



Newsletter

March 2004

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This man knows his onions when it comes to grains and wool

The guest speaker at our March luncheon meeting (Friday 19 March), Trevor Flugge AO, has a wealth of experience at the helm of peak wool and wheat industry bodies and should be able to offer many interesting insights into where these industries have been and are heading.

Trevor Flugge is chairman of Australian Wool Services and the Woolmark Company, and from 17 years to 2002 he was a director and then chairman of the Australian Wheat Board, now AWB Ltd.

He has also served as president of the grower body, the Grains Council of Australia, and as a director on the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

Mr Flugge has a wool and grain producing operation near Katanning in Western Australia.

In 1998 he was chosen as the Monash University/ Rabobank Agribusiness Leader of the Year and in 1997 was awarded the Farrer Medal for his contribution to agriculture.

His other industry positions include being a director of Wesfarmers Ltd, chairman of the CSIRO Agribusiness Advisory Council, and a member of the Rabobank Food and Agribusiness Advisory Board.

Perhaps most topical is the fact that last year the Federal Government appointed him as an adviser on agriculture to the provisional authority running Iraq in the aftermath of the war that removed Saddam Hussein.



This is Kirstie Marshall, World Champion Aerial Skier & Winter Olympian, in the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony Uniform supplied by Woolmark. AWS and Woolmark Chairman, Trevor Flugge AO is up the top (an ultra low res pic off the Woolmark web site) looking on proudly. If we blew up Trevor's pic any more than this, he'd not be looking pretty. Don't miss Trevor Flugge on Friday 19 March

In one of his former roles as AWB chairman, Mr Flugge established a strong links with Iraqi agricultural authorities, and this latest role has been to work with the interim Iraqi Minister for Agriculture on the post-war rehabilitation of the Iraqi Agriculture Department.

This had involved such things as re-hiring bureaucrats and refurbishing computer systems, and Mr Flugge is reputed to have done an outstanding job.

Don't forget this month's luncheon meeting is on FRIDAY 19 MARCH, not the usual last Friday of the month, because the function room at the Menzies Hotel was pre-booked for that day.

Register early and on-line for Friday 19 March's luncheon seminar with Trevor Flugge

Corporate 'Member of the Month': Rural Press Limited and Cox Inall Communications

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

When: 12:00 noon for 12:30pm: Friday, 19 March

Cost: \$55 per head, or voucher (Note: we have had to increase the price of luncheon attendances from \$50 to \$55. The price of voucher books has increased to \$600.

Register: On-line before 5:00pm, Tuesday 16 March 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 Amy Lawrence (02 8204 3857) or Jamie Graham (0418 479 434)

Acronyms and so-called free trade agreements aside, Aussie red meat still rules, OK!



Australia's red meat industry is currently swimming in a sea of acronyms, according to the special guest speaker at our February luncheon meeting, Meat and Livestock Australia chairman, David Crombie.

Mr Crombie ruefully reeled off NLIS, BSE, the FTA, the SARS outbreak and so on, and commented, "Don't you just love these acronyms."

But the good news he had to tell, for those who missed the meeting, was that while any one of these issues, plus the drought and rapid rise of the Australian dollar against the US dollar, had the potential to cripple the Australian red meat industry, the industry has grown strongly over the last seven years.

Its value had grown by 54 per cent from \$7.8 billion to \$12 billion in that period, and even though the value of exports had dropped 19 per cent in the past two years because of the 50 per cent rise in the value of the \$A, that was still a "pretty strong" performance.

He had some sharp words to say about the approach by the US to the Free Trade Agreement recently announced between Australia and the US.

He said the one per cent per year quota increase over 18 years in Australia's beef exports to the US was "a nonsense", and accused the US of "bewildering hypocrisy" over its incorporation of a "snap back" provision which would allow it to have a price safeguard against Australian imports after the 18 years is up.

This was the very issue over which Australia in talks with the US had been calling Japan to account, he said.

He noted that while Canadian and US beef exports and prices had been hit hard by the BSE incidents in their respective countries, there was no great joy in it for Australia.

Such events damaged consumer confidence and disrupted trade patterns, and he warned of the dangers of frenzied competition under national banners when the events passed.

"The warning is watch out for the re-entry of the United States to Korea," Mr Crombie said.

In his wide ranging talk, Mr Crombie also implied that rural Australia might find it harder in future to attract support from the cities for its plight in times of drought and other disasters.

He said there was the "creeping" effect of growing urbanisation and the increasing number of Australians not born in this country.

"I think this has widened the understanding divide between urban and regional communities.

"The romantic notions endure but I think there's a real lack of understanding of the issues facing the bush," he said.

This is who we hope to have on 30 April ... Mac Bank's David Clarke to talk wine

Founding Executive Chairman of Macquarie Bank, David Clarke will be wearing his other ... probably more 'fun' ... hat as Chairman of McGuigan Simeon Wines Limited when he addresses us (finger crossed) on Friday 30 April. David, as we understand it, will be talking about his company's exploits on the world wine stage, as well as locally. (Worry not. If David Clarke isn't able to make it, we have a top notch bench replacement!)