

**A HELPING HAND FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

When St. Mary's based Semco Equipment Sales heard of The Mamre Projects need for assistance in establishing its African farm Project+-, the company was quick to come forward.

Semco has committed to providing assistance with tasks such as trenching for irrigation and provision of other agricultural equipment to complete a variety of works associated with establishment and maintenance of the small lots.

Plots are leased by Sudanese refugees from Mamre, a sponsored work of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta. On these small allotments and with the assistance of Mamre's agricultural specialists, they plant herbs and vegetables that are sold at the Hawkesbury Harvest Markets, Penrith.

The project aims to help these refugees stand on their own feet, providing them with an independent income from SPIN farming where a **S**mall **P**lot is farmed **I**ntensively. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides part of the funding for this program.

Semco has also provided funding for the marquee in the grounds of Mamre Homestead when it serves produce grown by African farmers at its 100 Mile Dinner on October 16 which will featuring locally produced food and wine.

"Profit from sales of the produce provides the financial start these people need to become independent. Growing vegetables on small plots is something they know well from their native land. So far we have three farmers and already we have economies of scale for watering systems, manure and seeds", said Sharon Holstein, Mamre Homestead's Development Officer.

Mamre Homestead, built c1820s, was the home of the colonial chaplain, magistrate and pastoralist, the Reverend Samuel Marsden. It was the working farmhouse of a busy rural property, a model farm which included orchards, exotic pasture and other crops.

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*For further information:*

*Satch Santilli - Sales Director SEMCO EQUIPMENT SALES*

*Tel: 02 9833 6000/0419 468 580 /Email: [ssantilli@semcogroup.com.au](mailto:ssantilli@semcogroup.com.au)/web: [www.semcogroup.com.au](http://www.semcogroup.com.au)*

*Michael Parkinson*

*Tel: 02 9572 7678 /M: 0419 264 465 / E: [ausvex@bigpond.com](mailto:ausvex@bigpond.com)*

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*Semco's Phil Williams operates the Case trencher while Mamre Homestead's Farm Manager Luke Jewell(R) and Ian MacGregor (L) watch progress.*