



Newsletter

March 2009

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc
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Why does the fertiliser industry stir up so much emotion?

Controversy and the fertiliser industry have been close companions in the past 12 months. The industry has been subject to an ACCC inquiry, a Senate Inquiry and vigorous debate in the media about pricing and competition. Now global prices have cooled, and new market entrants are attempting to grab market share from the dominant player on the east coast, Incitec Pivot.



Incitec Pivot's General Manager Australian Fertilisers, Gary Brinkworth, is our speaker at Farm Writers on March 27. Gary is accountable for approximately \$2 billion in annual sales of IPL-manufactured and imported fertilisers, throughout the East Coast of Australia including South Australia and Tasmania. Gary will be talking about competition in the industry, supply and demand over the next 18 months and price trends.

Time: 12 midday (with lunch commencing as usual at 12:30pm)
Date: Friday 27th March 2009.
Venue: The Menzies Hotel
14 Carrington St, Sydney
Bookings: www.nswfarmwriters.org
bookings@nswfarmwriters.org

Alltech Young Leader in Rural Journalism Awards

OPEN NOW

Offered by Alltech in conjunction with Farm Writers' and the Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists, the Young Leader in Rural Journalism Awards are now open. This award is the chance to identify up and coming journalists and support their leadership development.

The winner will represent the state in a national contest and so become one of five contenders for the national prize: fully funded attendance at the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists Congress at Fort Worth, Texas; and participation in the professional development program that runs at the same time.

This is a fantastic opportunity for any young journalist, so enter today!
For details on who qualifies and how to enter, please go to the Farm Writers' website:
www.nswfarmwriters.org

New seminar prices

For the last three years NSW Farm Writers' has been pleased to be able to offer Members unchanged seminar prices; however during this time catering and room hire costs have increased significantly. At current prices, seminars are not sustainable for the organisation. New prices for seminars where you can hear influential speakers in the agriculture sector offer authoritative, frank and newsworthy commentary and perspectives on issues of current or emerging importance are:

\$70 for Members and \$90 for non members.

The Menzies continues to offer the best location, facilities and value for money for Farm Writers' events, and the new pricing has been set to allow individuals and corporations to continue to enjoy the best value networking agribusiness event in Sydney. Existing vouchers held by Members will be honoured; new vouchers will be issued with a face value of \$70. Annual membership fees will be reviewed at the 2009 AGM.

Can agribusiness weather the GFC storm?

The unique challenges of the global financial crisis and their impact on Australian agribusiness were addressed at the February Farm Writers' seminar, with an expert panel from the major banks. Directed by Brooke Corte from Sky Channel Business News, the discussion covered short-term finance availability, demand and prices for Australia's agricultural exports; and government intervention.

Paul Beiboer from Corporate Financial Services with Rabobank Australia Group highlighted that this is a once-in-a-lifetime event with credit set to get tighter in 2009 and more so further down the value chain. Mr Beiboer forecasted a decline in input costs through this year, with land values coming under pressure especially in second tier assets where production is less viable.

Senior Economist at Westpac, Andrew Hanlan, had a positive message for Farm Writers' members, that world growth won't be contracting in one year's time and he does not expect a recession. Mr Hanlan noted that government intervention has had an impact on prices and output, and quoted a Westpac survey which found that in relation to the availability of credit, finance was the most difficult to obtain in thirty years. A closing message from Mr Hanlan was that risk was not being priced properly by some banks.

Another positive message was delivered by Peter Jolly, Head of Markets Research at National Australia Bank, who believes the macro-economy is past the worst, despite GDP numbers for the fourth quarter being very poor. According to Mr Jolly unemployment will continue to rise for some time and the financial system will never be the same again; though the agriculture sector is one of the better-placed sectors to carry through the storm.



Peter Jolly, National Australia Bank; Brooke Corte, Sky Channel Business News; Andrew Hanlan, Westpac; Paul Beiboer, Rabobank

Agribuzz is back

The Farm Writers' networking function Agribuzz has kicked off 2009 with a bang and a sensational view. Sponsor of the event, NAB Agribusiness, opened up its Level 28 function room to over 60 Farm Writers' Members and friends; who were treated to a presentation from Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay.

The development of the industry has been mirrored in Adam's career progression; the challenges of gene technologies, best management practice, water use and market access making for a fascinating journey. Speaking about his personal experiences, the development of the industry, and sharing some advice for other young agribusiness professionals; Adam's presentation was a great way to start the year's events.

Agribuzz guests enjoyed great food, fun networking and pearls of wisdom from one of the leaders of Australian agribusiness. Farm Writers' hopes to hold four Agribuzz functions a year, so watch this space for the next networking opportunity!

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc

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'Biosecurity – What are our critical risk areas?' A seminar addressing the challenges we face today

Australian Institute of Agricultural Science & Technology

When: Thursday, 16th April 2009 12 pm (includes lunch) to 5pm (includes afternoon tea)

Where: Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) – Woodbridge Road Menangle

Who should attend? Anyone interested in the future health of Australia's livestock, grain horticultural and apiculture industries

Cost: \$60 (AIAST members), \$70 (AIAST non-members), including lunch and afternoon tea.

More information: www.aiast.com.au