

Express

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DOWN ON THE FARM: Redbank Organics was popular with the little ones last year as visitors get a taste of farm life.

Taste the good life

FARMS across the Hastings will be open this June long weekend offering residents a taste of the good life.

The 2016 Hastings Landcare Farm Gate Tours are expected to attract hundreds of people wanting to experience life on the farm firsthand. It is also an opportunity to showcase the region's diverse range of producers and the hard work invested in environmentally sustain-

able agriculture.

Ten properties will be on show this year with visitors able to meet with farmers and learn about free range food production, Landcare initiatives and the local paddock to plate philosophy that underpins the foundation of the flourishing Hastings food bowl.

The self-drive tours will stretch from the oyster farms of the Hastings River to the

lush grazing valleys of the Wauchope hinterland.

To join the tour, visitors must purchase a \$30 guide book which covers the entry fee for one family/car at every location.

Highlights of this year's Farm Gate Tours include presentations on native bees and their important role in pollination at Benaroon Farm; delicious bush foods at Barbuscho; chicken cara-

vans at Oxhill Organics and the impressive Ewetopia, an award-winning farm specialising in sheep and dairy with its licensed cheese-making facility.

"The Farm Gate Tour is a perfect opportunity for people to learn how food is grown, or for those considering a tree-change," Landcare organisers said.

"It is also a great day out for children who will see

cows being milked, chickens free ranging and baby animals being fed.

"Enterprises range from large to small scale holdings and include dairy, garlic, essential oils, cattle breeding and beef, a flora and wildlife sanctuary, egg production, native bush foods, sheep cheese, oysters, blueberries, avocados, ginger and turmeric."

On the tour you can find

out more about biological regeneration of soil and pastures, holistic farm management, biodiversity and water quality protection and weed control measures.

Tour books with booking schedules, can be purchased at the Port Macquarie Information Centre at the Glasshouse, from Ecowild in Wauchope or from Hastings Landcare in Cameron Street, Wauchope.