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2010 SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS

Australian Dairy Conference	Horticulture Australia Limited
Australian Processing Tomato Growers	Landmark
Dairy Australia	Meat & Livestock Australia
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	Nuffield Australia Queensland Branch
Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation	Rabobank
Grain Growers Association	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
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Friday 23 October 2009

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM, FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER 2008

Nuffield Scholarship for Wanaaring goat producer

NSW goat-meat producer Chris Ferguson will tonight be awarded a scholarship in Australia's leading research program for primary producers, the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship Program.

Mrs Ferguson is one of only 18 Australians to receive a 2010 Nuffield Scholarship. She will be presented with her scholarship tonight at the Innovation in Australian Farming Awards dinner at the Hawkesbury Race Club, which is part of the four-day Nuffield Australia Spring Tour being held in the NSW Hawkesbury region.

Nuffield Farming Scholarships, each worth \$27,000, give young Australian primary producers the opportunity to travel internationally and explore agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context. There are about 1400 Nuffield scholars worldwide.

Mrs Ferguson will use her scholarship, sponsored by Meat & Livestock Australia, to investigate opportunities within the goat meat industry and issues relating to the sustainable management of goatherds in arid areas.

Mrs Ferguson and husband Duncan are commercial goat-meat producers at Wanaaring, in the semi-arid rangelands of NSW, west of Bourke. They have a core herd of 2000 organically certified Kalahari Red cross rangeland breeding goats, and they opportunistically trade both goats and sheep to align stocking rates with pasture availability. When seasonal conditions allow they take on agistment stock and contract muster feral goats on local properties.

"The goat industry is something of a wild card in the Australian meat game, although goat meat is the most frequently consumed meat in the world," Mrs Ferguson says. "Australia is the largest goat-meat exporter but we still supply less than 0.4 per cent of all the goat meat consumed globally.

"It is important that we develop and maintain a strong market for our rangeland goats as they provide a stabilising income in areas dominated by rainfall variability, and strong goat prices are also the most effective method of controlling Australia's feral goat herd. It is vital that goatherds are well managed in arid areas in order to avoid land degradation.

"Our experience here shows us that goats have the potential to improve grasslands affected by woody weeds, and I would like to see how other arid countries manage their goat herds and identify factors that result in positive outcomes for land and vegetation," Mrs Ferguson says.

Nuffield Australia CEO Mr Jim Geltch says many Nuffield Scholars go on to become active leaders in agriculture and the community, and sharing their research findings is an important part of the scholarship program. "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," he says.

The 2010 Australian Nuffield Scholars will leave Australia in February, June or September 2010 for a compulsory Global Focus Program. This will involve travel to China, North America, South America, Middle East, India 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. Mrs Ferguson plans to visit the US, Canada, Taiwan and Malaysia. China, India, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

More information:

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A high-resolution photograph of Mrs Ferguson can be downloaded from the link

www.coretext.com.au/communications_images.php