



Newsletter

December 2007

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

Christmas comes early for Farm Writers

NSW Farm Writers' final seminar for the year is a mix of serious policy and political review with a good dash of Christmas spirit.

It is the biggest event of the year so please book early to guarantee a seat, particularly if you are seeking to book out a table.

Our patron, the Hon Ian Macdonald MLC, NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy, Minister for Mineral Resources and Minister for State Development is hosting the seminar and Christmas celebrations in Strangers' Dining Room at Parliament House.

In what has become a traditional year in review address, Mr Macdonald will talk about the state of agriculture in NSW and give us some insight into the government's priorities for the coming year.

There is much to talk about: drought, the containment of equine influenza and the lifting of the moratorium on growing genetically modified crops.

It's not too late to get a table together – this is a great way to say 'thankyou' to business associates and clients or to cement new relationships. Book online (see table below) to join the festivities on December 13.

Time to fill the Farm Writers' Christmas stocking!

One of the enduring traditions of the Farm Writers' Christmas lunch is the prize draw. Drop your business card in a bowl at the lunch and your Christmas may well come early with a thoughtful gift from one of our corporate or individual members.

Because the prizes are donated by our members, who do everything from make pig feed through to trade policy, you never know what might be inside your gift.

So members, Farm Writers' Santa needs your help to fill the sack with Christmas cheer.

Please support our function by donating gifts (with a value of \$25 or more).

This is a great way to get your company's name out there in front of a large group of farm media, agricultural professionals and industry leaders.

Gifts can be sent to: **Susan Tindall** at **Agricultural Appointments**, 84 Pitt St, Sydney, preferably by **5pm on Monday 10 December**, or phone Susan on 9223 9944.



The Hon Ian Macdonald MLC, NSW Minister for Primary Industries: Does EI affect the movement of reindeer?

Join our corporate members of the month **NSW Farmers** and **The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW**.

To get your book of 6 (\$360) or 12 (\$720) vouchers contact Richard.Hincks@rabobank.com

To book your place for lunch on **Thursday December 13**, go to our website: www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm

Register early and online for the Thursday, December 13 lunch to hear the Hon Ian Macdonald MLC and enjoy some Farm Writers Christmas cheer.

Corporate Members of the month NSW Farmers and The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW.

Venue: Strangers Dining Room, NSW Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney

When: **Thursday, 13 December 2007 at 12.30 pm for 1.00 pm**

Cost: \$60 per head, or voucher, for members. \$70 per head for all non-members

Register: **BEFORE 5:00pm on Monday December 10 2007**
online: www.nswfarmwriters.org, email: bookings@nswfarmwriters.org

Reminder: If bookings are not cancelled by the deadline, the person making the booking will be invoiced. We will do our best to accommodate late bookings and cancellations – please phone Stuart Hutton (02) 9338 2626

Are we resource rich but digitally dumb ?

NSW Farm Writers' hosted a presentation from Fairfax Media Chief Executive Officer David Kirk at our October 23 seminar. Since Fairfax and Rural Press completed their friendly merger and Rural Press acquired the Riverina Media Group, the Fairfax Media Group now dominates regional and agricultural publishing in NSW.

During his speech, Mr Kirk talked about the importance of regional newspapers to their communities and the amount of energy Fairfax was putting into defending and growing its newspapers.

“Our papers succeed because they are part and parcel of their communities and the lives of their readers,” he said.

“This is what distinguishes truly great newspapers from publications that are mediocre. This is the difference between quality news and news as a commodity. And this is the difference between stewardship of local values and mediocrity in the discharge of a public trust.

Mr Kirk said he could not see a situation where Fairfax's growing investments in digital media would see local papers replaced by local websites.

Fairfax Media is the number one player in digital news in Australia. Fairfax Digital attracts over 14 million unique browsers per month. Video downloads have grown from less than a million seven months ago to 4 million per month today.

Mr Kirk said following the merger with Rural Press, Fairfax had launched a major effort to upgrade the websites of its regional and rural publications.

The future was to build a digital media company that commissioned, created and distributed digital content over multiple platforms.

Mr Kirk pointed to the new Sydney newsroom at One Darling Island as the Newsroom of the Future, in operation now. The new newsroom is an integrated multimedia editorial platform, where print, online and electronic editors sit together, commission stories, break news and decide where that news is most effectively placed.

“In the future we will continue to see an expansion of the number of ways digital video can be distributed; IPTV, digital free to air TV, 3G wireless networks and the so-called B licence to mobile carriers,” he said.

With digital content so important, broadband would be a key driver of future growth for the company.

“The issue of broadband is absolutely critical to the future of regional and rural Australia, no less than our major cities.

“I believe regional and rural Australia is in the midst of a second drought, a drought in broadband deployment.

“We can no longer afford to be resource rich but digitally dumb,” Mr Kirk said.

Copies of David Kirk's speech are available at www.nswfarmwriters.org

News from Neil Inall

Neil Inall is on the loose again, this time at the 3rd International Conference on Greenhouse Gases and Agriculture in Christchurch, NZ.

Climate change and Kyoto certainly moved up the national agenda in the past few days.

It hit me between the eyes when I went to the 3rd International conference on greenhouse gases and agriculture in Christchurch NZ last week along with 220 scientists from all over the world.

I will admit to really struggling with the science initially. It's a long time since student chemistry days! But no one can ignore the long list of multi million dollar research projects that are underway from Holland to Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia.

The target is to reduce the offending front end emissions of methane and nitrous oxide from sheep and cattle and that means playing all sorts of tricks with their rumens. Those tricks range from changing the genetics of the rumen's microflora to using slow release capsules, producing grasses with high sugar content and adding plant oils to rations and vaccines. And when the cheapest and most effective trick is pinned down it will have to easily fit into everyday farming systems. Wow! It is a big ask.

Report of the Month

The Implications for Australian Agriculture of Changing Demand for Animal Protein in Asia

The Australian Farm Institute, in conjunction with the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC), carried out research to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities arising from changing diets in Asia.

The research examined recent trends in animal protein demand in 12 Asian nations. It then developed projections of likely demand trends for the period to 2020.

For a copy go to www.farminstitute.org.au

Congratulations to Tony Burke

The new Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is Tony Burke, the Federal MP for the inner Sydney seat of Watson. Tony was a NSW MLC from 2003 to 2004 and entered the Federal Parliament in 2004. Prior to Parliament he was a union organiser with the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association.

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Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc

President: Bev Jordan
bevjordan@msn.com.au

Secretary: Emily Ray
eray@hassall.com.au

Newsletter: Tim Powell
timp@coxinall.com.au

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