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Watching your back

AUGUST 2016

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tony York

WAFARMERS PRESIDENT

As we reach the middle of the year, both myself and the WAFarmers staff are busier than ever.

We held another successful and inspiring Annual Conference in February, with Dale Park being farewelled from his Presidency after an energetic and fruitful four years. Dale left big shoes to fill, and while adapting to being the President of WAFarmers has presented many challenges, I thank staff and members for helping me through the process.

The Annual Conference was highlighted by a session from Tom O'Toole, whose career in building a successful bakery business and motivating his staff was truly inspirational. His advice on how to get the best from his staff and how to build a successful business can easily translate into farm business and the greater agricultural sector. Key takeaway points included being prepared to change, listening to your customers and empowering your staff. For WAFarmers, that means continuing to listen to members and giving you direct benefits.

To this end, WAFarmers has been very active in pursuing your interests on both state and federal platforms, with some real benefits. Some modest but important gains for small and medium-sized businesses in the Federal Budget included extending the small business threshold from \$2 million to \$10 million, which will benefit many members. Additionally, there will be a lower company tax rate for some others. The State Budget saw some extra funding towards Royalties for Regions, a small extension of the payroll tax threshold from \$850,000 to \$900,000, and no reductions in funding or staff for The Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA).

At the time of writing, the nation was gearing up for a Federal Election. This lengthy campaign gave WAFarmers increased opportunity to highlight what needed to be done for our sector, and we will continue to be actively engaged in advocating for our members with the successful party.

In addition to our core purpose of advocacy, we are in the process of value adding our membership and diversifying into providing member services. To this end, we recently announced an agreement with HBF which sees members benefit from the WAFarmers HBF Corporate Health Plan. Through this partnership, members can enjoy savings of up to 12 per cent on health policies, plus so much more.



Our continued engagement with our sponsors has provided significant gains for members too. From savings on Isuzu UTEs, the opportunity to reduce insurance premiums through PSC Insurance Brokers (Perth) (formerly Australian Reliance), expert legal advice and services to the rural sector through Bailiwick Legal and so much more, members are receiving greater benefits than ever.

Finally, we have thoroughly enjoyed speaking with you at recent events such as the Wagin Woolorama, Zone Meetings, conferences and field days, and we look forward to seeing you our upcoming events, including the ever-popular Heart of WA!

On behalf of WAFarmers, I would like to thank you for your continued support, and wish you the very best for the remainder of the year.

Tony York
PRESIDENT



LETTER FROM WAFARMERS CEO

Stephen Brown

Welcome to the second edition of

Watching Your Back, our half year update on WAFarmers and what we have been doing for our members.

I would like to take this opportunity to update members on our five-year Business Plan – Project Re-charge, Re-connect. We are now halfway through this plan and are about to undertake a full review of what we have achieved, and make some minor changes as we head in to the future.

As indicated in the 2015 Annual Report, we recorded a financial surplus for the 2015 year, our first surplus for over five years, and we stemmed the decrease of membership numbers from five per cent to 1.6 per cent.



These were exceptionally significant achievements for WAFarmers and we have worked incredibly hard over the last six months to keep this momentum going.

To capitalise on these opportunities and build on our Business Plan, we appointed two experienced full-time staff members in January. Sara Andacic joined as our Membership Coordinator, coming from a similar role at The Royal Agricultural Society of WA, and Grady Powell joined as our Executive Officer Policy – General, coming from the office of the former Minister for Agriculture, Ken Baston.

With these appointments, we now have a staff of 9.4 FTE's, and I am pleased to say we have a fantastic team in Guildford doing a phenomenal job with the limitations we face. With the update to the Business Plan about to be undertaken, I am very confident that the growth and recognition we have achieved over the last two years will continue to increase, resulting in strong membership growth and continued financial improvement.

I look forward to meeting as many members as possible at upcoming conferences, Zone Meetings, field days and other events. Don't forget that tickets are on sale now for our signature event, Heart of WA – be there Friday 16 September for a big announcement.

Stephen Brown
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

USEFUL CONTACTS

WAFarmers
(08) 9486 2100

Rural Financial Counselling Services
1800 612 004

Lifeline
13 11 14

Crisis Care
(08) 9223 1111

Rural Link
1800 552 002

Headspace National Youth Mental
Health Foundation
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Wheatbelt GP Network (Northam)
(08) 9621 1530

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Chris Antonio
Business Development Manager
Agribusiness

The Agribusiness Team at PSC Insurance Brokers Perth is led by Chris Antonio. Having grown up on the family farm at Northam, Chris has maintained strong ties with the WA Farming community. As a co-owner of a farm himself, Chris has decades of first hand experience in the operations and complexities of running an agricultural business. Over 20 years of experience in farm insurance and rural finance has given Chris a unique appreciation for the risks WA Farmers face, and how to provide the best insurance solutions for your individual needs. Chris can offer an in-depth analysis of your exposure, and will work with you to create a tailored Agribusiness Insurance package which gives you all the protection you need at the right price. With the backing of PSC Insurance Brokers Perth, Chris can tailor an insurance package for any farming enterprise, regardless of type or size.

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LIVESTOCK AND DAIRY

Kim Haywood



PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA BOLSENBROEK, FARM WEEKLY

I am a fourth generation livestock producer who has worked in all facets of the red meat supply chain globally, before becoming involved in policy and advocacy roles. I have a B.Sc. in Agricultural Management, am a registered Human Nutritionist and was a recipient of the Gyrnet Ellis Award for outstanding services to the agricultural industry.

I returned from the UK in 2012, taking a position with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association as their Policy Advisor before accepting a position as Executive Officer with WAFarmers in January 2015. In my role, I am responsible for livestock and dairy sector policies and advocacy.

The amalgamation of the Meat and Wool Councils to form the Livestock Council at the Annual General Meeting on 18 February marked a significant milestone for WAFarmers. The Livestock Council was established to increase collaboration on meat and wool issues between the two former councils and to streamline processes to ensure continued and enhanced representation on all livestock issues.

Kim Haywood

KEY FOCUS AREAS SO FAR IN 2016

► Waroona fire

The devastating Waroona bushfires caused havoc for dairy farmers. In addition to loss of infrastructure, feed and pasture, some farmers were forced to dump milk because of a power outage and others were unable to get milk through to processors as tankers were blocked by road closures. Dairy farmers and their families were assisted in their recovery through the WAFarmers Fire Appeal.

► Dairy Industry Fund

Sales of WAFarmersFirst Milk have continued to rise as consumers make a conscious decision to give back to local dairy farmers by purchasing our milk. As a result, the WAFarmers Dairy Council launched three dairy industry projects in April through the Dairy Industry Fund.

► Industry consultation and representation

WAFarmers has been a key player in the formation of The Sheep Alliance of WA, which is due to replace the Sheep Industry Leadership Council at its AGM in July 2016, and will also engage with Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) to encourage them to develop a similar research and development structure to that created by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), which could merge WA's sheep industry priorities into the new Sheep Alliance of WA.

► Biosecurity and disease management

Bovine Johnes disease (BJD), Footrot, Foot in Mouth disease and other communicable diseases have been a continued focus for WAFarmers throughout 2016. We were successful in getting an extension to the Permit for the Strain Specific Footrot Vaccines that were due to expire in July this year, plus we submitted a draft framework for the management of BJD in WA after it was agreed nationally to deregulate BJD.



Alongside WAFarmers colleagues and industry representatives, I also participated in the DAFWA APOLLO Biosecurity Exercise in May, and have continued to represent WAFarmers on the national Biosecurity Task Force, which is charged with developing the regulations and statutory instruments to support the new Biosecurity Act.

► **Safeguarding the red meat supply chain**

WAFarmers has recently collaborated with Sheepmeat Council of Australia and Cattle Council of Australia and supported their submission into the Regulatory Burdens in the Red Meat Industry. The regulatory costs in the red meat and livestock industries report provides a current examination of the regulatory costs within the sheep and cattle industries value chains.

WAFarmers has also worked with the Australian Farm Institute (AFI), which has been commissioned by the Red Meat Advisory Council to improve the sustainability of red meat and livestock industry peak councils.

Recently, a letter written by animal welfare groups including the RSPCA was sent to the Prime Minister asking him to establish an Office for Animal Welfare, which is not supported by the industry for a number of reasons. As a result, WAFarmers Senior Vice President Lyn Slade (who sits on the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) Animal Welfare Committee on behalf of WAFarmers Members) and I provided input into the development of an Animal Welfare Policy to be adopted nationally.

WHAT I'VE DONE

► **Options to Strengthen the Misuse of Market Power Law – The Effects Test**

WAFarmers supported the Australian Dairy Farmers' (ADF) submission to control the misuse of market power by retailers by writing to relevant Ministers recommending the adoption of the proposed Effects Test. WAFarmers believed the most pragmatic option outlined was Option E. However, WAFarmers did not agree with the inclusion of the 'purpose' element due to the practical difficulties of proving purpose.

► **Submissions and comments**

WAFarmers has provided comment on a number of livestock issues and reports over the past six months including: the AWI Strategic Plan Development 2016-17 to 2018-19; the Western Australian Draft Wild Dog Action 2016-2021; the AusVet Plan compensation and valuations for livestock and livestock products; the Primary

Industries Levies and Charges Collection Amendment Bill 2016; and Towards an Integrated Integrity System – A report by the SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review Steering Group.

► **Harmonised international standards for agricultural chemicals**

WAFarmers, in discussions with State and Federal Ministers, has helped to fast track new AgVet chemical products through research grants. This new funding will help bridge the gap by helping Australian producers access the same new and innovative AgVet chemicals as some international competitor, saving time and money.

WHERE I'VE BEEN

► **Dairy meetings and events**

In February, WAFarmers in partnership with ADF hosted Dairy Industry Updates in Boyanup, Metricup and Harvey to provide dairy farmers with the opportunity to learn about the latest developments in products and services, and learn how ADF and WAFarmers were working together to benefit all members. Industry representatives also participated in the Dairy Innovation Day in May hosted by Dairy Australia and Western Dairy, which was followed by the WAFarmers Dairy Industry Dinner. The dinner was attended by 200 people, and included the announcement of the inaugural Brownes Dairy Young Dairy Farmer of the Year Award.

► **BAM Act industry funding schemes review**

WAFarmers met with representatives from ACIL Allen and DAFWA to discuss the main areas of concern to levy payers, including micro administration of the schemes and opportunities for industry to fund big picture issues, the need for more detail on how program funds are spent in the field, and the need to permit outside tendering so that other organisations could tender for projects.

► **Sheep Health Workshops**

Collaboration between WAFarmers, DAFWA and industry organisations resulted in a series of highly successful Sheep Health Workshops. Over 100 sheep producers attended the four events in March and more workshops have been requested in different areas across the country.

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

- Sustainable dairy price key to industry development
- 2016 WAFarmers Dairy Conference
- Tag retention issues
- Livestock declarations and loading laws



WAFARMERSFIRST MILK

The most significant achievement of the last six months has been the commencement of shipments of WAFarmersFirst Milk into China, a direct result of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. The milk is now on sale through two major department store chains in the city of Dalian, and initial reports have indicated strong consumer uptake.

This is the first milk to be shipped into China that has been treated in no way, shape or form, contrary to other imported milks such as ESL from Europe or UHT. We are immensely proud of this achievement and if figures from the initial reports are anything to go by, we look forward to increasing shipments of the milk in the coming months.

DAIRY INDUSTRY FUND

Public support and sentiment towards WAFarmersFirst Milk has continued to rise over the last six months, especially in light of challenges being faced by dairy farmers in the eastern states. As a direct result of sales, a significant amount has been channelled into the Dairy Industry Fund. The fund aims to support a number of short, medium and long term dairy projects across the WA dairy industry, all of which should improve productivity, performance, business growth and diversity of the industry and any part of its supply chain.

Round one of the Dairy Industry Fund projects closed recently, with round two having opened at the start of June. The biggest result of the first round was the establishment of two scholarships that were funded through the project. These scholarships will support young graduates to pursue a career in the dairy industry, which is critically important as it will work to secure the future of the state's dairy industry. Additionally the fund has supported a dairy industry representative to mentor 10 young dairy ambassadors (alongside Dairy Australia), who will have a presence at the revamped dairy industry pavilion at the Perth Royal Show this year.

Round two will continue to expand upon opportunities, and will support small to large-scale projects that work towards the betterment of the industry. We thank everyone who has purchased WAFarmersFirst Milk and urge them to continue to support their local dairy farmers by spreading the word about this delicious local milk and the benefits it has for our dairy industry.



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

The milk continues to be promoted through various social media channels, print media and occasionally on radio, so keep your eyes and ears peeled for information about WAFarmersFirst Milk next time you are scrolling through your newsfeed, flicking through the newspaper or channel-surfing.

We are always looking for fresh content so if you have pictures where you are using WAFarmers First Milk, please send them in to us.

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 /WAFarmersFirst

 WAFarmersFirst



Heart of WA is back again for 2016 and will be bigger, brighter and tastier than ever before!

7.00pm, Friday 16 September
HBF Stadium | Black Tie Event

Book tickets online - only \$190 for members
Booking discount code - heartwa

JOIN US on a delicious food journey as we sample some of the best produce grown here on our own door step. The evening will start with an interactive entrée where you will be able to **TASTE** some of the fresh produce on offer and **MEET** the people from behind the scenes. **WATCH** as the chefs prepare your meal while you sip on a signature Heart of WA cocktail or a glass of local wine. Guests will then move into the main area where the fun will continue. **SIT BACK AND ENJOY** the entertainment, good food and great company.



WHAT'S COMING UP

2016

- 16 September | Heart of WA – HBF Stadium
- 8 October | AgTiki #4 – Perth Hills
- 1 September | WAFarmers Livestock and Pasture Conference – Manjimup

2017

- 21 January | AgConnectWA River Cruise – Swan River
- February | WAFarmers Annual Conference
WAFarmers Bee Conference
- July | WAFarmers Dairy Conference
- September | WAFarmers Livestock and Pasture Conference
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GENERAL POLICY

Grady Powell

I joined WAFarmers in January 2016 as the organisation's third full-time Executive Officer Policy (General), having come from my previous role as Research and Policy Officer to the Hon. Ken Baston MLC, former Minister for Agriculture and Food. I have completed Bachelor Degrees in Politics and International Studies and Environmental Science and Sustainable Development, and am due to complete my Postgraduate Degree in Politics at the end of the year.

In my role, I am responsible for our largest Policy area, General, which involves issues such as transport, farm economics, land clearing, regional communities, fracking and gas, and a wide range of other issues that impact agriculture during any given year.

Grady Powell

KEY FOCUS AREAS SO FAR IN 2016

► Backpacker tax

In the 2014-15 Federal Budget the Commonwealth Government proposed to tax working holiday visa holders (backpackers) 32.5 cents in the dollar. Further to this, the government's proposed policy would see the tax free threshold of \$18,200 turned off, resulting in backpackers paying tax from the first dollar earned.

Approximately 40,000 backpackers work on farms each year, with their efforts contributing an estimated \$3.5 billion to the Australian economy. Given this, and backpackers' willingness to fulfil short-term, high volume employment opportunities, WAFarmers has campaigned strongly against the proposed tax over the last six months, alongside the NFF, state farming organisations, and key industry groups.



In March, WAFarmers represented seven other Western Australian stakeholder bodies at a roundtable meeting held in Sydney that was hosted by Federal Government Ministers. WAFarmers was the only representative from Western Australia in attendance, but was able to convey the importance of the issue and highlighted the impact Western Australian businesses would face should the proposed tax be progressed.

In May, the Federal Government announced a delay to the implementation of the backpacker tax until 1 January 2017, subject to a whole-of-government review. WAFarmers will continue to represent the farmers' voices with government over the coming months, and ensure that the backpacker workforce remains an attractive and accessible option for primary producers into the future.

► Esperance and Waroona fires

WAFarmers has supported the Esperance, Waroona and Yarloop communities following devastating fires which ripped through each community. In November 2015, the Esperance fire claimed four lives, and resulted in the loss of more than 150 livestock, 16 properties and agricultural and native bushland, with 128,000 hectares lost in Cascades, 18,000 hectares in Merivale and 164,000 hectares in Cape Arid. In January 2016, Yarloop was wiped off the map and the neighbouring town of Waroona was severely impacted. In Yarloop, all 121 homes were destroyed and two fatalities occurred. Approximately 71,000 hectares of land was burnt within the region, much of which affected primary producers.

The fires not only scarred the landscape and burnt away a record crop, but charred the morale of the communities. However, these fires also resulted in displays of the camaraderie for which the farming community is renowned. WAFarmers banded together with the local Esperance community and participating companies to



provide some relief to those impacted by fire, by way of a community Christmas party. Donations and fundraising efforts allowed Santa to make the journey to Esperance to give gifts to children, and allowed the adults to experience some respite from recent events and enjoy some normality and Christmas spirit.

Both the Esperance and Waroona fires also resulted in WAFarmers launching fire appeals, which saw a significant amount of money raised that has been used to assist farmers in repairing their properties and preparing for the 2016 season. In addition to monetary donations, the WAFarmers Head Office also coordinated non-financial donations such as fodder for livestock, fencing and grain donations, which were made possible with the assistance of CBH.

WAFarmers is immensely proud to have been able to assist farmers and their families to get back on their feet after these devastating fires, and hopes the donations from the generous Western Australian, inter-state and international public has helped producers to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

WHAT I'VE DONE

► Submissions to both the Esperance and Waroona fires

Esperance-Ravensthorpe Zone created a fire mitigation policy which has now been adopted by the WAFarmers General Council. It is anticipated that this policy will work towards shaping State Government policy, in the hope of improving fire mitigation procedures and strategies.

► Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal

WAFarmers supported the abolition of the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal in April, following the tribunal's pay order that would have severely impacted owner-drivers, which included some farmers in WA. The main argument for this position was that rural and regional WA relies almost entirely on road transport and already transport costs are a concern to our members and other people residing in these areas. If these rates increased by 30 per cent or more, the impact in rural and regional towns would be substantial.



► Review of the Firearms Act 1973 (WA)

WAFarmers recognised the need for a framework surrounding firearms to facilitate their safe use, and prevent firearms from falling into the hands of the non-intended. However, we stated that there must be a balance that would allow farm operators to conduct daily business without fear of falling outside of the legislative procedures.

WHERE I'VE BEEN

► Meeting with Minister for Agriculture

WAFarmers met with the Hon. Dean Nalder to welcome him as our new Minister for Agriculture and Food. A range of issues were raised including the uptake of Multi Peril Crop Insurance, the backpacker tax, the repeal of the GM Act and the retention of the Nucleus Flock 2 Sheep Research, to name a few. This provided an opportunity to the Minister to inform WAFarmers of the direction the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) will take over the coming months and the priorities that have been set.

► Land clearing and environmentally sensitive areas

WAFarmers met with the Minister for Environment, the Hon. Albert Jacob, to gain a greater understanding of environmentally sensitive areas, how they impact farmland, and how farmers need to manage them. As a result of this meeting, the Director General of the Department of Environmental Regulation will present at the mid-year General Section Meeting.

► Zone Meetings

I have attended a number of Zone Meetings in the short time I've been with WAFarmers, and have gained a great understanding of the issues important to members on a local level. Among these issues were heavy vehicle access, rural mental health and Local Government rates.

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

- Privatisation of Fremantle Port
- Development of an Outer Harbour in Kwinana
- Perth Freight Link



AGRICULTURE AND LEADERSHIP AMONG THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

Wes Lefroy

In 2015, I applied for the Zanda McDonald Award, an award run by Platinum Primary Producers Group (PPP) recognising young leaders in agriculture across Australia and New Zealand. From all the nominations received, I was lucky enough to be selected as one of three finalists and, as a result, I participated in a week-long tour of New Zealand's agricultural circuit and attended the award ceremony in Wellington.

First up was a three-day conference in Wellington which included words from the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the director of a sheep dairy, and a tourism entrepreneur speaking about his venture to into agriculture, just to name a few. The conference also included a field trip to Wairarapa where we saw first-hand a leading sheep stud and a fully automated dairy; both very impressive set ups.



After the conference we visited some farms. First stop was Stonyhurst, a 10,000 acre operation of deer, cows, cropping and sheep. Every decision on the property was made with a high level of information with advanced technology for big gains. All animals had EID tags with the performance of each animal scrutinised.

Next stop was Silverstream Charlois at Lincoln. Brent and Anna Fisher sell bulls across New Zealand and are now selling semen into QLD and Canada. It was extremely interesting learning about the advanced genetics within the stud. Brent and Anna are also some of the first farmers in New Zealand to grow fodder beet for cattle grazing, with huge results. One early trial resulted in 2,500kg per hectare live weight gain.

Throughout my time in New Zealand, three things really resounded with me. The first was the obvious passion these producers have for farming and agriculture. Throughout the trip the catch phrase was "I'm proud to be a farmer". For us here in WA, I feel we do not sell our industry well enough. I do not doubt the passion we have for what we do, but how we share that passion with people outside our industry must improve to secure long term sustainability.

The second was the importance of a hunger to learn, gain and share knowledge. Early in the conference it became apparent to me why these farmers were so successful. They were all extremely inquisitive and constantly asked questions of me, and were equally prepared to share their stories.

The final point was the view many of the producers had towards change. Their attitude was not so much about predicting the future and creating a farming system for that, but more about creating a farming system that can thrive in a future that cannot be predicted. Change creates opportunity and those producers who embrace change are in the best position to make the most of it.

Ultimately the Zanda McDonald Award was won by Dean Rabbidge, a dairy farmer New Zealand. Nevertheless, this experience has had a resounding effect on my career and my view of the industry, and I can not speak more highly of the support and enthusiasm of PPP Group. I encourage everyone to get involved with this group for a rewarding and once-in-a-lifetime experience.



AGCONNECTWA



It has been another productive and fun-filled 12 months for AgConnectWA, particularly since the start of 2016.

Having doubled our membership since this time last year, we are now bringing together even more young people interested in agriculture from across the state at a host of different events. We have held a couple of regional sundowners, with our latest in Esperance in March, and intend to do more across the state, in addition to a host of other exciting events.

Our signature River Cruise on the Swan River saw us host over 150 people, and Rural Roots to City Suits featuring Richard Goyder, who rarely accepts speaking opportunities, spoke to a room of 200 young people and answered their questions. The evening was a resounding success, and we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

We also completed the HBF Run for a Reason in May, raising funds and awareness for Beyond Blue, which is a cause close to many of our hearts.

At this, the time of writing, we are gearing up to co-host Innovation Generation with GrainGrowers. In the 10 years since the event began, this is the first time that GrainGrowers has worked on the event with another group. We are really excited about this opportunity and the new faces that we will meet at this combined event.

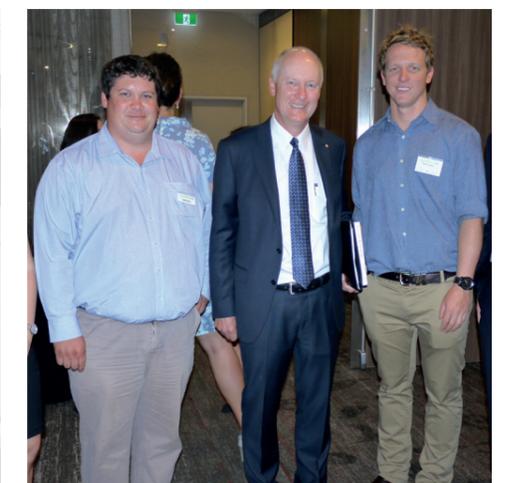
Finally, the fourth annual AgTiki event will head to the Perth Hills in October for a change of scenery. After three successful trips to the

Swan Valley, we decided it would be fun to see what was happening up in the hills.

In other news, Harvest Young Professionals made the decision to close their doors after five years and rolled into AgConnectWA in June, making us the largest networking group in Western Australia for young farmers and agri-professionals.

As a result of our hard work over the past 12 months, both our membership and attendance at events has grown significantly. If you know of any young people who would benefit from being part of AgConnectWA, get them to come along to one of our events or check us out on social media.

-  /WAagconnect
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MEMBERSHIP

Sara Andacic

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

I joined WAFarmers in January 2016 as the organisation's Membership Coordinator, following a high membership retention rate in 2015, and a recognised need to expand upon existing member benefits. I am the direct point of contact for member queries and in the short time since commencing my role, I have spoken with many members, in person and over the phone. I am delighted to be working with such passionate and welcoming people.

With my previous experience at The Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia and completed studies, I have worked alongside the other staff at WAFarmers to maintain this momentum and further increase our member numbers, and I look forward to developing further opportunities for our members over the coming months.



We must continue to be involved, be on the forefront, farm smarter and be professional in every aspect; after all we are the link to life through food. As they say, you need a doctor a few times a year, a teacher in your younger years, but every day you need a farmer.

– Hayley Goad



Hayley Goad

CATTLE PRODUCTION

How did you get involved in the agriculture industry?

I started out working on a few properties in the south west before starting a traineeship as a Livestock Agent. Seven years later, I am still thoroughly enjoying my job and have accomplished a lot in that time, personally and professionally, within the Primaries business.

What is your personal forecast for your industry for the next five years?

Australia has the best agriculture and food for our consumers. Unfortunately there will always be negativity and we will face it throughout the years, but we will stand together and represent our businesses and become stronger.

How has your view of WAFarmers changed since you first got involved?

Being a part of WAFarmers has opened my eyes to the various processes to make plans turn into actions. It's the 'one per cent-ers' that will go above and beyond for others, and WAFarmers is our one per cent-er in WA.

What do you wish other people knew about WAFarmers?

That it isn't a "boys club". WAFarmers offers insight, experience and a vast knowledge of all things agriculture. There is AgConnectWA which caters for 18 to 35 year olds which is a great support network. WAFarmers is a very understanding, fair go and nurturing state farming organisation that allows everyone a chance to become involved and have an opinion.



Laurie Bush

CATTLE PRODUCTION

What was your first impression of WAFarmers?

I didn't have a great deal to do with WAFarmers initially, despite being entitled to go to the meetings as a citrus grower, but I thought that seeing as I had a lot of sheep and a few cows that I had better do the right thing and join. I have been involved with WAFarmers for about the last 16 or 17 years.

Tell us about some of the people you have met whilst working with WAFarmers?

Being a member of the Mortlock Zone, it has been great to meet different people with different views. I am glad we now have some combined meetings with the Avon Zone because it gives us an even greater variety, listening to other peoples' views.

If you weren't farming, what do you think you would be doing?

I would be retired! I'm interested in historical information and I know a lot of historical information about Chittering, Bindoon and the Swan areas, so I probably would have been an archaeologist if my father didn't have a farm.



Tammy Negus

DAIRY PRODUCTION

How did you get involved in the agriculture industry?

You could say farming is in my blood. I was born in Wagin, and my family (the Eckersleys) have farmed sheep and grain since the early 1900's. After studying at university, I became an agronomist and worked for Elders for eight years. I married Oscar Junior in 2010 and now help run a large-scale dairy operation whilst doing off-farm contract work/projects for Western Dairy.

What do you find most challenging about your industry?

I find the general intensity of dairy farming one of the most challenging things about producing this commodity. It requires intensive animal husbandry to set up and maintain a productive and profitable milking herd and a reliance on employees. It would be nice if the wider community were more educated on what actually goes into producing a litre of milk and food in general.

What do you wish other people knew about WAFarmers?

I wish more dairy farmers would have a better understanding about what WAFarmers' role is, and that it's not funded by the government- funding is primarily by members. WAFarmers' actions benefit all farms and not just the members.



Rhys Turton

MIXED GRAINS AND SHEEP PRODUCTION

What was your first impression of WAFarmers? How has your view changed?

I saw WAFarmers as an organisation working hard to represent the interests of Western Australian primary producers. I still believe the organisation has the same fundamental reason for being, however it is great to see a stronger focus on younger people involved in the industry.

What's your personal philosophy on what should be done about your industry?

I believe the best outcomes for our industry occur when growers work together in a co-operative manner to achieve the best possible result. This could be marketing your commodity, lobbying government, solving specific problems on or off farm, or working together for a better deal.

What is your personal forecast for your industry for the next five years?

Farming is an exciting industry with a solid future. I believe we will continue to increase our productivity on farm through the adoption of technology. This can include genetics, agronomic packages, improvements in machinery, and environmental understanding. I feel we will face a growing challenge from countries that can produce the same commodities that we do, with a much lower cost of production.



I have met many talented and passionate people through my involvement with WAFarmers, but I would have to say the members and committee of AgConnectWA would certainly be the most inspiring.

– Rhys Turton

GRAINS AND BEES

Maddison McNeil

Having grown up in Kellerberrin on the family farm and gained significant experience in the agricultural sector before commencing at WAFarmers, my knowledge and passion for agriculture has always been a key driver in my involvement in agriculture. Following the completion of a Bachelor of Agribusiness from Curtin University, I joined WAFarmers in a part-time capacity in October 2014, and became a full-time Executive Officer in December 2014.

At WAFarmers, I am responsible for grains, beekeeping, and ports and rail. While these industries are, at first glance, significantly varied, there are a number of cross-commodity issues which people may not expect. Given the WA grains industry is the state's largest agricultural sector and that bees pollinate at least one third of all the food we eat, there are always a number of issues on the go.

GRAINS

▶ AGC's bid to corporatise CBH

February and March saw significant moves by Australian Grains Champions (AGC) to corporatise Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH). Our position remains that it is an individual grower decision, and we encourage all to educate themselves about the options and potential implications for their businesses and future. AGC has continued to work to corporatise CBH and, now that seeding has been completed for the majority of the state, the debate will likely reignite in the near future. WAFarmers will continue to assess all information presented in future proposals.

▶ Acquisition of Asciano

The proposed acquisition of Asciano by Brookfield has continued to be a key focus for WAFarmers so far this year, with us having put forward numerous submissions to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) on this issue since late 2015. Our primary concerns remain around the long-term implications of vertical integration of the Asciano assets in a restricted, monopoly market, particularly railway and ports, and we look forward to detailing our position further to the ACCC.

▶ 2016/17 Wheat Receival Standards

In April, WAFarmers Grains Council made a submission to Grain Trade Australia about proposed changes to APW2 and ASW1 and stated emphatically that the Council does not support the proposed changes.



▶ 2016/17 Barley Standards

Following on from their 2015 review of barley standards, Grains Industry Association of WA, proposed changes to receival standards, including ryegrass ergot, fusarium affected barley, snails and weed seeds, and WAFarmers provided comment on the changes.

WHAT I'VE DONE

▶ Submissions and comments – chemicals, labelling, market power, and levies

WAFarmers has made a number of comments and submissions over the past six months on various issues pertinent to grains. The submissions were as follows:

- Review of duplication with AgVet chemical labeling and WHS legislation.
- Options to strengthen the misuse of market power law.
- Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Amendment Bill 2016.

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

- GM Free Areas Act 2003
- Chemical reviews: omethoate

BEES

▶ Waroona fire

The Waroona fire caused significant loss of both hives and vegetation, with at least 40 jarrah sites destroyed, as well as a number of organic and other high value sites. Flowering of jarrah occurs only once every two years during December to January and as jarrah is a high value honey, with significant market potential, the loss of these sites was a significant blow. The Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) have proposed fire prevention activities on a number of existing jarrah sites, which would significantly deplete all jarrah resources and may lead to issues with this season's honey flow. WAFarmers will continue to consult with DPaW to ensure that there is minimal disruption to apiary activities in jarrah-flow years.

▶ Consultation with DPaW

WAFarmers Bee Executive recently put a proposal to DPaW with comments to improve current business practices, which focused on the current renewal process, length of apiary site tenures, management of fire, clearing permits, and the ability to option a site prior to applying for a permit. The proposal was a result of a consultation meeting in 2015, with the Director General of DPaW indicating that all issues could be worked through if industry came together with concerns and solutions. WAFarmers will continue to work with DPaW and DAFWA on these issues, and will work to bring management of apiary sites into the technology era.

WHAT I'VE DONE

▶ Biosecurity Act 2015 – Biosecurity (Prohibited and Conditionally Non-prohibited Goods) Determination 2016

In May, WAFarmers Beekeepers Section commented on the proposed implementation of the biosecurity legislation. While WAFarmers supported moves to update Federal biosecurity legislation to ensure it meets modern requirements, WAFarmers was concerned about the rush to implement the legislation, and about how the limited information available would specifically work with existing WA Biosecurity Legislation and Restrictions.

WHERE I'VE BEEN

▶ WAFarmers Beekeepers Conference

At the recent WAFarmers Beekeepers Conference, the executive retained their positions, and attendees were treated to numerous presentations from local and inter-state industry representatives which included achievements, research and information on the latest apiary practices.

▶ Honey Festival

The annual Honey Festival was held at the start of May, with more than 3,000 people having attended the event at The House of Honey.

WHAT I'M WORKING ON

- WA Honey Research Development Group
- Bee Industry Council Western Australia



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