



Nuffield Australia Farming Scholars
NUFFIELD UPDATE
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NEWS

Director nominations due:

Nomination forms were recently despatched to all Members of the Association. Nominations close at 5.00pm on Friday 5th September 2008.

Applications close:

Applications closed for the 2009 scholarship on the 30th June. We had 163 enquiries, well up on the 130 last year; and 52 applications, slightly down from 61 last year.

State selections will commence in Launceston on the 28th July and conclude in Perth on the 8th August. Final selection will be in Melbourne on the 1st and 2nd September.

Spring Tour:

The 2008 Spring Tour will be held in Hobart in early October (see dates on the calendar). A brochure will be available later this month.

Nuffield Calendar:

Month	Date	Activity
July	28	State selection Launceston
	30	State selection Melbourne
August	1	State selection Brisbane
	4	State selection Sydney
	6	State selection Adelaide
	8	State selection Perth
September	1-2	Final selection Melbourne
October	8	Scholar briefing/debrief Hobart
	9	ABARE Conference Hobart
	9-12	Spring Tour in Hobart
	10	Scholar presentations Hobart
	10	Nuffield Awards Dinner Hobart

Scholarship year change:

To bring Australia in line with the rest of the Nuffield world, the Board approved a recommendation that all Scholars will now be listed as the year they travelled. For example; if you were selected in 1991 and travelled in 1992 you will, from now, be designated a 1992 Scholar.

This change will be reflected in the next directory to be printed in October.

NUFFIELD INNOVATION AWARD

Applications are still open for the **Innovation and Excellence Award**. Applications close 31st July. To apply visit the Nuffield website at:
http://www.nuffield.com.au/award_f/award.html.

WORTH SHARING

Tracy Lefroy:

Tracy Lefroy (nee Gillam); 2006 Nuffield Scholar was safely delivered of a son, Henry Ryan Lefroy. Congratulations Tracy and Kirsten.

Andrew Broad:

Andrew Broad; 2006 Nuffield Scholar was recently elected VFF Vice President. Well done Andrew.

Ronald Thompson:

Ronald Thompson; 2007 Nuffield Scholar was recently published in the May 2008 issue of the Farm Policy Journal of the Australian Farm Institute on "**Implications of Increasing Brazilian Beef Production for Australia**".

You can access Ronald's report on the Nuffield website www.nuffield.com.au.

Find the latest newsletter from Canada reporting on their AGM and tour at www.nuffield.com.au. They go to Cuba; we go to Hobart!

House sitting opportunity:

Robert Kerr NSch 1999 has neighbours who are visiting Australia between December 5th 2008 and January 7th 2009. They are looking for a house sitter for their lovely 5 bedroom farmhouse in a very attractive part of north Oxfordshire. This may be of interest to anyone thinking of visiting UK at that time.

All questions and enquiries to Rob at robertkerr@rkag.demon.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2008 International Conference was recently held as an All Ireland experience with visits to both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It was a great success with over 50 participants from Australia.

Courtesy of **Stan Schur** we have DVD copies of the tour for sale at a nominal charge to cover copying and postage.

A contingent of the Ireland participants also spent 4 days on the WW1 Battlefields of France- an informative and moving few days. A report and photos from the tour will be available in due course.

A highlight was Sam Archer, 2008 Scholar, presenting the Conference wrap up. Amongst esteemed company, he gave a superb account of himself. His summary follows: -

Nuffield International Conference: 2008

Global Production Agriculture: What part will you play?

As a “young” Nuffield Scholar I feel extremely privileged to have been asked to provide a summary of the conference. My back of the envelope calculation puts the collective agricultural experience of everyone gathered here today at in excess of 4,600 years and in such distinguished company it is an honour to address you.

A testament to the calibre of the speakers is that each and every topic has produced robust debate and questioning. You could not help but notice the noise level at each intermission, it was loud, very loud, and is a reflection of the interest created by each of the six sessions.

The common themes heard throughout the conference have been:

1. Population growth and affluence will drive market demand;
2. Additional productive agricultural land is limited;
3. Energy demand and policy have had, and will continue to have, a significant influence on agriculture;
4. Global trade mechanisms must be efficient if they are to deliver agricultural progress and productivity;
5. Technology has delivered great advances for agriculture, but we need to bring the wider community along with us if technology is to continue providing benefits to all mankind;
6. Science should not be viewed in absolute terms of “good” and “bad”. We should determine an appropriate balance between the risks and benefits of adopting a particular scientific application and how it might then be used;
7. Good people are critical to the success of every business and you get the staff you deserve.

The key points we heard were:

- Asia is resource constrained, especially with land and increasingly water. China and India have 42% of the world’s population and only 15% of the available arable land;
- Agriculture’s capacity to supply markets is also being impacted by bio-fuels, energy costs and climate change;
- Key drivers of demand in developing economies are life style, health and wellbeing;
- Food demand is forecast to double over the next 50 years.
- The world’s food and fuel needs will far exceed current available farming land;
- Throughout the world there is limited new farmland that can be utilised without critical environmental impacts;
- Only three regions have the potential to develop significant additional agricultural land. These are the USA, Brazil and sub Saharan Africa;

- We are faced, therefore, with a decision: “do we take more farming land from nature or use biotechnology”;
- Our world trade framework under the World Trade Organisation is slow and cumbersome and has stalled agricultural progress and productivity gains;
- In coming years we are likely to see increased protectionism between trading nations as they look to secure their own national interests. (For a country such as Australia which exports 60% of it’s agricultural produce, this does not bode well);
- It has also been suggested that it is not the responsibility of the developed world to feed the developing world, but to enable them to feed themselves;
- To do this we will need a vibrant agricultural research and extension base together with people, profit and passion. I am sure that you will agree that these qualities are epitomised by Mariano Bosch, whose presentation on farming in Argentina and his business model was inspirational.

I am halfway through my scholarship year having travelled through the Americas and Europe, and will shortly visit Asia. What I have seen so far is that the issues we face as an industry are the same throughout the world - many of which have been raised throughout today’s conference. These are; climate change, food and water security, increased input costs, an aging rural population, a growing rural-urban disconnect, production constraints due to limited new farmland, land prices driven by proximity to urban centres, and an urgent need for research and development.

Each country, however, chooses to address these issues with some differences, influenced in large part by their political systems but also by their historical and cultural legacies.

Few participants here today would deny that our industry is faced with challenges and we are required to manage significant risks: climate risk, production risk and financial risk. John F. Kennedy said, “history will not accept difficulty as an excuse”...so what do we need to do to ensure we can participate in global production agriculture?

We need good science, good economics and good policy.

I know that as an industry we are often frustrated by failures in these three critical areas. But I am confident that with the experience, leadership and demonstrated innovative capacity of Nuffield Scholars that we are well placed to drive and embrace the necessary changes to take advantage of the exciting times ahead for agriculture.

Sam Archer, 2008 Scholar