

Nerrigundah Berries is for Fair Farms

Samtui Selave, Growcom's Fair Farms Program, Communications Officer

A family owned and operated berry farm in the Yarra Valley, Nerrigundah Berries, grows a delicious variety of berries including boysenberries, blueberries, and raspberries. They also made the move to become Fair Farms Certified this year.

Nerrigundah Berries has been managed by Brialey Brightwell's family for four generations and the move to become Fair Farms Certified has been described as "straightforward and simple," by Brialey.

"Fair Farms just makes sense for Australian Farmers," she said. Brialey decided to become Fair Farms Certified after finding out about the Australian-centric social compliance program a couple of years ago at a Berries Australia event on Queensland's Gold Coast. "We were at this Berries Australia event, and we found out about Fair Farms there and were genuinely interested in it," she said.

"We were already with another social compliance program at the time, but decided that in the future we would look into Fair Farms after hearing about it at this event. We listened and asked questions and found it was super relevant to us."

Brialey said that the Fair Farms certification process including the online self-assessment and training platform were easy to understand and use, which gave Nerrigundah Berries the confidence to succeed at audit.

"We decided to go with Fair Farms because it just makes more sense – it was more relevant to who we are and how we do things," she said. "Some of the questions from our previous audit were just not relevant to us, or to any Australian farmer I know."

Brialey said that Fair Farm's emphasis on worker wellbeing aligned with how she treats her employees on a day-to-day basis. "We're on a first name basis

with our employees and I recognise them – in recent times we've got to know our employees better because we have to do daily health checks to manage our COVID risk," Brialey said.

The realities of managing a family-owned farm means that Brialey is constantly donning different business hats. At times she'll function as human resources, and at other times when she is short on pickers you can find her out with her team harvesting – this means that being a part of a straightforward program like Fair Farms makes farming life a little easier.

"I love farming, it is a constant challenge of production and the elements," she said. "We were one of the first farms to start early with hydroponics – which was a game changer. Every year we look at what we do and what we want to improve, and Fair Farms has been part of that. I would tell people who are thinking about joining Fair Farms that it is a good system and covers everything you should be doing in farming."

Fair Farms National Program Manager, Sachin Ayachit, said that it wasn't a surprise that the program resonated with farms like Nerrigundah Berries.

"Fair Farms was developed for Australian growers by Australian growers – that is why farms find it so relevant to what they do. Fair Farms is also about acknowledging the outstanding work Australian horticulture farmers are already doing like Nerrigundah Berries. As we have done in the past and moving forward, we will always keep growers like Brialey at the forefront of what we do."



Brialey Brightwell picking berries.

Photo credit: Nerrigundah Berries.



Ryan Brightwell planting berries.

Photo credit: Nerrigundah Berries.

Fair Farms

Fair Farms is developed and delivered by Growcom with funding by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and is officially endorsed by the National Farmers Federation Horticulture Council, AUSVEG, and Fresh Markets Australia.

Join Fair Farms today to access an Australian-centric training and certification program including online training modules, one-on-one training and over-the-phone support that helps your business showcase ethical employment practices to the supply chain.

Fair Farms is currently offering any new members who join before 31 March 2022:

- 5 free training modules, should your online self-assessment identify training needs;
- Up to 2 hours of free consultation with our Fair Farms Industry expert to help with onboarding to the scheme;
- Access to regular Fair Farms webinars; and
- Free customised Fair Farms certification logo pack for you to use on trade-level communications (once certified) valued at \$200.



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