



## NEW CHAIRMAN - DAVID BROWNHILL

Nuffield Australia's new chairman, grain grower David Brownhill from the northern NSW town of Spring Ridge, was elected chairman in October. He plans to spend his three year term consolidating the position of Nuffield's Farming Scholars program as the leader of innovation in Australian agriculture. He travelled on his Nuffield scholarship in 1998.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Firstly I would like to thank the outgoing Chairman, Peter Nixon for the tremendous job that he has done in the last three years. Nuffield Australia is in excellent shape, and over the next few years we plan to consolidate what has already been achieved.

On a personal note I believe I am the first Nuffield Chairman to be announced to the wider alumni at a truckstop in WA on the way to the Kulin Bush Races. Congratulations to Rob Henry for being elected Vice Chairman, and I look forward to working closely with him. I would also like to welcome Christine Hawkins as the new external director on the Board. Christine replaces David Coombes who has been a valuable contributor in his time with Nuffield. Peter Treloar and Hugh Roberts join the board for three year terms and Ronald Thompson, a 2006 Scholar joins the board on a one year appointment. We thank Dale Metcalf and Brett Roberts for their commitment and time whilst they were directors of Nuffield Australia

We have just returned from a very successful October Conference in Fremantle. The conference and tour had a terrific attendance of both young and old Scholars. One of the best aspects of the Nuffield program is the network that it provides, so I can only encourage all Scholars to use the network and, specifically, use the events that are planned to gather new ideas, renew old friendships and make new contacts.

The awards dinner was well attended and some special presentations were also made to Margaret Perkins, Richard Harvey, Robert Harrison, Stan Schur, 1950 Scholar Neil McNeil and Peter Rose.

Nuffield Australia recognises the importance of those who have gone before us, and see it as important to recognise their contribution.



*Back Left: Richard Harvey and Robert Harrison.  
Front: Stan Schur, 1950 Scholar Neil McNeil and Peter Rose.*

The October gathering of Nuffield Scholars is to celebrate the presentations of the new Scholars, and of course listen to the reports from eight of the returning Scholars.

This year marks a new high for Nuffield Australia, with 16 scholarships awarded. Congratulations to Jason Jarvis, Robert Kestel, Mathew Stott, Sam Archer, Graham Finlayson, Lester Marshall, Annabelle Coppin, Matthew Munzberg, Ben Ranford, Jarrod Ryan, Tim Harslett, Simon Tiller, Mark Graham, Murray Scholz, Jane Bennett and Ben Forsyth.

Not only have we continued with our traditional scholarships, we have four new scholarships funded, encompassing the grain, aquaculture, fruit and horticulture industries.

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### **2007 Nuffield Scholars:**

*Front: Jason Jarvis, Robert Kestel, Mathew Stott, Sam Archer, Graham Finlayson, Lester Marshall, Annabelle Coppin, Matthew Munzberg and Ben Ranford.*

*Back: Jarrod Ryan, Tim Harslett, Simon Tiller, Mark Graham, Murray Scholz, Jane Bennett and Ben Forsyth.*

The program has certainly expanded from the two Scholars per year in 1995 to now. The Harry Perkins vision is closer to reality now than it has ever been.

We often have the discussion at Board level, and also within the general alumni, about how many Scholars per year is too many. We are very mindful of keeping the quality of Nuffield Scholars at the highest level, but by accessing these new industries, well new to Nuffield anyway, we are actually targeting a whole new market. This is a market that we have had limited access to in the past.

This years Scholars went through the now traditional pre-brief with their partners, a process that is very helpful for partners to build their own network, and to understand more about the

program itself. At the same time we have a debrief for the returning Scholars. This is viewed as very important, to give the management and board of Nuffield feedback on what we can improve for the Scholars of the future.

A new initiative this year was a GRDC forum. The objective of this was to share information and innovation, keep up-to-date on what GRDC is focussing its energies on and to give

GRDC a forum to add value to its investment in Nuffield. It was our first attempt at this and, with changes in the future, we believe that we will be able to add value for all participants.

The next event on the Nuffield calendar is in February 2008 when we will be hosting the Contemporary Scholars Conference in Melbourne. We anticipate 45 Scholars of the current year to attend, providing a great opportunity for the Scholars to build relationships and contacts. It is also an opportunity for the overseas Scholars to see what Australia has to offer in terms of agricultural innovation.

This conference will overlap with our annual Autumn Tour which will be in Victoria.

Here's hoping for an improvement in the season for next year, and may you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Regards  
David Brownhill

### **Ode to High Office....**

I'm married to this Chairman  
Well at least I used to be  
He's now divorced from Nuffield  
And left with only me

Morning checks of e-mails  
Leave him really sad  
He used to be an upright chap  
But now he's turning bad

Drinking time grows earlier  
He's getting quite a shake  
A large black void approaches  
I must apply the brake



*Peter and Caroline Nixon.*

What wifely skill will comfort him?  
I'm really quite perplexed  
We could of course just fill the void  
With good old-fashioned sex

So if you get elected  
To positions at the top  
Be prepared that in due course  
Everything will flop

Good luck to you Dave Brownhill  
But should you get the sack  
You can warn the other buggers  
They won't get Nixon back

**by Caroline Nixon**

## Spring Tour and Conference

Report by: *John Foss*

### Briefing - Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October

Held in the historic buildings of Notre Dame University in Fremantle the returning 2006 Scholars and new 2007 Scholars met for briefing and debriefing sessions. While the new and returning Scholars shared their experiences and prepared for the year ahead their partners took time to visit some of the sights of Fremantle, including Kailis Pearls, the art centre and the many and varied cafes and shops in the precinct.

The current Scholars sessions were run concurrently with the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) strategic management forum. This forum is a new initiative in the Nuffield program and is aimed at creating greater interaction between the GRDC and the Scholars it funds. Approximately 30 recent GRDC funded Scholars met for this forum and were treated to top class presentations from professionals in the agribusiness industry to discuss alternative finance options, business structures, marketing and farm business management.

On Wednesday evening a casual and relaxing seafood dinner was enjoyed at Joe's Fish Shack on the edge of Fishing Boat Harbour in Fremantle.

### Tour Day One - Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October

Thursday morning saw the big group gather to head off on a tour of the Perth surrounds. One bus load left Fremantle and travelled to the CBH Group's Metro Grain Centre (MGC) which is 15 kilometres east of the Perth CBD. The \$120 million MGC was built in 1998 and is one of the most innovative and advanced grain receipt, storage and distribution complexes in the world. It is strategically located close to domestic markets and processors, with road and rail access to Fremantle Port for container export and bulk shipping via the CBH grain terminal at Kwinana.



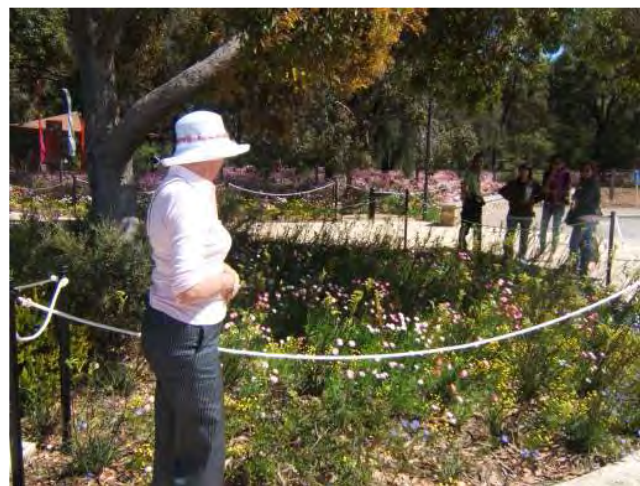
*Metro Grain Centre.*

The MGC, located in Forrestfield, is fully computerised and can store over 200,000 tonnes of grain. It has the ability to clean grain adding value to the product by preparing it for specialised markets.

The MGC site also houses the Australian Grains Centre, a centre of excellence for grain technology. The Centre provides the most advanced on-site grain testing facilities in Australia, delivering enhanced grain analysis, quality control and research into storage methods and grain varieties. After an informative presentation from David Fienburg, manager of the Australian Grains Centre, the group had a tour of the facility. John Doncon, manager of the Australian Lupin Processing Plant guided the tour. Other than the sheer scale and efficiency of the operations the key points of interest were the automated container loading facility and the lupin dehulling plant.

From the MGC the group walked next door to the ABB's Joe White malting facility. This malting plant is connected to the MGC by conveyor belt and all the barley and malt is transported in and out of the centre via the conveyor. Anthony Fitzgerald of ABB and Mike Tempone, the master maltster gave a presentation and tour of the facility which produces approximately 200,000 tonnes of malt annually 95 per cent of which is destined for the Asian export market.

While the grain facility tour was being conducted another bus load of Nuffield Scholars and their partners visited Kings Park to view the amazing display of WA wild flowers that are in bloom at this time of the year.



*Kathy Henry admiring the wildflowers at Kings Park.*

The two buses met back together in the Swan Valley where the group gathered for lunch at Houghton's winery. Houghton Wines has a romantic history and is one of Australia's oldest continuous winemakers. Named after Lieutenant Colonel Richmond Houghton in 1836, the first commercial vintage was produced in 1859 totalling 25 gallons. The picturesque Houghton winery property has 50 hectares planted with premium grape varieties including Verdelho, Chardonnay, Semillon and Chenin Blanc.

Early documentation and current research suggests the first vines were planted between 1830 and 1836. Houghton also operates four of Western Australia's largest vineyards at Moondah Brook, Pemberton, Mt Barker and Frankland River, and sources fruit from Margaret River, Harvey and other emerging premium areas. These diverse wine regions provide the necessary fruit requirements vital for the production of premium table wines, which are distinctly Western Australian.

Over lunch the group heard an array of interesting presentations which all focused on the opportunities and challenges of agricultural production in the region.



*Presentation by Rob Kestel.*

Andrew McCrae of CSBP gave a detailed presentation on the trends in global agriculture and how these trends are affecting the current price and availability of fertiliser. Rob Kestel, a 2007 Scholar who operates a chicken meat production operation just north of Houghton's spoke about environmental regulations and the strict health and welfare regulations that his industry has to adhere to.

Aaron Edmonds a 2002 Scholar then spoke about his company Australia Nuts. Australia Nuts was founded by Aaron in 2005 to promote and develop the production and marketing of sandalwood nuts in Australia. Aaron, who is from Calingiri, a wheat belt town northwest of Perth, studied ways to

reduce the dependency of agriculture on fossil fuels while on his Nuffield scholarship. What he discovered led him to believe that the Australian sandalwood nut had a vital part to play in the future of Australian farming.

Prior to a session tasting the Houghton's premium wine range, the group heard from Dianne Stewarts, the manager of Houghton's WA, vineyards. Dianne spoke about the groups operations and emphasised some of the challenges the company faces, particularly in relation to sourcing and retaining quality staff and complying with environmental constraints.



*Ann Harrison and Stan Schur enjoying the wine tasting.*

The buses then headed back to Fremantle and the group met again that evening for the Nuffield forum over dinner at Maria's on The Terrace.



*From left: Brendon Smart, John Foss, Hugh Roberts, Andrew Fowler, and Rob Henry (Nuffield Forum).*

The Nuffield Forum, which was initiated on the Autumn Tour, is a stand-up interview session. The forum was chaired by Brendon Smart and he spoke with four Scholars, Rob Henry 1990, Andrew Fowler 1999, Hugh Roberts 1976 and John Foss 2000, about what they have done since returning from their scholarship. It was a really interesting session and an older Scholar commented to me afterwards saying, "I continue to be amazed at the talent of the people in the Nuffield alumni. It is important to hold these types of sessions so Scholars can get a greater appreciation of the people within the group. As the number of Scholars increases these interactive forums have greater importance."

## Innovative Farming Australia Conference Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October

The venue for Friday was the magnificent Maritime Museum on the bank of Fremantle harbour. The day started with a short and sharp AGM which was followed by a tour of the museum, the home to the famous America's Cup winning yacht Australia Two. The Innovative Farming Australia Conference then began with an inspiring opening address from Imre Mencshelyi, Chief Executive Officer, CBH Group. His presentation focused on the global demand for grain for food and fuel. He also said that with 10 to 12 multinational organisations feeding 70 per cent of the population, a company such as CBH had to make decisions about how to best fit into the global food industry. The consolidation of farms in WA has also created a new environment with the number of farmers in WA reducing from 10,300 in 2000 to 5500 in 2007.



*Back from Left: John Gladigau, Ronald Thompson, David Jochinke, Andrew Bouffler  
Front from Left: Bruce Thompson, Helen Dalton, Cathie Harvey, Damien Smart (2006 Scholars).*

Following Imre were the presentations from the 2006 Scholars. Andrew Bouffler presented the outcomes of his study into dual purpose maternal ewe flocks, citing key findings from his research in South Africa. Helen Dalton then presented on her topic of ecological goods and services, environmental stewardship programs and the future opportunities from carbon credits. John Gladigau made a powerful presentation on the benefits of cooperative farming models and drew on the knowledge he gained from fruitful meetings with farmers in cooperative business structures in North America. Catherine Harvey gave a detailed presentation on biological farming systems which included images of several alternative soil health practices such as diesel exhaust fume injection. David Jochinke's presentation was a humorous and articulate talk on the role of farmers in influencing government. His key messages were that reputations open doors and relationships are the key to success.

Damien Smart presented the findings from his diverse range of study topics which included sub surface drip irrigation systems and prescription livestock feeding systems. His point about doing your research thoroughly prior to embarking on a new venture was best summed up by his quote "if you want to cut the tree down fast spend twice as much time sharpening the axe". Bruce Thompson gave a fascinating presentation on cropping rotations and unmanned machinery technology. The statistics he quoted in relationship to the significant shift of USA research resources from food crops to fuel crops and the flow on effects of the US mandate to supply 20 per cent of US oil consumption with fuel from renewable sources by 2015 gave a compelling argument for the positive future prospects for grain production in Australia. Ronald Thompson was the final presenter and gave a well researched presentation on the world wide issue of the diminishing work force in farming. After outlining the issues he spoke about some of the options for overcoming labour shortages and suggested that the rise of farm income as a result of a portion of revenue coming from the energy market could be one solution to reinvigorate Australia's farming economy and repopulate regional areas.

## Awards Dinner - Friday night at the Esplanade Hotel



*From left: Peter Nixon, Margaret Perkins and Michael Chaney at the awards dinner.*

A very large crowd of Nuffield Scholars, sponsor companies and leading farming and agribusiness identities in Western Australia attended the awards dinner on Friday night at the Esplanade Hotel. The highlights of the night were the presentation to the pre 1965 Scholars, the keynote address from Michael Chaney and the excellent acceptance speeches from the sixteen new Scholars. The event certainly helped to raise the profile of Nuffield within agribusiness circles in WA and the energy and enthusiasm projected from the new Scholars left the audience in no doubt that Nuffield will play an increasingly active role in the ongoing success of Australian agriculture.

## Weekend Wheatbelt tour

On Saturday morning approximately 70 Scholars and partners headed east into the WA wheat belt to go to the famous Kulin Bush races. First stop was the Brookton roadhouse to get some greasy food to soak up any alcohol from the night before, and then the long journey to Kulin continued. Finally the group were greeted with the sight of this uniquely Australian bush race meeting nestled picturesquely between the granite outcrops and Lake Jilikan.



*The Ausplow Marquee.*

The Nuffield group were superbly catered for in the sponsors marquee courtesy of Ausplow sponsorship. Lack of local knowledge, inconsistent form and the unreliable tip to back a horse called 'Panda' meant the group left the track with empty pockets. The group left the races and headed further east to Terra Vista restaurant at Hyden just as locals in the tin shed bar started to get rowdy.



*Jim Geltch and Brendon Smart at the Kulin Bush Races.*

After an hour on the road and a stop for some wine some of the group were wondering if we had actually crossed the border in South Australia. But the trip was worth it and the dinner served at the isolated Italian restaurant was superb. The mood in the bus soured as we left the restaurant as the group learnt of the Wallabies getting kicked out of the World Cup, so by the time they all arrived at the Wave Rock

resort (!!?) and had to play the game of 'find a bed in the dark' the party was over.

The next morning everyone woke to witness the stunning views of the salt lake that surrounded the resort. For those that missed the tour it is best to imagine an island in the Whitsundays.



*Above: Jo-Anne Ruscoe, Projects Manager - People Development, from Fisheries Research and Development Corporation at Wave Rock.*

It was then on to a look at Wave Rock followed by a hearty breakfast at Jane and Vern Mouritz's farm. The Mouritz family are pioneers of the Hyden region and are incredibly active in the development of the Hyden community. Their extensive farming operations include the award winning Hydiollowah beef feedlot.

Then back to the airport and the flights home to the many points of the Australian map. Thanks to all of the participants on the trip who witnessed the heart of the WA wheat belt. The Kulin Bush Races committee and the Mouritz family have passed on their thanks and appreciation to the Nuffield Scholars group for making the long trip to the area to visit their farms and communities and share in their event.



*Caroline Nixon and Jim Geltch in front of the Nuffield Tour Bus.*

DVD of presentations and photos of the tour are available from the Nuffield office by request.

## Introducing the 2007 Nuffield Scholars

### Simon Tiller

Simon Tiller, from Esperance, WA, receives a 2007 scholarship supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation.



Simon will study biofuel technology, hay, straw and grain usage and processing, feed lotting, feed grain and fodder production and integrated storage systems - basically any farming systems that add value to, or recycle, many or all of their products and byproducts.

Simon and his wife Felicity live 130 km north east of Esperance on a 8000 hectare no stock, control traffic, continual cropping property. Simon has been involved in the family farm for 10 years and his parents remain involved in the farming enterprise.

He is committed to adding value to the farm's product and creating another dimension to the business by using all of the farm's produce and byproducts.

Simon is a committee member for his local farming group, Beaumont Better Farming Group, which is focused on precision agronomy. He is also involved with the South East Wheat Growers Association and the Control Traffic Farming Association.

Simon's contact details are:

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ESPERANCE WA 6450  
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Mobile: 0429 787 012



*GRDC Managing Director Peter Reading presented Simon Tiller with his scholarship.*



*GRDC Managing Director Peter Reading presented Mathew Stott with his scholarship.*

### Mathew Stott

Mathew Stott, from Darlington Point, NSW, receives a 2007 scholarship supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

Mathew will study deep sub-surface drip irrigation on medium-to-heavy clay soils, on a variety of crops, but with a particular emphasis on grain crops.

Mathew, 25, is currently in partnership with his father, Richard, and younger brother, Andrew, in a branch of a fourth generation family farming enterprise. Stott Management Group has 1800 hectares of irrigatable land and a further 600 hectares of grazing country. The current cropping enterprise consists of seed crops such as sunflowers, sorghum, corn, lucerne, onions, carrots, wheat, canola, oats and triticale.

Commercial grain crops include wheat, popcorn, white and yellow gritting maize, faba beans, and tomatoes for processing and drying. There is also a 100 hectare vineyard of wine grapes. Small areas of clover and lucerne have been established to help keep livestock numbers consistent. Livestock numbers vary but at any one time the enterprise has 180 cows with calves at foot. Lamb production is small, from 200 to 500 at varying times. With diminishing water supplies it is crucial to increase yields while using less water. Mathew's challenge is to find more efficient and environmentally sustainable methods of irrigation.

Mathew's contact details are:  
"Point Farms", Sturt Highway  
DARLINGTON POINT NSW 2706  
Email: [mathewstott1@bigpond.com.au](mailto:mathewstott1@bigpond.com.au)  
Phone: 02 6968 4148  
Mobile: 0427 552 682

## Mark Graham

Mark Graham, from Popanyinning, WA, receives a 2007 scholarship supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation.



Mark will study the opportunities and risks for Australian agriculture in the changing energy market with a focus on broadacre cropping. He will examine how the changing price of energy has, and will continue to affect prices of grain, fuel, fertiliser, chemicals and land.

Mark and his wife Claire have two sons, William and Edward, and live north of Narrogin in the mixed farming area of Western Australia.

They farm multiple properties in the surrounding region along with Mark's parents. The farming operation is mostly grain focused, cropping 5000 hectares, with a mix of wheat, barley, canola, oats and export hay.

Sheep remain an important part of the farm's rotational balance with wool Merinos being mated to Poll Dorsets for meat production.

Mark's contact details are:

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POPANYINNING WA 6309  
Email: mark.clairegraham@bordnet.com.au  
Phone: 08 98 836 055  
Mobile: 0427 811 285



*GRDC Managing Director Peter Reading presented Mark Graham with his scholarship.*

## Lester Marshall

Lester Marshall, from Coffin Bay, SA, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.



Australian Government  
Fisheries Research and  
Development Corporation

Lester will study the development of a regional brand, how to use company brands to underpin this, and the importance of using branded products to develop market pull.

Lester's involvement in aquaculture began in 1992 when he started to develop an oyster farm at Coffin Bay on the Eyre Peninsula.

He now manages 24 hectares of oyster farms with approximately 10 staff producing some 300 tonnes of oysters a year.

Lester is the chair of the Fishing and Aquaculture Target Team and a director on the Eyre Regional Development Board.

He wants to develop a strong regional brand for South Australia's Eyre Peninsula that cements its reputation as Australia's seafood frontier.

Lester's contact details are:

Box 204  
COFFIN BAY SA 5607  
Email: lester@coffinbayoysterfarm.com.au  
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Mobile: 0429 855 021



*Lester Marshall was presented with his scholarship by Jo-Anne Ruscoe, Projects Manager - People Development, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.*

## Robert Kestel

Robert Kestel, from Gingin, WA, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's Chicken Meat Program.



Robert will study on-farm management systems to improve the environmental status of chicken meat farms, strategies to enable chicken meat farms to continue farming at the urban-rural interface and animal welfare issues.

Robert, with his wife Robyn, is raising their four children on their farming property in Gingin. He has a healthy involvement with his local community and is a past Gingin Shire Councillor.

Robert is the managing director of B JandR Enterprises Pty Ltd. The company grows meat chickens on contract for Ingham's on a 58 hectare property that houses 175,000 birds in five naturally ventilated sheds. Robert produces 5.7 batches of chickens a year and hopes to expand the farm to 400,000 birds.

Robert also carries out a small hay making and beef cattle operation on the property.

Robert's contact details are:

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GINGIN WA 6503

Email: robertkestel@bigpond.com.au

Phone: 08 9575 2395

Mobile: 0429 778 560



*Gary Sansom – a member of the RIRDC Chicken Meat Committee and President of the Queensland Farmers Federation presented Robert Kestel with his scholarship.*

## Tim Harslett

Tim Harslett, from Amiens, QLD, receives the 2007 scholarship funded by the National Vegetable Levy and sponsored by Horticulture Australia Limited in partnership with AUSVEG.

Tim will study mechanised harvesting and different methods of disease management.

Tim is a fourth generation vegetable farmer and lives near Stanthorpe in the mountains of south-east Queensland.

The farming enterprise's main crops are celery, Chinese cabbage and cos lettuce. Because of the farm's altitude the farming operation is limited by cold winters and therefore can't produce year round.

Tim is a part owner of the business and has been home on the farm for about five years since completing a degree in Agricultural Science (plant/soil) at the University of Queensland and travelling overseas.

Tim's contact details are:

Harslett Farm, Mountain View,

74 Harslett Rd

AMIENS QLD 4352

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Phone: 07 4683 3326

Mobile: 0405 103 876



*Tim Harslett was presented with his scholarship by David Anderson, Ausveg.*



## Jason Jarvis

Jason Jarvis, from Donnybrook, WA, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Apple and Pear Australia and Horticulture Australia Ltd.



Jason will study how to maintain and improve quality and yield during the conversion to organic certification for fruit production.

Jason is a third-generation farmer and the current WA Apple and Pear Council Chairman. He studied Horticultural Management at Lincoln University in New Zealand.

In partnership with his parents, the farming enterprise has four main components: a 15 hectare apple orchard, a 220 hectare + (120 hectare leased) beef cattle unit (Red Poll breeders), a packhouse facility that contract pack fruit for other growers and exporters, and a pony stud and riding stables.

Jason and his parents farm using biological methods and aim to become certified organic. They constantly work to improve soil health and the nutritional quality of their produce.

Jason's contact details are:

206 Goldfields Road  
DONNYBROOK WA 6239  
Email: twinpack@bigpond.com  
Phone: 08 9731 1363  
Mobile: 0429 311 363



*Jason Jarvis was presented with his scholarship by Vick Grozotis, Chairman of the Apple and Pear Council of the Western Australian Fruitgrowers Association.*

## Sam Archer

Sam Archer, from Gundagai, NSW, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Meat and Livestock Australia.



Sam will study natural resource management stewardship schemes.

Sam and his wife Sabrina run a 1500 hectare grazing enterprise at Gundagai, turning off first cross Wagyu and second cross Dorpers. They aspire to run a regenerative farming system to the point where their environmental, social and financial capital compounds annually.

In 2000 Sam purchased the family farm and committed to its full-time management. The property, Kincora, is a demonstration site for the Environmental Services Scheme, a NSW pilot program seeking to establish a market price for environmental credits - namely carbon, soil, water, salinity and biodiversity.

In 2008, Sam will travel to Europe and North America to research natural resource management stewardship schemes in an effort to engage the farm sector in developing economic instruments to deliver environmental outcomes.

Sam's contact details are:

Kincora  
GUNDAGAI NSW 2722  
Email: sam@wallabycreekpastoral.com.au  
Phone: 02 6944 1473  
Mobile: 0408 441 473



*Sam Archer was presented with his scholarship by Peter Trefort, Director of Meat and Livestock Australia.*

## Benjamin Ranford

Benjamin Ranford, from Cleve, SA, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Australian Wool Innovation.



Ben will study methods to meet increasingly tough business challenges.

Ben is a fourth generation farmer, cropping cereals and running a 1200 head flock of self-replacing, dual-purpose breeding ewes on 3000 arable hectares. He wants to ensure farming's future, but says being a 'good farmer' is no longer enough to meet business challenges.

Ben wants to see how other agricultural communities have secured vibrant futures, and identify ways that his community and others in Australia can restore a balance of economic power to farmers, ensuring the long-term viability of farming communities.

Ben's contact details are:

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CLEVE SA 5640  
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Phone: 08 8628 2152  
Mobile: 0428 282 152



*Australian Wool Innovation Scholars, Ben Ranford 2007 and Andrew Bouffler 2006.*

## Jane Bennett

Jane Bennett, from Elizabeth Town, TAS, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Rabobank.



**Rabobank**

Jane will study trends in regional product development and point of difference for branding in conjunction with the nature of distribution channels (particularly innovative systems) for regional produce.

Jane is the Managing Director of Ashgrove Cheese, a family business established in 1993 to add value to milk produced on the Bennett family's farming enterprise Ashgrove Farms, located in Elizabeth Town in central northern Tasmania.

Ashgrove Cheese specialises in the production of award winning hard and semi-hard traditional styles of cheese as well as innovatively flavoured cheeses featuring locally grown Tasmanian ingredients. The business features a retail shop showcasing an extensive range of Tasmanian-produced gourmet food and wine and an educational tourism facility.

Jane's contact details are:

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Phone: 03 6368 1105  
Mobile: 0418 567 480



*Stephen Kelly from Rabobank presented Jane Bennett with her scholarship.*

## Graham Finlayson

Graham Finlayson, from Brewarrina, NSW, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by AWB Landmark.



Graham will study natural resource management – specifically, the use of livestock in improving the diversity, health and regeneration of the semi-arid rangelands of Australia.

Graham and his wife Cathy own and manage an organic certified livestock-based enterprise north of Brewarrina in western NSW. Diversification into complementary enterprises such as tourism and a strong focus on the environmental health of their landscape has been integral in the ability of their business to succeed through seven years of drought.

Graham is born and bred in the semi-arid western division and is passionate about the potential of the rangelands to be greatly improved through alternative strategic grazing management, and the ability of smaller family owned farms to be increasingly profitable.

Graham's contact details are:

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BREWARRINA NSW 2839  
Email: bokharaplains@bigpond.com  
Phone: 02 6874 4921  
Mobile: 0428 168 407



*Renay Van Der Meulen, WA State Manager, Landmark, presented Graham Finlayson with his scholarship.*

## Murray Scholz

Murray Scholz, from Culcairn, NSW, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Grain Growers Association.



Murray will study Integrated Weed Management, specifically looking at the effects of GM crops on weed management and at non-chemical methods of weed control.

Murray Scholz farms with his wife Emma and parents in the Eastern Riverina of NSW. Their family has farmed in the area since 1919.

They have a 1640 hectare property and continuously crop 1200 hectares in a wheat, canola and lupin rotation. They began direct drilling in the mid 1970s and adapted to no-till in the mid 1980s.

On their non arable country they run a 200 cow purebred Shorthorn herd targeting the high marbling Japanese feedlot market.

Murray is also involved in the organisation of the Henty Machinery Field Days and was the founding chairman of one of his local Landcare groups.

Murray's contact details are:

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*Murray Scholz was presented with his scholarship by Dan Mangelsdorf, Chairman, GGA.*

## Ben Forsyth

Ben Forsyth, from Meekatharra, WA, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Sidney Myer Fund.



Ben will study methods for ensuring an ecologically sustainable future in the arid pastoral zone of inland Western Australia and maximising returns on that land including the potential of heat-adapted *Bos taurus* and composite breeds.

Ben comes from a pastoral background having been born to his family station of 'Three Rivers', located in the East Gascoyne of Western Australia.

With his parents and two brothers, Ben operates Beefwood Pastoral Company Pty Ltd. Beefwood also has properties in the West Gascoyne region, north of Carnarvon, and in the North Midlands region, near Eneabba.

All the properties are dedicated to sustainable beef production, with a small portion of the Eneabba farms planted to hay each year.

Ben has the dual roles of production manager and environmental manager. He is the resident manager of 'Three Rivers' and has had extensive experience on the Eneabba properties.

Ben's contact details are:

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*Cathie Harvey 2006 Scholar with Ben Forsyth, both are supported by the Sidney Myer Fund.*

## Annabelle Coppin

Annabelle Coppin, from Port Hedland, WA, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by CBH and CSBP.



Annabelle will study the Australian live export cattle trade and how to develop a sound understanding of the marketing chain beyond the farm-gate.

Annabelle is head stock person and station overseer of East Pilbara Cattle Company. This is an equal business partnership with her parents and brother.

The operation consists of a 500,000 hectare pastoral lease in WA's North West as well as two farming properties 1500km south that total another 2300 hectares.

The stations are primarily used for running 5500 Droughtmaster cross breeders and the southern properties for finishing animals for sale. The business relies heavily on the live cattle trade as its marketing avenue with 90 per cent of all sale animals sold to South East Asian and Middle Eastern markets.

Annabelle flies a fixed wing aircraft, enjoys working horses and cattle, travelling, and is passionate about Australian agriculture.

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*Annabelle Coppin was presented with her scholarship by Tony Critch, Chairman CBH Group, and Darryl Dent, GM Fertiliser Business, CSBP.*

## Matthew Munzberg

Matthew Munzberg, from Tanunda, SA, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Nufarm.



Matthew will study how to maximise grower returns without sacrificing quality in the vineyard, with a focus on using regional branding and marketing to improve returns to farmers.

Matthew is a fourth generation grapegrower. He currently manages 45 hectares of vineyards on the floor of the Barossa Valley, started by his great grandfather and built upon by his grandfather and father. He is a director of the family company that runs their farming operations and sells grapes to a number of well-known Barossa wineries. The family also manages and runs Mad Dog Wines which produced its first vintage, a Barossa Valley Shiraz, in 1999. The company has grown steadily over the ensuing years and now also produces a Sangiovese wine. As well as supplying local markets, Mad Dog is also exporting to a number of international markets.

For some time Matthew has been maintaining a web blog, to help provide a direct connection with his consumers and provide an insider's perspective on the day-to-day running of his vineyard.

Mathew's contact details are:

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Website <http://barossa-grapegrower.blogspot.com/>



Matthew Munzberg was presented with his scholarship by Warren Ramsmy from Nufarm.

## Jarrood Ryan

Jarrood Ryan, from Parap, NT, receives the 2007 scholarship supported by Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines.



Jarrood will study the production of fodder in tropical environments. He is the general manager and a shareholder of his family's enterprise Northern Australia Fodder Exports.

Their property, Early Storms, is situated approximately 260km south west of Darwin in the Douglas Daly region of the NT. The region is located in a monsoon climatic zone with an average annual rainfall of between 900 and 1000 mm.

Early Storms is about 600 hectares, broken into 200 hectares of irrigated fodder production (two 100 hectare centre pivots), 100 hectares of dryland cropping and 300 hectares of bushland. Irrigated Sudan Grass is the predominant crop with dryland tropical hay species such as Jarra Grass and Cavalcade also produced seasonally. Although the property was originally purchased to be a research and development site, the recent drought conditions in southern and eastern Australia have seen operations ramped up to not only supply the family's dairy operation in SA but also the local market, feedlots in NSW and Queensland, and dairy operations in Victoria and South Australia. This season Northern Australia Fodder Exports is exploring the possibility and viability of fodder seed production under irrigation and dry land conditions.

Jarrood's contact details are:

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Ashley Severin, Nuffield Australia NT Chairman presented Jarrood Ryan with his scholarship.

## STATE ROUNDUPS

### New South Wales

State Chairman: Jim Friend



Supported by:

Firstly I would like to congratulate our new NSW Scholars, Sam Archer, Graham Finlayson and Murray Scholz who were announced in Fremantle. Once again we have had a robust selection process that has thrown up a group of new Scholars who are the cream of NSW agriculture. Being part of the selection of these candidates has been a highlight of the year for me and for the individuals involved.

The Spring Tour was a great event – there is no doubt the west is a huge agri-powerhouse and some of the issues surrounding farming over there seem a long way away (namely worrying about wet harvests)! For my money listening to the CEO of CBH speak about the growth projected in his company and where that growth will lead it was most interesting.

I wonder what impact alternative fuels will have on WA in the future? It seems to me with the high use of fossil fuels needed to run the mining sector, WA may be Australia's best hope of starting a viable grain-to-fuel industry. No doubt there will be much debate about that statement!

Last year I wrote at the end of this report "roll on 2007 I say". I'm not going to jinx myself again, but suffice to say good luck for 2008.

### Northern Territory

State Chairman: Ashley Severin



Supported by:

Politically quite a lot of unrest in the Territory, with the proposed Local Government changes a hot topic. Very simply, the NT currently has only a small number of 'Local Governments' as commonly understood by the other states. The bulk of the Territory is under a community management structure controlled and run by the various Aboriginal corporations etc. The plan is to amalgamate all these entities into a 'normal' local government structure, with those structures then responsible for the bulk of the infrastructure (roads etc) and services and the Territory government then not financially responsible for any of these issues. There is a very little 'rate' base in the proposed structure and very high financial and service expectations. The cattle industry for example faces

a real threat of not only a possible four fold increase in pastoral lease payments (for which they receive no services) but a substantial rate cost (again with no service provision). For some this will be equal to a ten fold increase in pastoral lease costs and for others it would be even greater. These charges will have a dramatic effect on primary industry and small businesses across the Territory and the issue is being watched closely by us all.

On a lighter note, congratulations to Jarrod Ryan and we hope he represents the Territory and Australia well in his studies overseas. This year the Territory had four applicants and, for the first time ever, initial interviews were held in the Territory itself. An untold amount of work was done behind the scenes to secure the sponsorship support and attracting the applicants this year. Thanks must go to Bill Davey, John Shaw and Jim Geltch for what they achieved.

A big thank you to the Western Australian mob for a great conference and tour. Well done.

### Queensland

State Chairman: Derek Schulz



Supported by:

Here in the south-east corner of Queensland it is still like most of Australia – very dry. Fortunately for North Queensland they have had extremely good rain. Thank goodness some areas are still receiving close to their annual falls. So don't lose hope, one of us will be next.

After Australia's loss in the Rugby against England, I received a phone call from my fellow Nuffielder – David Rose, who was enjoying rubbing my nose into the English dust, as they too are experiencing unseasonable dry weather conditions. Our theory about the Poms – not only their pigeons fly upside down, so do their rain clouds.

Nuffield – Queensland had an extremely good list of applicants for this year, covering all aspects of farming. With the short list of applicants sent on to the national interviews, it was extremely pleasing to have Tim Harslett from the Stanthorpe area, who went on to receive a scholarship for Queensland. Congratulations to all our new Scholars.

At present we are planning our Annual Tour/AGM in February in the Longreach area. At the last couple of Nuffield events, it was very pleasing to see the increase of attendance.

Bye for now from sunny Queensland.

## South Australia

State Chairman: Steven Jaeschke

Supported By:



### Wine, women and song - Emma Leonard

This year the SA Annual Nuffield Tour visited the Clare and Gilbert Valleys. Mark Branson 2005 Scholar, now chair of the SA Nuffield Farming Scholars, and wife Nola organised the day and a half of visits that culminated with a tour of his property and machinery. The program on Saturday included visits to a unique low density bale processing plant and to Taylors Wines with viticulturalist Colin Hinze, naturally finishing with wine tasting.

At dinner Allan Mayfield, local agronomist and member of the GRDC southern panel, shared details of his Churchill Fellowship to study high yielding wheat production systems in New Zealand and Europe.

On the Sunday we travelled to the Gilbert Valley and enjoyed seeing the views and 1983 Scholar Trevor Day's simple but effective sheep feedlot. The valley appears to be a Nuffield enclave with four Scholars hailing from, or residing in the valley; this was where Bert and Kim Kelly farmed.

At Mark and Nola's property we learnt about their integrated production system consisting of 950 hectare of cropping, 240 hectare of pasture, 1280 Merino ewes and a prime lamb enterprise, all watered by an annual rainfall of between 425 and 550 mm. As well as discussing the overall cropping program we looked at Mark's grazing cereals, part of his strategy to manage herbicide resistant ryegrass.

In the afternoon we heard about the sheep enterprises and Mark's use of precision agriculture (PA). Mark believes PA is helping overcome yield loss by reducing soil compaction and overlap. On the heavier clay soils his yield monitor indicated cereal yields reduced by 0.5 t/ha and grain legume yield reduction of 1 t/ha on headlands. By using auto guidance, controlled traffic and equipment with good turning circles that are self-propelled or stay in line with the tractor even when turning, Mark recorded yield benefits in 2006 after three years of controlled traffic and will be closely monitoring these areas in the coming harvest for further gains. Mark varies inputs to better match the capacity of his variable soils, but in some cases he is still researching the input levels that are required.

Partners play a vital role in Nuffield and a big thank you must go to Nola for not only organising a feast

at home but a special dinner menu that highlighted some of the gourmet delights of the Clare Valley.

It was particularly special that the other three SA Scholars who travelled with Mark in 2005 (Graham Clothier, Andrew Johnson and Mark Modra) were able to attend. As always on the tour there was plenty of good conversation and debate, however, on this tour the chatter was accompanied by song.

Among the SA Scholars and their partners the musical talent fairly flows. I think a good old fashioned sing-song around the piano is likely to become a signature of any future SA Nuffield gatherings, providing Steven Jaeschke and his nimble fingers are in attendance.



*Congratulations to Damien and Jess Smart who were married in October.*

## Tasmania

State Chairman: Richard Gardner

Supported By:



Congratulations to Jane Bennett for her scholarship. Jane has been a long time leader in the agriculture and food industries in Tasmania and so we were all very pleased when she became a Nuffield Scholar.

This year's Tasmanian Tour is to King Island on the last weekend in October. This tour should be very interesting and looks like it will be well attended. Thank you to Rob, Jane and Darryl for organising everything.

The season in Tasmania continues to be very dry. Some areas have had enough rain to have an average spring while the southern parts are in their second year of drought. This situation is highlighted by the fact that Tasmania recently became eligible for full EC assistance a fairly rare event in our state. Next year, 2008, is our state scholarship year and we are also holding the National Spring Tour including presentation of new Scholars. Please start thinking about possible tour visits and venues.

Let's hope that 2008 also brings improved rainfall for the state and the rest of the country.

## Victoria

State Chairman: Trevor Caithness

Supported By:



I would like to open this Victorian Nuffield Newsletter with a thank you to all Nuffield Scholars who contacted and encouraged potential applicants for this year's round of scholarships. We had 10 applications and a full day of interviews held in Rabobank head office, Melbourne, in late July. Many thanks to Rabobank for graciously allowing Nuffield Victoria the use of their superbly located facilities. Thank you also to our selection panel that was made up of; Russell McKay and Andrew Nagorcka both Nuffield Scholars; John McCormick, Senior Manager Rural, Rabobank; Richard Drummond, National Events and Marketing Manager, Landmark; David Shannon, GRDC Southern Panel Chairman and Nuffield Scholar; Jan Mahoney, Program Manager, Community and People Development, Gardiner Foundation; Jim Geltch, Nuffield CEO and myself. Many thank to Paul Zuidema for welcoming applicants. Although Victoria did not have a Scholar selected this year, we did unearth some potential applicants for future years. It was great to hear a series of interviews from Jamie Snell, 2006 Scholar, upon his return home aired through our local ABC radio. Well done Jamie and Anne for the magnificent coverage you achieved with your presentations.

The Gippsland Branch of Southern Farming Systems held a tour to the Hamilton region last month. We were very fortunate to have Andrew Nagorcka, 2005 Nuffield Scholar and his brother Paul come speak with us on some of Andrew's overseas Nuffield experiences and how their business has grown and developed since the scholarship. It was great to have Paul's views and input as a business partner of a Scholar. I found the evening was a great way of stimulating interest from potential applicants and it generated a lot of talk on the bus next day, thanks to Andrew and Paul's presentations.

A reminder to all Victorian Nuffield Scholars that the **2008 Autumn Tour** will be held in Victoria from the 28<sup>th</sup> February to the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2008. We will assemble in Melbourne and travel north through Bendigo and stay in Echuca for two nights. For the first time, our tour will come together with the Contemporary Scholars Conference in Echuca on the Friday where we will be treated to presentations by our returning 2006 Scholars including Jamie Snell. This Conference brings together 45 of the recently selected Scholars from around the world. The tour will travel through NE Victoria to finish in Melbourne on Sunday. I trust all Victorian Nuffield Scholars make a special effort to make it in February.

## Western Australia

State Chairman: John Foss

Supported By:



Western Australian Nuffield Scholars have had a busy and rewarding time over the past few months with a record number of new Scholars being awarded along with hosting the Spring Tour and Innovative Farming Australia Conference.

Despite tough seasonal conditions in many parts of the state this winter there was a good response to the call for applications for scholarships. Thank you to all of the WA Nuffield Scholars and sponsors who actively promoted Nuffield scholarships in their regions and industries, and supported applicants through the selection process. Congratulations to our six new WA Scholars, Simon Tiller, Mark Graham, Rob Kestel, Jason Jarvis, Ben Forsyth and Annabelle Coppin. We are delighted to welcome them and their families into Nuffield, and are pleased to see that Nuffield is continuing to attract high performance farmers from a diverse range of industries and regions of the state.

WA had the pleasure of hosting the Spring Tour, Innovative Farming Conference and awards dinner in the first week of October. It was a big job for the committee to organise and run the five day events but the excellent number of delegates, high quality presentations and tours, coupled with great fellowship between Scholars made it a truly rewarding week to participate in. Special thanks to the organising committee of Murray Gmeiner, Brian McAlpine and Aaron Edmonds for all of their work towards the event. Thanks also to Jim and Janette from the national office for helping to organise and run the program. Thank you to all of the eastern state Scholars who made the long trip to WA to make the event a success.

Congratulations to David Brownhill on his appointment as the national chairman. WA Scholars would like to thank Peter Nixon for his very committed, enthusiastic and professionally directed term as chairman.

As visitors witnessed on the recent tour, farmers in WA are facing very mixed fortunes this season. I wish a safe and prosperous harvest for those that have crops and our thoughts go out to those who aren't going to get a crop again this year due to the persistent drought in many parts of the country.

## RETURNING SCHOLARS REPORTS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

(Full Scholars reports can be found at [www.nuffield.com.au](http://www.nuffield.com.au))

### Value Adding Using Traceability and Regional Branding in a Commodity World

#### David Fulwood - 2005 Scholar

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Grains  
Research &  
Development  
Corporation

#### Executive Summary

*"Farmers are their own worst enemy, the price of a commodity goes up so they produce more, the price of a commodity goes down so they produce more again".*

Adrie Zwanenberg

Rabobank Headquarters Netherlands, February 2006

There is increasing opportunities for producers to look past the farm gate, to explore ways to add value to their commodity product. It is easy to be

a commodity producer and blame the next step of the supply chain for poor prices, but producers need to understand that they can be involved further down the supply chain if they want to move away from being commodity producers and price takers. Value adding at a farm level is capital intensive, labour intensive and usually inefficient compared to commercial large scale food processing. This means that finished or processed goods produced on-farm or locally must have a point of difference so that consumers are prepared to pay a premium for the product.

Only the lowest cost producers will survive in a commodity producing environment, a trend that has been occurring in all types of agricultural production worldwide for decades. The number of producers is decreasing and the output of individual operations has increased as a result of the need to lower the cost per unit of production.

### Should We Be Growing Merino Wool?

#### Sarah Barrington (nee Ackland) - 2005 Scholar

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#### Executive Summary

##### Introduction

If you like the adrenalin rush of a roller coaster then perhaps you should be a wool producer as it is nothing compared to experiencing the highs and lows of the wool price received by Australian woolgrowers over the past 60 years. Those of us that are tired of the ups and downs should be relieved that the last five years have resulted in fairly stable wool prices. I am happy prices are stable but am not happy with the dollars per kilogram we receive. Many Australian Merino woolgrowers must feel the same as they have reduced production or left the industry. Since 1990, sheep numbers have fallen and wool production in Australia has declined by 57 per cent and is now at 470 million kg (Acil Tasman, 2006).

Is this trend firstly logical and secondly short term, or is there a viable future in growing Merino wool both now and in the future? My aim was to use the Nuffield scholarship opportunity to assess the viability of growing Merino wool on the farm I co-manage. I visited Canada, China, Denmark, Egypt, England, India, New Zealand and the US. The two major aspects I chose to explore were:

1) What do consumers think about wool and are brands and other members of the supply chain investing in Merino wool?

2) How are other wool growing countries, particularly New Zealand, selling wool and what are the positive and negative aspects of their approach?

##### Consumers

"Warm in winter", "itchy" and "expensive" are probably the three most common responses I received when randomly asking consumers about Merino wool. Many said they recognised the Woolmark logo, particularly in India, and that it gave them confidence in knowing they were buying wool. Many were not aware that some woollen garments could be machine washed and dried or there are non-prickly, next-to-skin garments available on the market. New Zealand and Alaska were the exceptions. In these two countries most consumers with whom I spoke were aware of many beneficial properties of Merino wool including: its ability to keep you warm even when wet; it is non flammable; it does not make you smell; and it can be machine washed.

##### Brands

A number of brands are heavily investing in Merino apparel mainly in the outdoor retail sector. Brands such as Icebreaker<sup>TM</sup>, Ibex, Smartwool and Teko<sup>TM</sup> are advancing quickly in the North American outdoor retail market and, in my opinion, larger established brands are noticing their success. This is an expanding market for Merino wool that has exciting potential.

### Market opportunities

The Indian shawl market has potential due to the increasing wealth of the Indian middle class and their cultural belief in the value of wool. Recently, some high profile Australian fashion designers, such as Josh Goot and Akira Isogawa, have used Merino wool in their international collections highlighting wool as a modern, chic and sexy fibre. Current fabric technologies have enabled Merino wool to rate in the collections.

In Egypt, New Zealand and Denmark, I visited businesses that have specifically moved to 100 per cent wool processing and clothing manufacture as they see this as a way of product differentiation and value adding. Conversely, in China and India the businesses I visited were using cotton, synthetics and wool.

### Buying wool?

The New Zealand Merino Company in particular, has been vocal about supply contracts it offers its growers. These contracts, which are up to seven years in duration, provide: price certainty to growers; feedback about what wool is in demand; and producer pride in seeing their production effort manufactured into a product demanded by the customer. Some growers have questioned whether the contract prices are high enough to ensure wool growing to be satisfactorily profitable. Others suggested the contracts have indirectly put a ceiling in the auction system in New Zealand. Yet, some growers have said they would not continue to grow Merino wool without a contract.

Roberts Ltd, a Tasmanian wool broker, has recently established the Roberts Wool Link program. It aims to market wool on behalf of Tasmanian wool producers on a pooled basis by “developing consistent demand and increased value for Tasmanian wool through unique and innovative marketing, along with product and processing solutions”.

### Managing and Financing Business Expansion In A Developing Industry, Primarily Focussing On The Dairy Goat Industry For Tasmania

#### **Tony Barker - 2005 Scholar**

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#### **Executive Summary**

When I embarked on my Nuffield travel, I focussed on my topic of Business Expansion and how that could benefit my own business and the dairy goat industry in Tasmania. I benefited greatly from the experience of the six week global focus program,

### Conclusion

Yes, we will continue to grow Merino wool on our farm. My optimism stems from the opening of markets that are allowing the positive attributes of Merino wool to be realised (including next-to-skin and high end fashion) and the associated level of technology that is allowing such advances. In addition, the increasing attraction by consumers towards natural fibres was apparent in all of the countries I visited. Although a number of technical synthetic fabrics and new alternative natural fibres have been developed, I have not yet seen or been informed of one that mimics all the properties of Merino wool (it breathes, wicks moisture, doesn't retain odours, allows the wearer to stay warm even when wet, is fire proof, is a natural fibre that is annually renewable and biodegradable, offers excellent UV protection and can now be machine washed and not prickly). However, we cannot be complacent.

I believe the clean, green, and minimal environmental footprint of growing Merino wool in Tasmania is a big marketing opportunity. However, the Tasmanian industry must be astute and learn from what has been achieved in New Zealand and clearly establish its point of difference and market this effectively. As a Merino woolgrower I do have two concerns about the industry that need to be addressed. Firstly, many consumers have negative perceptions about wool. Through education, this can be reversed but it is a big task. Secondly, that growers assume an increase in demand for wool will automatically result in higher prices per kilogram. Without some alignment or direct link with specific supply chains it is unclear how growers can capture and maintain their share of the value.

and I realised almost immediately how business expansion was part of a much larger phenomenon occurring at varying rates across the world. This phenomenon, commonly known as “change” affects us all, whether we are actively seeking it, trying to avoid it or that we simply do not recognise it occurring. Our approach to change as individuals seems to depend on our motivation, access to information (knowledge) and resources (land, labour, capital) and our skill to manage these for a successful outcome. Around the world, there are individuals who have constraints to growing their business. Many of the constraints are commonly known, for example, access to a primary resource such as land.

Urbanisation is becoming a bigger issue and land value is often not determined by agricultural production returns but by demand for lifestyle blocks. Water, labour and capital will also affect potential business expansion, and there are restrictions in relation to general regulation – political, economic and environmental.

New technology is often an integral component of business expansion, however to maximize the potential benefit from this technology, “big picture” thinking is required and maybe redesigning our farming systems to capture that benefit through increased efficiency. In many cases new technology is introduced without farm system changes, which can lead to increased cost without the offsetting benefit.

Producers in traditionally regulated and supported industries will be generally less able to be innovative and creative because they are entrenched in a handout mentality. Some Western European agriculture systems appear to lack efficiency due to scale, the inability to change farming practices for many years and the lack of

knowledge of the true cost of production. In some instances, the necessity to rely on the Government for continued support is immense.

If as owners/ investors/ managers of our businesses we understand all aspects of the supply chain from on farm production through to the culture of the people buying our end product, we have a better competitive advantage in distinguishing new opportunities to grow and expand our businesses.

There can be a lot of emotion attached to change so being an optimist sure helps to focus on opportunities and moving forward instead of getting bogged down with potential threats and fears of the unknown. Those who heavily focus on weaknesses and threats and reject unknown territory will more likely feel incapable of managing change.

Ultimately, business expansion in any industry is possible and depends on the individual/s involved and their passion and attitude to succeed. This seems to be the case anywhere in the world.

## **Aerobic and Alternate-Wet-and-Dry (AWD) Rice System**

### **Leigh Vial - 2005 Nuffield Scholar**

#### **Executive Summary**

This study intends to overview the efforts to adopt aerobic and alternate-wet-and-dry (AWD) rice systems to increase water use efficiency. It then assesses the possible value to the Australian rice industry.

Aerobic rice is defined as receiving no irrigation water, whilst AWD rice receives sufficient irrigation to meet crop requirements without permanently applying floodwater. Aerobic and AWD systems have significantly increased water use efficiency in more permeable soils (such as northern China), because up to 60 per cent of ponded water was leached from the soil. On low percolation soils (such as Australia), water use efficiency is much less responsive; less water means less transpiration and hence less yield.

Weed control revolves around grass weeds, particularly *Echinochloa* spp., and is heavily reliant on herbicides. There is an adequate diversity in available modes of action, with herbicide groups A, B, D, E and F represented. By comparison, Australia probably makes insufficient use of group B (Clearfield™) and group D (pendalmethalin), especially considering that group E is becoming less available.

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**Rabobank**

Aerobic germplasm, be it inbred or hybrid, is clearly more drought tolerant than lowland varieties. It generally stems from increased early vigour and root volume, greater osmoregulation and better use of nitrate nitrogen. No observed germplasm, however, displayed increased yield per unit transpiration, confining its value to reducing water losses, rather than increasing the conversion of water to yield. C<sub>4</sub> rice (or less temperature responsive germplasm) may be the only possible way of achieving this.

Aerobic and AWD rice systems have greater potential for nitrogen losses, often recording less than half the nitrogen use efficiency of flooded systems (Australian flooded systems typically have 60 to 80 per cent nitrogen use efficiency). Low soil nitrate levels at sowing, conservative nitrogen strategies under permanent flood and particularly controlled release nitrogen can reduce losses and increase efficiency. Controlled release nitrogen formulations have become much cheaper in recent years with increased manufacturing volumes. They may well become part of mainstream Australian crop management in the near future.

AWD rice systems may well reduce the Australian rice industry's field emissions by about half – provided denitrification (NO<sub>x</sub> production) is controlled – by confining the major decomposition of organic carbon to produce CO<sub>2</sub> rather than CH<sub>4</sub>. Only some Australian rice soils will be truly suited to AWD systems, as they may have insufficient ability to store and then deliver water between rainfall/irrigation events. Rice soil suitability assessment may need to be refined for AWD systems, to account for a soil's water relations as opposed to simply its percolation rates. EM38 soil

survey techniques may well be a part of this refinement. An AWD regime for the first half of the growing season will be of great value to the Australian rice industry, but it would only yield marginal water savings. It will be of great value, however, in managing broadleaf weed herbicide resistance, establishment costs, wildlife problems and low initial water allocations. As such, this report recommends adopting some aerobic germplasm, refining AWD nitrogen management, considering Clearfield™ technology and redefining rice soil suitability.

### Improving a High Rainfall Cropping System Using a more Biological and Sustainable Approach

**Andrew Nagorcka - 2005 Scholar**

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#### Executive Summary

- A more sustainable 'high rainfall' cropping system includes much more than becoming environmentally sustainable. Other important factors vital to achieving this will include leaving land in a better condition than when it was first cultivated, financial profitability through reducing costs and better marketing.
- The 'high rainfall' cropping has some great advantages to other Australian crop areas, which we have not fully utilised.
- A shift toward benchmarking and calculating gross margins over one season can only encourage management practices which are less sustainable over the medium and long term.

- Many of our current problems are a result of our management. Rather than looking for a cure to a problem we should try to understand what is causing it. For example an annual winter crop system, minimum till or no-till, with few crops in the rotation, guarantees that annual rye grass resistance will be a problem. Instead of looking at different herbicide options (eg GM crops), we should look at changing the system.
- Soils are alive. Soil organisms are responsible for many things which we take for granted including nitrogen mineralisation.
- Many current farming practices damage soil, and soil microorganisms. Tillage, fungicides, herbicides, pesticides and incorrect fertiliser applications all cause some level of damage; many are unavoidable, however, healthy soil will recover more quickly.
- Look at changing the current system to incorporate both winter and summer crops, as well as green manure or cover crops. By changing back to past practices to include livestock in the rotation we can improve long term farm profit and sustainability.

### Water Use Efficiency, A study into Water Use Efficiency in Irrigation

**Andrew Watson - 2005 Scholar**

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#### Executive Summary

Australia has some of the most advanced water use efficiency farming systems in the world, and our arid environment has demanded we have some of the most advanced water policies and regulations. Water scarcity is being recognised as a burgeoning problem by scientists in many parts of the world, but the banner is yet to be taken up by policy makers.

The major findings of my study are:

- More developed nations like the U.S. and Germany are focussing on technological advances like bio-technology, more advanced measuring techniques, and more efficient irrigation systems;
- Lesser developed nations rely on farming systems like multi-species cropping that focus on their strength of low labour costs, but which also manage climate variability well;
- Budgeting on ideas like combining irrigation systems such as overhead spray and furrow irrigation show low return on investment;
- The water use efficiency in the Australian cotton industry is the best in the world, with many other countries' industry unable to even measure their usage, let alone calculate efficiency;
- Australian water policy, with its focus on realistic and achievable management of both supply and demand, is more advanced than most places in the world.

## Farmers - Our Diminishing Workforce - How We Best Manage The Future

**Ronald Thompson - 2006 Scholar**

Sponsored by:  **Grains Research & Development Corporation**

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### Executive Summary

The aim of the study is to investigate the future of Australia's agricultural workforce including:

#### Issues

- The aging workforce
- The economics of farming
- The importation of labour
- Education
- The family farm
- Biofuels and their place in agriculture
- Research and Development

#### Findings

- With the farming community aging at the current rate and new policies in place, agriculture faces a tight future.
- If the economics of the farm are not dramatically improved the ability to attract workers and career people at all levels associated with farming will result in further agricultural decline.
- The importation of labour will be a short term way to prevent farming becoming less competitive.
- Education of all people including urban dwellers will reignite the connection to the land and its production which in turn helps agriculture to focus on what it is good at.
- The preservation of the family farm in some format is essential to maintain the spiritual and working connection.
- Biofuels are an essential part of moving agriculture forward so farmers can receive a proportion of income from energy.
- An increase in funding or tax breaks for research and development is essential to keep our top scientific brains in Australia.

### Recommendations

- Focus on the economics of farming.
- Develop better systems for the intergenerational transfer of farms.
- Value add or vertically integrate to maintain ownership of product for longer.
- Recognise overseas labour as a talented global workforce.
- Push for the recognition of the deep seated attachment to the land.
- Recognise it is our job to promote agriculture in a positive way through education.
- Immediately implement biofuels and renewable energy is essential as this proven international technology is globally exercised.
- Lobby for more research and development funds.

### Summary

- The final result is that farmers along with all rural people, lobbyists, politicians, researchers, business stakeholders, policy makers and industry representatives need to adopt ideas covered in this report.
- The research undertaken is of utmost importance as it shows that we are being left behind in areas that we were formerly leading. Technology, management, innovation and research as well as workforce management and skill levels are just several of the many areas of concern.
- Research is important to all level of industry. There has been an unprecedented increase in choices for career and work in many agricultural areas. We live in a technological world where communication is easy and job or career loyalty rare.
- Those to benefit from the report will range from the small family farmer to corporate operators. The findings also apply to associated industries and to people who use labour as part of their businesses.

### Low cost web hosting



The Magic Lantern Company, which maintains the Nuffield Australia web site, can now provide your business or enterprise with web hosting facilities at very low prices.

Ranging from \$4.40 per month (for 250 MB of server space, 2,500 MB of bandwidth) to \$8.80 per month (2500 MB of server space, 20,000 MB of bandwidth) plus a long list of useful features, it is well worth checking out to see how it all compares to your current supplier. Go to: <http://www.tmlc.com.au/hosting.html> for more detailed information.

## 2008 NUFFIELD EVENTS CALENDAR

| DATE  | EVENT                            | VENUE             | HOST               |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 24 <sup>th</sup> Feb – 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 08 | Contemporary Scholars Conference | Melbourne         | Nuffield Australia |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mar 08 | Autumn Tour                      | Regional Victoria | Nuffield Victoria  |

# Nuffield International Conference 2008 Ireland – 5<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> June

“A Whole Island Experience”

Web bookings will be able to be accessed from  
[www.nuffield.ie](http://www.nuffield.ie).

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**NUFFIELD**  
**AUSTRALIA**  
**FARMING SCHOLARS**



# **AUTUMN TOUR**

**(Details subject to change)**

**28<sup>th</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008**

**Day 1**

**WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2008**

**Arrive in Melbourne on Wednesday evening (informal dinner).**

**Day 2**

**THURSDAY 28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2008**

**Depart Melbourne at 9am to arrive at Echuca at 6pm, travelling through the Goulburn Valley inspecting a turf farm, Godolphin breeding and training complex, hydroponic vegetables and discuss the future of irrigation in the Goulburn Valley.**

**We will join the recently selected Nuffield Scholars from Australia, UK, Ireland, France, Canada and New Zealand until Saturday morning.**

**Traditional Koori welcome by the banks of the Murray River followed by an evening BBQ on board the Pevensey paddlesteamer (pictured).**

**Day 3**

**FRIDAY 29<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2008**

**Eight Nuffield Scholars to make their presentations during the day supported by commentary on China and Brazil with discussions on farm business structures for the future.**

**Social evening with a sporting "Test Match" between participating Nuffield countries.**

**Day 4**

**SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2008**

**Travel to north east Victoria and visit various places of interest in a relaxed and leisurely fashion.**

**Day 5**

**SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2008**

**After a slow Sunday morning start we will return to Melbourne visiting and relaxing at some of Victoria's tourist attractions.**