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Queensland Branch

from the Editor:

I am slowly coming to realise why the Poets of early Australia wrote of their experiences in the bush. From drought to flooding rains, fires to fine weather, personal tragedies to stories of joy, our Country is never short of surprising challenges that have to be dealt with. We know of disasters and good times of old and try to take heed from them, but all the best preparations cannot totally prepare us for every event.

Many of our Queensland Scholars and other farmers have had historical events thrown hard at them once again. Wondering how to pick up the pieces can become mind boggling at times and the rebuilding extremely slow, and we hope for their sakes that they are able to 'weather the storms' so to speak.

It seems like most of Agriculture is going through extreme cost pressures. With high interest rates (as compared with our competitors), high fuel, fertilizer and input costs going through the roof, and added to these pressures the threat of imported food driving the prices down, the outcome will cause a lot of farmers to go out of production. Governments seem to rave about the exciting future of mining, but fail to recognise the ongoing importance of Agriculture. A full belly of coal or iron ore won't keep the body going for too long. Despite all the rhetoric about a level playing field in trade there is no way that our trading partners play in the same field. It is more like a jagged rocky road to nowhere. Having said that about Agriculture, there are a lot of secondary industries facing similar pressures. The sad part about this is that there is going to be many Australian workers losing their jobs as they see their jobs heading offshore to cheap labour countries like China and India. How many jobs have to be lost and families hurt before politicians wake up to themselves and start looking after their fellow Australians.

When things get really tough I encourage you to go outside in the middle of the night and look up at the Milky Way stretching across the starry sky and think of how you fit into this great creation of nature of which you are a part, doing what you love to do best.

The end of March saw a gathering of "Nuffield's" assembled at Gatton where we saw firsthand massive devastation from flooding at Derek Schulz and Andrew Dewar's farms and others in the districts of Gatton, Grantham & Nobby.



Andrew displaying his produce.

Back that night at the Gatton Cultural Centre we had our Annual Meeting where Tim Harslett became our new Chairman and Tim Napier elected Secretary, and Camilla Philip continues as Treasurer.

'Well Done' to past and present Executive.

During Dinner we were privileged to have Mayor Steve Jones present us with the history & operation of the Cultural Centre & Truck Museum. Following Dinner Mayor Jones invited us to inspect the well displayed Truck Museum, which is a credit and asset for the Community. The males relived history as they browsed the trucks and equipment and the women were also impressed... I think!

Our State Selections have been completed with 4 contenders heading off to National Selections.

For those fortunate enough to attend the International Conference in Adelaide & Perth - the Programme looks very interesting. The Conference Tours organised look to cater for a wide variety of interests and will be a rewarding and memorable experience for those attending.

All the best for the coming Season.

Phil Donges

Chairman's Chat:

State interviews are done and dusted for another year. I am pleased to announce that we have 4 candidates who made it through to the National Interviews. Many thanks to those involved in the process. There is a lot of preliminary phone calling, time and effort that goes into getting the applicants to the interview stage. Then there is the time given up for the day. The interview panel consisted of myself, Tim Napier, Jack Milbank Jim Geltch and 4 industry representatives. Michael McKellar put in a day as the introduction guy. Turns out he was the busiest of the lot of us. Kerrie Richards's sister-in-law, Lisa, responded to a last minute SOS to help Michael for part of the day.

A last minute decision was made to scrap the new proposed interview process. The main concern was that it would disadvantage successful applicants when it came to national panel.

We presently have Aaron Sanderson and Andrew Dewar off on their travels. They seem to be enjoying their time. Hope they are learning something. Don Madden's year is drawing to a close. See the attached snippets for more details.

I have been asked to remind you all about the Nuffield International Conference being held in Adelaide and Perth.

We all need to start getting our heads around the Australian Spring Tour that will be based in Brisbane in October 2012. There will be effort required from us to help organise that. We will have our annual AGM in autumn next year. There has not been a location set, but we are probably due to venture out of the south-east corner if someone wants to volunteer their area.

Happy Farming **Tim Harslett – Qld Chairman**

Update Current Scholars:

Snippet from Andrew Dewar 10/08/2011

„Aaron and I headed off on 1st June for our whirlwind global focus program. We travelled in a group of 4 Aussies one Pom and an Irish.

We travelled to some amazing places and met extraordinary people all around the world, the countries we visited were Philippines, China, United States, Canada, France, Belgium and Ireland .

We returned home 7 weeks later battered and bruised but ready for our personal studies. The guys and girls I travelled with have become very close friends and with a comment at one stage “Are we just going to laugh our way round the world” it is no wonder. I’m currently 3 weeks into my personal travel I’ve been in the United States the whole time in and around Salinas and Yuma, I’m off to Miami next week for a week. Then I head to EU for 3 weeks visiting Netherlands, Germany ,Holland and France before heading home to start our lettuce season which we started to plant last week.

I attended a conference in Monterey last week and in Nuffield fashion was put on the spot to give a small presentation to around 350 people on “knowing your end user- an Australian perspective”.

I had a lot of fun giving it and my 30 minute spot ended up going for 45 minutes, about half of the time I fielded questions.”

Round the Ridges:

Robert Harrison. Robert is taking life a bit quieter these days. With a carer coming in to give Ann help, has allowed Robert to renew some of his golfing skills and getting the garden back in order. Robert has leased out the farm for cattle grazing to a neighbour and he is left with livestock of one dog!

Derek Schulz. The Schulz family after receiving so much devastation are steadily getting back to 'normality'. Crops are growing OK - but the returns are very low, putting the Industry into a 20 year low of cost squeeze pressure. Derek, Narelle and the children have just moved into their shed to live while their house is being gutted and rebuilt following the flooding.



Derek's first crop after the floods.

Camilla Philip. Camilla & Andrew experienced large amounts of rain last year, following flooding at the end of the season, causing huge losses to their production. Because of all the wet they suffered from bacterial problems in their crops which were hard to control. Despite all the hardships they have dusted themselves off and applied themselves to recovery the best way they can. Camilla says that the whole industry is in a lot of pain at the moment, and there will need to restructure in the future for the industry to be successful.

Michael McKellar. With all the good rain in the Augathella district last year, the grass grew very well, but now after the winter frosts there is a large body of dry grass which will become a huge fire hazard in the summer. Mike has purchased a second hand grader to make fire breaks around his property. Mike & Helen should be very proud of the home they built last year in true Queensland style with many fine timber features handcrafted by Mike.

Marty Phillips. Following a long cold winter, which steadied the growth of the fish the warming weather is increasing production. Sales over the last 6 months have been slow, mainly due from the affect of imports and the high Australian Dollar and the fact that a lot of Australians are holidaying overseas and the restaurant trade has been very slow. With the onset of Spring, local consumption appears to be increasing. Despite forecasts of another wet Summer, Marty is hoping that they won't be effected by cyclonic conditions.

Where are they Now??... Segment looking at the life of past Scholars.

Name: Tim Napier Scholar Year: 2005

Tim grew up in Tasmania before coming to Queensland, where he became involved in the operations of the Corish Family irrigation enterprise, growing cotton, wheat and beef cattle.

During the dry years of 2006/2007, a position became available for a CEO of the local irrigators organisation – The Border Rivers Food & Fibre, which stretches along the Border Rivers from Texas to Mungindi.

Tim accepted the position and represents 10 water user groups with membership of over 200 producers. His role involves liaison with the local groups and lobbying on their behalf to State and Federal Government bodies.

With water reform in State water regions and the Murray Darling water reforms, Tim has many trips to Canberra and other areas to represent irrigators

Tim has been able to form good working relationships with Government Ministers and Departmental officials and has been instrumental in forming a good understanding of real issues relating to water and the environment with Government.

Tim and Jodie live in Goondiwindi with their 2 children.



Tim Napier addressing an Irrigators meeting.



Lunch at Rudd's Pub Nobby – AGM March 2011