

Duckmaloi Farm



Duckmaloi Farm

Location: Duckmaloi, Lithgow

Manager: Susie and Stephen White

Farm produce: Cattle

Size of farm: 40 hectares (100 acres)

Website: duckmaloifarm.com.au

Why we decided to diversify into agritourism

Ten years ago, after we had retired, we moved from Sydney to the country. As a 100-acre farm can't provide a living from farming alone, we bought a farm with an established agritourism offering. Buying an existing agritourism business means you don't have to build up a loyal clientele from scratch.

Combining farming with accommodation means all of our income 'eggs' are not in the same basket – not in cattle alone, but also not in tourism alone. We learned when we first moved to the country that cash flow can be tricky with farming, and our accommodation income helps with that.

"We've also learned that it is much easier to make money from tourism than from farming."

We have no regrets at all, even though before we moved here we weren't sure if living in the country would suit us.

Agritourism offering



Accommodation

- 3 cottages: 1 x three-bedroom, and 2 x two-bedroom



Farm activities

- Animal feeding - ponies, donkeys, alpacas, deer, sheep, goats, cattle, ducks, chickens, geese, turkeys, rabbits and guinea pigs with self-serve bins for guests stocked with carrots, grain and chaff

Guests can enjoy on-farm bushwalks, wildlife, and fishing for trout in the river, as well as lots of nearby attractions.

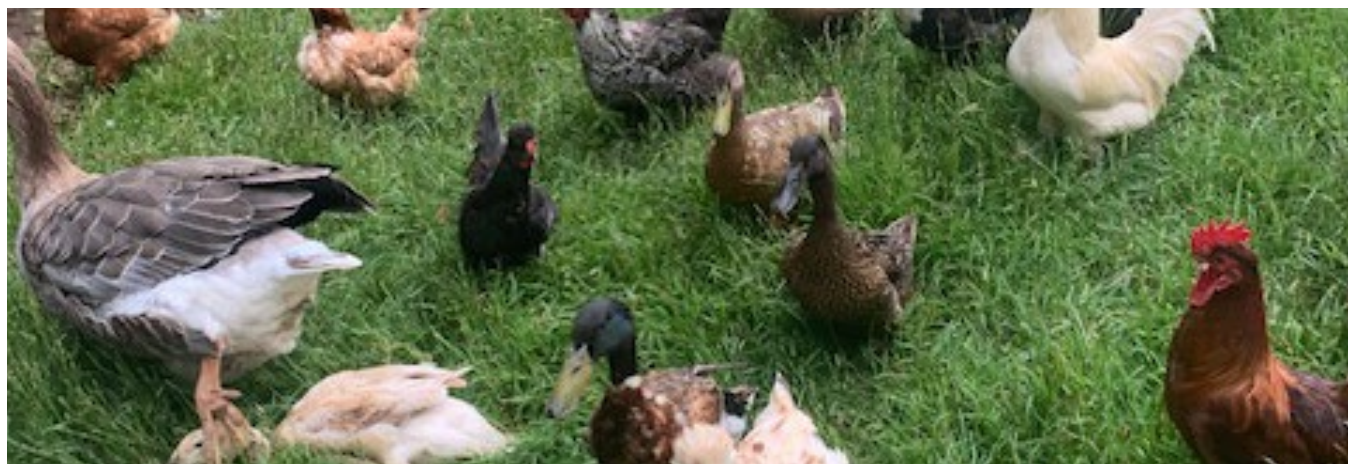
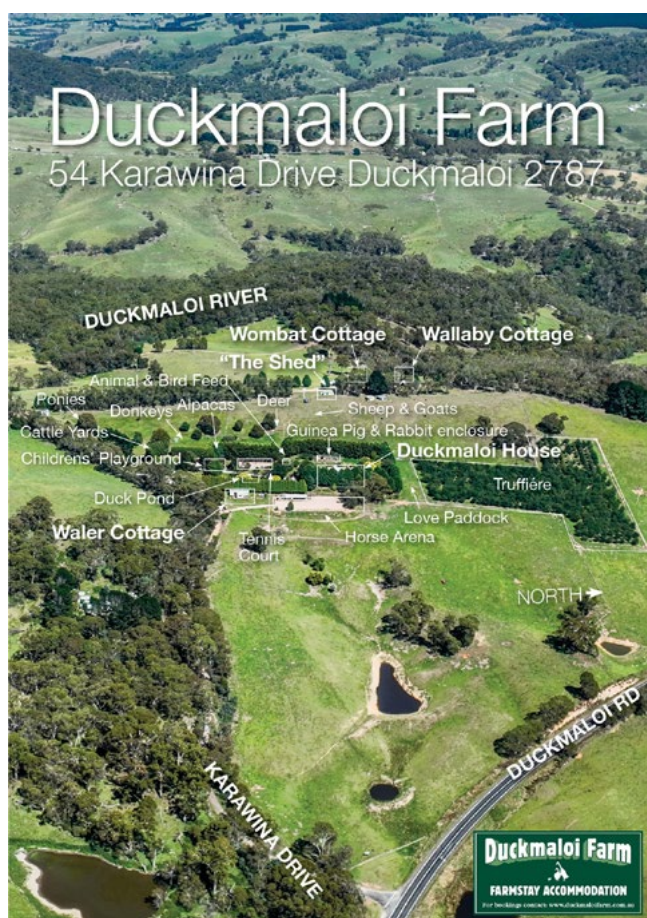


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Planning approval

Prior to the new agritourism-supportive legislation coming in in 2022, we applied for Development Approval (DA) for one of the existing cottages, which is a demountable. We had just wanted to add a verandah and do some renovations to the cottage, but in applying for a permit for the verandah we learned that the demountable had been put in place by the previous owner without development approval.

An issue we had during the DA application was, that although water from our rainwater tanks has been certified to be potable by an independent water quality consultant, Council wanted us to add chlorine to our rainwater tanks to ensure potability. As a work around, we provide guests with bottled drinking water as a condition of our license to operate tourist accommodation.



Advice to other farmers considering agritourism

KNOW YOUR TARGET MARKET VERY WELL

"Whenever we make decisions about our farm and agritourism offering, we consider the needs of our target market."

Our ideal visitors are families where the parents are in their 30s, and their kids are under 10 years old. Some families come as a group, such as adult siblings and their children who book two cottages, and they use our communal gathering space in a renovated farm shed to meet for shared meals. We have noticed that some immigrant families aren't that comfortable at the beach, but they love the mountains, the country, and even the cold!

REPEAT GUESTS ARE IDEAL

We aim to have repeat visitors because it saves on marketing, and repeat guests are easy to host. Some of our family guests have visited a dozen times, and we now have second generation guests – parents who used to come when they were kids, now bringing their own kids here.

To achieve this, we make sure our guests are happy and safe – parents need to feel comfortable that their kids are safe or they won't come back. For example, our rabbit and guinea pig enclosure has a double gate entry so parents don't have to stress about animals escaping as little kids enter or leave.

MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

In the same vein, we keep the farm mown or slashed, and free of hazards, like fallen limbs. This tidiness helps guests feel like the farm is well managed and safe – and it is safer!

SAFETY AROUND FARM ANIMALS

Kids feed bigger animals from the other side of a fence. If we see people walk into the paddock to be with the animals, we don't stop them, but they probably soon wish they were behind a fence if the donkeys see them and think they might be carrying carrots!

The benefits of agritourism for our family

ENJOYING OUR GUESTS – BUT NOT HAVING TO ENTERTAIN THEM

Because we have a comprehensive guidebook for guests on our website, we don't have to interact with guests if we don't want to. They can let themselves into the accommodation with a key from a key safe, and they have written instructions on how everything works.

“However, we find it's fun to talk with them, and their kids bring the farm to life with their enthusiasm.”

We love enabling city families to experience the feeling of freedom and calmness of being in wide open spaces, being with animals, and being in our oak tree truffiere. Interacting with farm animals is similar to equine therapy. Kids need such calming experiences.

CHOOSE A PROPERTY CLOSE TO TOWN

It's been a big benefit to have bought a farm only ten minutes from town as we find we need to go there often – our agritourism income helps support many local businesses.

We started by washing our own bedlinens and cleaning but found over time it better worked for us to hire a cleaner and use a commercial laundry, and being close to town helps a lot with that too.

FLEXIBILITY IN POTENTIAL INCOME STREAMS

The combination of farming and agritourism provides flexibility in potential income streams.

- Our adult daughter who now lives with us on the farm might in the future add a restaurant or function centre/ wedding venue to the farm.
- We have a horse arena we don't use due to the high cost of insurance for it, but it offers a potential future business or lease opportunity.
- Though we have decided not to harvest the truffles in our truffiere, our daughter might in the future.
- We might develop aquaculture with some professional-grade tanks we inherited when we purchased the farm.



Waler Cottage

from **\$350** per night (all inclusive) 3 Bedroom with 2 bathrooms sleeps 6



Wombat Cottage

from **\$250** per night (all inclusive) 2 bedrooms with 1 bathroom with a spa bath. sleeps 5



Wallaby Cottage

from **\$250** per night (all inclusive) 2 bedrooms with 1 bathroom with a spa bath. sleeps 5 and pet friendly

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