

Down on the farm

"The following history of farming in the Pambula region, written by ANGELA GEORGE, is continued from last Tuesday's edition of The Magnet.

MODEL FARM:

Fourter's Model Farm at Nethercote was, for many years, regarded as the pride of the district.

Mr Adolph Fourter selected the 230 acre property when Nethercote was first opened up around 1891.

While employed as carrier, he worked the farm of a weekend and good crops of maize and potatoes enabled him to start dairying which was carried on with the assistance of sons Frank, Joe and Mick.

Model Farm was kept free of unprofitable animals through careful testing, production records of each individual cow kept to ascertain their butter fat productivity.

It was through this systematic herd testing that Adolph Fourter was able to identify unproductive cows.

It was around 1904 that Mr Fourter became a supplier to the Pambula Butter Factory.

He also became a shareholder in the co-operative.

Despite the fact that the property had less acreage than many others in the district and maintained a smaller herd, Fourners were consistently one of the highest cream suppliers to the Pambula Dairy Factory.

In 1906, the Voice reported: "Another of our up-to-date dairymen -- we refer to Mr A Fourter of Nethercote -had a splendid return from his dairy herd last month. This dairyman has 32 cows and the gross returns for milk and cream for November amounted to 49 pounds, 4 shillings and 4 pence, being almost one pound, 11 shillings per cow. The result justifies Mr Fourter in keeping only good beasts".

In 1911, the Model Farm was described by the Bega Star as "A Nethercote gold mine" with reference to its herd.

"The stocks are the very best and well worth looking at; not only for symmetry, but profitability."

Adolph Fourter truly turned local dairying into a very successful business.

In 1916, with a farm labour shortage as a result of the war, Adolph Fourter was one of the first in the district to combat this by looking into milking machines and in July that year took delivery of his machinery.

Maize was sold to the maizena factory in Merimbula as well as to local businesses such as Goldberg Brothers general store.

Pigs were sent to the Bacon Factory in Merimbula.

Sheep were kept mainly for meat, although wool was sold first to Bill Stone, a buyer from Eden, and then after he died, to Billy Scanes of Bega.

By the 1920s the property became known as Fourter and Son's Model Farm.

The hilly nature of the Model Farm meant that soil erosion was something of a problem, but Mr Fourter and later his son, combated this by contour draining the property.

Later, when erosion became more of an issue, Bill Fourter dispensed with cropping and ran a larger Jersey herd.

Adolph Fourter worked steadily to improve that Model Farm and by the 1930s it was, without a doubt, one of the best in the district.

In June 1935, the Pambula Voice stated: "In regard to model farms, Nethercote is well in the picture thanks to the steadily progressive efforts of some of its most enterprising farmers, Messrs Fourter and Son who by their example have done much to raise the standard of local farming".



The local policeman stands with an unknown man and Mick and Joe Fourter and one of the Model Farm's champion bulls in the main street of Pambula. The bull had been walked to Pambula from Fourter's Nethercote property behind a car for the Pambula Show.

District stock inspector Furness, said: "Fourter is progressive and thorough and deserves to come out on top.

"He cultivates thoroughly and is not afraid to turn the earth up to make it yield its utmost.

Model Farm was a diverse property.

As well as its fine Jersey herd, crops of maize, oats and saciline were grown, and pigs and sheep were raised.

Adolph Fourter also had some success with trotters and one in particular, 'Girl's Boy' raised on Model Farm had a number of wins at Harold Park in Sydney.

Mr Fourter was always a keen supporter of local agricultural societies, and was a founder of the Eden Exhibition Society as well as a loyal supporter of the Pambula AH and PSociety, taking out numerous awards at both.

Over the years he took out seven championships for bulls at the Pambula Show.

The property was also a keen competitor in other agricultural competitions as well.

In 1936, Fourter and Son's Model Farm was placed second in the Pambula Fodder Conservation competition.

The same year, they were placed fourth in the Farmer and Settler dairy farm competition for South Coast farms, also winning a special prize for the high quality of their cream and milk.

A farmer's field day was held on Model Farm, the day of the judging.

In the following three years, the property advanced to the point where they took out first place in the Pambula District Fodder competition from six other entrants with a total of 183 points out of 200.

Following this they were also placed among the top ten in the entire south coast district for fodder conservation.

The same year the farm was featured in an issue of the Farmer and Settler newspaper.

One of the most prestigious of the awards taken out by the Model Farm also occurred in

1939, when they won the south coast section of dairy farm championships from other competitors such as H. Bates of Tilba and Pubrhien or Corridgeree, Bega.

This was a statewide competition organised by the Department of Agriculture, the Farmer and Settler newspaper, dairy factories and the Milk Board, and divided into districts for judging purposes.

The judges of the competition commented on Model Farm that the notable feature of the property was that every acre had been rendered productive by good management.

They also pointed out that it was stocked with a fine herd of registered Jerseys which included 57 cows, 18 heifers, 12 yearlings, four bulls, 17 horses and 50 sheep.

The judge, Mr Hungerford, said that he had never judged a better herd of young stock.

Out of a possible 2,800 points, Fourter and Son scored 2277.

In conjunction with the judging, another farmer's field day was held and it was estimated that about 200 people were present.

Following Adolph Fourter's death in 1946, his son Joe carried on the property with similar success, taking out prizes for cattle and produce at the local show.

For a number of years he also served as managing director of the Pambula Co-operative Dairy Co

The farming skills developed by Adolph Fourter were passed on to Joe who then taught his son Bill, who became the third generation Fourter, to work the property.

Initially Bill leased the Model Farm from his father, but following Joe's death in 1962, the property passed to Bill.

In 1963, he took out the Country Life Dairy Farm Improvement competition for Model Farm.

In 1976, the property was sold, and continues to operate as a farm today, but the contribution of the Fourter family to local agriculture has been recognised through the naming of a street that runs into the Model Farm. at Nethercote. "