



# Newsletter

**March 2006**

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## Beef Industry Success or AWB Mess!

**O**ur guest speaker at lunch on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, cattleman and grain grower businessman, Nick Burton Taylor AM, is well qualified to talk with authority on both subjects.

Nick is the chairman of Australia's largest cattle company, The Australian Agricultural Company Limited, better known as AACo. He is also a former director of GrainCorp Limited, one of the nation's largest grain handling, trading and milling businesses. For the record, he is also a director of Rural Press Limited and on the Food and Agribusiness Advisory Board of Rabobank Australia. His other corporate interests are equally impressive.

Away from the corporate scene he is principal of Hillgrove Pastoral Company, an agricultural investment and operating company with four properties located at Boorowa, Cowra and in North Queensland. The properties run 55,000 sheep and a cattle breeding herd of 7,000 cows as well as growing wheat and other cereal crops.

Nick will be able to provide an interesting perspective of the beef

industry through his personal and business interests.

Beef prices are at near record highs and Australia's export market share of the lucrative Japanese market is at an all time high. Feedlot participation is near record levels and the percentage of grain fed beef relative to grass fed beef exported to Japan is at an all time high. Many will argue that this is not a boom in prices but a catch-up to inflation equivalent prices experienced decades ago. Whichever it is, the current cattle price is creating wealth.

Nick has an opinion, which he will share on Friday, on the dramatic rise in land prices paid for cattle country properties over the last five to ten years. Peter Austin, in a recent article in *The Land*, commented on the record prices per "cow area" being paid for properties in NSW, up to \$8,000 in some areas. In central Queensland, the heart of cattle country, some notable cattle properties have trebled in price in the last six years. Many are concerned that cattlemen are pushing the envelope too far.

Nick's perspective on the future of



*AACo's Nick Burton Taylor AM*

AWB Limited and the single desk for export wheat will be interesting to say the least. With the Cole enquiry providing a daily revelation and with many reputations, including AWB's, now tarnished, grain industry professionals are divided in their view of the likely outcome. Grower support seems to be remaining strong for the moment but will it weaken as more information is revealed?

Join our Corporate Members of the Month, Rabobank Australia Ltd and Anvil Media Pty Ltd, at the Menzies hotel on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 to be part of this exciting lunch.

**Register on-line for the luncheon on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.**

**Corporate Members of the Month: Rabobank Australia Ltd and Anvil Media Pty Ltd**

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

**When:** Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March at 12pm for 12:30pm

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

**Register:** **BEFORE 5:00pm on Wednesday 29th March**, on-line at <http://www.nswfarmwriters.org> or by emailing [bookings@nswfarmwriters.org](mailto:bookings@nswfarmwriters.org), or by phone to Sarah Robson, (02) 8204 3730.

**Late cancellations:** Phone Sarah Robson, (02) 8204 3730

**Website sponsored by Telstra Country Wide NSW**

# RAS bold future plans revealed at Farm Writers luncheon

Contributed by Alan Dick of *The Land*

The Sydney Royal Easter Show faces a hefty challenge to ensure it remains relevant and interesting to a largely urban audience with an ever-widening range of entertainment options.

But the guest speaker at our February luncheon, chief executive of the NSW Royal Agricultural Society, Roger Perkins, had some interesting ideas on how to achieve this.

The most immediate and dramatic has already been implemented. From next year the "Royal" will start on Easter Thursday, a week earlier than under its long-standing tradition.

Mr Perkins said this would mean that in all but a few of the next 15 years more of the Show would take place during the NSW school holidays, which should result in an estimated 40,000 to 80,000 extra visitors each year.

He suggested the Show would need to keep re-inventing itself to continue to be a major attraction, but not at the expense of the animal exhibits that were a central feature in its role to create a bridge between city and country.

"We can't be doing tomorrow

what we did today and yesterday, he said"

Other ideas include giving the Show a more international appeal, wooing Sydney's ethnic community, and attracting more of the 18 to 35 year age group who might not think it "cool" to go to the Show.

He said this year's show would provide a venue, called "The Shed", aimed at this age group, which would have a bar and feature acts such as The Whitlams and the band of actor Russell Crowe.

Mr Perkins said that the Show was the sixth or seventh largest event of its type in the world and was unique in the Oceanic region.

Early in March the RAS would be running a major promotion to 200 travel industry representatives in Hong Kong. This would take woodchoppers and other show attractions to demonstrate the flavour of the event.

Another thing he would like to see is Sydney-siders adopting the type of "theming" that occurs in Canada's annual Calgary Stampede, where dentists, doctors, lawyers and hotel staff in Calgary



*Chief Executive of RAS, Roger Perkins.*

all dress in cowboy gear.

Mr Perkins said he believed the show had a "rosy" future, however, it would not become just "fairy floss town" where people came for "trinkets, show bags and carnival rides" and where it was "bugger the animal side."

"The three major reasons people come are the animals, the show bags and then the carnival.

"Without the animals we would have no reason to exist."

Thanks to our Corporate Members of the Month, Cox Inall Communications and AWEX.

## Rural Writing Competition Deadline Looms

Could you be Australia's entrant in an international agricultural writing contest? If so, hurry, the deadline (close of business Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>) rapidly approaches.

We're looking for NSW's best on-farm production article written by a member of Farm Writers and published during 2005. That article becomes the NSW Finalist in the national judging to find Australia's representative in the 2006 Star Prize Writing Contest run by the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists. This is the only way to enter this international competition. If you are not already a member there is time to join and enter. For information, check our website <http://www.nswfarmwriters.org.au>

The IFAJ also award the Agricultural Photo Star Prize. A member of Farm Writers can enter this contest via the Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists.

Go to the IFAJ website (<http://ifaj.org/photocontest/index.html>) for more information about this competition and contact Bev Jordan ([bevjordan@msn.com.au](mailto:bevjordan@msn.com.au)) if you would like to enter.