



# Newsletter

December 2004

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## Macdonald special guest

**T**HE Farm Writers' Association Christmas luncheon is not too far away, with patron and host, Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, joining us for the festivities.

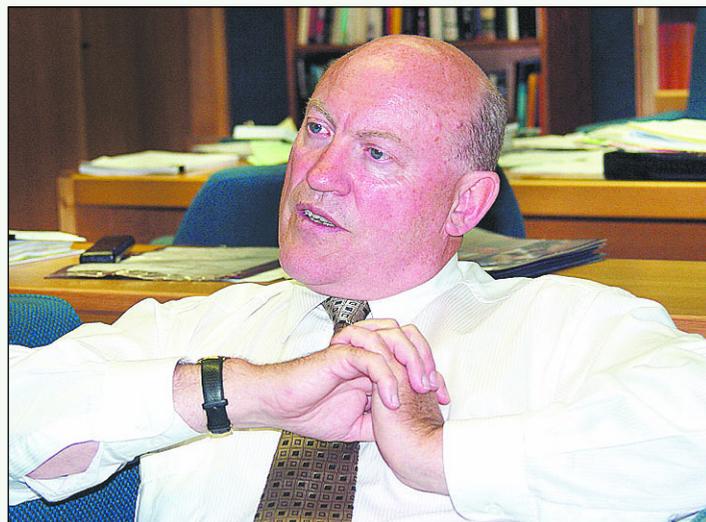
It's not too late to get a table together or host a table of guests for the December 9 function, and in past years this has been a great opportunity to say thankyou to business associates and clients or build new relationships.

Mr Macdonald (pictured) will sum up some of the department's achievements and issues which it has been working on for the past year, addressing in particular the drought (which we hoped would be over by this Christmas), locusts and the role of agricultural research in NSW.

Mr Macdonald has also seen significant adjustment within his portfolio, which moved from being NSW Agriculture to now the Department of Primary Industries, which also encompasses minerals, fisheries and forests on top of agriculture.

As in past years, the Farm Writers' Association is relying on the generosity of its members to provide some Christmas cheer through donations and gifts for this year's Christmas luncheon.

Gifts and lucky door prizes to be drawn at the luncheon



would be greatly appreciated, with a suggested value of \$25.

What a way to get the company's logo out there in front of a huge group of agricultural professionals.

Gifts can be sent to Chris Dodd at NSW Farmers' Association, 10th Floor, 225 Elizabeth Street, Sydney; phone (02) 8251 1811, preferably by 5pm Tuesday.

■ **To book your place for the Christmas lunch go to our website:**  
[www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm).

**Register early and on-line for our Thursday, December 9, Christmas party and luncheon with our patron and Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald.**

**Corporate 'Members of the Month': Dupont (Australia) Ltd, Horticulture Australia Ltd, Renard, and the University of Sydney, Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.**

**Venue:** STRANGERS DINING ROOM, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

**When:** 12.30pm, Thursday, December 9.

**Cost:** \$55 a head, or voucher for members. **\$65 a head for all non-members.**

**Register:** On-line **BEFORE** 5pm, **MONDAY, DECEMBER 6**, at [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org) or through *Australian Honey Bee Industry Council's* Laurel Pickering, [ahbic@honeybee.org.au](mailto:ahbic@honeybee.org.au), phone (02) 9221 0911 or fax (02) 9221 0922.

**Late cancellations:** Phone Fiona Dewar, (02) 8204 3856, or Jamie Graham, 0418 479 434.



# Oogjes: mulesing must go

**A**NIMALS Australia executive director, Glenys Oogjes, weighed into the mulesing debate engrossing the Australian wool industry at our November luncheon.

Ms Oogjes (pictured) has been an animal welfare campaigner for more than 20 years and has represented her organisation on a number of industry and advisory boards over the years.

She told guests at the November luncheon that farmers who continued to mulesing their sheep would face a market backlash from city consumers as public awareness of animal welfare grew.

Ms Oogjes said the public's perceptions on animal welfare had changed and were becoming more in favour of "the rights of animals not to suffer" and farmers should be listening more to city consumers if they wanted to keep selling their products.

She said the debate on mulesing was not a new one, and she had been campaigning to stop the practice for more than 25 years, frustrated there was still no alternative to removing wrinkled or loose skin from the crutch or breech of sheep to control flystrike.

She said her organisation wouldn't be happy until the practice had completely stopped and farmers were managing their flocks for flystrike with more handlers assigned to manage smaller flocks to monitor fly damage on a daily basis.

She said the common argument from farmers was that people in the cities didn't understand the realities of farm life.

"But the reality is, people in the cities are the customers so farmers better listen to what they're saying," Ms Oogjes said.

Animals Australia represents close to 50 animal welfare organisations, and while not affiliated with PETA, Ms Oogjes said the two organisations shared similar concerns.

She said the degree of pain felt by animals was often glossed over by farmers who were becoming "blasé" about the practice of mulesing.

"After mulesing, lambs can feel pain for between two hours to two days yet it doesn't necessarily always prevent sheep from fly strike," she said.

"Lambs remember and recognise the person who has mulesed them for 36 days and will shy away from that person.

She said in the year 2000 an independent survey revealed 54 per cent of the public viewed animal welfare as an important social issue, which had risen from 29pc of people surveyed in 1994.

Mrs Oogjes concedes she wouldn't be happy with any compromises, and her campaign to reduce suffering in animals wouldn't be stopping with the sheep industry, with the de-horning of cattle, castration and hide branding in the cattle industry and pressure on the intense pork industry just some of the areas Animals Australia will next be targeting.

**■ Thanks to our corporate sponsors for the month of November, Pulse Australia and Virbac Australia.**



## GGA pushes for grain 'improvements'

**N**EWLY appointed chairman of the Grain Growers Association (GGA), Ron Hards, was our guest speaker in October.

Mr Hards told guests at the October Farm Writers' luncheon that growers would be the losers if the recommendations of the 2004 wheat marketing review panel were not implemented.

The 2004 review panel – which released its findings publicly last month – found AWB International (AWBI) had generally performed well in its responsibility to maximise returns to growers as commercial manager of the wheat single desk.

However it also said there was room for improvement to the current arrangements – and it's these "improvements" the GGA is keen to see become reality.

Mr Hards also highlighted the panel's recommendation that remuneration for AWBI staff be linked to pool performance not the AWB Ltd share price and that AWB Ltd's own remuneration be linked to net rather than gross pool returns.

**■ Thank you to our corporate sponsors for October, Cox Inall Communications and NSW Farmers Association.**