

PO Box 1385, Griffith NSW 2680  
T 02 6964 6600 F 02 6964 1605  
E enquiries@nuffield.com.au W www.nuffield.com.au  
A.B.N. 33 092 327 396

#### 2007 SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS

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Corporation Chicken Meat Program

Sidney Myer Fund

**5 October 2007**

## Nuffield Scholarship for Gingin chicken meat producer

Chicken meat producer Robert Kestel from Gingin, Western Australia, will tonight be awarded Australia's leading farming scholarship, a Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship.

Mr Kestel is one of only 16 Australians to receive a 2007 Nuffield Scholarship. He will be presented with his award tonight at the Innovative Farming Australia awards dinner, part of the Nuffield Australia Spring Tour being held in Fremantle, WA.

Nuffield Farming Scholarships, each worth \$25,000, give young Australian farmers the opportunity to travel internationally and explore agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context. There are about 1300 Nuffield scholars worldwide.

Mr Kestel will use his scholarship, sponsored by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Chicken Meat Program, to investigate animal welfare and on-farm management systems to improve the environmental status of the chicken meat industry.

He will explore animal welfare issues that could affect the industry's capacity to farm into the future. He will also study strategies to enable meat chicken farms to continue farming at the urban-rural interface as residential development expands over the next decade.

"The Australian Chicken Growers' Council is implementing an environmental management system across the meat chicken industry, but further research is needed into odour, noise and dust control to minimise the environmental impact," Mr Kestel says.

Mr Kestel is the managing director and part-owner of B J&R enterprises Pty Ltd, a 58-hectare Gingin operation which grows meat chickens under contract to Inghams Enterprises. The property houses 175,000 birds in naturally ventilated sheds and produces 5.7 batches each year, but Mr Kestel has ambitions to expand the farm to 400,000 birds.

"An investigation of rear-end technology for mechanically ventilated shedding is high on my tour agenda, as I believe that by converting current shedding to computer-controlled mechanically ventilated facilities we can enhance our production performance," he says.

Nuffield Australia CEO Mr Jim Geltch says many Nuffield Scholars go on to become active leaders in agriculture and the community. "For many, the scholarship experience changes their lives by opening their eyes to the wider world and giving them the confidence to pursue their goals," Mr Geltch says.

The 16 2007 Australian Nuffield Scholars will leave Australia in either February or June 2008 for a compulsory Global Focus Program. This will involve travel to China, North America, South America and Europe investigating agricultural marketing and trade issues, environmental issues and experiencing the different social and cultural aspects of each region.

Following the initial six-week program, the scholars will go their individual ways to pursue specific study programs in the country or countries of their choice. Mr Kestel hopes to travel to Canada, the US, the UK and Europe.

#### Further information:

**Jim Geltch**  
CEO, Nuffield Australia  
T +61 (0)3 5480 0755

**More information: Robert Kestel, 08 9575 2395,  
0429 778 560, robertkestel@bigpond.com.au**