



Peter Lipscombe inspects the kiwifruit crop at his Somersby orchard.

Picture: PETER CLARK

Industry not chickenfeed

TERRY COLLINS

THE Central Coast is growing in importance as a food producing area.

Already the area around Somersby, Mangrove Mountain, Calga, Peats Ridge, Central Mangrove, Mount White and Kulnura is the highest chicken producer in the Sydney region and produces almost 15 per cent of all agricultural production in the region.

A recent profile on the farming industry on the coast showed the area – referred to as the Plateau – has the highest value of production per hectare in the region and generated

produce valued at \$92 million in 2005-2006.

Plateau Chamber of Commerce president Peter Lipscombe said he hoped the report would highlight to the State Government, Gosford Council and industry groups the importance of farming and that a range of forward-thinking initiatives aimed at its protection was urgently required.

“The report shows that chickens for meat, nurseries and cut flowers are the most important industries on the Plateau,” Mr Lipscombe said.

“A comparison of data from the 2001 and 2005 Agricultural Censuses Ex-

pansion shows production in the Gosford local government area is significant and expanding with an increase of more than 83 per cent.

“The bulk of this increase is derived from poultry, nurseries and cut flowers. The poultry industry, including chickens for meat and egg production, is the largest agriculture sector on the Plateau with an output of more than \$56.5 million.

“The coast’s nursery industry, with an output of about 12.7 million, is exceeded by only Baulkham Hills and Hornsby.”