



Annual Report 2015

For more than a century, WAFarmers has represented the interests of the agricultural sector in Western Australia. It is the largest agricultural lobby group in the state and, as such, has a very powerful and influential voice.

The strength of the WAFarmers brand means the organisation can successfully lobby government for positive change, form alliances with businesses and organisations and, most importantly, communicate with the rural and metropolitan public on important issues.

The WAFarmers 2015 Annual Report details much of the important work and achievements accomplished by WAFarmers in the past 12 months. The publication is an opportunity for members to see what their support enables WAFarmers to achieve on their behalf. For non-members, the information included in this report is intended to educate about the on-going work, challenges and successes of the organisation. It is hoped this report will encourage non-members to consider joining or supporting WAFarmers as it continues to fight for the agricultural community.

As a not-for-profit organisation, WAFarmers relies on the support of current and new members to be able to continue working for positive change.

Thank you for your support.



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It is with great pleasure that I present the 2015 Annual Report on behalf of the Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc) (WAFarmers). The past 12 months have seen WAFarmers continue on its path to rebuild the Federation and improve its situation, both in the short and long term.

While the year has not been without its challenges, there have been numerous successes of which WAFarmers, its staff, and the members they represent, can be proud. It has been well documented that many organisations which rely on memberships have struggled with declining numbers. WAFarmers is no exception to this, particularly as the number of farmers remaining in the industry continues to decrease at an alarming rate.

To remedy this loss of income, WAFarmers has pursued alternative income streams through ventures including the WAFarmersFirst Milk brand which was launched in November of 2014. The response to this initiative has been overwhelmingly positive and we look forward to benefitting the industry through the associated project trust. The 2015 Annual Conference was a positive, educational experience which encompassed the WAFarmers Annual General Meeting and Commodity meetings, in conjunction with fantastic guest speakers. These included Fremantle Dockers player Nat Fyfe, Federal Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs Joel Fitzgibbon and Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture Senator Richard Colbeck, as well as lively debate from the political panel. Attendees ranged from across the industry and included members of WAFarmers, agri-professionals, politicians, rural media, agricultural students, producers and other stakeholders.

WAFarmers celebrated the Heart of WA Ball in September with over 300 guests this year at the HBF Stadium in Mount Claremont. The black-tie event was a huge success and a wonderful opportunity to honour and celebrate the


hardworking producers located across Western Australia. The evening concluded with an exciting announcement outlining the new partnership between WAFarmers and the Chinese company Lifeland to export local milk and honey to Chinese consumers. This is another example of the additional income streams WAFarmers has been pursuing to generate income.

The Federation has maintained its association with the national peak body, the National Farmers' Federation (NFF). Representatives from WAFarmers have attended a number of members' council meetings, and engagement with the NFF and other state farming organisations has been largely positive. While there has been an emphasis on consolidating representation at a national level, the state farming organisations recognise that over 60 per cent of their work is state-specific so strengthening these divisions is also paramount.

The staff at WAFarmers have continued to work exceptionally hard in the policy and advocacy sphere on behalf of our members. As you will see in the pages of this report, WAFarmers has advocated on a wide range of issues which matter to you, both on and off the farm. I encourage you to read this report and familiarise yourself with the work WAFarmers is doing for you.

Agriculture is the only pillar of the Australian economy which has the potential to double by 2030 and it is with this in mind that WAFarmers continues to strive towards a more viable, profitable and sustainable future for the agricultural industry.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Federation's staff and elected representatives, all of whom continue to work tirelessly to assist our industry. Lastly, I would like to thank the members for their ongoing support - without you, WAFarmers could not carry out the exceptionally important work that it does.



“Agriculture is the only pillar of the Australian economy which has the potential to double by 2030 and it is with this in mind that WAFarmers continues to strive towards a more viable, profitable and sustainable future for the agricultural industry.”

Dale Park - President

Another milestone passes as I move from my first full year as WAFarmers CEO in to my second year, and what a year it has been.

Project Re-charge, Re-connect, our five-year plan to recharge our finances and re-connect with our members and the agricultural industry commenced in 2014 and has now completed its second year. I am very pleased to report that the results achieved in the last two years are exactly in line with the plan. During 2015 we have completely rebuilt our Policy Document and, as it is a live document, we continue to review and amend Policy as needed to ensure we have a current and accurate Policy Document at all times.

A renewed focus on membership was the second major part of Project Re-charge, Re-connect for 2015, and I am pleased to advise that significant advances were made in our plan for membership over the last 12 months. As at the end of 2015, we only recorded a 1.6 per cent drop in membership numbers; this is the first time for many years that our member numbers have not decreased by five per cent per annum. To continue this momentum and further increase our member numbers, we will appoint a Membership Officer in 2016. With a number of aging members and farmers leaving the industry, maintaining or increasing membership numbers is a significant challenge, but one myself and my team willingly take on board.

I would like to extend my thanks to all of our members who supported our membership drive with donations during 2015. The funds which have not been used will be carried forward into 2016 along with our budget and plans.

Our greatest achievement in 2015 was recording an operating surplus for the financial year. Whilst small, it is in line with Project Re-charge, Re-connect and is the first operating surplus recorded by WAFarmers since 2010. Notably, the surplus was achieved after a large increase

in expenses associated with travel. Our staff, Directors and Commodity representatives spent more time and money travelling inter-state to represent our members in 2015 than in the previous year. Add to this the 25,000 kilometres we clocked up in our Isuzu UTE attending Zone Meetings, Field Days and other industry events within WA and you can understand why there has been an increase in our profile during 2015. In summary, we spent more than ever representing members and still recorded a surplus.

Other highlights during 2015 included:

- our best Annual Conference for a number of years, with 288 registrations recorded over the day-day event;
- Heart of WA, which sold 350 tickets;
- the Beef Conference;
- the Dairy Conference;
- the AgConnectWA Conference;
- the first full year of sales for WAFarmersFirst Milk; and,
- the announcement of an Agreement that will see WAFarmersFirst milk and honey sold in China.

And, if you thought those events were good, wait until you see the plans for events in 2016.

Adding to the excitement in the Federation is the level of interest in executive positions that have been and will be filled at Zone, Commodity and Board level. A number of younger people have filled and are applying for various positions going forward, and this is a very positive signal for the future of WAFarmers.

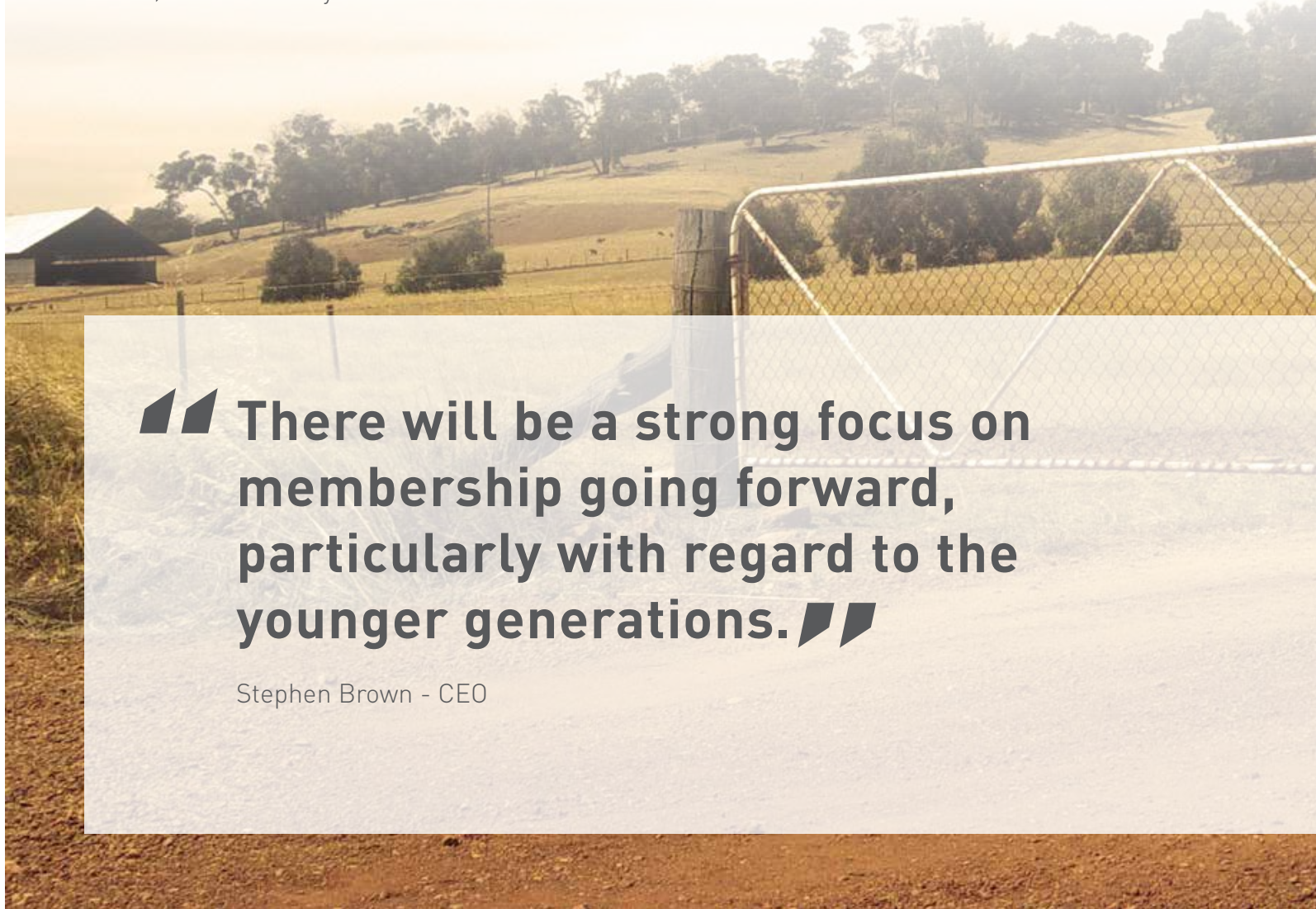
AgConnectWA continued to prove itself to be a glowing representation of young farmers and agri-professionals, and a great asset to WAFarmers. The committee members, made up of a number of new individuals, continually demonstrated passion and enthusiasm for the sector and brought fresh ideas to the table, resulting in numerous successful events

throughout the year. Their drive for all things agriculture will open up greater opportunities for both AgConnectWA and WAFarmers in 2016.

For our members we have released a new partnership with Australian Reliance Insurance, and our partnership with Isuzu UTE saw 19 members take advantage of this partnership during the first year resulting in a cheque to WAFarmers and another vehicle for our use for the next 12 months. The 4Farmers partnership allowed us to attend and participate in all four Field Days at next to no cost through the use of their site and marquee. Ongoing support was also received from RSM, PrimeSuper, Widespan Sheds, Countryman, RadioWest and a host of smaller event partners and levy bodies, including GRDC, MLA and Dairy Australia.

Finally, to all my staff, thank you very much for your work throughout the year. We have been understaffed this year and the work you have undertaken to achieve our results went above and beyond. It has shown what a small, dedicated team of professionals can achieve when we focus and work together in a team spirit.

To the Board of Directors, I thank you for your support throughout 2015 and look forward to working in 2016 with those of you remaining. To those retiring, I thank you for your commitment for not only the last 12 months but the entire time you have been on the Board.



“ There will be a strong focus on membership going forward, particularly with regard to the younger generations. ”

Stephen Brown - CEO

The WAFarmers Grains Section is the largest and most representative rural advocacy group in WA, and represents approximately one third of grain producers in WA. Throughout 2015, the Grains Council focused on rebuilding relationships with politicians, government departments and key industry figures, and returning savings to farmers at a farm gate level through supply chain efficiencies and reducing red tape.

The WAFarmers Grains Section hopes to increase membership by demonstrating the value WAFarmers provides to industry and how the work of 2015 has changed the operating environment for the state's farmers.

Railways

Railways have remained a key focus for WAFarmers in 2015, with the issue now moving beyond Tier 3 lines. Currently, farmers in WA face significant uncertainty with both the interim and long term access agreements. Negotiations on long term rail access arrangements were disrupted, with the requirement for negotiations to focus on interim access agreements.

Late April to early May in 2015 was extremely troublesome for the negotiations. Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH) was required to remove their locomotive fleet from the lines for approximately 18 hours, as an interim agreement had not been reached. CBH Group did sign an interim agreement under protest, with access fees reportedly increasing by 18 per cent.

When the WAFarmers Annual Report went to print, a new interim agreement between Brookfield Rail and CBH had just begun, with the previous short-term agreement having expired on 31 December 2015. Despite Brookfield and CBH not reaching a long-term agreement, WAFarmers commended the 12-month deal,

which gave farmers certainty about CBH's capacity to move grain from up-country storage to ports and on to international markets. This was particularly timely, as harvest had begun and the signing of the new agreement confirmed that there would be no disruptions in the supply chain. WAFarmers continues to pressure Brookfield and CBH to negotiate for fair access via a long-term agreement to give growers more certainty.

In conjunction with the issue of access to the WA rail network, the Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) conducted the five year review into the Railway (Access) Code 2000. This review also links to the re-certification of the Railway (Access) Code 2000, which is due to expire on 11 February 2016. The potential lapse in certification of the Code may allow the National Competition Council to have the lines declared under Part IIIA of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. Once the lines are declared, the ACCC can intervene to facilitate access for the lines, either through setting up terms and conditions or by approving an agreement similar to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).

The lapse in certification may also allow the current below-rail lease holder to become more accountable for the access provision process, as well as provide the Western Australian community with greater transparency as to the operations of this key infrastructure.

WAFarmers supports the Western Australian rail network and infrastructure being managed by a nationally regulated regime. Key logistic and supply chain infrastructure in the Australian economy, such as railways and ports, should have federally regulated access schemes. The importance of the infrastructure to the economy cannot be overstated and it cannot be left to self-regulate. Federal regulation will provide greater transparency and reduce the undue influence of monopolistic behaviour on industry.

ACCC Review of Brookfield's Proposed Asciano Takeover

On 19 August, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) announced an informal review of the proposed acquisition by Brookfield consortium (Brookfield) of Asciano Limited (Asciano). The informal review was an assessment of the likely competitive impacts of the acquisition. Some of Brookfield's Australian businesses include Brookfield Rail and Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal, while Asciano has three primary businesses including Pacific National, Patrick Terminals and Logistics, and Patrick Bulk & Automotive Port Services.

WAFarmers made comments to the informal review urging the ACCC to deny the acquisition, as the monopolistic nature of the rail infrastructure in WA would not be suitable for vertical integration of Brookfield to be both the below-rail lease holder and its above-rail operator. WAFarmers is against key logistical infrastructure in Western Australia, such as ports and railways, being treated as money making squeeze points that limit the economic viability of farmers.

On 15 October, the ACCC released a Statement of Issues regarding the proposed acquisition. The Statement gave significant merit to the concerns WAFarmers highlighted in its initial submission and subsequent discussions.

Ports

In February, WAFarmers attended the hearing on the Australian Grains Network review, and successfully advocated for CBH Group to maintain their exemption from some parts of the Port Terminal Access (Bulk Wheat) Code of

Conduct (the Code). CBH Group maintained the exemption from Parts 3 to 6 of the Code, and is only required to comply with Parts 1 and 2. The exemption saved CBH, and therefore farmers, an estimated \$1 million annually in compliance costs and additional charges.

In September, the WA Chip & Pulp Co Pty Ltd terminal in Bunbury, the port that Bunge operate through, was granted the same exemption. The exemption was granted on the basis that denying that exemption would create an unfair regulatory environment for port operators in Western Australia. This exception was supported by WAFarmers Grains Council on the basis that equal regulation would allow greater competition in pricing for WA grain producers.

Sale of Fremantle Port

WAFarmers have become increasingly vocal and active in discussions on the long-term lease of Fremantle Port since the announcement in May 2015. The long-term lease agreement is clouded with significant uncertainty, especially given WA's previous experiences with privatisation of state assets, namely railways. WAFarmers has engaged with government, specifically Treasury, to ensure that the agricultural perspective is not lost during the privatisation discussion. The primary concerns are the loss of access, increasing port charges, and the potential for the privatisation to mirror that of the state's railways. The best outcome for privatisation would be guaranteed access for agricultural commodities and inputs, as well as a fair and internationally comparable access regime and charges.

Western Australian agriculture is heavily reliant on port access, as approximately 90 per cent of all grain is exported. WA also relies heavily on imports for chemicals, fertilisers, machinery and fuel to keep the state's agriculture viable.

The wider economy would also be impacted by the privatisation as WA no longer manufactures cars, fuel and whitegoods. WAFarmers remains concerned that the current railway monopoly could be repeated if the port is privatised.

Barley Optimisation Trial

The Grains Council welcomed the trial of a barley quality optimisation system at the Pithara site in 2015. In July, WAFarmers provided CBH with a proposal for a barley quality optimisation system. The proposal would allow growers delivering multiple loads of the same variety of barley to optimise their loads. Following delivery of high quality loads, a grower could then 'optimise up' lower quality grade loads, of the same variety, delivered to the same receival point.

The primary differences between the proposed system and the current wheat optimisation model is that loads can only be optimised in alignment with what the farmer has already delivered. This process would occur at the time of sampling, and therefore the load would be delivered into the appropriate stack. This is unlike the wheat optimisation system, where all optimisation occurs after delivery to the stack. WAFarmers Grains Council is pleased that CBH have agreed to run a trial based on our proposed system, with a view to extending it further if successful.

Grain Contracts

The Grains Council continued to look at contract terms and conditions as a key issue. There were, and continue to be, many varied grain contracts - each with different terms and conditions - some of which are disadvantageous to farmers. During 2015, WAFarmers Grains Council aimed to complete a review of the Grain Trade Australia (GTA) terms and conditions, as well as a major grain trader. The project was delayed as a result

of major operational changes in the grains industry. However, it is hoped that in 2016 the WAFarmers Grains Section will have completed the work and will be able to make it available for utilisation by the WA grains industry.

In the interim, WAFarmers reminds farmers to remain vigilant with reading contract terms and conditions to ensure they get the best deal possible, as well as being aware of any issues with the terms of the contract.

Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)

A key recommendation from a recent inquiry in the R&D levy system was the development of a levy payer database. WAFarmers stated that any changes to research development corporations that would increase levy payer involvement would be welcome.

In 2015, Minister for Agriculture Barnaby Joyce announced a preference for GRDC to relocate from Canberra to Wagga Wagga. The announcement prompted WAFarmers Grains Council to liaise with the Minister and the GRDC Board and present an alternative proposal. The proposal suggested that national administration functions remain in Canberra, while the regional specific staff and functions should be separated into three regional branches, in accordance with the Northern, Southern and Western Panels. The proposal was considered by GRDC, and as such the 'hub and spoke' model was developed. GRDC announced that the regional office locations were to be Toowoomba, Dubbo, Adelaide and Perth (Northam). WAFarmers Grains Section Senior Vice President Michael Fels developed the model, and the implementation of the WAFarmers proposal will give WA grains levy payers greater accessibility and involvement with GRDC staff.

National Grains Representation

Since the inception of the National Farmers Federation Grains Policy Council (NFF GPC) in 2012, WAFarmers has remained involved in national grains representation. In July 2015, Grain Producers Australia (GPA) made constitutional changes to become a National Grains Policy Group, which amalgamated with the un-constituted NFF GPC. The newly constituted GPA is likely to become the NFF Grains Commodity Council in the NFF Streamline and Strengthen model.

In 2015, there were also significant developments with the Representative Organisation (RO) role of the GRDC, which was originally held by GPA. The role of the RO is to oversee GRDC administration, hold GRDC financially accountable, and report to the Federal Minister of Agriculture. While the WAFarmers Grains Section would have preferred the role to remain with a single organisation, the representative organisation of GRDC was jointly appointed to GPA and Grain Growers Limited (GGL).

WA Production Research – GrainsWest Project

In August, WAFarmers organised a grains industry discussion group in conjunction with key industry figures, which allowed industry to be briefed on the proposed Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) GrainsWest research centre in Northam. Representatives spanned the entire grains industry in WA, including DAFWA, GRDC, universities, research groups, production groups, agronomists, consultants and farmer representative groups.

The group came to the consensus that, given

the DAFWA staffing and budget cuts, industry needed to become involved to ensure the government knew the cuts were unacceptable and that the government had a role to play in the future of Western Australian agriculture. Since the meeting, a Grains Industry Group was formed with the sole intention of scrutinising models for productivity R&D in WA. The Grains Industry Group will also recommend the most appropriate option/s going forward and expects deliver the option/s in early 2016.

GIWA standards and markets review

In 2015, Grains Industry Western Australia (GIWA) completed a review of barley standards and the noodle market.

The barley standards review was an open review and WAFarmers proposed the trial use of falling numbers to determine malting quality, as opposed to colour measurement. This proposition was due to issues with rain during harvest and the potential degradation to feed quality.

The noodle market review was based on the declining production of Western Australian noodle wheat and the potential implications for the noodle markets of Japan and Korea. WAFarmers suggested that, although the noodle markets were important, market forces must apply to allow the prices to reflect the global demand for the grain. The comment on noodle markets also identified the on-farm production risks for noodle varieties, particularly with protein levels, yields and yield stability.

Genetically Modified crops

Genetically Modified (GM) crops continue to be a contentious topic within the WA agricultural

industry, as well as the wider community. The issue has also been fuelled further by the Marsh v Baxter trial and its subsequent Supreme Court appeal.

The issues presented in the Marsh v Baxter trial prompted a review by the National Standards Sub Committee of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The review was conducted through the Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council (OISCC) and looked directly at the National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Agriculture. The National Organics Standards were reviewed for Section 3.3, which stated "... Crops on the organic property, or post-harvest, found to contain detectable GMO presence at or above the reportable presence of GMOs in food by FSANZ shall lose certification as organic."

WAFarmers commented that the amendment of that subparagraph would facilitate co-existence with organic and non-organic farmers, thereby avoiding issues similar to that in the Marsh v Baxter case.

WAFarmers has reaffirmed its support for the right of farmers to farm as they choose, whether through the use of traditional or genetically modified cultivars. This choice can only be made if options are available.

The Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003 was a key issue for WAFarmers this year. State Minister for Agriculture and Food Ken Baston raised the issue at the 2015 Crop Updates in February and resolved for the process to occur before the end of 2015. WAFarmers and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association (PGA) have worked collaboratively with Minister Baston to progress the repeal of the legislation.

Sclerotinia Research

WAFarmers continues to engage with industry research leaders, with particular reference to

concerns from farmers on the genetic origin of Sclerotinia isolates. These concerns were sparked by an increase in the presence of Sclerotinia in regions where it was previously undetected, and it was theorised that the increase in Sclerotinia incidence was in alignment with an increase in imports of canola seed.

These concerns were shared with researchers from the Centre for Crop and Disease Management (CCDM), and as such researchers have developed a research proposal to look at determining the import risk and prevalence of Sclerotinia in imported canola seed. This research would include determination of genetic origin of currently prevalent Sclerotinia isolates.

WAFarmers awaits the potential for the research and the potential for the findings to significantly impact how canola seed is imported into Western Australia.

Submissions

- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) – Proposed variation to registration of Pintobi Attack Herbicide
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) Chemical Review Priorities
- Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) initial review on the Brookfield Asciano Acquisition
- Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) response to statement of issues on Brookfield Asciano Acquisition
- Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) Bunge Port Exemption
- Grain Industry Association of Western Australia 2025 Grains Industry strategy
- Grain Industry Association of Western Australia Barley standards review
- Grain Industry Association of Western Australia Nodde wheat market report
- Economic Regulation Authority 2015 Code Review: Initial Comment 1
- Economic Regulation Authority 2015 Code Review: Draft Comment 2
- Industry structures and systems governing the imposition of and disbursement of marketing and research and development (R&D) levies in the agricultural sector
- Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council (OISCC) consultation to improve National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Agriculture
- Involvement in developing the Grains Stewardship protocol document
- WAFarmers comment on the Grains, Hay and Seeds Industry Funding Scheme (IFS)
- WAFarmers response to the Draft State Biosecurity Strategy

The WAFarmers Dairy Council represents the interests of the organisation's dairy members and is actively involved in the policy field to ensure the industry remains viable and sustainable.

Over the past 12 months, the Dairy Council, overseen by President Phil Depiazzi, has continued to work towards achieving a sustainable price for dairy farmers in Western Australia. It has also maintained an excellent working partnership with Western Dairy and Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and this continued relationship will provide future benefits for all dairy farmers.

Summer incentive payments, the increase in farm gate price by two major processors and favourable seasonal conditions have seen the state's milk production move in a positive direction. This is the first increase to occur in the last four years, with annual production up 21 million litres to 349 million litres.

WAFarmersFirst Milk

To increase awareness of farmers and their daily mission to get fresh produce to consumers, while at the same time generating additional income, WAFarmers launched WAFarmersFirst Milk in November 2014. Since the launch, sales have steadily increased, recently exceeding the 700,000 litre mark. This is a significant result for just over one year of production, and WAFarmers is proud to be part of it. With 40 cents from the sale of every two litre bottle of WAFarmersFirst Milk being distributed via a project fund and other initiatives to assist the development of industry, the future of dairy in Western Australia continues to look bright.

Milk and Honey Exports to China

Through WAFarmers' partnership with Chinese company Lifeland, exports of Western Australian milk and honey to China have commenced.

Conference, Forums and Industry Representation

The WAFarmers Dairy Council and its new Dairy Executive Officer Kim Haywood hosted another successful Annual Dairy Conference in July at Abbey Beach Resort in Busselton. An array of excellent speakers, witty jokes from Phil Depiazzi and the 'Old Fella' comedian kept the audience entertained throughout the Conference and subsequent Gala Dinner. WAFarmers President Dale Park presented the Dairy Australia awards to 16 Western Australian businesses, and WAFarmers extends their congratulations to the winners on their excellent achievements.

At the AGM held during the Dairy Conference, Phil Depiazzi was re-elected to the position of Dairy Council President for the fourth consecutive year. Michael Partridge was elected as Senior Vice President and Paul Ieraci was elected as Vice President. WAFarmers sincerely thanks them and the Dairy Council for their ongoing support and assistance.

The state has continued to be well represented at a national level with many members filling positions on ADF's Policy Advisory Groups (PAGs). Michael Partridge contributed to the Markets Trade and Value Chain Group and represents WA on ADF's National Council, while young dairy farmer Tammy Negus sat on the People and Human Capacity Group. Phil Depiazzi sat on the Animal Health and Welfare Policy Advisory Group.

Additionally, Phil Depiazzi and Warrick Tyrrell have worked closely with members of the Meat Council on the national Bovine Johne's disease (BJD) plan review, with the aim of maintaining WA's BJD freedom status and protecting the dairy (and beef) herds from the disease.

Business and Policy

Following on from one of the major issues of the previous year, the WAFarmers Dairy Council continued to present its case on the \$1.00 per litre milk campaign initiated by Coles Supermarkets in 2011. This year, the Council took the opportunity to highlight the negative impact the decision had on the industry through a combined national and state media campaign.

In May, the Council held a policy forum and developed 36 new policies for the Dairy Sector to be incorporated into the organisation's policy document.

The Council continued to address issues raised by members. A recent win enabled farmers to obtain exemptions from earmarking calves under the age of six weeks. The Council is currently working on obtaining licensing exemptions for captive bolts which will be a great benefit for all livestock industries in regard to humanely euthanising stock in a safe manner when required.

Over the course of the year, WorkSafe has audited dairy farms in Western Australia. During this period, the Council endeavoured to ensure that members were aware of this, and offered assistance and advice where possible.



Good seasonal outcomes coupled with improved cattle and sheep prices have seen increased optimism in the industry as a direct result of demand outstripping supply. Moving forward, a key question is how the industry will meet supply demands over the next few years.

WAFarmers wishes to express its sincere thanks to Jeff Murray for his excellent contribution and efforts during his term as Meat Council President. Mr Murray remains on the Council, and his expertise and guidance at meetings is sincerely valued. He is now the President of Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA). Capably taking over the position was John Wallace from Esperance, with David Slade presiding as Senior Vice President and Steven McGuire as Junior Vice President.

NLIS, NVDs and Livestock Production Assurance

At the start of 2015, many livestock producers struggled to obtain newer versions of the National Vendor Declaration (NVD), forcing WAFarmers to demand answers from the Meat & Livestock Association (MLA) and Safemeat. In September, Safemeat again forced livestock producers to purchase more new NVD books to help meat processors meet export demands.

In August, a review of the Safemeat initiatives was launched for stakeholder consideration. The proposal included rolling the existing ten committees into one streamlined company as a wholly-owned subsidiary of MLA, removing its auditing arm (Aus-Meat) to create greater competition and the inclusion of animal welfare and biosecurity modules into the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA). WAFarmers does not support these proposals

for an array of reasons, all of which were outlined in its submission.

In a united industry effort, WAFarmers advocated for the retention of the current mob based system for sheep traceability rather than implementation of the electronic radio frequency identification (eRFID). Implementation of the eRFID system would incur large costs to producers due to infrastructure and tag costs. Lobbying to the Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA) was accompanied with concerted efforts to work with government and state groups to identify issues and fix problems in the traceability system, therefore encouraging all participants to see the benefit in the system.

Exports

WAFarmers works closely with the national peak industry bodies including SCA and the Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) to advocate on trade issues. These efforts have achieved some excellent outcomes for sheep and cattle producers over the past year, especially given the importance of the export market to Western Australian livestock producers. WAFarmers President Dale Park and Livestock Executive Officer Kim Haywood had a very positive meeting with the Indonesian Ambassador early in the year to discuss the extension of live cattle and meat export permits, and also attended the live export strategic plan development meeting hosted by the Australian Livestock Exporters Council (ALEC) and MLA.

A major issue being dealt with at present is how the industry balances feeding its own backyard while meeting growing export demand for both meat and live animals to an array of existing and new overseas markets. Intense competition for livestock will only

increase, and this is going to keep prices high and put pressure on meat processors who will battle to keep their plants running at full capacity.

Policy

A main aim this year was the development of the WAFarmers' policy document which outlined the organisation's policies for all commodity areas. The Meat Council developed over 30 new policies which will be included in this document.

A large number of policy areas were dealt with this year including: the reforms of the beef and sheep languages; the meat and sheep industry strategic plans; the ag vet chemical reforms including the operations of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA); reviews of the Animal Welfare Act; reviews of the Biosecurity Acts; reviews of the RSPCA's operations; Bovine Johne's disease; the MLA annual operating plans; the development of the new WA Livestock Research Panel; and, the funding and operations of regional saleyards, to name but a few.

WAFarmers Meat Council representatives also actively engaged with Local Council representatives to establish an approvals process and investment strategy for regional saleyards. It was, and continues to be, important that these yards are maintained and kept functioning as they could play a significant role in an emergency disease crisis. The WAFarmers Meat Council was concerned about the loss of regional saleyards and supported their use to service the livestock industry. Additionally, it gave its support to the Wellington Alliance of Shire Councils and WA Livestock Salemen's Association in their

efforts to relocate the Boyanup sale yard.

The WAFarmers Meat Council welcomed the decision by the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority (WAMIA) earlier in the year not to change the live auction sale dates after robust engagement by the Council, and was pleased to see an improvement in the cattle management issues that have plagued Muchae saleyards.

Meat Council meetings have taken on a new format this year, with meetings being held at major meat processing or feedlot facilities to open up engagement and better relations with supply chain partners, particularly in the interest of meeting supply chain demands and opportunities.

Working Dogs

From 1 November 2015, the owner of a dog that reached three months of age had to ensure that the dog was microchipped. Non-compliance from this date could result in a penalty fine of \$5,000. An exemption from microchipping can be sought from a veterinarian. WAFarmers is in consultation with Local Government on this issue, as the microchips in dogs can interfere with electronic tag readers for livestock.

National Representation

WAFarmers continues to maintain good representation on peak industry bodies on a national level. John Wallace, David Slade, Geoff Pearson (CCA Council member), Clinton Gartrell, Hayley Goad and Kim Haywood sit on the CCA consultative committees, funded by MLA. Additionally, Jeff Murray is currently the President of the SCA, and John Wallace and

Steve McGuire attend its Council Meetings.

Sheep Health Workshops

Working with staff from DAFWA and commercial sponsors including Zoetis and All Flex, WAFarmers initiated a program of sheep health workshops, with the first workshop conducted at Denmark Agricultural College in September. The workshop focused on the practical implications of key diseases like Ovine Johnes disease and Footrot, and was extremely well received by attendees. The next round of workshops will be held in May 2016.

Rising Champion Initiative

The NAB Agribusiness Rising Champion Initiative aims to inspire, empower and support young people who are passionate about the Australian beef industry and provide them with an opportunity to be directly involved. This year, Western Australia had the largest number of applicants to date. Interviews were held in July to select the state representative to go forward to the national finals in August. WAFarmers Livestock Executive Officer Kim Haywood, Ian Randall from the PGA and Ben Weber from NAB were very impressed with the calibre of the applicants interviewed, and extended their congratulations to Emma Bryant from Kununurra who was selected as the WA representative to attend the finals in Canberra.



Submissions

- Australian Ag Vet Chemical Reforms and Priorities
- Review of the Biosecurity Act
- Review of the Livestock Biosecurity Network
- Australian Beef Language White Paper Review
- The Senate Enquiry into the Red Meat Processing Sector
- The Reform of the Native Title Act
- The Safemeat Review
- Changes to the WA Livestock Sale Days
- Animal Protection Bill 2015
- Review of the Animal Welfare Act
- Review of the Operations of the RSPCA
- Recast of the National BJD Strategy
- Review of the Declared Weeds and Pests Priorities WA
- Review of the Organic standards and inclusion of 1080
- Review of the WA Cattle Industry Funding Scheme contributions



The WAFarmers Wool Council wishes to express its sincere thanks to Ed Rogister for his excellent contribution and efforts as the Wool Council President during the year. Mr Rogister is supported by Ken Clark and Malcolm Edwards as Vice Presidents. He is also the WAFarmers representative on Wool Producers Australia (WPA) along with Max Watts as an independent Director of WPA. Mr Watts also sits on the WAFarmers Wool Council.

Marketing and Research

The WAFarmers Wool Council continued to work with DAFWA staff and other industry stakeholders on the Sheep and Goat Industry Funding Scheme Management Committee, which is chaired by Jeff Murray.

Alongside WAFarmers Wool Executive Officer Kim Haywood, the Committee continued to work on the management of footrot disease. Collectively, they applied considerable pressure on the Federal Minister for Agriculture and Food Barnaby Joyce to force the APVMA to grant a permit in January for the use of the footrot strain specific vaccines. These vaccines will be used as part of a research project to identify and eradicate footrot serogroups present in WA flocks.

In August, WAFarmers brought together sheep industry leaders and organisations to have a robust debate about the challenges and opportunities facing the sheep and wool industry, and discuss how all parties could work together to agree on one sheep industry strategy for WA. This groundbreaking meeting, which was held in Katanning, was followed up by a second meeting in October hosted by the Sheep Industry Leadership Council, with the specific intent of looking at investment opportunities in the industry.

WPA President Richard Halliday was the keynote

speaker at the Sheep Health Workshop at Denmark Agricultural College in September hosted by WAFarmers. His inspiring and emotional presentation on the impacts of Ovine Johne's disease (OJD) certainly provoked WA sheep producers to take precautions to avoid getting OJD on their properties.

Sheep NLIS

WPA coordinated an industry response to the Victorian Agricultural Minister's push to mandate the electronic tagging of individual sheep, which all state farming organisations (SFOs) across Australia opposes. As a member of WPA and an SFO, WAFarmers will continue to support the current mob-based identification for sheep.

Animal Health and Welfare

WAFarmers contributed significant advice to the proposed new framework for endemic disease policy development, control and extension. This new framework will combine the data collected as part of the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project (NSHMP) and the national OJD Management Plan into an overarching project called the 'Livestock Production Conditions Project' (LPCP) – Sheep.

The LPCP – Sheep pilot project has been developed by Animal Health Australia together with sheep industry organisations, including WAFarmers, in order to streamline governance costs, enhance collaboration and take a more holistic approach to addressing endemic disease conditions.

A major marketing coup during the year occurred when WAFarmers took the lead for the Australian wool industry, by initiating a social media fundraising campaign against the musician Jona

Weinhofen for his attempt to discredit the wool and shearing industry by using a false picture of a lamb apparently cut as a result of shearing. The social media campaign was a great success and the money accrued from this exercise was used to promote the sheep and wool industry and its practices to protect animal welfare to the general public.

Key activities for the year also included WAFarmers' submissions to the Australian Wool Initiative (AWI) Wool Selling Systems Review initiated at the start of the year. The AWI Panel Review Committee had focused their attention on the development of a web-based wool exchange portal. WAFarmers, along with many other organisations, challenged this concept by explaining and demonstrating how key cost savings could be made throughout the selling system without wasting more wool grower contributions on the development of another web-based portal.

Wild Dogs

John Nankivell and Scott Pickering have done a wonderful job representing WA's interests on the National Wild Dog Action Plan Committees. Mr Pickering is also the WAFarmers representative on the newly established WA Wild Dog Action Plan Steering Group, funded and chaired by DAFWA. The Steering Group had two meetings in July and September, and have spoken to a wide group of people from Kununurra to Esperance in an attempt to get a handle on the key issues and activities across regions. Discussions have also taken place with the Community Resource Centres in the eastern states and other key industry personnel.

A cost benefit analysis was completed on the impacts of wild dogs in areas across Western Australia, a summary of which was released in November. The Steering Group aims to develop a

set of principles and an action plan for the State Government which will be launched in early 2016.

Weeds and Pest Animals

WAFarmers was pleased to become a member, and contribute to, the Declared Pests Stakeholder Reference Group chaired by DAFWA. WAFarmers Wool Executive Officer Kim Haywood sits on the group on behalf of WAFarmers, and is supported by a membership working group.

Shearing and Wool Handling

WAFarmers Wool Executive Officer Kim Haywood attended the WA Shearing Industry Association (WASIA) meetings to identify issues which WAFarmers can engage with government about on behalf of WASIA. These included shearing shed safety protocols, training requirements and funding and payroll tax implications.

This was a Wool Poll year, and WAFarmers encouraged all wool growers to cast their vote on the wool rate contribution paid to AWI. Very few producers attended the AWI roadshow meetings around the state, which were not very well advertised by AWI who chose not to communicate with state farming bodies. 2015 was also the year for AWI and Wool Producers Australia Director elections.



Bees

Leilani Leyland and Maddison McNeil



The past 12 months have proven to be successful for beekeepers in Western Australia, following a difficult 2014. Honey production has been above average and the honey price remains high, despite being in a state of transition. Outside of production, partnerships proved to be an invaluable resource for the commodity, increasing relationships, opportunities and techniques.

As the state representative group under the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), WAFarmers has taken steps to strengthen industry collaboration in Western Australia, part of which involved greater synergy between the state's three representative groups - WAFarmers, Western Australia Beekeepers Association (WABA) and Western Australia Apiarists Society (WAAS).

Since then, representatives from WABA and WAAS have attended all WAFarmers Beekeepers Council meetings, using them as a forum to strengthen representation of the WA honey bee industry. WAFarmers also continued to be a strong supporter of Honey Month and the WA Honey Festival, and held a successful Beekeepers Conference on 2 May 2015.

The WA honey industry is in a state of transition as consultative and industry groups respond to changes at DAFWA and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW). The state's honey bee industry is now looking at ways to significantly increase production to meet market demands, and WAFarmers is working with government groups to consider options for funding these projects.

National Representation – Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

AHBIC, in collaboration with Plant Health

Australia and the state and federal departments for biosecurity, are responsible for implantation and management of the Code of Practice and the National Bee Biosecurity Program. Western Australia has taken steps throughout the year for the application of the Code to be varied to that of the eastern states, given the significant differences in production systems as well as disease and pest threats.

Changes to the Honey Levy

On 1 July 2015, the Australian honey levy was increased from .23c/kg to .46c/kg, and the threshold to apply the levy was increased from 600kg to 1,500kg. The increase in levy was voted on by beekeepers throughout Australia, with additional revenue to be utilised for research and development projects and the funding of national biosecurity programs.

National Honey Bee and Pollination Industry Biosecurity Management Strategy

In response to growing industry, government and community concerns, a biosecurity strategy was developed through national industry reforms. The National Honey Bee and Pollination Industry Biosecurity Management Strategy is comprised of two components: the National Bee Biosecurity Program and the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBPS).

The National Bee Biosecurity Program aims to improve management of established pests and diseases, as well as increase preparedness and surveillance of exotic pests. The program is underpinned by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice, also referred to as the Code of Practice. The Code was developed with industry and government

consultation and aims to provide a clear framework for beekeepers' best practice for biosecurity management.

The NBPSP aims to be an early detection system for exotic pest and disease outbreaks.

Industry Consultation Meetings

On 3 June 2015, a workshop and seminar was held at the University of Western Australia (UWA) to highlight strengths and weaknesses in the current beekeeping industry. As part of this event, the WA honey bee industry was encouraged to apply for Royalties for Regions funding under the Going for Growth project. The proposal was compiled with assistance from Liz Barbour of UWA, Boris Baer of the Centre for Integrative Bee Research, and feedback from industry groups. The WAFarmers Beekeepers Section also contributed to this proposal and continues to work collaboratively with industry on this project.

Department of Agriculture and Food WA

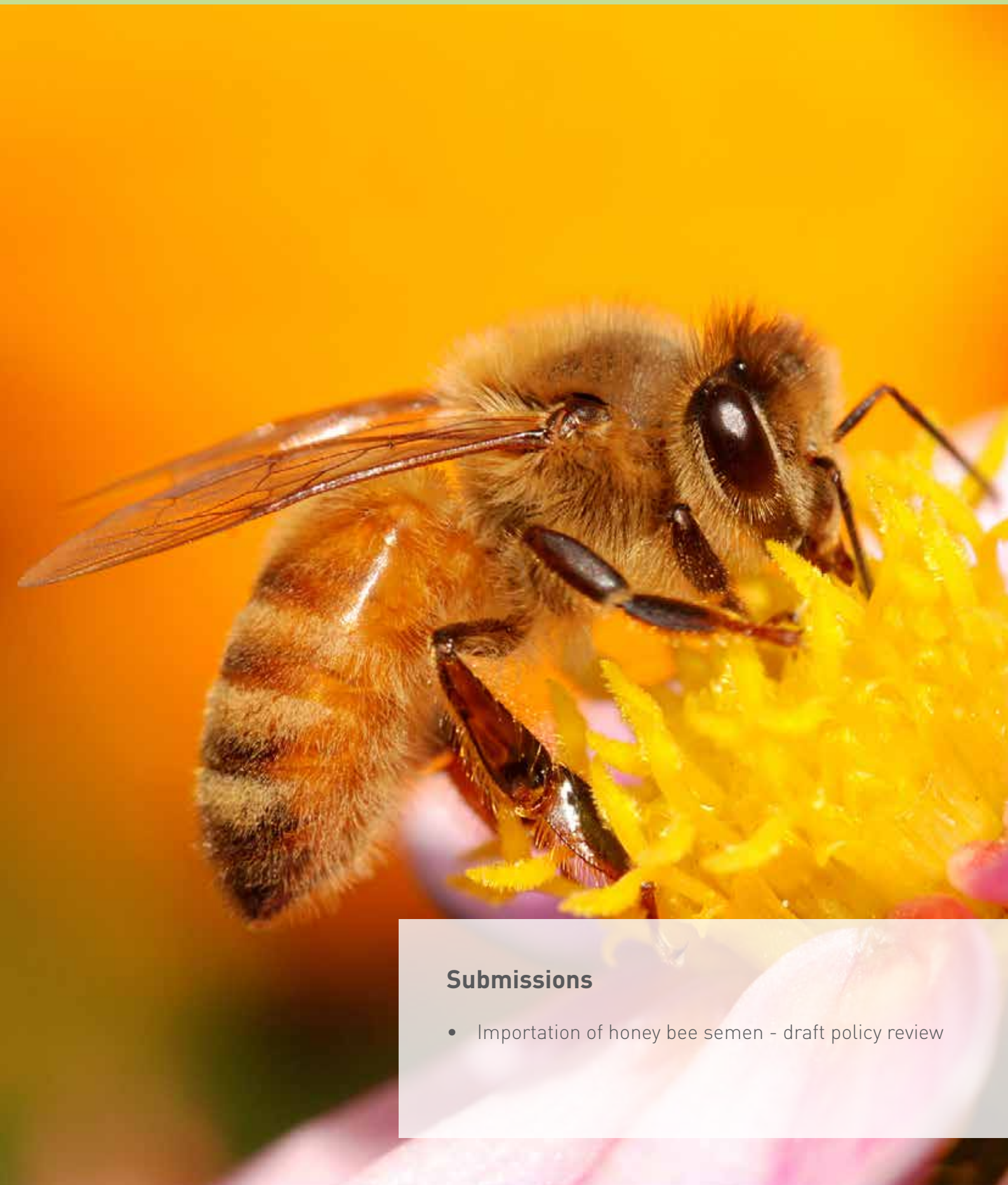
WAFarmers was involved in ongoing discussions with DAFWA following the changes to research staff and budget cuts. The WA honey bee industry is concerned that DAFWA will not have adequate expertise and knowledge to complete their obligations with regard to biosecurity oversight as a result of these changes. DAFWA Director General Rob Delane affirmed DAFWA's commitment to meeting their biosecurity requirements while assisting the industry to double value when he spoke at the 2015 WAFarmers Beekeepers Conference. WAFarmers will continue to engage with DAFWA to ensure they work for the betterment of the apiary industry.

Department of Parks and Wildlife

Over the course of the year, WAFarmers continued to engage with DPaW on a number of ongoing issues, including clearing permits, security of apiary site rentals and tenure, changes to permit reapplications, distances between apiary sites, and inaccuracy of site and map locations. Amongst submissions to address these issues, WAFarmers proposed that DPaW develop an online database for site activity to enable beekeepers to indicate sites that are active, inactive, or available to be utilised by other beekeepers. This online site would also allow non-beekeepers and farmers to educate themselves on apiary activity within their area.

Seismic Testing in the Beekeepers Reserve

The proposed seismic testing and potential fracking in the Beekeepers Reserve was a key issue at the 2015 WAFarmers Beekeepers Conference. The executive met with the company's Managing Director to discuss key concerns with vehicle movements and the destroying of native vegetation in the area. WAFarmers will continue to engage with Norwest Energy to mitigate any impact on apiary sites.



Submissions

- Importation of honey bee semen - draft policy review

WAFarmers has maintained its association with the national peak body, the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) over the past 12 months. Representatives from WAFarmers have attended a number of Members' Council meetings, and engagement with the NFF and other SFO's has been largely positive. While there was an emphasis on consolidating representation at a national level, the SFO's recognised that a large percentage of their work was state specific, so strengthening these divisions was also paramount.

WAFarmers President Dale Park attended the NFF's Members' Council Meetings in March and June. He was accompanied by WAFarmers Senior Vice President Tony York and Board Member Lyn Slade to the November Members' Council meeting and Annual General meeting. The Members' Council meetings covered a range of topics including natural resources management, trade, competitiveness, biosecurity and animal welfare.

There was significant progress in the past 12 months with the NFF's Streamline and Strengthen project which aimed to restructure farm sector representation and remove the inefficiencies of separate state farming and commodity organisations, thereby improving value for farmers.

The program included the initial creation of an online platform which will transform farming by providing four services. Firstly, it will provide a direct link between farmers and their political representatives, strengthening the industry's online voice. Secondly, it will generate a sense of community, providing a source of news and conversation about the issues that really matter at the farm gate. Thirdly, it will benefit members who will have

access to discounted farm inputs and other offers through the collective bargaining power of the online platform user group. Finally, it will equip farmers with best management practice tools, from weather reports to cloud based accounting, to help them with daily decision making and business analytics. The dashboard is expected to be an integral part of the new national organisation when it is completed.

WAFarmers also worked with the NFF and the other SFO's in support of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA). The combined efforts of these representative bodies have seen the agreement receive bipartisan support. It is expected that the agreement will be ratified soon. The NFF and SFO's have also worked together in support of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP countries are Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, New Zealand, Singapore, the United States of America and Vietnam.

Despite plans to streamline and strengthen national representation, WAFarmers will remain a grass roots organisation at their core with a major emphasis on state issues.



Transport remained a major portfolio within WAFarmers throughout 2015 as work continued on a range of issues across rail, road and ports.

The last 12 months saw the introduction of the Compliance and Enforcement (Chain of Responsibility) legislation in Western Australia following amendments to the Road Traffic (Administration) Act 2008 and the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Act 2012. The Compliance and Enforcement Bill was first tabled for discussion in 1997 and final national legislation was passed in 2003. WAFarmers was positioned front and centre throughout this process, having made numerous submissions and partaken in discussions to ensure the overall effect of the legislation was as minimal as possible.

WAFarmers has hosted workshops and forums across the state in conjunction with the WA Road Transport Association (WARTA), with whom it has formed a strong alliance. Furthermore, WAFarmers has formed a partnership with Combined Rural Traders and Landmark in order to work together to help educate farm businesses about carting farm merchandise, particularly with respect to Dangerous Goods regulations.

WAFarmers is a founding member of the Agricultural Vehicle Advisory Group (AVAC) which continues to reduce red tape in the agricultural machinery space, particularly with the Class 1 notice for heavy machinery. WAFarmers provided AVAC with commentary regarding issues including farm haulage concessions, licensing new farm machinery, speed limits for tractors, permits and policing of transport, accreditation for farm trucks, transporting chemicals and carrying dangerous goods.

Throughout the year, WAFarmers was successful in getting a reprint of the Towed Agricultural Vehicle Guide, which is highly valued amongst industry, particularly the 'ready reckoner' that fits in vehicle glove boxes. WAFarmers is now working with industry and government to produce a 'ready reckoner' that incorporates Towed Agricultural Implement Codes of Practice with relevant sections of Compliance and Enforcement, Dangerous Goods and Load Restraint legislation



Economics and Farm Business

The year was characterised by a declining Australian dollar and subdued economic activity in the overall Australian economy. This enabled interest rates to remain at near-record lows in conjunction with a low Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The relatively low global economic activity was reflected in lower US dollar prices for most commodities. The low exchange rate has allowed Australian dollar prices to remain relatively strong for grains, with increases in beef and sheep meats and wool. It remains to be seen whether imported machinery and inputs fully reflect the lower Australian dollar by commanding higher prices.

The 2015 growing season ranged from mixed to good. A very dry, late finish to the season reduced what could have been a good season to an average or below season for some farmers.

Federal White Papers

During the year, the Australian Federal Government released three White Papers of considerable significance to agriculture. The White Paper on Developing Northern Australia outlined how the Federal Government plans to unlock the great potential and opportunities of the north. The Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper contained the Australian Government's practical actions with the intention of growing the agricultural sector and strengthening the economy. Lastly, the Tax White Paper was produced in an effort to simplify Australia's tax system, improve its fairness and attract multinational trade and investment.

Many of the issues addressed in these papers were ones which WAFarmers has raised in its

submissions. Significant measures outlined in the Tax White Paper and Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper included an increase to the deposit limit for Farm Management Deposits (FMDs) to \$800,000, an increase in off-farm income thresholds for FMD's to \$100,000, and accelerated depreciation for grain and feed storage, fencing and water infrastructure. Additionally, WAFarmers has requested government to change the regulations around FMD's to allow farmers to offer FMD's as security, therefore improving the farm viability. It was encouraging to see some of the recommendations made by WAFarmers incorporated in the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper.

Finally, WAFarmers continued to engage with many industry and government stakeholders to discuss policy and industry development, as well as how WAFarmers can play a role in helping improve our members' bottom lines.

Rural Financial Counselling Service

WAFarmers continued to work closely with the Western Australian Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS WA) throughout the year, encouraging the Federal Government to commit to further funding and ensure the continuation of a service that delivers real outcomes for farming family businesses experiencing financial stress.

WAFarmers also highlighted to government and the NFF the inherent dangers of allowing poor policy advice to be given under the Farm Household Allowance agreement by the Department of Human Services (DHS). Under the agreement, there was concern that Centrelink staff inadvertently duplicated some parts of the existing RFCS service. However, these staff lacked the professional

experience of the RFCS and their background in counselling and business planning. Additionally, where farming clients in distress shared both DHS and RFCS, DHS took precedence which unintentionally risked DHS giving advice on clients' future planning. WAFarmers endeavoured to prevent this and as a result, the risk to farm businesses was reduced.

WAFarmers successfully advocated for the design of a nationally harmonised farm debt mediation scheme for Western Australia, a result of WAFarmers meeting with the banks and advocating on a national level at the Rural Debt Roundtable in 2012. The Farm Debt Mediation Scheme allows banks and farmers to request and undertake dispute resolution much earlier in the process, rather than when it comes too late to allow successful adjustment.

Lastly, WAFarmers continued its success in long-term advocacy for Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI). The Federal Government provided \$30 million towards assessment grants that will encourage more producers to take up MPCI, ultimately making it cheaper for all producers.

Trades

Several very significant agreements were finalised by the Federal Government in the past 12 months, namely ChAFTA and the TPP. It is expected that these agreements will result in the reduction of various tariffs on agricultural exports, boost trade and increase opportunities for Australian producers and exporters.

The Federal Government announced several reforms to the foreign investment policy. As of 1 March 2015, privately-owned foreign investors required prior approval for a proposed acquisition of an interest in rural land where the

cumulative value of rural land that the foreign person (and any associates) already holds exceeds, or immediately following the proposed acquisition is likely to exceed, \$15 million. Furthermore, as of 1 July 2015, the ATO was responsible for a register related to foreign ownership of agricultural land. WAFarmers provided significant policy to the NFF to help influence the government to ensure that all foreign investment is not only in the best interests of Australians, but provides opportunity to expand the industry.

Occupational Health and Safety

WAFarmers continues to engage with Standards Australia to advocate for industry to be permitted to import and use new and improved helmets from New Zealand, which are of a lightweight design that will improve use and compliance on-farm.

This year has seen Worksafe undertake more random safety audits on-farm, initially within the dairy industry and more recently across the Wheatbelt. WAFarmers has guided members on how to prepare for, and respond to, these audits. WAFarmers also made recommendations to Worksafe, through mutual membership of the Agricultural Industry Safety Group, which provides stakeholder views to the Worksafe Commissioner.

2015 proved to be an exciting one for AgConnectWA as the group continued to engage, connect, represent, educate, listen, advocate and support young people throughout the agricultural industry across Western Australia. In addition to raising awareness and attracting new members, AgConnectWA held numerous events in both metropolitan and regional centres, and eagerly contributed to ensuring that agriculture has a viable, sustainable and profitable future by engaging with key stakeholders, including government. Events for members and non-members alike proved to be highly valuable networking and learning opportunities for attendees. At the beginning of the year, AgConnectWA worked with the Rural Agricultural Society Youth Advisory Council, Harvest, Curtin Agriculture Association, Students of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and Muresk to bring AgriCultured to the Perth Royal Showgrounds.

This event was an excellent opportunity for all the agricultural groups supporting young people in the sector to come together. July saw the third AgconnectWA Annual Conference '#GenerationAg' at the Ocean Beach Hotel, where Kallum Blake and Katie Pole were re-elected to the positions of President and Vice President, respectively. During October, the third AgTiki event took place in the Swan Valley, and the group made its first trip to Broome for a sundowner in conjunction with Northern Beef Futures. This was the first of many events the group wants to undertake out in the regions. The next one is planned for Esperance the beginning of 2016. Engaging with current and prospective members was a top priority for the year. To this end, AgConnectWA launched QR codes at Farmer Jacks in Mandurah in March so that consumers could learn how the product they scanned was produced.



The group also implemented the use of the hashtag #GenerationAg to connect with other young people within the industry on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Finally, considerable media exposure was achieved this year. AgConnectWA had a full page feature in The Weekend West which was a positive step towards demonstrating the wealth of young people within the agricultural industry to those outside the industry. The feature was also printed in the Countryman newspaper, highlighting the committee members behind AgConnectWA.

Two members of the AgConnectWA committee, Callum Wesley and Wesley Lefroy, were also invited to participate in a closed industry roundtable in December, which garnered state-wide coverage in the form of print and

online articles in Farm Weekly and The West Australian. AgConnectWA is committed the task of connecting young people within WA who are involved in agriculture offering them a space to network, learn and grow, and is run by a talented group of individuals who all have a vested interest in agriculture and know the value of strong relationships between farmers and the community.

AgConnectWA hopes the group's achievements over the course of 2015 encourages more young people aged 18 to 35 years to become members so that they continue to contribute to the future of agriculture in Western Australia, both now and into the future.



Fitzgibbon, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food the Hon. Ken Travers, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development Shane Love, Senator Zhenya Wang, Senator Rachel Siewart and Senator Chris Back generated robust discussion about current issues within agriculture.

Finally, the Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony was held on the Friday night. The event was hosted by WAFarmers President Dale Park, who was accompanied by Master of Ceremonies Vin Dawes, and guests were kept well entertained by the comic antics of Bruno Lucia and by musician Monty Cotton.

Six individuals were recognised for their service to WAFarmers and the industry during the Awards Ceremony. Congratulations to Mike Norton (*Life Membership*), Tony Gooch (*Distinguished Service Award*), Owen Grieve (*Industry Service Award*), Mark Fowler (*Young Farmer Award*), John Moyes (*Certificate of Merit*) and Melanie Tolich (*President's Award*), and thank you for all the time and dedication you continue to provide.

WAFarmers would like to thank all the event sponsors throughout the duration of the conference: GRDC, Grain Growers, CBH Group, Coles, AWT Limited, MLA, Harvey Beef, Prime Super, HIP, AgConnectWA, Isuzu UTE and RSM.

On 19-20 February 2015, WAFarmers hosted its 103rd Annual Conference at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Perth. The two-day conference, which this year focused on attracting and retaining young people in the agricultural sector and coincided with the launch of the #GenerationAg hashtag, featured a range of topical and relevant speakers, and gave attendees ample opportunity to network with other industry professionals.

Day one comprised of Annual General Meetings for the Wool, Livestock, Grain and General Sections and WAFarmers, during which Dale Park was re-elected as WAFarmers President for a third and final term. Tony York was also re-elected to the position of Senior Vice President, with Lyn Slade elected to the Vice President position. The day concluded with a very successful sundowner event at Origins.

A business breakfast hosted by Fremantle Dockers star Nat Fyfe opened day two, and

was followed by an official opening from CEO of the National Farmers Federation Simon Talbot, Shadow Minister for Agriculture the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon and Senator Richard Colbeck, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture.

Panel discussions made up the second half of the day, with Silver Back Farm's Darren West, Grain Growers CEO Alicia Garden, Kenway and Clark Branch Manager Sam Collier, Tractor and Machinery Association Executive Director Richard Lewis, Department of Mines and Petroleum Principal Policy Officer Jason Medd, Katie Joy's Eggs' Kate Mason, Wellards CEO Tim Macnamara, Muresk General Manager Prue Jenkins and Scenic Rim4Real Milk's Greg Dennis all speaking about image, innovation and investment within agriculture.

Following this, a political panel comprising of Shadow Minister for Agriculture the Hon. Joel



WAFarmers launched WAFarmersFirst Milk at the 2014 Heart of WA event and, after a year on the shelves, sales have exceeded 700,000 litres. Public support and sentiment towards the product has been very positive, particularly because the general public wants to support a product which gives back to the industry. It is possible for WAFarmersFirst Milk to do this because 40 cents from the sale of every two litre bottle of WAFarmersFirst Milk will be distributed via a project fund and through other initiatives which assist the development of the dairy industry.

The WAFarmersFirst Milk has been promoted wherever possible. This has included WAFarmers working with Coles on marketing strategies including point-of-sale material on shelves, double-sided flyers distributed to local businesses, and pinning the WAFarmersFirst Milk product at the top of searches when online shopping. WAFarmersFirst Milk also has a social media presence through its Facebook, Instagram and Twitter profiles.

At the 2015 WAFarmers Annual Dairy Conference it was announced that Dean Maughan, John Lucey and John Giumelli were appointed to oversee the distribution of the project funds accumulated through the sale of WAFarmersFirst Milk. Project applications opened in December 2015, and the WAFarmers Dairy Council invites individuals and organisations to submit proposals on how they would spend the funds. It is expected that the main objective of the proposed projects will be to increase knowledge and awareness of the Western Australian dairy industry.

www.WAFarmersFirst.com.au



Water Portfolio

Steve Dilley

Over the past year, WAFarmers has continued to provide strong representation as a key member of the Department of Water's (DoW) Water Resources Reform Industry Reference Group. This diverse group has representatives from all major sectors including mining and petroleum, conservation, Local Government, irrigation and drilling, water services, forest industry and, most importantly, agriculture and horticulture.

While government has given approval for drafting of the Water Resources Management Bill, the complexity of the Bill and other legislative priorities means that it will be some months before initial draft clauses are available for review. When draft provisions are available, the Department of Water will be able to draw on the expertise of the Water Reform Reference Group to ensure that the drafted provisions are workable, adaptable to suit local conditions and meet the needs of water users.

Water resources are currently managed under six different Acts. These Acts regulate the take and use of water, protect waterways, manage drainage and protect public drinking water sources and supply. Some of these Acts are over 100 years old and are heavily amended. They

were written for very different circumstances than currently apply, and are difficult to read, understand and apply. The government are proposing to consolidate the six existing Acts into one modernised Water Resources Management Act. Provisions will be written in modern language and structured in a logical way, which will make legislation easier for water users to understand and for government to administer.

A tentative timetable for development of the new legislation has been prepared, with the DoW aiming for the legislation to be available for introduction to Parliament in 2016. The Act would not commence until regulations were available to support the new Act (expected in 2018), and until such time, the existing Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 would remain in force. These dates will depend on how quickly the Bill is drafted and subsequently progressed through Parliament.

The partnership approach to policy formulation that WAFarmers has long advocated continues to be supported by Acting Director General Michael Rowe and his team, and is valued highly by all members of the Water Resources Reform Industry Reference Group.

WAFarmers has remained informed about the developments in biotechnology and supports the right of its members to adopt technology suitable to their farming enterprise. A farmer may choose to use conventional crops, GM crops, organic or any other systems, to produce food or fibre.

WAFarmers has noted the ongoing court challenges of the Marsh v Baxter case. The case has highlighted a number of aspects of the WAFarmers' GM policy. The policy supports the availability of approved gene technologies which are governed by industry-agreed protocols relating to storage, transport and buffer zones.

The WAFarmers' policy on GM also supports:

- The lifting of the State Government moratorium on the commercial release of GM canola;
- Future research and development into GM crops and pastures;
- The current Federal and State Government GM material tolerance levels of 0.9 per cent in crops and 0.5 per cent in seeds;
- The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and its charter to protect the health and safety of Australians and the Australian environment; and,
- Further development of protocols for the commercialisation of GM grains in the WA grains industry on issues including intellectual property rights, contamination, segregation, licensing, protection of individual growers and legal liability issues.



Biotechnology

Tony York

Over the past year, WAFarmers continued to engage with the State Government and Opposition, as well as the PGA, about the removal of the state moratorium on the commercial release of GM canola. Removing

the moratorium will allow commercial GM crops to be used in WA without requiring a ministerial exemption, subject to the overarching Federal legislation.

Marketing and Communications

Megan MacNeill and Sophie Kilby



WAFarmers remained at the forefront of agricultural coverage in Western Australia this year, enhancing the Federation's profile through appropriate communications and relevant and engaging events. The Marketing and Communications team strived to connect with existing and potential stakeholders, media outlets and members to further consolidate WAFarmers' standing as an accomplished advocacy organisation.

Marketing

The primary marketing focus for WAFarmers throughout 2015 was the launch and promotion of WAFarmers First Milk. Through print, online and social platforms, the milk has become a huge success throughout its first year of operation, even winning an award at the 2015 Rural Media Association Awards.

Through a program aimed at small businesses and not-for-profit organisations, the milk was, and continues to be, advertised on a weekly basis in The West Australian's Fresh magazine. A two page flyer was created and distributed to cafés and businesses around Perth illustrating how businesses could purchase the milk, and Christmas cards with a voucher for WAFarmers First Milk was sent to businesses during the festive period.

The milk also has three dedicated social media channels - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram - all of which provide stakeholders with relevant milk and dairy information and suggest delicious recipes using WAFarmersFirst Milk.

In addition to our work with the milk, we completed a membership drive during 2015 with supplementary advertisements in the Countryman and Farm Weekly newspapers, plus radio advertising.

Finally, on the back of the expansion of the WAFarmers social media channels, we started to further develop our social media marketing strategies. These actions proved to be very successful and gave us the opportunity to be very specific about who we targeted.

Communications

WAFarmers maintained a productive relationship with a host of media outlets, both rural and mainstream, throughout the year. The organisation is routinely contacted by journalists seeking authoritative comment on many agricultural matters, particularly in relation to the commodities which WAFarmers represents. The coverage was largely positive and extended across radio, television, print and online mediums.

This year the organisation produced a half-yearly publication for the benefit of its members and stakeholders. The report outlined what WAFarmers had been working on, its recent achievements and the intended direction of its future work.

The WAFarmers Marketing and Communications team's efforts were recognised at the 2015 Rural Media Association Awards. They were awarded Best Communications Campaign for their work promoting the launch of the WAFarmersFirst Milk in 2014, as well as an Honourable Mention for their 'Send Jona to School' campaign.

Over the past 12 months the large majority of the organisation's communications continued to be conducted online through the weekly member newsletter. This was reinforced by WAFarmers' presence on various social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Events

WAFarmers' major annual event, the Annual Conference, was held on February 19 and 20 at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Perth's central business district. The event featured a host of informative and engaging speakers on a range of topics. Presentations were interspersed with opportunities for attendees to network and connect with WAFarmers members, agri-professionals, industry stakeholders, politicians and rural media.

The 2015 Annual Dairy Conference and Beef Conference were held in July and August in Busselton at the Abbey Beach Resort. Conference attendees heard from a variety of guest speakers and leaders in their field.

In September, WAFarmers held the 2015 Heart of WA gala dinner which celebrated the state's amazing produce and honoured the people who grow it. More than 350 people attended the dinner, which is now an annual flagship event for WAFarmers. The organisation intends to improve on these already successful events in 2016.

Heart of WA

September saw the second Heart of WA gala dinner, which celebrated agriculture and the state's excellent fresh produce.

Approximately 350 people attended the event which was hosted by Chayce Creedy, and enjoyed entertainment including live music, dancers, a photo booth, a cooking demonstration and discussions with prominent agricultural representatives, including WA Food Ambassador Don Hancey.

Western Australia's fresh produce was at the forefront of the evening, with guests able to enjoy lamb from Dowell Dohnes, WA Variety

udon noodles, beef from Harvey Beef, pork from Linley Valley, and fruit and vegetables from the Gascoyne.

The highlight of the evening came when it was announced that WAFarmers had partnered with Chinese company Lifeland to coordinate the export of Western Australian milk and honey into China, as part of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

WAFarmers would like to thank major sponsor Coles as well as CBH Group, Bailiwick Legal and Linley Valley Pork, without whom the event would not have been possible.



Executive Summary

The 2015 Financial Report has been completed on a financial basis, with WAFarmers recording an Audited operating surplus of \$22,382 for the year ended November 2015. This is a \$140,000 turnaround from 2014, which recorded a \$117,000 loss. The surplus is in line with the 2015 budget and our five-year Re-charge, Re-connect Business Plan. The highlight of this result is the fact that this is the first operating surplus reported by the WAFarmers since 2010.

The surplus was achieved by a focused commitment to expenditure over the last 12 month period whilst working to retain and grow membership, sponsorship, corporate partners and events. While the CEO and Board Members remained strongly focused on ensuring the commitment on reducing expenditure did not result in a reduction in services and benefits to our members, corporate partners and events, there was a limit to what could be achieved.

Expenses

The Board and CEO have worked hard to ensure expenses were well managed, with a focus on return on investment resulting in a decrease in total expenditure by 9.7 per cent to \$1,579,426.

In achieving this reduction in expenses, it should be noted that in line with our five-year Business Plan to re-connect (with members), membership promotion expenses increased 50 per cent on 2014, marketing and promotion increased 160 per cent on 2014, staff travel increased 20 per cent on 2014 and, under our agreement with Isuzu UTE, the WAFarmers Isuzu UTE covered just over 25,000 kilometres in 12 months attending numerous events throughout regional WA with our members. In addition, many other inter-state events were

attended by Policy staff where travel costs were covered by other parties. WAFarmers Policy Executive Officers attended more inter-state meetings and events in 2015 than at any other time in the last four years.

As advised last year, the single biggest reduction in costs for WAFarmers in 2015 has been the office relocation, resulting in a saving of 60 per cent for lease and outgoings associated with the WAFarmers premises.

Income

The 2016 Budget has a very strong focus on membership and income for 2016.

Membership dollar income decreased slightly by four per cent to \$983,482 but it was interesting to note that the membership numbers only decreased by approximately 1.6 per cent, indicating an increase in the retention rate compared to previous years. For the calendar year 2015 WAFarmers will have signed up nearly 60 new members, significantly offsetting numbers lost through sale of farm, death or financial hardship. We are focused on a big change in this number in 2016 through the appointment of a Membership Coordinator, due to commence on a permanent basis in January 2016.

Grain donations were once again accepted by WAFarmers in 2015, with all funds raised going towards a membership drive. Grains and other donations received for this project totalled \$16,692. In addition our 2015 Budget had an amount of \$23,000 allocated to a membership drive. At the end of 2015, all unused funds were accrued for use in 2016 once the new Membership Coordinator commences.

Sponsorship and events income decreased by 30 per cent to \$304,455 and was \$74,295 less

than budget. A significant portion of this change was due to a change in accounting procedures required by our Auditors, whereby we are now required to report Income from these activities in the year in which the expense will be incurred and not the year we receive the cheque. Events were managed strategically to ensure costs were managed resulting in a surplus of \$136,692 in this area for 2015.

The first complete year of WAFarmersFirst Milk resulted in significant income derived from the initiative and, more importantly, an amount of \$42,263 was accrued in the Dairy Industry Project Trust for use on projects which will result in a direct benefit to the WA Dairy Industry. Applications for the first round of funding opened in December 2015, with successful applicants to be announced in early 2016. In addition to this venture with Parmalat and Coles, the first shipment of WAFarmersFirst Milk and Western Australian honey should arrive in China in January 2016, adding another income stream for WAFarmers in the years ahead.

Balance Sheet and Cash Position

This year, the Board and CEO were extremely focused on growing our Balance Sheet, increasing reserves and ensuring the "Re-charge" aspect of the five-year Business Plan was achieved. To this end, we have:

- Increased members' funds by nine per cent or \$22,382 between November 2014 and November 2015.
- Increased Cash on Hand and Trade Debtors by just over 100 per cent, from \$168,227 at November 2014 to \$337,700 at November 2015, which was a significant improvement in our cash position.

It is important to note the Federation does not carry any debt or borrowings.

The total liabilities of the Federation are \$345,937 of which subs and income received in advance represents \$135,256 (39 per cent) of the total liabilities. As mentioned earlier, this is due to a change in accounting requirements instructed by our Auditors.

In summary, 2015 has been a very successful year for WAFarmers. The 2015 result is in line with our five-year Re-charge, Re-connect Business Plan. The Board and CEO have commenced making significant steps to ensure the long term financial strength of your organisation.

With plans and budgets in place for 2016 combined with the addition of two additional staff in January 2016, one Policy Executive Officer and a Membership Coordinator, combined with the very professional and focused team at WAFarmers today, we are confident that the 2015 results will be improved on again in 2016, further cementing WAFarmers' position as Western Australia's number one membership based, advocacy group.

Financial Report

For the year ended 30 november 2015



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2015	2015	2014
	ACTUAL \$	BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$
COMMUNICATIONS			
Beyond the Farmgate	665	1,000	191
Farm Weekly	6,118	10,000	6,335
News Research	4,861	8,500	7,500
Sub Total	11,644	19,500	14,026
MARKETING & PROMOTION			
Membership Promotion	14,844	23,000	8,994
Marketing Promotion	13,354	23,500	4,885
Sponsorship/Awards	500	1,000	1,550
Field Days & Shows	2,777	6,000	2,382
Website Development	1,128	6,000	1,513
Database Upgrade	0	10,000	10,000
Sub Total	32,603	69,500	29,324
PERSONNEL			
Salaries & Wages	605,547	649,127	631,868
Superannuation	58,075	68,562	60,869
Zone Co-Ordinators Wages	32,955	48,100	40,175
Zone Co-Ordinators Expenses	0	2,000	0
Payroll Tax	0	4,700	9,826
Fringe Benefits Tax	0	1,000	437
Recruitment & Trainig	12,497	8,000	3,652
Workers Compensation	4,356	6,000	5,462
Staff Travel	18,042	15,500	14,941
Sub Total	731,472	802,989	767,230
OFFICE SERVICES			
Rent & Variables	86,523	95,800	218,645
Office Relocation Exp	0	0	37,415
Electricity	7,355	13,000	12,132
Office Operating Expenses	64,236	88,780	86,257
Repairs & Maintenance	2,093	1,500	1,669
General Expenses	11,740	10,500	10,138
Minor Assets	0	1,000	1,539
Periodicals & Publications	8,347	7,680	7,374
Sub Total	180,294	218,260	375,169
FINANCIAL SERVICES			
Bank Fees	3,117	3,800	3,701
Insurance	11,907	15,000	14,480
Audit Fees	10,160	11,500	10,940
Accounting Fees	9,563	2,500	3,550
Legal Expenses	56,141	37,000	9,980
Debts Expense	6,160	0	404
Depreciation	4,827	12,500	11,000
Sub Total	101,875	82,300	54,055
TOTAL ADMIN. EXPENSES	1,057,888	1,192,549	1,239,804

	2015	2015	2014
	ACTUAL \$	BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$
INCOME			
Members subscriptions	973,609	1,051,780	1,018,463
Allied Industries/Associate Members	7,872	0	7,227
Affiliation Fees	2,000	4,000	2,000
Commission	20,091	2,000	2,686
WAFarmers First Milk Royalty	221,076	186,000	0
Sponsorship/Events Income	304,455	378,750	441,235
Recharge Reconnect Income	0	0	20,909
Interest-Main A/C & Term Deposits	7,246	12,000	14,886
Commodity Sections Income	35,603	57,693	57,181
Zone Investments Income	0	2,000	9,283
Rental Income	5,083	4,764	6,764
Sundry Income	1,198	3,000	1,889
Datamars Income	6,882	6,500	7,045
Advocacy - Grain Growers	0	0	36,000
Grain Donation	16,692	0	5,144
TOTAL INCOME	1,601,807	1,708,487	1,630,712
LESS EXPENDITURE			
Affiliation Fees			
National Farmers Federation	40,000	40,000	40,000
Cattle Council of Australia	20,833	23,000	28,607
Sheepmeat Council of Australia	13,832	15,000	16,250
Grains Expense Account	1,139	13,000	0
WoolProducers Australia	15,821	16,366	17,730
Australian Honey Bee	182	2,300	1,012
Australian Dairy Farmers	17,092	19,000	27,653
Sub Total	108,899	128,666	131,252
General Section Executive Expenses	3,207	3,500	3,449
Board Expenses	2,987	8,000	3,620
President's Allowance inc Super	58,002	63,430	58,002
President's Expenses	13,452	16,000	17,175
Events Expense	167,763	174,000	148,941
Recharge Reconnect Expenses	0	0	23,303
WAFarmersFirst Milk	27,999	0	24,152
Dairy Industry Milk Trust	42,264	0	0
General Council	11,005	12,000	1,452
Commodity expenses	53,117	61,864	71,413
Commodity Pres/Portfolio Allowance	15,125	21,000	20,000
Datamars Expense	5,803	5,050	5,643
Zone Expenses	1,415	1,000	189
Sundry Expense	10,499	0	0
Sub Total	412,638	365,844	377,337
OTHER EXPENSES	521,537	494,510	508,589
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES	1,057,888	1,192,549	1,239,804
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,579,425	1,687,059	1,748,392
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	22,382	21,428	-117,680

BALANCE SHEET

	2015	2014
	November	November
BALANCE SHEET NOVEMBER 2015		
Bank - Operating Account	61,045	35,587
Westpac Bank-Term Deposits	0	0
Westpac Cash Reserve	251,195	126,192
Petty Cash	250	250
Accounts Receivable	86,504	42,035
Zone Bank Accounts	140,888	141,660
Donations Account	45,338	0
Prepayments	14,759	8,814
Sundry Debtors	0	2,000
Total Current Assets	599,979	356,538
Non-Current Assets		
Furniture & Fittings	10,558	11,611
Lease Hold Improvements	0	467
Plant & Machinery	1,470	1,117
Telephone System	398	499
Computer Hardware	1,693	1,775
Computer - Software	1,192	2,437
Investment - Westralian Farmers	2,734	2,734
Investment - Trust Fund WAFF	10	10
Investment - Farmwide	1,334	1,334
Total Non-Current Assets	19,389	21,984
TOTAL ASSETS	619,368	378,522
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	13,324	1,249
Esperance Fire Appeal	45,338	0
Payroll Liabilities-Group Tax/Super	16,000	1
Provision for Holiday Pay	28,735	21,872
Staff Contributions-Xmas Function	0	-325
Accruals	50,303	20,500
Subs in Advance 2017	8,982	40,609
Subs in Advance 2016	63,627	40,609
Income Received in Advance	62,648	4,439
Provision for Dairy Trust Projects	42,264	0
Sundry Creditors	4,038	0
GST Collected	13,787	8,174
GST Paid	-14,627	-23,175
Total Current Liabilities	334,419	113,953
Non-Current Liabilities		
Prov for Employee Long Service Leave	11,519	13,519
National Affiliation Fees	0	0
Total Non Current Liabilities	11,519	13,519
TOTAL LIABILITIES	345,938	127,472
NET ASSETS	273,430	251,049
EQUITY		
Retained Surplus	251,049	368,731
Current Surplus	22,382	-117,681
TOTAL EQUITY	273,431	251,050



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