

STRATHFIELDSAYE ESTATE – Newsletter July 2021

Oh my goodness yet another newsletter just as Victoria is back in lockdown. Unbelievable. Our last newsletter was in February and while I feel like not much has been happening at Strath, I think the newsletter might even surprise me.

1. Painting – We have finally been able to engage a local painter. A lovely young man called Ben who has now painted the lounge room & bathroom of the farm hands house as well as the ceilings in the master bedroom and hallway of the farms hands house. He has also painted the whole dining room of the managers house and has just this week finished the walls of the games room (blue room) of the homestead. It is difficult to photograph, so I apologise for the poor pictures, but Ben has achieved amazing results given the surfaces he started with.



2. Managers House – Unfortunately the manager's house has suffered a little bit with Pam's absence. It started with birds getting inside through the heater, then the mice moved in and then the fridge blew a fuse and shut down

all the power. Then we had the plasters come in and the painters, so many feet have been through the house and all contributed to the mess. Luckily for Pam everything has now been put back in place. No more livestock inside and most the furniture is back where it started, all just waiting for her to return.

3. Cattle on agistment - Back at the start of March Cherry Tree Organics delivered 154 pregnant heifers to the property. They have now started calving and so far not too many complications. There have been difficulties dealing with fencing issues since the cattle arrived, but now with extra work forom Paul and Kimberley the electric fencing is working again and helping to keep the stock where they are put. CTO has now delivered another 57 cows and Kimberley will continue to supervise all stock. The paddocks are much greener now than when they arrived in March.



4. Unwanted visitors – Unfortunately in the past few weeks (mainly) we have had issues with gates being opened and stock being let out of paddocks. It has made managing the stock even more difficult than it should have been. Sadly however, there is very little we can do about it, as the public road runs all the way to swell point. There have also been reports of people entering the property to cut firewood without permission. We also had issues with water troughs which we had turned off as they were not needed being turned on and floats damaged causing the trough to overflow. Thanks to Danny, repairs were carried out and all seems to be well now.

5. Kangaroo management- Our current permit has just expired, but another will be applied for as the kangaroo number continue to be a concern. We worked with a pet food harvesting company and had 30 animals removed, with an additional 228 destroyed in the last 12 months. The control program has definitely had an impact and the animals on the property are in much better condition than previously, but their numbers will get out of control very quickly if we don't keep the program running.

6. North West Deck replaced - Baade Builders spent 4 days removing and replacing the timber deck on the North West verandah. The timber used is red gum and you can see from the gorgeous colour why it was used originally. A very professional finish has been achieved, and with regular oiling hopefully it will last a very long time. One coat of oil has been applied with at least one more to go.





7. Disher lab verandah deck - needs replacing. It is in a very poor state and could be dangerous. I have requested a quote for its replacement. This unfortunately could be rather expensive as it appears that when the verandah was originally built there were not enough stumps put in place and so the bearers are placed too far apart which causes the decking timbers to be weakened when they are walked on. In order to build a legally compliant verandah, additional stumps, joist and bearers would need to be put in place. I have requested a quote and an assessment will need to be done once it is received.



8. Queen's birthday Long weekend – The plan had been for the volunteers to spend the weekend together at Strath and light up the big bon fire. However, the weather was terrible and most of us only went out for a day trip. The kids did have a lot of fun using the clay target shooting machine.

9. Rainfall - Well we have certainly had some rain lately. In March there was 124mm, in April 21mm, May was 112mm and in June 100mm. There are puddles on the driveway in places I had not seen water before. It was running across from one side to the other. The lake was very high, and Lake Tiny was not so tiny. Large wet lands have appeared in some areas too. Of course the hope is that the ground will retain the moisture and when the weather warms up a little we will see huge improvements in pasture growth.



NEW WET LANDS



LAKE WELLINGTON



LAKE TINY



DAMS JOINING ACROSS THE DRIVEWAY

10. Tandem Trailer – which also has a stock crate was in need of repairs. It has had a birthday, with new brakes, new master cylinder a new wheel hub and rewiring. Thank you to another local, a mechanic from Stratford, Jase. Now with the rust removal and treatment done by Richard earlier in the year the trailer is safe and suitable for use again.

11. Chimneys – I think we finally have the tradesman booked in for the week after next to start on the chimney repairs. I will try to keep you informed.

By Cindy Chrisp – Strathfieldsaye Volunteers.