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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
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Friday 23 October 2009

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM, FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER 2008

Nuffield Scholarship for Manoora farmer

South Australian farmer Helen Thomas will tonight be awarded a scholarship in Australia's leading research program for primary producers, the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship Program.

Mrs Thomas 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 farmers the opportunity to travel internationally and explore agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context. There are about 1400 Nuffield scholars worldwide.

Mrs Thomas will use her scholarship, sponsored by Landmark, to study integrated environmental management.

She and husband Wayne operate a mixed farming business in South Australia's mid-north region, near Manoora. They have four properties totalling 38,500ha, cropping and producing wool and prime lambs, with stud and commercial poll Merino flocks of up to 8,500 head, depending on seasonal conditions.

Mrs Thomas says she plans to research the integration of agriculture into broader, publicly-supported ecosystem management programs to preserve aesthetic, environmental and production values. "Agriculture is being squeezed by the increasing urbanisation of traditional farm land. Because land values, particularly near urban centres, are often higher than the productive capacity of the land it is difficult for farmers to carry the burden of environmental stewardship.

"Prime agricultural land has its own intrinsic worth to society in terms of its productive capacity and aesthetic charm and we need to preserve it, but at the moment the farming community is a lone voice in wanting to do so. I'd would also like to see systems where farmland is better integrated with environmental reserves and urban areas," Mrs Thomas says.

Leadership on issues like this is vital for the farming community, according to Landmark managing director Graeme Jacobs, which is why the company sponsors Nuffield Australia.

"Agriculture in Australia is globally competitive, but it needs leaders to constantly take this industry forward. Add to this Landmark's philosophy that everyone has a right to personally develop to their full potential, and the rationale for our support of people like Helen Thomas through Nuffield becomes crystal clear," Mr Jacobs 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 Thomas plans to visit the US and Europe during her study tour.

More information:

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A high-resolution photograph of Mrs Thomas can be downloaded from the link www.coretext.com.au/communications_images.php