

**AUSTRALIAN NUFFIELD FARMING
SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION**

Nuffield  *etin*

Bull

APRIL 2006

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2006 has started well for Nuffield with the 12 2005 scholars meeting in Utrecht (Netherlands), for the first international Nuffield conference for contemporary scholars. There were 41 scholars from Australia, NZ, Canada, France, Ireland and UK. Rabobank, one of our national sponsors, assisted in organising the week. The event was an outstanding success and through the network and relationships built, will assist all the scholars with their study topics.



Also present was an American (Eisenhower Fellow), Chairman of Dutch young farmers and the CEO from the German Agricultural Society with two of their young farmers. These contacts have already been useful in assisting our Global Focus Program (GFP).

Seven of the scholars then continued on their GFP, whilst the others returned to Australia prior to departure on their GFP in June. A feature of their program will be the leg in China, with the grateful help of Seedmark of South Australia, who will be supplying one of their personnel (fluent in Mandarin) to lead the party.

Governor General to open National Conference.

We are delighted to announce that the Governor General, Major General Michael Jeffery, AC, CVO, MC will open our National conference in Melbourne this October. He will be accompanied by Mrs. Jeffrey. The Governor-General is Patron of our Association here in Australia.

Closer to the conference, more details will be supplied, but this will be a great addition to what is shaping up to be an outstanding conference with world class speakers. Conference dates are 5th & 6th October – please make a note in your diary!

**PLEASE INFORM THE NUFFIELD OFFICE OF
ANY CHANGES TO YOUR CONTACT DETAILS**

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Autumn Tour.

We have just completed an outstanding autumn tour based out of Griffith in southern NSW. There were three and a half days of most interesting tours, dinners and camaraderie – it was good to see many familiar faces. In all we had 30 Nuffield’s and 14 wives & partners attend the tour, with a number



of our sponsors and numerous guests at the sit down functions. 90 attended the dinner in Griffith.

We were welcomed by the Mayor, Mr. John Dal Broi, and Mrs Dal Broi to the Griffith dinner, which was also attended by local politicians and the media. As they were present, this dinner also gave Nuffield the opportunity to formally congratulate Ian Macintosh and Hugh Roberts on receiving Orders of Australia. Bryan Clark was also present with his wife Lucy, and the Association made a presentation to him to recognise the services he had given as CEO between 2001 and 2005.

Over the period of the tour we had presentations from 4 returning scholars – David Cattanach, Paul Zuidema, Michael Hastings and Jon Shaw. Congratulations to them all on 4 excellent presentations.

In general, the media coverage has been excellent, and from the response and interest we received, I think Nuffield is certainly growing in terms of its recognition and stature within Australian Agriculture.

Our thanks to Peter Draper, Russell Ford, Ian Mason and David Cattanach for their roles in organising, Robyn Ford, Erin Draper and Aileen Mason for the bountiful food and hospitality in their three respective homes during the course of the tour. To Janette for a lot of hard work leading to and during the tour.

Peter Nixon – National Chairman.

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THE YEAR AHEAD

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	Information
5 th June to 16 th July	GFP	International	The June Global Focus Program tour will comprise five scholars, who will visit New Zealand, China, California, Nebraska, Canada, Washington and Ireland.
30 th June	Applications close	National	
July	State selection	Various	Vic Melbourne; Wednesday 12th July SA Adelaide; Friday 14th July WA Perth; Monday 17th July QLD Toowoomba; Tuesday 25th July NSW Griffith; Friday 28th July
4 th -5 th September	National selection	Melbourne	A dinner for all applicants will be held on 4 th September at the Melbourne Club.
3 rd October	Scholar briefing, debriefing	Melbourne	The 2006 Scholars will be briefed, 2005 Scholars debriefed and GRDC Scholars alumni will meet with GRDC management in a strategic planning session
4 th October	Pre conference tour	Melbourne	Will be held in the Kinglake area on the 4 th Oct 2006.
5 th -6 th October	Conference	Melbourne	Australian Innovative Farming Conference 2006 <i>Globalisation and the impact on farming in Australia</i> To be formally opened by the Governor General With presentations from returning scholars.
5 th October	Conference dinner	MCG	The conference dinner will be held in the Olympic Room at the MCG with a pre dinner tour of the stadium
6 th October	Presentation day	Melbourne	The 2006 scholars will be formally presented with their ties/scarves over lunch at the Naval and Military Club
6 th October	AGM	Melbourne	AGM for Australian Nuffield Farming Scholars Association Members
1st to 4th March 07	2007 Autumn Tour	South Australia	2007 Autumn Tour with presentations from returning scholars. More information will be circulated at a later date

If you would like to promote an event that you believe would be of interest to the Nuffield community feel free to enter details via the link provided at http://www.nuffield.com.au/news_f/events.php (**Add an event.**) Please note that all entries will be vetted before posting to this site. Nuffield Farming Scholars Association reserves the right to refuse the publication of material judged unsuitable.

THE AUSTRALIAN INNOVATIVE FARMING CONFERENCE

To be held in Melbourne on the 4th - 6th of October 2006

Preparations for this year's Australian Innovative Farming Conference are progressing well with sponsors coming on board and some excellent local and international speakers being locked in. A real coup is that we will have the Governor General (who is the Patron of Nuffield) opening the conference. The theme of the conference is "*Globalisation and its Impact on Farming in Australia*". It will include sessions on:

Accessing Markets in a Global Environment, which will explore the problems and opportunities that Globalisation presents for Australian farmers

Biosecurity vs Free Trade will look at some biosecurity and quarantine issues which affect international trade.

Technology & Innovation. Innovations in technology are constantly driven by the need for farmers to remain competitive in the global market. This session will look at a few areas in which Australia leads the world.

Prospering in a Global Environment will explore options and opportunities, and show how some businesses are taking advantage of Australia's position in the global market, and how others are dealing with competition from imports in local markets.



A conference highlight will be presentations by 6 recently returned scholars.

The conference will be held in the Telstra Building at 242 Exhibition St. in Melbourne. On Wednesday there will be a pre-conference tour to the Kinglake area north of Melbourne. The Conference Dinner on Thursday night will be at the MCG, with a sporting legend as guest speaker, and hopefully a tour of the grounds beforehand. And of course the 3 days will culminate in the new scholar Presentation Luncheon on the Friday.

The new conference webpage is worth a look by following the link from the Nuffield site. It also features speaker summaries and some PowerPoint presentations from the previous 2 conferences.

Put the conference dates into your diaries now, and spread the word!

See you there! Bernadette Clarke.

NEW SOUTH WALES

State Chairman: David Brownhill

SUPPORTED BY



Nuffield has had an eventful time in NSW in the last couple of months. We have just hosted the Autumn Tour, and Simon Turnbull has recently held a very successful Field Day on his farm at Quambone. In addition to this we have confirmed Incitec Pivot as our State sponsor for 2006. We still need to confirm our second sponsor.

Autumn Tour

The tour was held around Griffith and Leeton for four days. A great deal of work was put in by a committee of Nuffield's based in this area and also Jim and Janette did a fantastic job coordinating the tour and making sure everything ran smoothly.

It has been the intention of the Nuffield Board to make the Autumn Tour and the October Conference the highlights of the Nuffield Calendar, so a large effort was made to attract as many Scholars as possible, prospective applicants, sponsors and media. In my view this was successful and the tour has gone long way in lifting Nuffield's profile in Southern NSW. There was some excellent media coverage, with TV and local radio. David Cattanach also appeared in the Land Newspaper with an article on his topic of climate change.

The program attempted to cater for all scholars, with the first two days fairly full on, with some excellent visits to the following operations. The Nugan Group, where we saw a family business that had grown substantially after developing an export market particularly for fruit juice and in particular carrot juice to Japan.



A visit to Casella Wines (the makers of Yellow Tail) was quite unbelievable. Once again a family business that had grown on the back of a vision to supply the US market with easy, ready to drink wine. The business had sales last year of 348 million, purely into the US. They bottle the wine into 1.5 litre bottles and add sugar to make it sweet enough for the US market. The bottling line can fill 36000 bottles per hour. The shed that holds the empties before bottling is 1.5 acres. They can store over 100 million litres of wine ready for bottling. The place gives you a hang over just walking around it!

A great local success story that is very reliant on the local community and also very focussed on supporting the local community.

As we had to split into two groups for this tour, Jim Geltch did some quick improvisation and had one group at a Prune farm looking at the drying system, and another at a small winery where they had a wine tasting. You work out which one you would have preferred to be at!

But it was great to be able to just lob on these people and receive some great hospitality.

David Cattanach presented his report on Day 1, and this was followed by a panel session in which there was general discussion on climate change and global warming etc. The general conclusion was that we will need to change in the future as the problem is real.

On Thursday evening we had a formal dinner supported by Landmark where we had two returning Scholars present. Paul Zuidema and Michael Hastings gave great presentations of their experiences and about their topics of study. This was held in Griffith and was attended by many local officials etc.

On Friday a visit to Commins Partnership was stimulating in that it demonstrated what you can do if you think outside the square. They have grown from a small start in irrigation farming to a large diversified farming business that mixes and sells liquid fertiliser, and a manufacturing business that makes stainless steel tanks for Winery's. This all happens on the farm. A 1.1 million litre tank sell for \$250,000 each. They have just supplied Casellas with 40. They also have a Tank Farm on the farm which stores wine on contract for the Winery's. They can store 40 million litres of wine on the farm. The most interesting aspect is that they are very involved in the wine industry but grow not one grape.

We visited Peter Draper's farm where Rice harvest was in full swing and then enjoyed a magnificent lunch at his home. There is no doubt it was a great afternoon and enjoyed by all. The setting and company was great.

Friday night we were in Leeton for John Shaw's presentation and also an address from a local rice grower. This was held at the Historic Hydro and was a great setting and some enjoyed the festivities more than others.

The weekend saw us start in the Darlington Point area visiting local farms and these were just as interesting if not more so than the commercial visits. We had a little bus trouble but that was soon fixed with another bus and the tour continued. Richard Stott, a neighbouring farmer to David Cattanach gave us a run down on his farm, the irrigation issues and the different crops he grows. This is all to service his debt which in his words he "couldn't ride around in a day on a motorbike!!!!"

Some of the party, who could not stand the pace, left the tour as we headed south to Jerilderie. We were entertained, over lunch, at the Ned Kelly museum by the "King of England" and a local identity, on the weekend Ned came to Jerilderie. We then had a few hours rest and respite. Some took the opportunity to take in an aerial view of the Bunge piggery at Corowa (some scholars just can't help themselves).

We then travelled to "Old Coree" where Russell Ford manages the Rice Research Station. He showed us around (sans a WA Scholar and his wife who "missed" the bus -no names---) before we adjourned to the magnificent homestead for pre dinner drinks by the Billabong Creek.



We were joined for dinner by the Chairman of Sunrice, Gerry Lawson and his wife Sue, along with a number of Russell and Robyn's neighbours who ably assisted in preparing a magnificent meal. Many thanks to Russell and Robyn for a wonderful evening in a great setting.

We were allowed to sleep in the next morning (which some of the late night party goers appreciated) before being bussed to Ian and Aileen Mason's property near Finley for breakfast. They were ably assisted by their neighbours feeding the multitude.

After a tour of Ian's property, we visited the only commercial liquorice farm in the world and completed the tour with a visit to a (you guessed it) DAIRY FARM.

All in all a great tour where those that wanted to learn would have surely taken something home and those who were more social had a great time.

Some did both!!



Jon Shaw & Ashley Severin



Peter Nixon & Jim Geltch



Simon Turnbull's Field Day

Simon had a field Day on his farm on the 5th April to show the wider community what he has been doing since his return home. He has installed a feedlot and put in place a plan to rapidly increase his numbers on feed. He has hooked in to use a well known expression and we wish him all the best with his plans.

The field day was attended by 60 people and they had a very informative day with speakers both locally and from the US.



NORTHERN TERRITORY

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State Chairman: Ashley Severin



Horticulture Australia

QUEENSLAND

SUPPORTED BY *Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation*

State Chairman: Warren Drynan

Marc and Santina Jackson's banana plantation was devastated by Cyclone Larry. However, he remains positive and assures us he is not as bad off as others, particularly those in the Innisfail region, where crops have been mown off at ground level. His house and packing shed are OK. Marc has been hit about 5 times in the last 15 years but nothing as bad as this.

Apparently he still has some suckers that have survived that should be producing in 3-4 months. Other growers will take 12 months to recover. The Government will be supplying an immediate grant of \$10,000 and longer term interest free loans/grants for reconstruction. Marc's biggest issue is retaining his workforce of 12 men, some who have been with him for up to 10 years. The Banana growers are lobbying the Government for "work for the dole" type assistance that will allow them to remain on the properties cleaning up and reconstructing.

Woolworths have already indicated they will assist, and Marc is meeting with Coles to see what they will offer. He is hoping enough trees may have survived to pick a few boxes a day to generate some cashflow.

We would like to congratulate Marc on his invention of a Clip Slip.

"He has received an \$80,000 Innovation Start-up Scheme grant from the Queensland Government to develop his Clip Slip, a combination plastic clip and slip sheet that is designed to separate the hands of bananas, reducing tip scarring during the fruit's growth phase. Mr Jackson has been farming for 15 years in North Queensland's wet tropics but it wasn't until 2001, while studying international banana industry practices after winning a Nuffield farming scholarship, that he began to develop the Clip Slip. Like most farm inventions, the idea was borne of the frustration over an inefficient but necessary management practice that all banana farmers have to endure."
(Excerpt from the Queensland Country Life 16 March 2006, article by Chris McCormack)

Sadly 1976 Nuffield Scholar, Graham Joppich from Queensland passed away on Thursday 23rd March. Graham was heavily involved the Barley industry in QLD and was on the Board of Scots College, in Warwick, for many years. He will be sadly missed.

From Tim Napier - Queensland Scholar 2004

I have completed just over half of my required time abroad, having done the 6 week GFP and a few weeks of my own study last winter.

It took a while for things to sink in, with my head still spinning for a while after I arrived back home. The GFP really opened our eyes on the 'global scene', and put a lot of things into a new perspective, as I am sure it does with everybody. We were privileged to meet the people and organisations that we did, and have made many contacts and many new friends.

The few weeks after GFP I spent travelling through parts of the US, mostly mid-west and west, visiting some interesting operations in the 'sustainable ag' field. It was really interesting to see the different interpretations of the concept and what part the payment of subsidies plays in the participation in the Govt. programs. Unless paid to do so, there a few farmers who are willing to embark on a course of change.

This winter will see me back in the US for a while and also NZ, with a possible detour to China.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTED BY



State Chairman: Peter Treloar

2006 has moved on rapidly, with most harvest operations throughout the state completed and sound yield results generally. Some areas have received substantial Summer/Autumn rains, boosting hopes for this current year. Planning is well under way for the new season, not unlike the year's programme for SA Nuffield.

Two 2005 Scholars, Mark Branson and Graham Clothier, gave brief presentations at two SA Farmers Federation Future Leaders/Farmers Forums in Clare and Naracoorte respectively during March. This was another opportunity to briefly share individual Nuffield experiences and to encourage potential applicants to apply for a scholarship. Mark Modra and Mark Branson were also involved in the SA No-til Farmers Association during February.

All 4 recently returned scholars also travelled to the Griffith NSW Autumn tour.

There are two main points to mention and put into diaries for the immediate future. Potential applicants need to be reminded of the selection deadlines for 2006 scholarship opportunities between April 1st and June 30th. The state selection interviews are planned for 14th July in Adelaide.

We are considering an AGM in Adelaide on Friday 14th July, after which time a weekend tour to the South East on 15th and 16th July, to visit two immediate past Scholars' operations. Being school holidays we are hoping to encourage better attendance and family participation to both events. Because of scholars' locations, the annual tour for 2007 is being considered for Northern and Western areas from Adelaide.

Steven Jaeschke (S.A. Secretary)

TASMANIA

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State Chairman: Robert Dent

Tasmanian Scholars have been fairly quiet over the summer months. We are looking forward to a successful supper and information evening for potential scholars on the 21st April at Rabobank House in Launceston. The three scholars who have returned from the core tour have great things to say about the experience and we look forward to hearing more from them.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTED BY



State Chairman: John Foss

In February WA Nuffield held a successful 'Farming beyond tomorrow' seminar. The good sized crowd of Nuffield scholars and young farmers who are potential scholarship applicants learnt about Nuffield scholarship programs available this year, and then listened to a returned scholar and a range of other expert speakers on a topical subject in Australian agriculture. The topic of this year's seminar was "Managing Nutrient Inputs and Soil Fertility".

David Cox, the recently returned 2005 scholar, set the scene for the day with a well rehearsed presentation on his Nuffield topic of 'nitrogen management and foliar disease control'. David spoke about some of the issues that he faces on his farming operations in the south coast region of WA. Efficient use of nitrogen is a major driver of profitability on David's farm. Of particular interest from his study was the application of the US designed Green Seeker technology to measure and then calculate crop nitrogen requirements.

David spoke about how he will be incorporating this system as a management tool on his farm in the future.

Paul Omedei, a pasture consultant, then gave a presentation on high input nutrient management in dairy pastures. Paul is part of a WA project called "Greener Pastures" which is a joint initiative between several dairy industry bodies; the WA Department of Agriculture and south west dairy farmers to develop pasture management programs that maximise production in an environmentally sustainable manner. One of Paul's consulting clients, Bevan Ravenhill, of Ravenhill dairy then spoke about how he had increased his dairy's output by adopting intensive nutrient applications and pasture grazing and silage systems on his dryland farm. Bevan also gave a very interesting account of his family's new value adding initiative in their dairy and the range of branded products that they are marketing to the high value food markets in Perth.

To balance the high input fertiliser strategy sessions we also heard from well qualified speakers on biological farming.

Margaret Roper, a soil biology specialist from CSIRO, gave an in depth overview of what biology is active in agricultural soils and the roles and functions that the specific species play. Margaret also showed trial results from the WA wheat belt where beneficial microbes have been introduced and have had positive effects of yield increase and disease suppression in wheat.

Cameron Sutherland, a soil biology consultant and the curator at the WACA, the state's major cricket oval, spoke about incorporating biological systems into broad acre farming, horticulture, pasture and turf production. Cameron's key message was that biology is an integral part of the soil and therefore had to be managed appropriately. He said that incorporating biological principles is not about wholesale changes, but rather a different thought process to how farmers manage their soil.

Charlie Hilton and John Ryan



The final speaker for the day was Charlie Hilton. Charlie is a Nuffield Scholar from Bordertown in SA and travelled in 2003. His topic of his presentation was 'farming with balanced living soil'. He gave an excellent presentation that incorporated his findings from research from his Nuffield scholarship as well as examples from incorporating biological systems on his farm.

WA Nuffield is very grateful for the time that all of the speakers gave to present at the seminar, particularly Charlie who travelled from SA to be a part of the day. Thanks also to John Ryan of Ausplow who sponsored

the day which included a sundowner at the Cottlesloe Hotel. Thankyou to Sandy Forbes, WA Nuffield vice chairman, who organised the speakers, venue and proceeding on the day.

VICTORIA

State Chairman: Paul Bethune

SUPPORTED BY



April 12th saw a Vic Nuffield field day at Paul and Kerry Zuidema's dairy farm at Leongatha. Fonterra sponsored the day and provided a great lunch. Paul gave us a run down on his scholarship and we had a squiz round the farm. Peter Notman and Jim Geltch both gave a bit of yarn to the masses about Nuffield. It all worked out pretty well.

Directly following the day was the AGM/BBQ/booze up, held at Max and Barb Jelbart's place which is just up the road. There was a rumour that Dennis Moon had promised to do a rendition of "God save the Queen" if we got more than fifteen Nuffield scholars. Unfortunately we were spared this as we fell just short of the fifteen scholars required. Elections were held and Paul Bethune replaces Dennis Moon as Chairman and Paul Zuidema was elected as Secretary, Graeme Box remains the Treasurer.

By all reports the current Victorian scholars Andrew Broad and Andrew Nagorcka are having a blast and we look forward to hearing the details.

P.S. If you are always on the edge then you are taking up too much room.

RETURNING SCHOLARS REPORTS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES
(FULL SCHOLARS REPORTS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.NUFFIELD.COM.AU)

Topic: Patterns of Profit in the Australian Dairy Industry

Sponsored By

By 2003 Nuffield Scholar – Paul Bethune



Executive Summary

Total Australian milk production has grown remarkably in recent times yet Australian dairy farmers have performed poorly in a financial sense. Average return on assets for the last decade for Australian dairy- farmers has been 2.2%. Many farms consistently achieve operating returns of 15% and above. Why is it so?

Three key areas are identified and discussed –

- 1 - The importance of efficiency gains
- 2 - Focusing on whole farm profitability rather than on individual benchmarks
- 3 - Understanding the affect of the level of capitalization.

Measuring **efficiency gains** is complex, not very reliable, but crucial for long term profitability. An efficiency gain is made when resources are better used either through better management or implementation of technology. Australian dairy farmers often confuse efficiency gains with production gains. Evidence suggests that the rate of efficiency gains in Australia has slowed. Can this all be attributed to dry conditions or as an industry have we lost the plot and chased production instead of profits? It seems likely there is truth in both arguments.

Australian farmers have developed a culture in which discussions of financial performance are almost taboo. To get around this, industry and farmers have focused on key operational parameters such as production per cow, labour use efficiency, milking speed and more recently water use efficiency. All desirable traits but the correlation to **whole farm profitability** is dubious. There is an abundance of credible information on financial performance in Australian dairy but it is not co-ordinated or widely presented in a clear easy to understand format for farmers. Would the dairy industry and farmers benefit from sustained co-ordinated focus on whole farm profitability?

The net affect of being overcapitalised is to lift the cost of milk production and risk profit of the enterprise. Very little work has been done in Australian dairy on helping farmers understand the influence of the level of **capital intensity** on business profitability. Research in Ireland, Holland and Wales points to it being very significant. This is an area on many farms where soft decisions are made and wants rather than needs often dictate the decision making process. We've all heard the saying "cows and land appreciate in value and machinery depreciates" but do we really understand it?

The key to lifting profitability is not to be a low input farmer or a high input farmer and not to have all the new technology or not to use only contractors. The key revolves around making not all but more of farm decisions with return on investment as the focus. Significant potential to improve profits with existing resources is the good news story for most Australian farmers. This combined with bright future prospects for the industry should see us thrive as we move forward.

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RETURNING SCHOLARS REPORTS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES
(FULL SCHOLARS REPORTS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.NUFFIELD.COM.AU)

Topic: Lamb Production, Marketing and Quality Assurance
(Focus on Brands and Value Adding for the Producer)

By 2004 Nuffield Scholar – Graham Clothier

Executive Summary

Sponsored by:



Lamb producers - have you ever been really disappointed after a sale of lambs in the auction or over the hooks, especially when you believe the quality of lambs is excellent? My guess is that you have, even though you may have invested in good genetics, feeding and even been a part of a Quality Assurance scheme. That being the main driver, an astute couple from Beachport, South Australia put into motion a branded product called Limestone Coast Lamb (LCL). They then invited three other likeminded businesses to join them to start a company of which I am a director.

Starting a branded product takes a lot of time and effort, and is often met with little success. The red meat industry has developed over a long period of time and some people involved in the industry are entrenched in their views and ways. To broaden this thinking and help in the development of our industry and product, I have looked at similar products and businesses overseas and in Australia. I visited the UK, Canada, USA, and New Zealand on my study tour.

Being involved in the industry from three different perspectives at production level, including seed stock, prime lambs and brand marketing, gave me the basis to look at operations in other countries industries and bring home findings or innovations.

The main focus of my study was to look at producer-driven value adding and some through branding, and some through continued ownership along the marketing chain. I also looked at the industry outlook on a global scale to see whether the current buoyant conditions for lamb will continue.

The sheep and lamb industry in Australia is in a very positive position. Low and relatively static sheep numbers in the large exporting countries look set to continue. China, although having the largest population of sheep, nearly consumes all its own production. The US flock whilst possibly levelling out in numbers, is still under threat of further decline as it dips below a level of critical mass. Farmers in the UK have to face a steep learning curve as subsidies are shifted from production based to a single farm payment.

All areas visited had some production issues. Many areas in the USA have major predator problems, with bears, mountain lions, wolves and coyotes all playing a part in reducing lamb numbers. Canadian producers, have the extreme winters to deal with. The UK has a lot of small flocks comprising many breeds, making it hard to get continuity of type through the works. Wet and cold winters also result in most sheep being shedded for a period, with most lambed indoors. The main issue for Australian producers is the climate, which makes it difficult to get an even supply all year round. Australia also had the lowest lambing performance in percentage terms, of the countries I visited. New Zealand's problems are few, with feed systems in place to get a reasonable supply of lambs through the winter, and the North Island having a good turn-off all year. However, internal parasites are a problem.

My search for producer-driven branded products uncovered some successful brands and groups, as well as some which were less successful. The businesses I looked at are by no means an exhaustive list but I believe represent a good cross-section in the industry. The four outstanding groups I found were Mountain States Lamb co-op in the USA, Alliance Group and Primary Producers Cooperative Society in NZ, and Q lamb in WA.

Graham Clothier

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RETURNING SCHOLARS REPORTS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES
(FULL SCHOLARS REPORTS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.NUFFIELD.COM.AU)

Topic: Chemical Free Production of Nutrient Dense Food

Sponsored by:



Horticulture Australia

By 2003 Nuffield Scholar - Sandra Kirk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consumer demand is the driving market force in world wide agricultural production as we know it. Producers are faced with ever increasing pressure to produce a premium grade product that retains a high level of nutritional value. This is becoming increasingly more difficult to achieve given the conventional farming practices of producers. Farmers need to find a solution to their predicament.

Through balancing the soil's physical, chemical and biological properties, farmers can create an environment whereby they maintain a healthy system. Declining soil biology is the fundamental problem that is plaguing the majority of farms world wide. Yet the methods of restoring soil biology are so simple and affordable, it is a change farmers cannot afford not to make in order to remain viable.

Soil can be balanced by understanding and employing a few simple key practices, which can include:

- Regular soil testing;
- Applying compost;
- Application of Compost Teas and inoculums;
- Implementing crop rotation systems;
- Employing sound farm management practices.

Through introducing a farming system, which employs these key practices, the remainder of the system will automatically follow – the development of healthier crops that are more resilient to pests and diseases and with greater nutritional value. It is vital that the concept of our food being dependant on our soil is understood, and it is imperative that action be instigated now to prevent any further decline in the health of human life's greatest asset. It stands to reason that improving the soil will improve the quality of crops grown in it. If the crop quality is improved it is only logical that whatever consumes that crop will be healthier as well.

Sandra Kirk

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Topic: A Report On The Challenge Of Rural Leadership Course

By 2005 Nuffield Scholar - Sarah Ackland

Sponsored by:



At The Worshipful Company of Farmers and Duchy College 6-18 November 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1) This was a valuable course to do in another country. I met many new people, was exposed to issues and attitudes with which I was not familiar and I could leave the farm behind and "get on the balcony".
- 2) Leadership is not about the biggest, loudest person standing up the front giving orders. Good leaders use a number of traits to achieve desired outcomes.
- 3) Problems that have been seen and dealt with before (tame problems) are best dealt with by management. Problems that require quick decisive action (critical problems) are best dealt with by commanding. New problems that have never been dealt with before (wicked problems) are best dealt with by leadership.
- 4) It is important to gain an understanding of traits of traditionalists (born 1900-1945), baby boomers (1946-1964), generation X (1965-1980) and millenials (1981-1999z) in order to manage or lead them in a way that is sympathetic to their values.
 - 5) The divide between traditional UK growers who are used to subsidies and those who know they must deal on a global stage is widening substantially in the UK.

- 6) Supermarkets in the UK play a huge role in dictating prices and conditions to growers. Some growers are trying to hold onto their own brands in order to make it more difficult for supermarkets to delist their products.
- 7) It is difficult to gauge the future demand for organic products in the UK. Some speakers talked about large potential gains in markets but when the whole market was considered it was still a small percentage.
- 8) There is a need for farmers in the UK to effectively use the media to portray to their fellow citizens they are a valuable asset to the country.

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NUFFIELD LOGO - KEEPING THE RECORD STRAIGHT



'Chinese Whispers' is a party game which, by its very nature of passing messages down the line of party-goers both amuses and misleads, with the final participant proclaiming a message very different from the one whispered by the first guest! Something similar has happened in relation to the origins of the now widely familiar Nuffield crest, and perhaps a few comments may set the record straight

In England in 1934 William Morris was created a peer in recognition of his contribution to the motor industry, and extensive charitable works. His inclination was towards adopting the names of either Morris or Cowley to accompany his new title, but both these names already belonged to other members of the peerage so he settled for his further choice of Nuffield.

A Grant of Arms followed and it was Lord Nuffield's decision that the crest of his Coat of Arms should be adopted by the Nuffield Foundation, and later the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust. In heraldic terms the crest is described as being "on a Wreath Or and Gules a demi Bull Gules armed and unguled Or resting the sinister hoof on a Winged Wheel Gold". In less pedantic parlance the bull in the crest is taken from the Arms of the City of Oxford, and the wheel which it holds represents the motor industry in which this remarkable man left his footprint in history, and bestowed upon us such a legacy of philanthropy.

By Caroline Nixon

THE NUFFIELD WORLD CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN 2008

The provisional dates are the 5th to the 17th June 2008 to coincide with the Royal Highland Show in Scotland and the Royal Show in the UK. Both these shows will take place after the Nuffield Conference and Tour.

A pre-conference tour is planned for Northern Ireland over 3 days. The conference itself will take place in Dublin (2 days) and there will be a post conference tour in the South-West of Ireland.

This is the provisional timetable but as more information arrives we will keep you briefed.

ABIC 2006

Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference

'Unlocking the potential of agricultural biotechnology'

The Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference (ABIC) is the major global conference for agricultural biotechnology.

First held in 1996 in Canada by the ABIC Foundation, Melbourne Australia will host the first conference to be staged in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Victorian State Government as Principal Sponsor and Host State and AusBiotech, as the Host Industry Body invites you to join the ABIC Foundation at ABIC2006 from 6 - 9 August 2006.

For more information please go to www.abic.ca.