

Agricultural advances to keep food local

The recent unveiling of a robotic milking machine mightn't grab everyone's attention, but in the big picture it just further cements this area's rich history in agriculture.

It also shows what an important industry we have and with more land being earmarked for housing in place of food growth, the potential is there to lose it all.

Dick Smith came out in the last few days slamming Australia's move in selling prime agricultural land to overseas buyers. He is saying we are selling off our farms to overseas buyers for them to produce and export to the overseas market.

It's another way of decreasing food productivity and opening this country up to more food imports. Australia will lose out in the long-run if it doesn't retain its land for its own food producing interests.

It's a shame considering that Australia and particularly NSW has good food producing land and environment and this should be highly regarded.

Our farmers and growers need to be supported and while the community likes to support these smaller businesses -farmers markets and creative traders - they are few and far between, but exceedingly popular.

The Elizabeth Macarthur Institute of Agriculture is leading the way in many areas of agriculture and all tiers of government should pay heed and acknowledge that research and the need for Australia to be self sufficient when it comes to food production.

EMAI is working towards safer and better ways of agriculture, and it's important for future generations. The recent launch of the robotic milking machine just proves that this country is intert on fine tuning many of its food processing methods and it should also mean that the industry is vital and everything associated with it should be a priority.

Securing our food growing areas is in the national interest.

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Busting the food myths

15.11.10 - Amanda R.

Food safety has its own week and the advice is to follow sensible handling techniques to avoid nasty bugs - especially as the festive season approaches.

Myths and Mastery is the theme for Australian Food Safety Week 2010, and aims to debunk the myths and uncover the masters of food safety.

"Many people learn food safety myths from family and friends who always mean well, but often the advice they give is wrong and sometimes even dangerous," Food Safety Information Council, Dr Michael Eyles said.

"A popular misconception is that it's safe to defrost food on the bench is one example of a food safety myth that can lead to people becoming very ill.

"Another is that leftovers have to be cold before they go in the fridge. This one should have gone out when the iceman stopped delivering ice to cool the forerunner of the fridge, the ice chest.

"Other people are well educated on the risks

and they've mastered challenging food safety situations with innovative solutions such as shopping with a cooler bag, or making sure perishable including meats, chicken and fish are last on the shopping list.

"Whether you're a master chef or a master microwave dinners, it's a good idea to know what will and won't help you and your family avoid becoming one of the estimated 5.4 million Australian who suffer food poisoning annually," Dr Eyles said.

The Council is inviting people to send in their myths: questionable food safety advice they've grown up with or heard from other people. It would also like to hear people's stories of mastery great solutions to food safety challenges that smart thinking has overcome.

Send your story to foodsafety@ozemail.com.au before November 30. For more details www.foodsafety.asn.au/foodsafetyweek/