



Newsletter

July 2004

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New CEO plots course ahead for NSW Farmers

Our guest speaker at our next luncheon meeting on July 30 will be the newly appointed chief executive officer of the NSW Farmers Association, Dr Ray Johnson.

It's all going to be a bit different this time in terms of format (read on!) and venue (yes, folks, we are back at the 'Country Embassy').

Ray Johnson took on the job early this year after the sudden departure of Jonathan McKeown in a move that marked a return by the association to having a CEO from a farming background.

As well as being a farm boy, Ray has qualifications in agricultural science and high level administrative experience.

He is already making his mark at the association, notably in extending the network of regional representatives to maintain closer touch with grass roots members and issues.

Ray was born on an 320 hectare family sheep and wheat farm at Forbes, which also ran pigs and cattle in later years.

He won a scholarship to Sydney University and completed undergraduate and masters degrees in agricultural science and a Diploma in Education.

Later he won a scholarship to complete a PhD in rural science and animal nutrition at the University of New England, Armidale.

After a year as a post doctoral research fellow at the Waite Agricultural research Institute in Adelaide he joined the Victorian Department of agriculture as a research scientist.

In 1989 he joined Rhône-Poulenc Animal Nutrition as its Technical Manager and was appointed general manager of its Australian operations a year later.

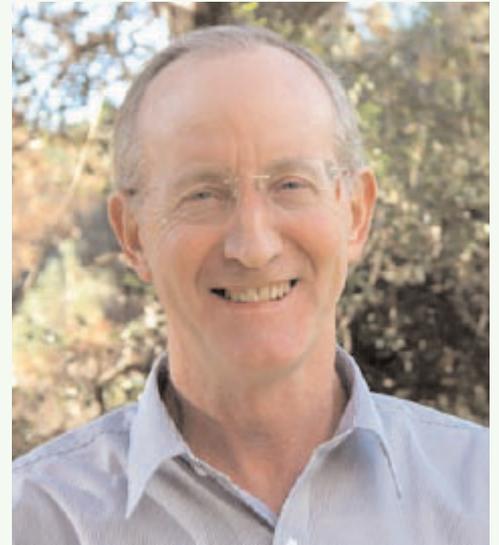
He was General Manager of a major Australian pet food company from 1997 to 2000, where he carried out major sales and marketing programs that resulted in a significant increase in overall market share in competition with the major multinational overseas-owned companies.

In this position he had to deal with large supermarket chains and his experience there should stand him in good stead at the association which has made overcoming the lack of market power of farmers against the big supermarket chains one of its priority issues.

In 2000 he joined Australia's largest stock feed company, Ridley AgriProducts, as national technical and research and development manager as well as general manager of Ridley Aquafeeds and CCD Animal Nutrition and Health.

Ray is married to another agricultural science graduate, Karayna, and lives in the Blue Mountains near Kurrajong.

At our luncheon meeting, he will talk about the future direction and goals of the association before being subject to an interview by Farm Writers vice-president and ABC radio rural and regional stalwart, Colin Munro.



Hear new NSW Farmers' Assoc CEO, Ray Johnson, at the Country Embassy on Friday 30 July

Register early and on-line for Friday 30 July's luncheon seminar with NSW Farmers' Ray Johnson

Corporate 'Members of the Month': Telstra Country wide and Farmers' Info

Venue: The 'COUNTRY EMBASSY' Level 44, 225 George Street, Sydney (**NOTE NEW VENUE!**)

When: 12:00 noon (SHARP!!) for 12:30pm: Friday, 30 July

Cost: \$55 per head, or voucher for members. \$65 per head for ALL non members.

Register: On-line before 5:00pm, Tuesday 27 July 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 Fiona Dewar (phone: 02 8204 3856) or Jamie Graham (0418 479 434)

Rice, at this price, has to be very nice



But to survive the drought and meet market needs it had had to buy in rice from other countries.

It has also bought a lot of water to help farmers finish off crops in Australia.

"The strength of the SunRice brand overseas has helped us maintain brand recognition, and high demand in the countries we sell to combined to push prices so high," he said.

Mr Lawson said final paddy return payments for 2003 would be made to growers in July.

Sunrice Chairman, Gerry Lawson: "... this price is a terrific outcome"

The drought and the shortage of irrigation water in the Riverina cut deeply into rice production in NSW last year and this year, but the pain has been salvaged to some extent by record prices for the 2003 crop.

That was part of the message by the guest speaker at our June Luncheon meeting, the chairman of SunRice, Gerry Lawson, who spoke to an audience of about 60.

SunRice is the highly successful and innovative processing and marketing arm of the NSW rice industry based in the Murumbidgee and Murray valleys.

Mr Lawson, a rice grower himself, said last year's crop had totalled only 390,000 tonnes, less than a third of normal levels of recent years.

The 2004 crop whose harvest was almost completed was expected to produce 530,00 tonnes, compared with crops of 1.7m tonnes in 2001 and 1.2m tonnes in 2002.

But he said SunRice had announced a record price of \$313 a tonne for the 2003 crop.

"A lot of people in the south were unable to grow rice and no-one has been able to grow as much as in usual years, but for those able to grow something this price is a terrific outcome," he said.

He said SunRice had managed to maintain its core markets and core infrastructure and had maximised its development of value added products.

The logo for Telstra Country Wide, featuring the word "Telstra" in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a stylized orange and blue "T" icon to its left. Below it, the words "Country Wide" are written in a white, cursive-style font with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the right.

Telstra Country Wide backs Farm Writers' web site

A special feature of the 30 July luncheon seminar at the Country Embassy will be the official launch of NSW Farm Writers' 'new' web site. Actually, it is not the site, as such, that's new. What's new is that the site now has a major and very special web sponsor.

As befits its role in promoting rural and regional communication, Telstra Country Wide, has agreed to support the maintenance and development of our site, which provides an invaluable link to and between members and also with rural and regional Australia.

The launch of the sponsorship will be performed by Mark Skinner, Telstra Country Wide's Consumer Sales Manager, NSW.