionate about clear communication, community engagement, and supporting practical, local solutions in agriculture.

Sprout once again thanks Felicity for taking part in Cross Pollinate, helping to facilitate both panel discussions.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

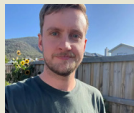


Hayden Findlay, Emma Bowen & Calum Jacobsen- *Letting Go To Grow*

Small-scale farmers are often emotionally, physically, and financially invested in what they do. But sometimes, the best thing for the person (or even the farm) is to shift direction. This session creates space for honest, reflective, and possibly cathartic storytelling.



Our panellists will explore the courage and clarity it takes to step back, pivot, or walk away from aspects of farm life that no longer align with personal wellbeing, values, or vision. It's about reclaiming agency, not as a failure, but as an act of self-respect and evolution, and will prompt the audience to reflect on what they're holding onto that no longer serves them.



Hayden Findlay runs Ravens Creek Farm, in Moriac, about 20 minutes outside of Geelong. Having had a passion for farming and working on the land for as long as he could remember, in 2009 he decided to pursue a dream of making a living off his small family farm. He knew that in order to make the farm a viable business he had to think outside the square, using alternative, regenerative farming techniques in order to restore the land as well as earn a profit from it. Having converted a humble beef farm providing minimal income, into a bio-diverse, naturally regenerating environment with a wide variety of stacked enterprises, he now focuses on two main enterprises, pastured eggs and free range pork.

Emma Bowen is a farmer and permaculture designer with a background in permaculture, market gardening, urban farming, design and community engagement. She was co-founder and manager of Pocket City Farms, a quarter-acre urban farm in the centre of Sydney on a converted lawn bowls club, that provides organic produce, education and a place for connection to the local community. Emma's passionate about the transformative power of farms and gardens and the immeasurable value they bring to our physical and mental well-being as individuals and communities. Emma now lives in the Huon Valley with her partner Michael and two children on Rising Farm - a 50-acre former apple orchard in the Huon Valley. Emma is in the early stages of returning the farm to food production, developing a permaculture orchard with a primary crop of hazelnuts, building upon her passion for sustainable agriculture on a larger scale. Alongside her farm work she is also a permaculture garden designer and community project consultant at Yarrow.

Calum's journey into farming began in the suburbs of Perth, where a love of growing things led him to complete a Permaculture Design Certificate just out of high school. Since then, his path has meandered between small-scale agriculture, hospitality, and business ownership — always driven by curiosity, community, and a willingness to dive into the unknown. Before 2020, Calum and his partner Samara ran Broadchurch Farm in Tasmania's Southern Midlands, raising pastured meat chickens, beef and heritage pork. Their chicken enterprise earned a State Delicious Good Food Award and a loyal customer base across farmers markets and restaurants. His hands-on experience also spans work in abattoirs and butcher shops, shaping a strong understanding of Tasmania's small-scale livestock sector. Like many others, COVID forced a major shift — and a pause on farm life. Relocating to Brisbane, Calum went on to launch multiple hospitality ventures driven by a desire to contribute to the community. Now back in Tasmania with his young family, Calum is embracing the pace of parenting and backyard food growing, while looking for ways to contribute to the local food movement beyond the paddock.

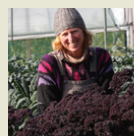


Vanessa Hall, Fraser Bayley and Sonja Ralph - *The Ultimate Juggle - Parenting & Farming*

Small-scale farming is not just a job—it's a lifestyle. For farming parents, the boundaries between work, family, and self are porous at best. There's immense beauty in raising kids close to the land, but also real challenges in balancing childcare, farm schedules, income pressures, and personal well-being.



This panel will see honest conversations on parenting while growing food and running a farm. We dig into the complex, messy, joyful, and often exhausting reality of raising children while running a small-scale farm. It's not just about logistics—it's about identity, relationships, safety, creativity, burnout, and resilience. It aims to normalise the chaos, celebrate the wins (big and small), and share the load through collective wisdom.



Vanessa runs Abruzzo Farm, a charming 50-acre slice of heaven nestled in the hills of the Meander Valley. Her story began in 2019 with a spontaneous purchase that envisioned a quiet retirement haven for the not-too-distant future. However, life had different plans. What started as a retirement dream for her and partner Shane took a delightful detour into the world of newborns and navigating the challenges of a changing global landscape.

Amidst the unpredictability, and with a lot of help from the local farming community, she found her passion in working with the land, nurturing a calm and healthy environment for our livestock, and creating a wonderful home for their daughter.

Fraser runs a small mixed vegetable farming business with his partner Kirsti Wilkinson and their family at Old Mill Road on Walbunga and Brinja Yuin country, on the South Coast of NSW. The pair are driven by a desire to run a farm on ecological principles connected to both the local environment and the local community. For their most recent season of veg boxes, resilience in supply and excellent flavours came through collaboration nearby BooBook Hill Farm and with regular and special contributions by colleagues around Moruya.

Sonja's eclectic work life has ranged from clinical embryology to field botany, catering to outdoor guiding. She's currently splitting her time working with her husband on their small market garden, Constance Farm, while homeschooling their two children, working as 'Grow and Learn' program facilitator at Dodges Ferry Primary School and as a project officer for Landcare Tasmania.

PROGRAM

8:30 AM	Doors Open
9:00 AM	Conference Opens
9:10 AM	Part 1 - Autumn
9:10 AM	Presentation 1 - March: Janneke Scheeres, <i>Small Bugs, Big Impact</i>
9:30 AM	Presentation 2 - April: Fraser Bayley & Stan Robert, <i>If We Were Starting Again</i>
9:50 AM	Presentation 3 - May: Jason Smith, <i>What Can I Do Today To Heal Country?</i>
10:10 AM	Q&A with Janneke, Fraser, Stan & Jason
10:40 AM	Morning Tea. Coffee, teas, baked treats from Marie Zerella (Mutterliebe) and apples from Our Mates Farm. GF/VG available.
11:15 AM	Part 2 - Winter
11:15 AM	Presentation 4 - June: Hayden Findlay, <i>Diversification and Back Again</i>
11:35 AM	Presentation 5 - July: Will Bignell, <i>The 80/20 Farm: Working Smarter, Not Harder</i>
11:55 AM	Presentation 6 - August: Panel Discussion facilitated by Felicity Richards, with Hayden Findlay, Calum Jacobsen & Emma Bowen, <i>Letting Go To Grow</i>
12:30 PM	Q&A with Felicity, Hayden, Calum & Emma
12:45 PM	Lunch. Hearty soups and salads, courtesy of Jim Zerella, plus bread from Pigeon Whole Bakery and more goodies from Marie. GF/VG available.
14:00 PM	Part 3 - Spring
14:00 PM	Presentation 7 - September: Thomas Botha, <i>Cracking the Code: Getting Accreditation as an Egg Producer</i>
14:20 PM	Presentation 8 - October: Kate Field, <i>The Mayhem of Goat Kidding Season</i>
14:40 PM	Presentation 9 - November: Emma Horswill, <i>Garden & Gossip: Building Community through Volunteer Programs</i>
15:00 PM	Q&A with Thomas, Kate & Emma
15:20 PM	Afternoon Tea. Fuel up with more sweet and savoury snacks, cooked by Marie Zerella. GF/VG available.
16:00 PM	Part 4 - Summer
16:00 PM	Presentation 10 - December: Belinda Hagan, <i>From Farrow to Festive: The Christmas Ham Countdown (video)</i>
16:20 PM	Presentation 11 - January: Glenn Morris & Martin Royds, <i>Practical Steps for Climate Resilience (video, with thanks to NSW DPI)</i>
16:40 PM	Presentation 12 - February: Panel Discussion facilitated by Felicity Richards, with Fraser Bayley, Sonya Ralph, & Vanessa Hall, <i>The Ultimate Juggle? Farming and Parenting</i>
17:10 PM	Q&A with Felicity, Fraser, Sonya, & Vanessa
17:30 PM	Wrap Up, Drinks & Close.