

MEDIA RELEASE

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

****Elgaar Calls On Friends to Farm Again****

After almost a one year production hiatus, upgrading their facilities, Tasmania's only organic dairy is reaching out with a crowd funding campaign to get their award winning dairy up and running again.

Elgaar has been working over the past year updating their factory to meet new dairy codes of practice without losing authenticity. Works completed include new concrete slab, new drainage system, upgraded bottle area, upgraded pasteuriser, complete repainting and sealing of factory and a complete update of the quality assurance program. This work has come at a high financial cost.

"We've managed to run the farm for nearly a year now without production, but the time has come to call on our friends. We never expected it to take so long to get through all the red tape", says Elgaar owner, Antonia Gretschmann.

Final upgrades include purchasing a pasteuriser which comes into line with new regulations.

"Since July last year we've been milking our cows every day and I can't watch another litre go down the drain. We're going public to raise funds for new equipment to satisfy the authorities' requirements. The funds will be a crucial step to bringing us back", says Elgaar owner Joe Gretschmann.

The Elgaar Farm Kaserei (German for cheesery) is not a normal factory, it has been built to the time honoured style typical of cheese factories in the Bavarian, Swiss and French alps. The factory is built in the traditional way with tiles, whitewashed walls and oiled wooden ceiling and window frames. The underground maturing cellar is built from local stone to be as natural and authentic as possible with no need for artificial climate control.

"Our production style similarly follows traditional methods perfected over the last few hundred years which see cheesemaking as an art first, and you can put science back into it afterwards. Sometimes it is hard to fit into a system designed for conventional automated factories built from steel clad Styrofoam and plastic," says Joe Gretschmann.

For over 20 years Elgaar has developed a loyal following through local Tasmanian and mainland retailers including Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. In more recent years they have gained a strong presence at local farmers markets with their multi award winning and highly sought after produce. Elgaar is now reaching out to customers to help them get producing again.

Joe explains *"We are launching a crowd funding campaign. As part of the campaign people can become a 'cow buddy', have cheese made especially for them or learn how to make their own cheese!"*

The crowd funding campaign can be found at www.elgaarscomeback.weebly.com

Facebook page: "Friends of Elgaar Farm"

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Wondering why we had to pause on our production in the first place?

In the last three routine audits before our shutdown in July last year we received one 'A' and two 'B's. (A is the highest level of food safety rating and 'B' requires small corrective actions). In the final audit before our temporary closure, we neglected to do a follow up test required to gather more information about a particular product. This is what caused the need to initially close down to start the upgrade process. At no point was there a health risk to the public.

For the record...

- We are 100% committed to public health.
- We have had a perfect food safety record for over 20 years, our entire production history.
- While part of our record keeping has needed improvement our commitment to food safety has always been our highest priority.
- Over last year our quality assurance program has been completely updated.
- We have invested everything into developing our reputation as Australia's premium supplier of the highest quality dairy throughout Tasmania and the mainland. We would not risk that.
- We have never sold unpasteurised goods disallowed by the Dairy Act.
- We have had excellent working relationship with TDIA for over 20 years.
- Our most recent inspections were 'B', 'A' and 'B'.
- What we are seeing here is a traditional German dairy trying to fit into a modern framework.

About Elgaar Farm

Elgaar is a multi-award winning organic Tasmanian Dairy established in 1986 by Joe and Antonia Gretschnann.

Elgaar is a unique dairy in Australia – we do not practice “bobby calving” and we do not separate calves from their mums and no Elgaar calves are sent to the abattoir.

As far as we know, we are the only dairy farm in Australia that lets the calves suckle naturally on their mothers for an extended period of time (minimum 4 months).

Our male calves are reared as above, and are either raised for organic beef on a local farm or kept as replacement bulls (we have several bulls with the herd).

As part of our philosophy of quality, our products have to begin with the absolute best of ingredients, our milk. Elgaar Farm's contented cows graze on lush organic meadows and aromatic hay free from pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilisers. The high quality of the milk our cows produce is a reflection of the richness and diversity of grasses and herbs of the fields they graze.

Elgaar is one of Australia's most recognised organic dairies, a recognition built on 20 years of unsurpassed quality and a dedication to producing only the freshest, purest organic products that truly reflect their natural origin.

These products are packaged solely in returnable glass bottles and jars and as far as we know we are the only company in Australia doing this. They're not only returned to us, they're re-used again and again.

All Elgaar products are a true to their description. It's nothing but fresh organic ingredients and the time-honoured skills of our master cheese-makers.