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> Organic farmer Ketut Bassett, Westut Plantation, Carnarvon.

COVER SHOT: *Goat and sheep farmer Chris Higham, Meedo station, Gascoyne, featured in one of 15 six minute films about WA farmers as part of the Visible Farmer series. Photograph by Kaufmann Productions.*

Making *female farmers* visible

By BELINDA HICKMAN

A YEAR ago Sydney film producer and director Gisela Kaufmann had a meeting with Museums Victoria curator Liza Dale-Hallet who is heading a breakthrough research program into Australian women in agriculture.

She was hoping to spin it into a new film project.

This month Ms Kaufmann and her partner Carsten Örlt were working in the Margaret River area, having travelled about 15,000 kilometres through WA, meeting inspiring female farmers along the way.

Ms Kaufmann, from the Sydney-based film production company Kaufmann Productions, is the producer and director of a series of 15 six-minute films, which form the first season of the Visible Farmer project.

The films will be progressively posted on the Visible Farmer Facebook and YouTube pages and eventually will be on a dedicated website.

They have already been shared hundreds of times through ag industry partner organisations – such as the Rural Women's Network – and by individuals around Australia, to help shine a light on the work and life of farming women across Australia.

"The film project is called Visible Farmer – we do make them visible," Ms Kaufmann said.

The production company is co-operating with the Invisible Farmer

▼ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Welcome to this month's edition of Ripe

ANOTHER edition of Ripe has rolled off the presses and once again the team has assembled a great story list.

Everyone loves working on this special publication as they get to unearth some great content and put the spotlight on people and groups who are doing great things in Western Australia.

The adjacent headline - 'Making female farmers visible' sets the scene for the lead story.

All of the WA women who have already been featured are part of a three-year study of Australian women on the land. They have great stories to tell and I am sure the producers of this series will continue to unearth some great people doing great things.

Then we have a story about a woman known as Jillaroo Jess.

She is described as a road train driving, cattle wrangling, snake handling, horse riding, can-do-cowgirl with a passion for agriculture and her story is worth reading.

If you have ever been to Kalgoorlie you know the Goldfields city is not short of a watering hole or two.

One of the most iconic pubs is the Exchange Hotel that has been part of the landscape for more than a century and was recently refurbished, ensuring the Hannan Street landmark will be there for many years to come.

We visit an operation that has been featured in Ripe before - Wide Open Agriculture that is near Williams and is now investigating if industrial hemp, that yields a high-protein seed containing omega-3, can be grown in the area.

Add in a focus on a distillery that is making dry gin and vodka from local triticale, another cracking recipe from the CWA for you to try and much more - and it's another great read.

Enjoy!

DARREN O'DEA
Editor

Ripe

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> Film maker Carsten Orlt (left), Kaufmann Productions with Debbie Dowden, Challe station, in the Mid West. All photographs by Kaufmann Production.

> Kimberley cattle farmer Darrylin Gordon, Lamboo station.

> Pilbara farmer Annabelle Coppin, Yarrie station.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

project, being run out of Museum Victoria, but is operating this project independently.

The three-year Invisible Farmer project is the biggest ever study of Australian women on the land and is funded by the Australian Research Council and headed by Museums Victoria.

It involves a massive partnership between rural communities, government and cultural organisations to create stories and films which tell rural women's stories.

Visible Farmer is also intended be a national project, and ultimately will be, but Ms Kaufmann said she started in WA on the invitation of the RRR Network, which was the first organisation to jump on board.

A trailer for the series was launched at the RRR conference in Perth last month.

She said the film crew had found so many remarkable WA women, that the entire first season of 15 films would probably be made in WA.

"RRR said 'we want you over in WA because usually whatever comes out in the media is from the east coast and out of the big centres and rarely do we have people come out to these remote centres'," Ms Kaufmann said.

"We said OK, WA will be the first State in."

The one-year project is likely to be extended for a further year to take in the other States.

"WA is a massive State so it is not surprising that we found so many good stories here and we still haven't Finished," she said.

Ms Kaufmann said the idea for Visible Farmer came when she was working on a one-hour documentary which aired on the ABC last year, called Farmer Needs a Robot.

While researching across the rural space for it, she came across the Invisible Farmer project.

"I thought wow, why hasn't this been done yet? I thought they were really onto something," she said.

She contacted Ms Dale-Hallet and pitched an idea to go out to make films about "all these fantastic , female farmers that most people don't even know about".

"The idea was always not to do it straight away for broadcast," she said.

"What we wanted to do was really change the perceptions and have these films out there with as many people as we could possibly reach.

"The natural platform for that is digital and online."

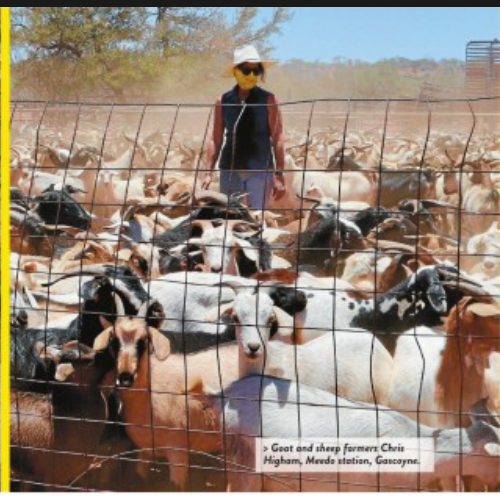
Ms Kaufmann and Mr Orlt started filming in the Kimberley last August.

The duo travel in a four-wheel drive and camper trailer, staying at farms for three to six days and filming "how the women live their lives as working farmers".

"Each woman will have a six-minute documentary short film made on her," she said.

"We want to make sure that we get as much of a range of backgrounds,

> Margaret River dairy farmer Nicole May (left), Brentina Farm, takes a break from filming with Kaufmann Productions director Gisela Kaufmann, who conceived the Visible Farmer film series. Copyright Kaufmann Productions Pty Ltd.



> Goat and sheep farmers Chris Higham, Meedo station, Gascoyne.

agricultural sectors and age – we want women from all backgrounds to be featured in the series."

The crew has travelled from the Kimberley, through the Pilbara, Gascoyne and Mid West to Margaret River, visiting WA's 2018 Rural Women's Award winner Darrylin Gordon, Lamboo station, the Kimberley, Annabelle Coppin, Yarrie station, Pilbara, Ketut Bassett, Westut Plantation, Carnarvon, Joanne Symonds, Bentwaters Plantation, Carnarvon, Chris Higham, Meedo station, Gascoyne, Nicole Batten, Yuna and Debbie Dowden, Challa station, Mid West.

The Kaufmann team was in the Margaret River region last week, working with dairy farmer Nicole May, Brantina Farms and grape grower Suzie Muntz, Xanadu wines.

Ms Kaufmann said the women in the films were sometimes reluctant to step forward for attention, but appreciated being acknowledged in film.

"Not a lot of women have come forward for themselves, they have been suggested through a network or through colleagues," she said.

"But every single women we have approached so far has come on board because they do see that it is important to tell these stories.

"If we want to change the perception about who produces our food – half of all people working in ag are women – we need to have the stories for it.

"Otherwise we can't change that perception of a middle-aged male farmer with a dog."

Ms Kaufmann said the project highlighted the shortage of skilled labour in agriculture and the difficulties women faced with poor internet connectivity; adapting to new technologies and trying to combine farming with motherhood.

"Women said we have been long invisible because we have basically been housebound – one woman did School of the Air for 21 years with her four kids," Ms Kaufmann said.

Another strong theme was that women felt they worked in a partnership and they were combining their skills with their husbands or business partners.

"The say 'we might not be running the tractor, but we are running the business' – and farming is a business," she said.

"People don't realise that you are very much a farmer too, even when you are 'just' running the business."

Ms Kaufmann said through the process she was struck with how much the ag industry was changing.

"There is room to break through the grass ceiling," she said.

"It comes down to how you identify yourself, women have every right to be called a farmer when you do the work.

"A lot of women hadn't identified themselves as such and that is another thing women have to do, they have to claim the role and not just do all the work that comes with it.

"And I think there are more women than I thought at the forefront.

"Farming isn't just driving the tractor in the field or mustering the cattle.

"Farming is such a complicated job with so many requirements.

"I think I have very much found a new respect for that.

"It really is very, very inspiring and I think people will connect to these stories because they are very personal stories."

want to know more

> facebook: Visible Farmer
> kaufmannproductions.com

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