

Hagley's Rupertswood Farm Crop Maze enjoys amazing growth

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By Andrew Mathieson
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Isabella Karas, Ellie Badcock and Ruby Karas, of Launceston, enjoy finding their way through the Rupertswood farm maze at Hagley. Picture: NEIL RICHARDSON

A HAGLEY farm could establish Australia's first crop maze tourist attraction, judging by a significant increase in visitors.

The Rupertswood Farm Crop Maze was cut two years ago to highlight the plight of struggling farmers.

But farm owners Anna and Rowan Clark have found the intricacies of a 2-hectare maze depicting a large rain cloud dropping water onto crops a growing must-see attraction.

"I don't think there's anything in Australia like this," Mrs Clark said. "There has been maybe one or two, but I don't think there is anyone who does this every year."

She said visitor numbers on the opening day of the crop maze have increased from 23 in 2014 to 78 last year to more than 140 on Saturday.

At least another 300 visitors turned up on Sunday to complete the first of four weekends that the maze will be open to the public.

Part of the \$15 adult and \$10 children entry proceeds is donated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Mrs Clark is also convinced the sorghum crop maze could be a legitimate source of income to the farm in another “challenging year” to ensure the third-generation farming family can sustain living on the property.

“It’s definitely not a huge farm enterprise at this stage, but maybe in the future I am sure it would be,” she said.

“Overseas, it is a major industry; this agri-tourism or ‘agri-tainment’ as they call it draws a massive amount of people.

“That’s kinda my thing ... going forward I would like to keep going on with it to try and get some industry going on in Australia.”

Mrs Clark said the onerous work preparing the maze each year would probably lead them to appoint a steering committee.

She said in the past two days they have worked “around the clock” on marquees, hay bales, roads, food, electricity, signage and the maze itself.

“We’d love it to be more financial, but at least at this stage it’s a very good feel-good factor because we get such fantastic comments, and it’s really nice to have people on our farm and talk to people.”