

## Episode 229 Saturday 12 April 2008

### AgForce Central Queensland Special Bridget Adams and Shane Webcke

Apart from a sense of adventure, Shane Webcke and Bridget Adams share something in common – both live and work on the land. Shane comes from broad-acre farming on the Darling Downs, while Bridget shares her North Queensland grazing property with husband Damien Curr and their children.



Meeting in the middle, Bridget and Shane set out on a tour of Central Queensland's prime crop and cattle country.

Rockhampton – the beef capital of Australia – was the starting point for the drive which would take them through the Central Highlands to Blackwater, south to Rolleston, west to Springsure and north towards Emerald.

**Contact Central Highlands Tourism**  
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### Blackwater

Blackwater is Queensland's coal capital, and you'd think it gets its name from the mountains of black mineral on the outskirts of town. But in fact, the moniker stems from the staining of the local water supply by ti-trees.



Blackwater is also home to a couple of unusual tourist attractions. The local Lions Park boasts the world's second biggest display of international flags – the largest is at the United Nations building in New York. The second unexpected attraction is Blackwater's Japanese garden – a traditional oriental oasis built in honour of the town's sister city in Japan.

### Dingo

Dingo is about two hours drive from Rockhampton and is best known as the home of the annual Dingo Trap Throwing Competition. But Shane and Bridget visited town to see another four-legged animal getting plenty of attention in the area.



Flossie is a 'super-cow', thanks to the work of country vet Carlie Ward. Carlie works in the field of embryo transfer – which is kind of like IVF for cows. From Flossie, Carlie can flush up to 20 embryos a year – the result of crossbreeding with top quality bulls.

## Rolleston

Recent rains have turned a parched landscape into lush green grasslands en route to Rolleston, south of Blackwater. That can only put a smile on the face of local graziers like Ian McCamley.



The McCamley's run Lowesby, a 4800-hectare cattle property, where they employ a high-tech way of keeping track of stock. The NLIS, or National Livestock Identification System, was designed for better traceability of livestock across Australia. Each individual beast carries a bar-coded ear tag that can be read when passing a scanner mounted at the McCamley's cattle-yards.

South of Lowesby lies the little town of Rolleston, the closest community to Canarvan Gorge. The town's public park features an old boundary rider's hut – a rustic tribute to the region's pioneers.

South of Rolleston is the Smith family's vast grain and grazing holdings. The Smiths were among the first farmers in the area to draw up a property plan that included retaining huge tracts of bush land as wildlife corridors. The Smiths also regularly check the health of local waterways and use environmentally-friendly farming practices like zero tilling.

## Springsure

West of Rolleston lies Springsure which takes its name from the natural springs in the area. Before you reach town, take a quick detour off the main road to see the Staircase Range cutting - the remains of an old sandstone road which Chinese labourers carved by hand in the early 1900's.



More colonial history can be discovered at nearby Old Rainworth Fort. The fort is an impressive stone building which was erected a year after a massacre of white people by aborigines in 1862. Next to the fort you'll find an old homestead and a 112-year-old bush school. Visitors can enjoy a tour of the historic buildings and homemade biscuits for morning tea.

## Emerald

Emerald is bouncing back from floods which hit the town earlier this year. It still sparkles as a tourist destination and gateway to the gem fields. The silver lining to the deluge is that local Fairbairn Dam – the state's second biggest water reservoir – is full and overflowing.

