



Newsletter

September 2006

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

Celebrating 40 years and looking to the future

CALLING members of Farm Writers, past and present...Join us on Friday, 29 September at a special luncheon to celebrate our 40th year of bringing rural issues directly to the people of metropolitan Sydney. Spread the word, particularly to past members, and encourage your colleagues and friends to attend.

As well as catching up with familiar faces from the past, we will look forward to learning about 'the future of rural and regional media'. And there is no one better equipped to look into that particular mist and find a path through than our special guest speaker, Mr John B Fairfax AM, Chairman of Marinya Media Pty Ltd and of Rural Press Limited.

John Fairfax gives generously of his time and influence to organisations representing youth, so it is not surprising that one focus of his presentation will be the training needed to prepare today's aspiring journalists for the future and to foster high quality rural journalism.

He will also look at how traditional media companies can take advantage of new technology rather than succumbing to competition from 'new media'. And we can also expect some

general comments on how Mr Fairfax anticipates the federal Government's changes to media regulations could shape the future. He may also challenge us with some pointers on the Farm Writers' future direction.

Mr Fairfax began his career in 1961 as a cadet journalist at the *Sydney Morning Herald* and then worked in management positions throughout Fairfax before joining the board in 1979. Since 1988 he has been Chairman of Marinya Media Pty Ltd, which was formed following the takeover of John Fairfax Ltd in December 1987. His active involvement in organisations representing rural Australia includes serving as a Councillor of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW and he has rural interests in country NSW.

Farm Writers' History

"On the 12th August 1966, the Agricultural Press Club of Australia [provisional name] held their inaugural meeting at the Pitt Club". *Extract from minutes held in the archives at the State Library of NSW.*

From that beginning has come the association we enjoy today - a networking forum for agri-communicators to discuss industry



Mr John B. Fairfax AM is the guest speaker at the Farm Writers' 40th anniversary lunch.

developments and issues with people involved in farming, food and fibre processing, marketing, finance, regulation and rural politics.

Although our name has changed over the years (you may remember the *Farm Writers' and Broadcasters' Society of NSW*) our commitment to rural communications remains the same.

To help Farm Writers' celebrate its 40 years, corporate members are encouraged to book tables in advance.

To book go to our website: www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm

Register early and on-line for the 40th birthday celebrations luncheon on Friday, 29 September

Corporate Member of the Month: Renard and University of Sydney, Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

Venue: The MENZIES HOTEL, 14 Carrington Street, Sydney

When: Friday, 29 September at 12pm for 12:30pm

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

Register: BEFORE 5:00pm on Wednesday, 27 September

on-line at <http://www.nswfarmwriters.org> or by emailing bookings@nswfarmwriters.org or by phone to Sarah Robson (02) 8204 3730

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 Sarah Robson on (02) 8204 3730.

Social conscience delivers results for agribusiness

Contributed by Sally Edgar, OneProfile Communications

AN innovative scrap metal clean up program that has raised almost \$1 million for rural fire brigades nationally is showing there are plenty of commercially rewarding opportunities for social responsible marketing (SRM) in the agribusiness sector.

Despite mainstream debates about the need for corporate Australia to balance profit-making with a social and environmental conscience as well as the inherent difficulty in economically measuring the SRM outcomes, Solutions Marketing and Research Managing Director Rob Hoile presented the case for actively engaging in SRM to members and guests of the Farm Writers' August lunch.

With 27 years experience in the consumer and agricultural marketing arena, Mr Hoile said outcomes from an Australian Corporate Social Responsibility Study conducted in 2005 by forecasting company Foreseechange Pty Ltd provided solid arguments for why corporate Australia should not ignore SRM.

From a consumer perspective, the study showed that 80 per cent of people surveyed believed companies should not ignore social and environmental issues, with 53 per cent saying they would pay up to five per cent more for a product made by a company that was socially responsible, so long as the quality of the product was the same.

On the other hand, from an employee



NSW Farm Writers' President Bev Jordan discusses corporate social responsibility with Solutions Marketing & Research Managing Director Rob Hoile, who presented the case for corporate philanthropy to the Association's August luncheon.

perspective, 45 per cent of people surveyed said most people would prefer to work for a company that puts a high priority on social and environmental issues.

Mr Hoile said the most important elements for SRM success included aligning the company's brand with the right cause, undertaking a long-term investment in and commitment to working with the chosen partner and not funding political parties.

"If a company gets all the elements of SRM right, public relations benefits and improved brand image follows," said Mr Hoile, who highlighted the Smorgon Steel Great Scrap RoundUp campaign as an excellent example of SRM in agribusiness. The innovative campaign sees Smorgon Steel collect on-farm

scrap metal paying farmers in product vouchers plus a \$15 per tonne donation to the farmer's nominated Volunteer Fire Brigade. The campaign has so far injected almost \$2 million into rural and regional Australia.

As well as providing Smorgon Steel with new resources for its steel manufacturing business, Mr Hoile said the campaign had helped to raise the company's profile as being community and environmentally aware, which in turn was increasing financial returns.

A key public relations outcome has been a feature-length segment about the campaign on WIN TV's prime time news.

"The WIN TV segment was free advertising that's worth about \$27,000," Mr Hoile said. "It was high value because it had a lot of branding and every message was hit."

"The Smorgon Steel campaign shows how corporate social responsibility is an excellent way to improve a company's triple bottom line; being environment, business and shareholders."

Thanks to August Corporate Members of the Month Landmark.



Smorgon Steel Business Development Manager Richard Castan (left) said the benefits of the Great Scrap RoundUp had been huge for the company.

"As well as improving brand recognition, we have opened up new markets, established relationships with new communities and we have been able to access a new resource of scrap metal for steel making," Mr Castan told Farm Writers' members and guests at the August lunch.

40th Anniversary Special 'Regional Broadcast'

The NSW Farm Writers' Association has a proud 40-year history of bringing rural issues directly to the people of metropolitan Sydney. Now, with the generous support of our corporate member, Telstra Country Wide, we will mark that achievement by reaching out the other way.

You can be part of the audience at the Farm Writers' 40th anniversary event on Friday, 29 September – even if you cannot make it to “the big smoke”.

Telstra Country Wide will host light refreshments and an inter-active link to this special event at regional venues around NSW, see box below for venues.

This will extend our excellent forum by providing an opportunity for our regionally based members and others who are unable to attend the meeting in Sydney – particularly country-based media - to hear Mr John B. Fairfax's address and to take part in the debate about the future of regional and rural media.

Members and their guests can arrive at regional venues at 12.30pm for the 1.05pm speaker link. The address should last 20-30 minutes, followed by questions and answers from both Sydney and regional audiences. Please support this new initiative, and let your rural colleagues, friends and associates know about this exciting opportunity.

For more information and to make a booking, please see the contact list below, or phone Sarah Robson on (02) 8204 3730 or Margaret McCullough on (02) 8251 1827. Please note: the website booking system is for the Sydney event ONLY.

Area Office	Contact	Ph/Mob	Location
Canberra	Jess Izod	02 6219 2918 or 0428 258 949	Telstra Tower
Central coast-Hunter Valley	Lauren Howson	02 4362 0002 or 0428 556 112	Erina & Maitland
Far North Coast NSW	Daryl Rock	02 6626 5210 or 0429 776 643	Lismore
Illawarra	Craig Haase	02 4251 0355 or 0428 553 994	Wollongong
Mid north coast NSW	Katrina Baines	02 6588 2060 or 0429 882 060	Port Macquarie
Newcastle & Lake Macquarie	Lorraine Davies	02 4985 8940 or 0429 632 648	Newcastle
North West NSW	Robert Butler	02 6774 9975 or 0429 693 218	Armidale
Western Region NSW	Virginia Chambers	02 6392 8388 or 0427 106 707	Orange, Dubbo & Bathurst

Hawkesbury Spring Expo showcases new agricultural degree for 2007

If you're thinking about studying a course in agriculture, the Hawkesbury Spring Expo at the University of Western Sydney (UWS), Hawkesbury Campus on Saturday, 23 September from 10am to 4pm could be the day for you.

The Expo will showcase UWS course information, including its new agricultural degree for 2007, as well as courses in animal science, forensic science, horticulture, nutrition and food, medical science, nursing, environmental health and science.

There will be live entertainment all day and loads of fun, fair and festival. You can visit the forensic crime scene house, look at Campus archives, have your diet scientifically analysed and indulge in Harvest food and produce stalls.

Free entry and parking on campus.

News In Brief

Alltech/IFAJ Travel Award Presentation at 40th luncheon

As the NSW finalist in the 2006 Alltech/International Federation of Agricultural Journalists Travel competition, *The Land* journalist Lucy Skuthorpe will be presented with a special award by Alltech Biotechnology as part of the Farm Writers' 40th birthday celebrations.

Australian Star Prize article online

To see the standards of journalism being set by Australia's finest rural writers, make sure you read Tamworth journalist, Neil Lyon's Star Prize winning article that saw him represent Australia at the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists Congress contest in Norway in August.

Neil's story of how two generations are successfully farming together near Narrabri in North-West NSW, titled 'Family team a powerful force', was published in *The Land* on 17 November 2005 as part of a special feature profiling 10 of NSW's top farming enterprises.

It can now be read online at http://www.nswfarmwriters.org/IFAJ_STARPRIZE_STORY.htm

Notice of AGM

The Farm Writers' Annual General Meeting is to be held at 11am Friday, 27 October, prior to that month's luncheon, with both events being held at the Menzies Hotel, Carrington Street, Sydney.

More information about the AGM and booking for the luncheon are available on www.nswfarmwriters.org.

September 2006

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc

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