



Newsletter

August 2003

President: Stuart Hutton (schutton@kpmg.com.au)

Secretary: Susan Madden (smadden@hassall.com.au)

Newsletter: Alan Dick (citynews.theland@ruralpress.com) and
Andy Royal (aroyal@ozemail.com.au)

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc. GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001
Internet: www.nswfarmwriters.org

ALFA's Sandy Maconochie: What should our red meat industry look like in five years?

The drought has impacted on the beef cattle feedlot industry in a variety of ways and at our luncheon seminar on Friday 26 August, the president of the Australian Lot Feeders Association (ALFA), Sandy Maconochie, will outline those impacts and how he sees the industry recovering.

Sandy owns and operates Glen Evan Feedlot at Macarthur in southwestern Victoria. The feedlot produces export cattle, some of which part are sold to leading food service operators and supermarkets in Melbourne.

In addition he is the Southern Co-ordinator to supply major supermarkets with grain fed beef with responsibility for cattle purchasing through co-ordinating a network of buyers, liaising with custom feeders and transport.



**Red meat – Where to from here?
ALFA President, Sandy Maconochie.
Friday 29 August.**

Sandy Maconochie has extensive experience in beef cattle production, rural commodities distribution and transport and design engineering in both Australia and overseas.

He has also designed 'state of the art' transport specifically to meet quality control standards for grain fed cattle.

High on the list of the feedlot industry's drought induced problems are high feed grain prices and a shortage of feeder cattle.

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Register early and on-line for Friday 29 August's luncheon seminar with Sandy Maconochie

Corporate 'Member of the Month': Virbac

Venue: The **ALL SEASONS PREMIER MENZIES HOTEL** 14 Carrington Street, Sydney.

When: 12:00 noon for 12:30pm: Friday, 29 August, 2003

Cost: \$50 per head, or voucher

Register: On-line before 5:00pm, Tuesday 26 August at www.nswfarmwriters.org. Or through *Australian Honey Bee Industry Council's* Laurel Pickering: ahbic@honeybee.org.au Phone: 02 9221 0911 or Fax: 02 9221 0922

Late cancellations: Phone Jamie Graham (0418 479 434) or Amy Lawrence (02 8204 3857)

If you missed July's meeting ...

Keene: Regulation still stifling grains industry growth

GrainCorp has done well in expanding away from its core grain storage business and becoming more of a vertically integrated agrifood company, but its capacity for growth is still being stifled by the amount of regulation still left in the grains industry.

That's the message GrainCorp's managing director, Tom Keene, sought to get across when he addressed our July lunchtime meeting.

He said despite government ownership receding, the grains industry remained one of the most heavily regulated in Australia.

Export monopolies, State based vesting rights, and price regulation at port facilities — notably at Portland and Geelong in Victoria where GrainCorp had export terminals — were all limiting market participation.

But his main beef was with how AWB Ltd exercised its single desk wheat export powers - not the single desk itself he hastened to point out, but its application to the supply chain within Australia.

"Wheat is the single largest grain produced in Australia and the AWB is the single biggest purchaser of wheat.

"That is what gives it so much power over the supply chain," he said.

His solution for achieving contestability and transparency was to separate AWB

International (which runs the export pool) from AWB Ltd (which provides all the services domestically to the pool).

Moreover, he made the bold prediction that it would not be too long before something like that occurred.

This would help GrainCorp become one of — in his words — "the Jonah Lomus of business": companies that were both large and nimble (perhaps an unfortunate image given the thrashing the Wallabies received at the hands of the All Blacks the following day).

As for GrainCorp's current situation, it expects to record a loss for the 2002-03 but remains cash flow positive and fully committed to its long term strategy of consistent growth and development.

It has forecast grain receipts of about nine million tonnes in NSW and Victoria in the 2003-04 harvest, compared with 1.8 million tonnes last season because of the drought and 12 million tonnes the year before.



suggestions that retailers should be forced through legislation to comply on labelling and on whether the question can be solved by regulation.

Also on the red meat industry's agenda is the next Meat Industry Strategic Plan to cover the next five years and Mr Maconochie will review the state of play there.

The industry has already run a planning workshop as a preliminary step in the development of the plan.

The meeting starts, as usual, at 12:00 noon for 12:30pm at the All Seasons Premier Menzies Hotel.

Sandy Maconochie

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Hopefully by the time he speaks there will have been widespread good rain over the grain belt to guarantee a reasonable harvest and lower prices.

But he believes the question of how long the feeder cattle shortage will last will only be answered when the drought has actually broken and herd rebuilding starts.

Other hot topics he will touch on are likely to include the meat grading/labelling issue. He will offer his views on

IFAJ Congress in South Africa

The 2004 IFAJ Conference will be held in South Africa from 12 to 20 March. As is traditional, NSW Farm Writers' provide support for a number of members to attend the congress.

Selection of delegates will be based, largely, on members' contribution to and involvement in Farm Writers'. Farm Writers' is seeking expressions of interest, in writing, to Secretary, Susan Madden, GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001 (smadden@hassall.com.au). For more information about the congress, visit the IFAJ web site: www.ifaj.org/congresses

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 2003 Annual General Meeting of Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc will be held at 11.30am on Friday 31 October. Singed and seconded notices of motion should be forwarded by 17 October to Susan Madden, Secretary, Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc, GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001 (smadden@hassall.com.au)

Agribusiness 'guru': 26 September

One of Australia's leading lights in agribusiness, food and stockfeeds, and agrichemicals, Dr John Keniry, will be our speaker on Friday 26 September.