



WAFARMERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2023 Annual Report. The past 12 months have seen the two big issues of live sheep export and Aboriginal cultural heritage dominate the state and federal policy debate.

As of time of writing the Federal government had not announced its decision on the future of live exports but it is clear the relentless campaign that we have run along with our partners in the live sheep campaign group have made it increasingly difficult for the Government to claim they are only acting because the industry has lost its social license to operate.

Whatever the outcome there is still a long way to go as any decision to lock in an end date will be met with a concerted campaign to vote this government out and for the Opposition to reverse the decision. We know decisions can be reversed as this is exactly what we saw in July 2023 when the State government was forced to walk away from its new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act following a two-year campaign pointing out the enormous costs and impact on freehold property rights.

Governments can be forced to listen, but it takes an organised effort by a peak body such as WAFarmers to put the collective voice to government. As the old saying goes united we stand divided we fall.

WAFarmers is the largest and most influential agricultural advocacy group in Western Australia and is continually working towards a more viable, profitable, and sustainable future for the State's agriculture industry.

As part of this pursuit, WAFarmers advocates to government for positive change, develops corporate alliances and partnerships, as well as communicates with the rural and metropolitan public on important issues.

With the Federal government locking in their 43% emissions reduction target into legislation we are starting to look at what it means for farmers input costs and who will pay. Will the costs of carbon abatement be moved up or down the supply chain? Obviously WAFarmers will be making the case that the end consumer should be paying or at the very least, carbon calculators need to consider existing best practice and the cyclical nature of carbon methane emissions from livestock and grain.

It is in cases like this that the need for advocacy organisations becomes apparent. WAFarmers works closely with our various peak bodies; Grain Producers Australia, Sheep Producers Australia, Wool Producers Australia, Cattle Australia, and Dairy Australia along with the National Farmers' Federation.

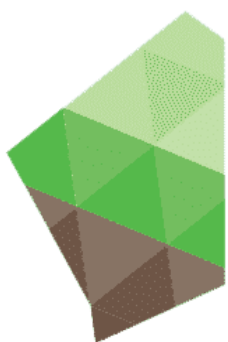
What we don't want to see is peak bodies outbidding each other on the speed and amount they can reduce emissions without understanding the full costs that industry will bear.

WAFarmers job is to engage with the government to help steer the ship of the state in a way that benefits the agricultural sector and not have farmers being the solution for Australia's carbon targets.

The 2023 Annual Report provides details of how our various sectors within the organisation Grains, Livestock, Dairy and General are addressing the carbon question along with all the other issues we represent the industry on behalf of our members.

Without your valued support we can't do the work that allows farmers to grow.

Thank you for your continued support.



WAFARMERS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



John Hassell

2023 marked the first full year of the Federal Labor government and the seventh year of the State Labor government and on both fronts Western Australian farmers have had to push back on policies that would have had long term detrimental impacts on farm businesses.

It would have to be a toss up what was worse, the State governments disastrous new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage laws or the Federal governments move to progress the end of the live sheep trade. Both would have had disastrous long-term consequences for farmers.

But these were not the only challenges the industry faced. The Federal government spent the year taking Australia back to the 1970s with its industrial relations laws making employing workers for seasonal farm work even more expensive and problematic and followed it up with a biosecurity tax on farm gate production.

On the upside, we now have a State government that is listening to the industry with a new Minister for Agriculture, the Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, replacing the challenging to work with former minister Alannah MacTiernan. We also have a new Premier who listened to the industry and rolled back the unworkable new heritage laws within weeks of being sworn in and cancelled the redraft of the Water Reform Bill as they too were unworkable for farmers.

What has become obvious to me as President of WAFarmers, is some governments, ministers, Premiers and Prime Ministers can listen and change direction while others are dogmatic and will only change when forced to by stakeholders.

Federally 2023 proved we have a government that cannot listen unless it is to the union movement, while at the State level we have clearly turned the corner and have a constructive relationship with the Premier and key ministers; long may it last. Political advocacy is a relentless task and as a peak body you need to be there week in and week out tracking what government is doing and being ready to head them off.

In the case of the heritage laws, we had to run the State government into the ground and to do it we called on farmers to make their voice heard via two public meetings, one at Katanning and the other at Parliament House which certainly got the new Premiers attention and helped lead to the Government dumping the legislation and reverting to the old Act. It was a notable about face which would not have come about without the public campaign WAFarmers ran.

Unfortunately, our efforts through the year to reverse the Federal government's policy to end the live export trade were not as successful despite a relentless effort to keep the issue on the front page of the media. If nothing else, we managed to slow down the government's decision making and make it known we were not going to take this lying down. In fact, our campaign fed well into the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) 'Keep Farmers Farming' campaign which was built around the growing number of policies that is becoming the most left-wing government since the Whitlam government to govern the country.

It is not only State and National issues that have been on our agenda. International trade with the reopening of the barley market with China, the near signing of a Free Trade Agreement with the United Kingdom that was only scuttled by push back by the NFF and the continuing push for Australia to follow global climate change policies such as the introduction of Euro 5 and 6 emissions restrictions on farmers' vehicles, not to mention pressure from the European Union to sign up to their sustainability framework were all topics that we have pushed back on behalf of our industry.

To do this we need ongoing support from our members, and I can report that the year has been yet another successful one for member numbers which is important for the long-term viability of our organisation.



John Hassell with Dinner Guest Speaker, Brad Hogg at 2023 Annual Conference

Without your support we cannot support the six national peak bodies we have which includes the NFF, Sheep Producers Australia, Wool Producers Australia, Grain Producers Australia, Cattle Australia, and Dairy Australia. Collectively they have over forty policy staff including economists, lawyers and trade experts working on issues impacting agriculture, which makes for a formidable brains trust that engage with every policy proposal put up in Canberra or Western Australia that impacts farm businesses.

Finally, I would like to thank the team at WAFarmers, Trevor, Mel, Julie, and Laura for their support along with my fellow Board and Council members who put so much time and effort into our organisation.

John Hassell



John Hassell addressing public meeting in Katanning



John Hassell addressing ACH rally at Parliament House



John Hassell talking to Hon Peter Dutton MP at Wagin Woolorama



GRAIN REPORT



Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich

WAFARMERSGRAINS

Opposing bad regulation to protect the viability of grain growing businesses

I have said for many years that the biggest risk to our farming businesses is BAD REGULATION. That is, new or amended laws, or changes to the administration of laws, that are:

(a) misconceived – where government does not properly understand the practices, science or economics which underpin the subject;

(b) politically motivated – where government is responding to popular opinion without regard to, and sometime despite, the applicable science or economics; and/or

(c) unfair – where government decides to prefer one group of constituents over another as a matter of electoral or factional expediency, often as the product of a political deal.

And never before have we been subjected to so much bad regulation. From the aborted heritage laws, to the ban on the live sheep trade, to the biosecurity tax, to political meddling with the APVMA and chemical regulation, to impractical and onerous industrial relations and immigration changes, through to quasi-regulation via the ISCC – and we haven't even started on biodiversity or carbon yet.

That is why it is so important that all grain growers get behind their state farming organisations. Growing our membership at this time is absolutely critical to give legitimacy & credibility to our voice when we go to government, to give us the resources to mount an effective PR campaign against bad regulation and to muster and coordinate our collective efforts when that is necessary.

Thankfully farmers everywhere are starting to realise this. We have seen a resurgence in our membership, a massive expansion in our engagement with members and a strengthening of our links to and coordination with the Pastoralists & Graziers Association (PGA) and the West Australian Grains Group (WAGG).

This will need to continue if we are to effectively protect our grain growing businesses from bad regulation.

As you can see from my detailed report below, there is a lot going on and even more in the pipeline.

APVMA REVIEW

In July 2023, the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Murray Watt, released a strategic review report prepared by law firm Clayton Utz in relation to the performance and governance of the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (the APVMA). In response to that report, he announced a deeper review to be carried out by Dr Ken Mathews and ordered the APVMA to accelerate and conclude all of its outstanding chemical reviews.

We had a number of concerns with this, namely:

(a) that the appointment of Ken Mathews (who had previously advocated for a role for the Minister and his department in chemical regulation) could lead to the erosion of the independence and science remit of the APVMA and lead to the politicisation of chemical regulation like in Europe;

(b) that the acceleration of outstanding chemical reviews could lead to the unjustified loss of key chemistry like chlorpyrifos and paraquat;

(c) that chemical regulation in Australia would be unduly influenced by what happens in Europe, the on-going glyphosate class action in the Australian Federal Court and the views of the Australian Greens Party as the product of a political deal like what has happened with the live sheep trade;

(d) that the government would re-visit a previous Labor policy of requiring the re-registration of older chemistry which would lead to a loss of safe cheap generic chemistry forcing farmers into using expensive on-patent chemistry; and

(e) that the (already poor) efficiency of the APVMA would be compromised by seeking to return the APVMA from Armidale to Canberra, leading to further cost and delays which would ultimately be paid for by Australian grain growers.

We lobbied strongly on these matters, including in the media, at the Australian Grain Industry Conference in Melbourne last year and a meeting with the Minister in Perth earlier this year and are pleased to report that the Minister seems to have heard us as he ultimately rejected most of Ken Matthews recommendations and has publicly recognised and committed to the continued independence of the APVMA.

We will continue to monitor this process, particularly in relation to the outstanding chemical reviews and on improving the the regulatory efficiency of the APVMA.

INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY & CARBON CERTIFICATION (ISCC) SCHEME

It has long been WAFarmersGrains policy that:

(a) Australian grain growers should not only be sustainable, they should be able to prove that via a credible accreditation scheme;

(b) WAFarmersGrains are opposed to the use of the ISCC scheme for that purpose because:

- it does not take into account Australian concepts of sustainability (eg. climate, topography, hydrology, soils & proximity to population);
- it is 100% driven by European regulation which is often affected by popular opinion (unlike in Australia where chemical regulation is independent of government and must be based on science);
- neither Australian grain growers nor the Australian people have any input into the ISCC scheme; and
- it does not recognise that, unlike Europe, Australian farmers are completely unsubsidised; and

(c) as a \$20-30 billion industry, it is entirely appropriate that the Australia grains sector develops and administers (via Grain Australia) its own sustainability accreditation system.

GRAIN REPORT CONT.

Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich



AERIAL SPRAYING

After carrying out audits from the 2022 harvest, a number of farmers were found to have infringed the aerial spraying restriction in the ISCC scheme which prohibits spraying pesticides classified as WHO 1a, 1b or 2 (pretty much all of the mouse baits & chemicals that we apply by air) within 500m of a water body. The ISCC clarified that "water body" for this purpose includes natural water courses, farm dams and lakes.

WAFarmersGrains, both directly and via the ISCC Technical Working Group, objected to both the inclusion of farm dams and salt lakes and to the arbitrary size of the 500m buffer on the basis that it was different to what the APVMA required in Australia, was unsupported by science and overlooked the fact that Australian grain growers often had little choice but to aerial spray (i.e. too wet, slow or damaging for a ground rig).

WAFarmersGrains objected that most grain growers would be unable to comply with this requirement.

As a result of lobbying pressure from WAFarmersGrains (together with PGA and WAGG), CBH engaged senior hydrologists from the University of Western Australia and, applying WA data and studies, was able to secure for WA farmers only an exemption from the ISCC in relation to the farm dam and salt lake aspects of the restriction.

That is, of course, only part of the problem and CBH and WAFarmers continue to work on securing an exemption from the 500m buffer aspect, proposing instead to limit this to the buffer distances required by Australian law (i.e. determined by the APVMA in accordance with the best available science specifically for each chemical).

GRDC STUDY

WAFarmersGrains, directly and via our membership of Grain Producers Australia (GPA), has been lobbying hard to GRDC and Grains Australia to develop an Australian sustainability accreditation system. In response to that pressure, GRDC commissioned a study to look at the costs and benefits of the existing system and also of alternatives like an Australian developed system.

WAFarmersGrains has been privy to the first draft of this document and have provided extensive commentary back to GRDC and LEK Consulting, the consultants engaged for this purpose.

Unfortunately, the first attempt was deeply flawed due to improper sampling, the preconceived views of the consultants and a misunderstanding of the subject matter. While we are hopeful that the next attempt will be better, we are concerned that the consultant will be unduly influenced by the work that they have done to date.

COMPLIANCE

WAFarmersGrains remains of the view that there is a high level of wrongful certification occurring. This is mainly due to the size of the discount for not certifying and the absence of any adverse consequences of being found to have wrongfully certified. Accordingly, we would urge the trade to reduce the size of the discount to reduce this moral hazard and would similarly urge growers to only certify if and to the extent that that are actually compliant. Otherwise, the trade will continue to misunderstand the ability of Australian grain growers to comply with the ISCC scheme.

BIOSECURITY LEVY

While WAFarmersGrains welcomed the increase in Federal Government spending on biosecurity and the move to ensure that those that create the risk bear a corresponding portion of the burden for funding the biosecurity system, it has strongly lobbied against the proposed biosecurity levy to be paid by Australian farmers and grain growers in particular.

In our written submission to the Government, we objected that:

(a) this money will not be quarantined specifically for biosecurity, and will instead go into the consolidated revenue of the federal department of agriculture, which is already operating at a loss due to poor management;

(b) that grains will pay an unfair proportion - it is estimated that more than half of the \$47.5m to be raised by the levy will be paid by the grains industry;

(c) this money will not be quarantined specifically for grains biosecurity and will instead be mainly used for the biosecurity of other agricultural commodities (eg livestock);

(d) levies are usually a joint initiative between government & industry with a mechanism in place to ensure industry money (OUR money) is spent most effectively - like in relation to the levies funding GRDC and Plant Health Australia - there has been no such engagement with industry in this case and that makes it a TAX, not a levy.

(e) grain growers already pay an enormous amount of money for biosecurity:

- Plant Health Australia (Federal levy) - PHA is a grains industry funded biosecurity body;
- GRDC (Federal levy) - most people don't know it but GRDC spends a lot of money on biosecurity;
- Industry Funding Scheme - Skeleton Weed & Bed-Straw (State levy);
- various local govt schemes (State);
- indirectly priced into imported farming products due to biosecurity costs passed on by importers;
- indirectly priced into imported consumer products due to biosecurity costs passed on by importers;
- when there is a biosecurity breach that results in extra costs in pest control (eg. use of imidacloprid to protect against Russian wheat aphids); and
- as a tax payer generally;

(f) WA grain growers already pay a disproportionate share of federal grain levies (because we export around half of the country's grain and do not necessarily get a corresponding share invested back in WA and because, unlike WA, the East has a large domestic grains industry which has a poor record of declaring and paying federal levies) - this initiative amplifies that structural unfairness so WA grain growers will be paying a disproportionate share of a disproportionate share; and

(g) as a matter of principle, those who create the risk (importers) should pay 100% of the cost of managing that risk. It is unfair to ask farmers to pay for this when we have not caused or contributed to this risk.

At a recent GPA Policy Council meeting in Canberra, we learned from the peak body representing importers that importers were in fact willing to pay this amount (i.e. instead of farmers). Despite this, the Government seems determined to press on with this misconceived proposal.

Happily though, as a result of the combined lobbying of WAFarmersGrains, GPA, NFF and others, it appears that this measure will ultimately fail to pass the Senate. Our hope is that the Government will then re-visit the idea of a container levy or some other means of extracting the true cost from the creators of the risk.

GRAIN REPORT CONT.



Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich

WHEAT PORT CODE

The Wheat Port Code was put in place as part of the de-regulation of the grains industry and, under its terms, was due for review in 2023. After much consultation with port operators (CBH & Bunge), the ACCC and the review team at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, WAFarmersGrains made a written submission along the following lines:

(a) WAFarmers Grains believes that strong and effective regulation of port and related infrastructure is important to ensure there is competition in the Western Australian grains supply chain.

(b) In our view, the Wheat Port Code in its current form falls well short of that, in that;

- it only applies to wheat and does not apply to other grains that represent a significant and increasing part of the grain crop exported annually from the Western Australian market (eg canola, barley, lupins and oats);
- all of the existing port terminal service providers in Western Australia are exempt from Parts 3 to 6 of the Wheat Port Code, meaning that it currently has very limited application in Western Australia;
- there has been a lack of rigour and transparency in the granting of exemptions from the Wheat Port Code and it would appear that political considerations have prevailed over the matters that ought to have been considered having regard to the intention of the Wheat Port Code and the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Clth);
- if any new entrant was to be subject to the Wheat Port Code in a manner different than the incumbents, that could represent a barrier to entry which would harm the competitiveness of the Western Australian market for port terminal services;
- the Wheat Port Code was designed when the market for port terminal services was dominated by large, vertically integrated bulk handlers that grew from former state monopolies, but the nature of that market has changed a lot since that time with the entry of smaller scale business models not contemplated by the Wheat Port Code (eg the use of transshipment vessels and mobile ship loaders);
- there is uncertainty over when many of the Wheat Port Code's provisions apply which has at times enabled port terminal service providers to avoid the intended operation of the Wheat Port Code;

- it does not apply to grain that is shipped to other Australian states which, in recent times with drought in the Eastern States, has been an important feature of the shipping calendar from Western Australian ports;
- it does not allow for the accurate capture of data; and
- there are no serious consequences of contravening the Wheat Port Code.

(c) In our view, if the Wheat Port Code is to sunset, the competition issues in the market for port terminal services would not be adequately addressed by the Competition & Consumer Act 2010 (Clth) (the Act) alone. That is because the Act is primarily concerned with offences for the most serious kinds of specific anti-competitive behaviour, which are very hard and expensive to prove, and where the ACCC often lacks standing to act.

(d) We believe that, if the Wheat Port Code is permitted to sunset, it will be important to replace that with some other form of regulation to ensure that the Western Australian supply chain is and remains subject to the forces of competition for the benefit of grain growers. Regulation of this nature would have the following benefits:

- it would be specifically tailored to the needs of the port terminal services market (whereas the Act is very general in nature);
- it could apply a systems approach where market participants have to demonstrate their compliance with certain principles (i.e. change the onus);
- the nature and scale of the regulatory burden could be pitched at an appropriate level to ensure that the burden does not outweigh the benefit (which can and should be reviewed at periodic intervals); and
- it could give standing to the ACCC to ensure that the code is understood and complied with.

WAFarmersGrains is of the view that the code should apply to all grains and to all port operators. It should have clear unambiguous provisions and meaningful enforcement provisions.

We have since met with the review panel who are concerned that, despite having extensive engagement from farmers and port terminal operators (including CBH), they have had limited feedback from the users of port terminal services (i.e. the trade), who presumably fear an adverse consequence for their port access.

As a result and in consultation with WAFarmersGrains & GPA, the review panel has extended the sunset date for a year and undertaken to continue to work to elicit the views of the trade.

In our assessment, the most likely consequence is that we will end up with a new port code that does the same thing as parts 1 & 2 of the existing Wheat Port Code (mostly relating to the provision of information) but which applies to all port operators and all grains and which has meaningful enforcement provisions.

VISA CHANGES

Late last year, the Federal Government carried out a review of its migration strategy which recommended an overhaul of the working holiday visa programme. Among other things, it was proposed that working holiday visas only be available for 1 year, meaning that the 2nd and 3rd year visas would no longer be available and, as a consequence, there would be no incentive to do regional work in order to qualify for the 2nd and 3rd year visas. This would have massive implications for grain growing businesses who depend on having access to seasonal labour both to get the crop in and to get it off.

WAFarmersGrains lobbied strongly locally and nationally to make clear that:

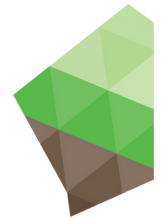
(a) regional Western Australia already had a labour problem before COVID-19 but, when the borders were shut down during COVID-19, this was made manifestly worse;

(b) with no backpackers available, farm businesses had to meet their seasonal labour requirements from the local population which is particularly difficult in WA because:

- unlike the Eastern States, WA does not have large regional towns with corresponding employment resources - instead our towns are quite small and shrinking, with relatively poor access to services by comparison with the city;
- farmers are set up to accommodate seasonal workers in single persons' quarters, not houses which local people want and need, particularly if they have a family, and there is no spare housing available in our towns; and
- in WA, the mining industry competes vigorously for workers and will pay whatever is required to secure the workers and the accommodation that they need - often at levels that cannot be matched by rural employers;

GRAIN REPORT CONT.

Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich



(c) this lack of seasonal labour during COVID-19 not only restricted productivity, it also caused a spike in farm injuries and fatalities caused by an erosion in the experience & skill level of the work force, the longer hours that existing farm staff were called on to work and added demands placed on the older family members of the business (who were over-represented in the injury & fatality statistics);

(d) cancelling 2nd and 3rd year visas would effectively return us to the same situation that was experienced during COVID-19;

(e) it is bad government policy to have local people engaged in seasonable employment – it is far better to have local people in permanent all-year-round employment (with all of the security benefits that permanent work provides) and to have seasonally available workers (i.e. backpackers) engaged in seasonally available work; and

(f) using backpackers for seasonally available work is a win-win because:

- they are well paid while having most of their living costs covered (so they save a lot of money);
- they are often from farms themselves and gain a lot of very different farming experiences;
- they contribute to the local community, often joining in with sporting teams, etc.; and
- they enrich our workplace, bringing different ideas, cultural diversity and energy/enthusiasm.

Our understanding is that the Government has backed away from this proposed idea, but we will keep the pressure on as we know that the availability of backpackers is critical to the safe and productive operation of our farms.

CBH REBATES

In 2023, CBH Marketing and Trading (M&T) made a large, unexpected profit which principally arose because M&T purchased grain before the war in the Ukraine occurred and they sold most of that grain at the high prices that were available after the war broke out. As a result of the dire need for investment in the up-country freight network (finding expression in the Path-to-2033 Strategy), the board of CBH decided:

(a) not to rebate the profit from M&T back to growers that sold grain to M&T;

(b) to retain most of the profit to rebuild equity in M&T following the M&T trading losses from a few years earlier and otherwise bolster its capacity to offer competitive pricing to members going forward; and

(c) controversially, to pay a dividend from M&T to its parent, CBH Storage & Handling (S&H), for the purpose of contributing to the financing of the network improvements contemplated in the Path-to-2033 Strategy.

WAFarmersGrains supported those decisions because:

(a) this was a matter to be determined by the CBH membership, which has its own membership architecture, including a grower elected board, a Grower Advisory Council, annual general meetings of grower members, regional grower meetings and a network of regionally located staff – which had all specifically considered and approved this approach;

(b) the record harvests in 2021 and 2022 meant that there was not enough up-country freight capacity to export the crop within the out-turn year, which caused the market to heavily discount all grains by \$50-100/tonne – we considered this a supply chain emergency that needed immediate attention and funding for that purpose;

(c) our advice was that:

- M&T could not return a rebate to members based on profits because that would be considered a return of profits which would offend CBH's constitutional arrangements and the legal frameworks that govern it;
- paying a rebate based on profits could cause that and other previous rebates to lose their tax deductibility, potentially precipitating a significant tax liability for CBH; and
- by paying a franked dividend to its parent, which is a tax exempt entity, CBH could recover the value of the franking credit from the ATO, effectively grossing up the value of that money enlarging the total pie for the benefit of all growers – in other words creating new value that would not otherwise exist.

d) We did not agree with the argument that people who sold grain to M&T from 2021 and 2022 were “funding” a disproportionate share of the network upgrade:

- It could not be said that growers selling their grain to CBH had a rational expectation of receiving a rebate because:

1. (M&T hadn't paid a rebate for many years;

2. M&T had never paid a rebate in excess of \$7/t – certainly not the \$40/t being sought by proponents of the rebate argument;

3. rebates had always been expressly at the discretion of the board – they were never mandated; and

4. because M&T had prior trading losses, the board had made very clear that they would not be paying a rebate.

- When you sell for cash, all risk passes to the buyer – if you want to share in the risk (i.e. BOTH WAYS), you put your grain in a POOL.
- 93% of growers sell at least some of their grain to CBH.

(e) The prospect of receiving rebates enables M&T to acquire grain for less than the best price in the market which, because M&T usually buy around half of the grain in the State, has a depressive influence on cash prices generally across the whole market.

While WAFarmersGrains was supportive of the payment of this dividend in 2023, this was based on the the particular circumstances that existed AT THAT TIME.

We were clear with CBH that we did NOT support the idea that CBH should deliberately use M&T to fund the network upgrades as part of the Path-to-2033 Strategy. That is because that would implicitly involve CBH offering lower prices to generate bigger surpluses – whereas we want CBH to offer the best prices to growers that it can, which will not just directly improve prices offered by CBH, but have a multiplier effect on the whole of the market because it would require other buyers to lift their prices as well.

This matter was then tested at the WAFarmers 2023 Annual General Meeting where the push for rebates was defeated by a majority of 2 to 1.

Since that time, CBH has paid a further dividend from M&T to its parent CBH.

While we can to a certain extent extrapolate from our previous position, WAFarmersGrains does not have a specific position on this dividend paid in 2024. That is why we have arranged a meeting with the CBH CEO, CFO and Company Secretary and invited members of the Grain Bulk Handlers Association to gain a full understanding of the logic for the 2024 dividend and the plan going forward.

GRAIN REPORT CONT.



Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich

We would make the following observations though:

(a) The prices offered by M&T in 2023 as part of its Dynamic Pricing Strategy were significantly better than any other prices offered in the market and the way in which M&T rationed these contracts between growers based on a first-in-first-served left many growers feeling embittered because they missed out, often for no other reason than they had poorer internet or mobile phone coverage. If M&T were to pay a significant rebate to the small number of people that actually got the CBH contracts (i.e. the lucky ones), that would amplify that sense of injustice and outrage.

(b) While the urgency of the supply chain crisis has eased, we remain only one season away from being back in that same situation (i.e. a supply chain emergency). The urgency and need for significant investment in the CBH up-country freight network remains as important as ever, particularly with the impending end to the live sheep trade which will only amplify supply chain pressure.

(c) The tax and regulatory logic for M&T paying a dividend to its parent CBH, rather than a rebate to members, remains as applicable in 2024 as it was in 2023.

OTHER MATTERS

National representation

It is a reality that most of the key decisions affecting the grains industry are now made in Canberra. That is why WAFarmersGrains sits on the GPA policy council, along with all of the grains presidents of the other state farming organisations. Through GPA, we have been involved in discussions and policy formation in relation to:

- the APVMA review;
- the biosecurity levy/tax;
- LEK Consultants' review of sustainability accreditation in Australia;
- supply chain issues (the AEGIC supply chain review & report);
- the policy settings for biofuel manufacturing in Australia (including sustainable aviation fuel)
- GRDC levy review regarding funding of Plant Health Australia;
- the results of the National Residue Survey;
- GRDC (Grains Australia, IOC structure & 5 year RD&E plan) ;
- varieties & end-point-royalties;
- competition issues in the grains sector (Wheat Port Code, agricultural machinery & canola seed); and
- whole of industry sustainability (Behind Australian Grain) and ISCC;
- farm labour/visa regulation.

Cooperation with PGA & WAGG

As WAFarmersGrains President, I am in regular communication with my counterparts at PGA (Gary McGill) and WAGG (Alistair Falconer/Michael O'Callaghan) and, where it is possible, we have spoken to government and industry with a unified voice. This has its own power for two reasons: firstly, when this occurs, we represent the combined numbers of our members; and secondly, it can be inferred that we represent the full spectrum of opinion within the farming population. And that is compelling.

Stevedore charges

In the past few years there has been an explosion in the container handling charges imposed by stevedores on exporters (including those exporting grain and hay). Our research shows that this has resulted from 3 factors. Firstly, the powerful shipping companies have refused to pay many of the shipping charges that the stevedores previously charged them and so the stevedores have looked elsewhere to recover that money.

Secondly, the stevedores learnt during the COVID-19 period that exporters can pay a lot more for containers if required and, as container fees have returned to normal, they have upped their service charges accordingly.

Thirdly, whenever waterside workers seek a further pay rise from their stevedore employers, rather than fighting the pay rise, the stevedores now just give in to the demand and pass the resulting cost on to the users of their services – that is to exporters.

As a result of this, the Productivity Commission carried out a detailed review and recommended that the ACCC be given oversight of stevedoring costs. However, because the Labor governments around the country are so heavily influenced by the unions, those governments have been unwilling to give effect to that recommendation of the Productivity Commission.

That is why, earlier this year, WAFarmersGrains sent a joint letter with PGA & WAGG to the ACCC asking them to investigate the significant and arbitrary rise in stevedoring charges that has occurred recently with a view to implementing the recommendation of the Productivity Commission.



Supply chain innovation

In July last year, I went to South Australia with representatives of PGA and WAGG to inspect the trans-shipment vessels, loading ports (Wallaroo & Lucky Bay) and up-country feeder sites (Kimba & Lucky Bay) owned and operated by T-Ports Pty Ltd. This helped inform our understanding of this disruptive technology and how it might be used to best effect in the Western Australian context.

Following on from this, and a year prior consulting with an entity interested in developing similar infrastructure along the WA coastline, we provided an introduction to that developer to the Western Australian government. We will continue to monitor the progress of this interesting project.



Trans-shipment vessel at the T-Port at Lucky Bay, South Australia

CONCLUSION

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the WAFarmers Grains council for their support and input on matters canvassed through the council in 2023/24 and acknowledge the work of our Policy Manager, Melanie Tolich for conveying and preparing all Grains Council documentation and delivering the resulting actions.

SUBMISSIONS 2023

WAFarmers have made the following grains related submission on behalf of members:

- Wheat Port Code Review



Harvest at Yarrabin Farms



LIVESTOCK REPORT



Geoff Pearson and Melanie Tolich

This year has certainly brought an interesting dynamic to the livestock sector. Record low prices for sheep and cattle, unusually dry season conditions, traceability reforms and turmoil in live export, has kept the Livestock Council busy over the past 12 months as it continues to develop and drive key policy areas at both a state and national level. Below are the highlighted key policy areas the council has been working on throughout 2023:

LIVE EXPORTS

Live Export has remained the number one advocacy topic for the WAFarmers Livestock Council throughout 2023. The council remains steadfast in its position that it will not support the Albanese Governments policy to phase out live export of sheep by sea.

The Albanese Government appointed a panel to travel around the country to consult with and gain feedback on what measures could be put in place to assist the industry to work towards phasing out live sheep exports. They consulted with all stakeholders (including industry and farmers) impacted by the proposed policy. Farmers and Industry were very staunch in their support for live sheep exports citing that there simply is no alternative and allow the trade to determine its own future.

The panel concluded its consultation in June 2023 and handed its report to the Federal Agriculture Minister, Murray Watt in October 2023. Industry is still waiting to see a copy of the report and awaits direction from the Federal Government as to the future of the industry.

The impending policy since its announcement early in 2023, has driven confidence in the Western Australian sheep industry to plummet, demonstrated by huge amounts of stock being turned off, prices in the market falling to historical lows, making it almost unviable for farmers to remain in the industry.

Certainty on the future of live sheep exports for our livestock producers is required, beyond telling us that it will not be phased out in the first term of government. This level of certainty will allow farmers to make the necessary decisions for their businesses and their farm survivability moving forward.

WAFarmers will continue to work closely with our national peak councils: Australian Live Exporters' Council (ALEC), Sheep Producers Australia (SPA), WoolProducers Australia (WPA), and National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and locally in Western Australia with Pastoralists and Graziers Association (PGA) and Western Australian Live Exporters' Association (WALEA) to ensure the continuation of the Live Export trade.



Tour of Live Export ship

SHEEP AND CATTLE PRICES

A loss of confidence in the Western Australian livestock markets, predominantly driven by the proposed live sheep exports phase out in conjunction with extreme dry season conditions has seen historically low prices being offered across our domestic markets during 2023.

The prices for both cattle and sheep bottomed out in September 2023, with cattle appearing to recover a little better than sheep through to December 2023. Low prices are reflective of the oversupply in the marketplace, with slaughter rates increasing month on month as farmers turn off stock, due to lack of confidence in the industry and predicted dry season conditions for Western Australia.

Finding buyers for the stock being turned off is proving difficult compounded by interruptions with of live export consignments and limited market access. WAFarmers Livestock Council continues to work with our national peak bodies, SPA and WPA to identify potential markets for our product and to manage seasonal conditions across the industry.



Geoff Pearson chairing live export public meeting in Katanning

LIVESTOCK REPORT CONT.



Geoff Pearson and Melanie Tolich

BIOSECURITY AND TRACEABILITY

Biosecurity remains a hot topic for the council in 2023 with the presence of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) in Indonesia. Although the situation has somewhat improved the threat to the Australian livestock industry is still present with a potential cost of \$80b to the Australian economy.

In July 2023, the Indonesian Agriculture and Quarantine Agency (IAQA) suspended the export of cattle from four export Registered Premises across three northern jurisdictions including WA following a detection of LSD in a small number of Australian cattle, that had arrived and spent some time in Indonesia. They advised that export would continue once they had received further information to clarify the source of the infection prior to enable exports to resume from the suspended premises.

The action taken by Indonesia had a domino effect with Malaysia following suit and suspending cattle and beef imports from Australia citing LSD concerns. It was determined that Australia was and remains free of LSD, with the trade to Indonesia and Malaysia resuming in September 2023. This resulted in significant impacts being felt in the Australian cattle market and had some questioning if the suspension was politically motivated around price rather than being specifically LSD related.

Following the heightened threat level of FMD and LSD during 2022, a meeting of Federal and State Ag Ministers in July 2022, resulted in industry being advised that EID's for sheep and goats will become mandatory by January 2025. The decision was reached on the basis that EID's will significantly improve traceability, allowing for timely management, control and eradication of biosecurity threats.

Given the decision made by State Ag Ministers in making EID's for sheep and goats mandatory, WAFarmers Livestock Council as part of the WA Sheep and Goat Advisory Group worked towards getting the best possible outcome for our members. As a result, a discount on electronic tags was secured through the State Government funded "Tag Incentive Program" (TIP) that provided a .75 cents discount on the relevant year of birth tag, being blue tags in 2023. This program has been extended and will be available on black tags for 2024.

WAFarmers understands members concerns in relation to this mandatory decision and the associated cost incurred through this process, however we remind farmers that this was made mandatory by the State Government on the back of major biosecurity threats on our doorstep, with the potential to wipe out the livestock industry Australia wide.

CARBON EMISSIONS

Since our report in 2023 the carbon discussion has not really moved forward with still no clarity on the complex nature of the methodologies and associated carbon calculation tools. The Australian livestock industry through its various sustainability frameworks has committed to reaching the 2030 red meat carbon neutral target but are yet to give producers clear guidance on what is required in order to achieve this. What we don't want is the Federal Government imposing a carbon tax to reduce methane emissions from livestock, similar to what has been proposed in New Zealand.

The Australian red meat industry is utilising innovation and technology to combat carbon emissions, however further work needs to be done to fix issues with how the emissions calculating and accounting is done for livestock. WAFarmers Livestock Council is around the table for these discussions and advocates to the best carbon policy outcomes for farmers.

EU - FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The EU trade offer was heavily negotiated in late 2023 and we congratulate Federal Trade Minister Don Farrell for in making the right call and turning down an trade offer that would have disadvantaged Australian farmers.

It appears that the EU was not willing to put anything commercially meaningful for Australia on the table, instead offering hardwired protectionism into our trading relationship for generations. Australia has always advocated for open and fair-trade negotiations on the world stage. If a deal had been done it would have sealed Australian farmers into a long-term disadvantage against our competitors in New Zealand, Canada and South America.

Ultimately if a deal is to be done, it must be a deal that benefits both sides. We encourage the Australian government to continue with open and frank negotiations with the EU to achieve a fair and equitable deal in the future.

Key policy areas for the WAFarmers Livestock Section into 2024 include:

- Advocating to retain the Live Export trade for sheep and cattle
- Working with partners across the industry to improve traceability and biosecurity outcomes.
- Development of nationally consistent policies on animal health and welfare best practice across the supply chain.
- Advocating for continued industry-specific R&D funding.
- Information gathering, accounting and long-term planning for a sustainable sheep and cattle industry.
- Understanding consumer demand and ensuring research and development is fit for purpose.
- Maintaining market access and international demand.

SUBMISSIONS 2023

WAFarmers have made the following livestock related submissions on behalf of members:

- Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports Amendment (Animal Welfare) Bill 2023
- Phase out of Live Sheep Export by Sea
- Review of the National Wool Declaration
- Wild Dogs Action Plan



Western Australian delegation to Canberra in support of the live sheep export industry



WAFarmers Livestock Council meeting at Lake Preston



DAIRY REPORT

Ian Noakes and Laura Stocker



WAFARMERS DAIRY COUNCIL

The WAFarmers Dairy Council is the peak advocacy group for the dairy industry in Western Australia. We aim to ensure the dairy industry is sustainable: profitable for farmers; safe for the environment and our animals; and valued by the community. We want to ensure our consumers are supplied with safe, wholesome and nutritious dairy products. The Dairy Council works in the policy field to ensure our industry is involved in shaping the regulations and laws under which dairy businesses operate. We contribute to strong leadership and nationally coordinated policy and advocacy work so the dairy industry can continue to grow and prosper.

WA Season

WA's southwest had a cold, wet start to winter followed by an early start to a hot dry summer meaning some farmers are short of summer stock feed.

Milk Prices

Farmgate milk prices headed in the right direction in 2023 in WA, but input costs such as fertiliser and purchased feed have also spiralled upwards. The net result is that over the next year or two, WA dairy farmers may increase their profit margins by a small amount enabling farmers to catch up a little, but not quite enough to reverse the flow of exits from the industry which are ongoing.

WA Dairy Industry Five Year Development Plan

The WA Dairy Industry Working Group (WADIWG) completed the WA Dairy Industry Five Year Development Plan. Our vision is: The WA dairy industry has a reputation for best practice, innovation and sustainability, enabling growth and building confidence in our industry to ensure its long term viability. WADIWG is made up of representatives from: WAFarmers Dairy Council, Western Dairy, Dairy Australia, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Lactalis, Brownes and Bega.

Dairy Regional Roundabout, April 2023

We had a good turnout at the WA Dairy Regional Roundabout held 4-6 April 2023, visiting Albany, Northcliffe, Busselton and Burekup. It is always a pleasure to catch up with other dairy farmers. We heard from Catherine O'Keefe about the potential for an Agricultural Produce Committee for Dairy.



Ian Noakes and Northcliffe dairy farmers at the 2023 Dairy Regional Roundabout

World Milk Day and WAFarmers Dairy Instagram, June 2023

We celebrated World Milk Day on 1 June - congratulating all dairy farmers who produce milk for WA. WAFarmers Dairy Council launched its Dairy Instagram WAFarmers Dairy. Tash Noakes has taken on running the social media site which shows the positive aspects of dairy farming, both to ourselves as a dairy farming community and also to the general public.

WAFarmers Dairy Conference, Busselton, July 2023

We had an excellent turnout at our Dairy Conference on 21 July, 2023. The Conference was opened by Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food, who updated the audience on the WA Dairy Industry 5 Year Development Plan, on behalf of the WADIWG.

During his Acting President's address, the MC Phil Depiazzi presented Ray Pulford with the prestigious Milk Bottle Award for his major long-term contribution to the dairy industry.

We had inspiring speakers across a range of topics from interstate and WA, finishing the day with a special presentation by Bailiwick Legal on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act. We appreciate all our sponsors and thank Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and Dairy Australia for attending and supporting our Conference as always.



Phil Depiazzi presenting Ray Pulford with the Milk Bottle Award at the 2023 Dairy Conference

Dairy Pavilion, Perth Royal Show, September 2023

The 2023 Perth Royal Agricultural Show ran from 23-30 September. The Dairy Pavilion was WAFarmers' main promotion at the Show and has again been recognised as the best Pavilion at the Perth Royal Show.

This accolade reflects the exceptional quality of our dairy products as well as the hard work and commitment of the whole team. The Dairy Pavilion was sponsored by WAFarmersFirst Milk and organised once again by Louise Cashmore. Just outside the Dairy Pavilion, dairy farmers Peter Evans, Michael Partridge, Luke Ieraci, Paul Ieraci, Jacqui Biddulph, Ian Noakes, Wendy Negus and Julie Bettink chatted with the general public about life as a dairy farmer and helped promote a positive message about sustainability.

DAIRY REPORT CONT.



Ian Noakes and Laura Stocker

Farmer Damien demonstrated milking every hour, each day. Children could feed calves donated by Michael Partridge, which was very popular. Inside the Dairy Pavilion, the WAFarmersFirst Coffee Bar was staffed by Louise's family and Scotch College students who learnt barista skills for their role. Our three main milk brands, Brownes, Harvey Fresh and Masters lined up around the Pavilion, alongside award winning ice-cream and other manufacturers, to pull in big crowds every day.

WAFarmers Dairy Council (Laura Stocker) and Western Dairy (Gemma Longford and Rebecca Zappia) shared a booth that offered information about careers, nutrition and sustainability in the WA dairy industry. We also offered cold fresh WAFarmersFirst milk tasting, which was a complete crowd pleaser in the heat, and delicious cheese tasting.

We appreciate the organisers, businesses, farmers and helpers who made the event such a success.



WAFarmersFirst coffee bar
2023 Perth Royal Show



Michael Partridge with media
at Dairy Pavilion
2023 Perth Royal Show

Rural Ag Shows, October 2023

There has been a busy season of rural shows. Margaret River Show and Brunswick Show both had WAFarmers Dairy Council and Western Dairy joint stalls promoting careers, nutrition and sustainability in the WA dairy industry. The Brunswick Show featured a Farm to Fridge concept, sponsored by the WAFarmers First Milk Fund, which attracted a lot of interest in local products including dairy giveaways by our three majors.



Farmer Damien with milking
demonstration at Brunswick Show



WAFarmers Dairy Council stall
Brunswick Show

Advocacy Issues

On behalf of the Dairy Council Michael Partridge attended the Celebration of Australian Dairy with Parliamentary Friends of Primary Producers and representatives of the Australian dairy industry at Parliament House in Canberra in March 2023. It featured a showcase of award-winning dairy and a series of short speeches.

In partnership with the rest of WAFarmers, the Dairy Council has been involved in cross commodity issues such as: biosecurity advocacy, live export debate, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act and WA Acts of Veterinary Medicine review. Another issue we have addressed is that the WA Industrial Relations Commission has proposed to amend the WA Farm Employees Award 1985 so that dairy farming is covered by the Award. The Dairy Council is pleased with the outcome so far.

At a national level, the Dairy Council has also been actively engaged with ADF to support national advocacy on issues such as Agriculture, Land and Emissions; FMD and LSD biosecurity; proposed Biosecurity Protection Levy; Coles Purchase of Saputo Plant; migration and overseas workers; awards; the Australia-EU FTA and Geographical Indications; and Modernising the Agricultural Levies. We also bring a WA perspective to national issues. We developed a position paper supporting Live Exports and made a submission to the federal government during their consultation process. A debate around the Dairy Code of Conduct has recently re-developed and the Dairy Council is advocating in favour of retaining it in its current form. Dairy Council is also represented on the Policy Advisory Groups (PAGs) of ADF. Ian Noakes is our representative on the Farm Operations PAG. Michael Partridge represents the Dairy Council at the ADF Economics and Trade PAG. Nicola Parker represents the Dairy Council at the People and Communities Policy Advisory Group.

Priorities for the year ahead (2024)

We will continue to implement the WA Dairy Industry Five Year Development Plan in place and improving the dairy industry in WA.

Our dairy farmer representation relies on voluntary membership through WAFarmers, but with declining dairy farm numbers, membership fees don't generate enough funds to cover core activities. This is true across Australia. The WA Dairy Industry Fund (a royalty from WAFarmers First Milk) has funded various industry-good projects for 10 years, but is declining in the face of product competition. One potential solution is to set up a Dairy Producers' Committee in Western Australia, under the Agricultural Produce Commission (APC). We will actively pursue this in 2024.



Calves at Ravenhill's Dairy



WAFarmers Members Working at a National Level

By **TREVOR WHITTINGTON**
CEO WAFarmers
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WAFarmers, through a paid membership, works closely with our national peak farming bodies which cover grains, sheep, wool, cattle and dairy, most of which are members of the National Farmers' Federation. WAFarmers pays membership to Grain Producers Australia (GPA), Sheep Producers Australia (SPA), Wool Producers Australia (WPA), Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), Cattle Australia (CA) and National Farmers' Federation (NFF).

Between these bodies, there are more than 40 professional staff working on all aspects of policy issues that impact farmers, including industrial relations, workforce, telecommunications, roads, chemical registration, sustainability, biosecurity, levies, water, native title, live exports, trade, market competition, and climate change, to mention but a few.

We encourage farmers to become a member of one of the State farming organisations. Your State farming membership automatically provides membership to the national bodies which they pay membership to.

Additionally, as a member you can become involved and have your say on committees at both a State and/or national commodity level, just as the below WAFarmers members have opted to do. Please note that you do not have to be involved with a WAFarmers committee to be able to represent the organisation at a national level. Travel and accommodation costs are covered for representatives and are a great way to extend your knowledge and provide valuable input on issues affecting your business.

If you are interested in opportunities to sit on a board or committee, contact John Hassell, WAFarmers president, at johnhassell@wafarmers.org.au or call the office on 08 9486 2100.

Allow us to introduce our WAFarmers members who give their time and expertise to support all Western Australian farmers by representing WAFarmers at a State and national level. Should you have any commodity questions please reach out and we can put you in touch with the relevant representative to discuss your concerns.

John Hassell

John Hassell farms in Pingelly and Wiaki across 3500ha producing grains, sheep, and export hay along with a mallee tree plantation. John is a graduate of Muresk Agricultural College and is currently the WAFarmers President and Chair of the WAFarmers Board. John was also recently elected to the NFF Board, holding the position of Vice President. He is also a member of the Sustainable Development & Climate Change, Economic Policy & Farm Business and Workforce NFF Committees.



The NFF Board has the responsibility of overseeing the day-to-day management of the organisation including appointment of the Chief Executive Officer, implementing, and setting priorities for the NFF Business Plan, financial oversight, establishing committees and taskforces, and receives advice from the Members' Council, policy committees and the NFF Secretariat.

Tony York

Tony York farms at Tammin producing grains and sheep across 12,000ha. Tony holds a commerce degree from UWA. He is a former President of WAFarmers and currently a board member of the NFF and Chair of the NFF Workforce Committee.



The role of the Workforce Committee includes advocating for policies to improve the safety and wellbeing of farmers, farm workers and families; fostering a productive and flexible workplace that supports diversity and participation; and promoting agriculture as a vocation of choice.

Mark Fowler

Mark Fowler farms in Williams, Wickpin and Dudinin, producing grains, sheep, and export have over 7500ha. Mark holds a degree in law and is currently a WAFarmers Board Member, the WAFarmers Grains Council President and the WAFarmers representative on the GPA Policy Council and is the current Chair of the GPA ISCC/Sustainability Committee.



The GPA's Policy Council and representative processes include the Grains Committees of State Farming Organisations. The GPA policy council was formally adopted as their national grain policy setting forum by the grain production farming members around Australia. A representative Policy Development Framework is the key business process of Grain Producers Australia. The framework is used to develop well researched, responsible, and representative policy to protect and promote Australian grain producers.

GPA represents Australia's broadacre, grain, pulse, and oilseed producers at the national level. GPA was created to foster a strong, innovative, profitable, globally competitive and environmentally sustainable grains industry in Australia.

Duncan Young

Duncan Young farms at Beverley and York running a grains operation across 3600ha. Duncan holds a science degree from Curtin University.



He is a former President of WAFarmers Grains Council, current board member of WAFarmers and currently sits on the board of GPA as the Western Region Director.

An early adopter of technology, Duncan was a fierce advocate in the early to mid-2000s of the campaign to allow growers access to genetically modified canola in Western Australia. He's also a strong supporter of research, development, and extension, hosting more than 25ha of trials on his farms each year.

David Slade

David Slade farms at Mt Barker operating a 6000ha cropping, sheep, and cattle property.



David is a former President of WAFarmers Livestock Council and currently sits on SPA Policy Council.

The Policy Council is the engine room of SPA. As an organisation with national influence on government, SPA is a leader in the industry and is responsible for looking beyond state borders and jurisdictions to advocate for issues that are not confined to individual regions or enterprises. The activities of the Council are closely linked to Red Meat 2030, the Sheep Sustainability Framework and the SPA Strategic Plan for its content, direction, and monitoring. These issues include, but are not limited to, supporting live export and trade, animal welfare and pain relief, biosecurity and climate change and carbon policy.

Dr Elizabeth (Liz) Jackson

Liz Jackson is an Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management and Logistics at Curtin University. A graduate of Muresk, Liz completed a PhD in agri business and is a specialist in food marketing, supply chain management and maritime economics.



Liz is a member of the WAFarmers Livestock Council, a member-elected Non-Executive Director of SPA and a director of Agribusiness Australia.

SPA is the National Peak Industry Body for the Australian sheepmeat industry. The organisations' purpose is to be a strategic leader working to benefit Australia's sheep industry to achieve a productive, profitable, and sustainable future. SPA's vision is an Australian sheep industry leading the world in the quality of our products, excellence in animal and environmental care and capability of our producers.

Makaela Knapp

Makaela Knapp farms at Katanning with her family running a Merino sheep stud, a commercial sheep operation and a sizeable cropping program.



Makaela holds a degree in International Relations and Sheep and Wool Science and is a member of the WAFarmers Livestock Council and is on the board of directors of WPA.

WPA is the peak national body for the wool industry of Australia. WPA's representation extends across the entire wool sector, encompassing both commercial and stud breeder growers. WPA advocate the interests of these wool growers to the Federal Government Departments and our international trade partners. WPA has a director appointed to both the Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX) and the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA) to ensure the interests of growers are met. WPA focus on key issues such as animal health and welfare, industry development, trade, biosecurity, sustainability, emergency animal disease preparedness, pest management and natural resource management.

Ian Noakes

Ian Noakes and his family farm at Forest Grove, south of Margaret River and milk up to 600 crossbred cows.



Ian is the President of WA Farmers Dairy Council and sits on the National Council for the ADF organisation.

ADF is made up of representatives from the six dairy farming States. ADF is the national policy and advocacy body working to improve profitability and sustainability of Australian dairy farmers.

Tamara Michalek

Tamara Michalek farms at Gidgegannup where she works with her husband and runs a rural contracting business which includes farming livestock, producing hay and livestock transport.



Tam is Australia's youngest live export licence holder. With her business partner, Chloe Grant, they together run T&T Rural Contracting, exporting cattle to the Middle East as well as contracting to other exporters which supply livestock to Southeast Asia.

Tam has travelled both nationally and internationally with her roles in the live export supply chain, encouraging the development supply chains in overseas markets. Tam is hugely passionate about animal welfare and is extremely proud to be supplying high quality protein to our overseas trading partners. Tam sits on the newly formed CA Regional Consultative Committee.

James Bowie

James Bowie farms at Bridgetown running cattle over 1600ha. James holds a degree from Curtin University and has worked as a corporate advisor in government relations for the oil and gas industry.



Engaging closely across government, communities and industries and various representative bodies, James has played a key role providing reputational management advice and building critical alignment. This culminated with a role James played helping establish the WA LNG Jobs Taskforce that was championed by the WA premier to improve collaboration across the LNG sector.

Also from his farm office desk, James has recently assisted with the establishment of the Asia Natural Gas and Energy Association which represents energy producers, buyers, suppliers and companies across Asia Pacific. ANGEA has been formed to partner with governments and advise them as they develop energy policies to meet their national needs, achieve global climate goals and encourage investment to support social and economic changes vital for a stable and consistent energy transition.

He is currently Chair of the Western Beef Grower Group and a director on the newly formed CA board.



GENERAL REPORT



Trevor Whittington

WAFarmers General Section met twice in 2023. Motions that were discussed through General Council that included;

- 1.WAFarmers Central Great Southern Zone requests WAFarmers to advocate to the State National and Liberal Party's to make the Cultural Heritage Bill regulations workable on freehold land.
- 2.WAFarmers Esperance-Ravensthorpe Zone calls for the moving of the trigger point number for the automatic application of a Vehicle and Harvest Movement Ban, under the Bushfires Act Regulations, from 40 to 50 and moving the Fire Permit System Rating from 24 to 40. Additionally, as there are no penalties in other states and as there is a desire to have harmonised laws between the states, no penalties should apply in Western Australia.
3. WAFarmers write to the Minister for Forestry to confirm the government's position on good neighbour policy including vermin control, biosecurity and council rates for organisations like the Forest Products Commission.
- 4.WAFarmers support mandatory mental health assessments for first time firearm license applicants, but not for the renewal of existing firearm licenses.
- 5.Western Australian farmers call for the State Government to take responsibility for funding surveys for Aboriginal heritage sites across freehold farmland, produce a definitive final map of heritage sites deemed protected and pay compensation for any loss of property rights.
- 6.WAFarmers supports a dedicated primary producers firearms license and additionally support recreational shooters as they are an important part of vermin pest control on private farmland.

WAFarmers staff and commodity presidents worked across a wide range of issues in advocating our policy positions and to deliver achievable outcomes for our members.

The two biggest issues in 2023 were the future of live sheep export and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

As of time of writing, the Federal government had not announced its decision on the future of live exports but it is clear the relentless campaign that we have run along with our partners in the live sheep campaign group have made it increasingly difficult for the Government to claim they are only acting because the industry has lost its social license to operate.

Whatever the outcome there is still a long way to go as any decision to lock in an end date will be met with a concerted campaign to vote this government out and for the Opposition to reverse the decision.

We know decisions can be reversed as this is exactly what we saw in July 2023 when the State government was forced to walk away from its new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act following a two-year campaign pointing out the enormous costs and impact on freehold property rights.

Governments can be forced to listen, but it takes an organised effort by a peak body such as WAFarmers to put the collective voice to government. As the old saying goes united we stand divided we fall.

KATANNING PUBLIC MEETING

In July WAFarmers organised a public meeting in Katanning for farmers and supply chain participants to let their views be heard by Members of Parliament on live export and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The attendees included Hon David Littleproud MP, Rick Wilson MP, Senator Slade Brockman, Hon Neil Thomson MLC, Hon Steve Martin MLC, Hon Darren West MLC, Shane Love MLA, Peter Rundle MLA, Mark Harvey-Sutton CEO Australian Livestock Exporters' Council, and David Jochinke Vice President National Farmers' Federation.

The meeting was chaired by Geoff Pearson WAFarmers Livestock President. Tamara Michalek, WAFarmers representative on Cattle Australia's Regional Consultative Committee, was on the live export panel.

The motions that were passed at this meeting were:

- 1.Western Australian farmers call on the Federal Government to recognise the importance of live exports to the states sheep producers and allow the trade to continue.
- 2.The State Government to exempt freehold farmland that has been disturbed, developed or cultivated from needing to undertake further surveys once the property has been surveyed.
- 3.The State government amend the Act to recognize that Intangible Cultural Heritage identified across freehold farmland will not impose restrictions on land usage.
- 4.This meeting convened by WAFarmers supports the notion that freehold property rights extinguishes cultural heritage.

GENERAL REPORT CONT.



Trevor Whittington



Live Export Panel in Katanning
L-R: Mark Harvey-Sutton, Senator Slade Brockman, Rick Wilson MP, Tamara Michalek and Hon David Littleproud MP



State National and Liberal MPs with speakers at the rally on the steps of Parliament House

AGRICULTURE SCHOLARSHIPS

AMBASSADOR

Students at Western Australia's agriculture colleges are invited to apply for a WAFarmers Agriculture Ambassador Scholarship every year.

These scholarships recognise students who have a strong interest in the state's agricultural industry and its future, and who wish to be a junior representative for industry promotion.

One scholarship is awarded for each of the agricultural college sites. The Harvey and Denmark scholarships are tied specifically to a student with a special interest in the dairy industry.

The intent of this scholarship is to support students with high potential to be effective communicators and take an active part in industry engagement opportunities. Academic performance is considered, but is not the sole criteria.

The winners of the 2023 scholarships were:

- Millah Gray, Harvey
- Natalie Bradford, Narrogin
- Jesse Oldfield, Denmark
- Isabella Noble, Cunderdin

Congratulations to our 2023 winners!



Attendees at Public Meeting in Katanning

RALLY AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Following the public meeting in Katanning, WAFarmers organised a rally at Parliament House in August 2023.

Speakers who addressed the rally were John Hassell WAFarmers President, Shane Love MLA, Libby Mettam MLA, Tony Seabrook PGA President, Alistair Falconer WA Grain Growers President, Hon Tony Buti MLA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Hon Neil Thomson MLC Shadow Minister for Heritage.

The motions passed at the Katanning public meeting were presented to Shane Love MLA at this rally and during the address from Minister Buti he apologised for all the stress that the 2021 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act had caused land owners.

The rally was exceptionally well attended with over 700 people in attendance.

SUBMISSIONS 2023

WAFarmers have made the following submissions on behalf of members:

- Inquiry into Commonwealth Bilateral Air Services Agreements
- Unfair trading practices regulatory reforms
- Biosecurity Protection Levy
- Telstra Regional Remote Tower Funding
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021
- 1973 Firearms Act



FARM WEEKLY

For the fifth year we have filled a full page in the Farm Weekly with commentary from Chief Executive Officer Trevor Whittington and President John Hassell covering everything from wind farms to regional education.

Our engagement with the broader industry through the Farm Weekly continues to be an important part of the work that we do to raise awareness and push policy positions.



Rally at Parliament House



Isabella Noble

WA Farmers Scholarship
Donated by WA Farmers





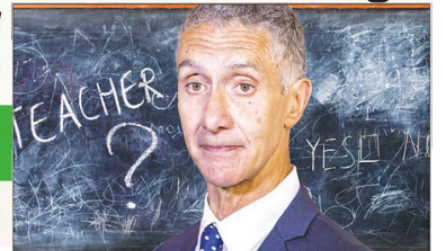
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act – have you got any culture? Buti’s heritage is in doubt

By **TREVOR WHITTINGTON**
CEO WAFarmers
trevorwhittington@wafarmers.org.au



Minister, on Heritage we have a way out The true cost of cultural heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage – what I know Known Unknown Noongar



Minister, please explain social license

The Voice will make some more equal than others

The Good, the Bad and the Tag Is Cook, Putin or Zelenskyy

Wool’s history of boom and bust here to stay

Shooting the Messenger

Global warming is nothing to fear

Captain Cook fighting for political inheritance Money, Power and Guns

Why Live Export is important to my family

Prosecutions and pleas – how to approach

Wind wire city



The heavy hand of the law is never far away

The race is on
Buti blew it

Housing expectations killing the bush
Ardern had to go for the sake of NZ farmers
Private Property Rights speaks louder than Any Voice

If you’re not vegan, you’re an animal abuser

Government thinks gravel pits are super pits
Immigration something is not right
The more the Federal government spends the poorer we all become

THE WIND FARMS ARE COMING

The Voice can be Heard in the Communist Manifesto

Drought of Time to end the Drought Funding Drip

Letter to Government – changes needed to the Aboriginal heritage act

Sorry no Gas
Abandoned wind farms
Rising CO₂ levels are nothing to fear
going cheap



Thrown to the winds

Despicable and warped moral compass

The politics of heritage still a genuine worry



The voice – more talk no answers The Nationals need to muscle up – not give up

The No vote and Neo-Nazis

Response to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH) Act

Tuesday, August 8 at 12.00pm

Farmers and community members who are concerned about the new ACH Laws are urged to reinforce their voice by joining WAFarmers and Members of Parliament on the steps of Parliament House in support of common-sense changes to the ACH by the State Government to protect freehold property rights.

The Government has lost its social license to judge

Neo-Nazis in the Wheatbelt

What really happened on the Awassi Express

Flying thoughts on air freight
Sheep need the dismal science
Canberra’s Woke science policy

WA Climate Change Bill

DPIRD’s oats research project has real value

Government trade delegation needed to the Middle East

Live exports and the drought – WA Ag Minister backs the industry
Mates more Important than Mutton

Two ministers, one sinking boat

One per cent a year will speak louder than The Voice

A Government at Sea on Live Ex
The Federal Government Badly Wants your Soil
Grain Highway Funding Falling into a Hole



Keep Farmers Farming



MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS



Melanie Tolich

Continuing on from our growth in membership numbers and revenue in 2022, in 2023 WAFarmers had strong growth yet again in both membership numbers and revenue. WAFarmers welcomed 100 new farm businesses with 130 new individual members.

This is a great result for the WAFarmers team who work diligently to deliver and communicate our relevance as a member-driven farm advocacy body. The main driver for the increase in membership was WAFarmers strong advocacy work against the changes to the state-based legislation Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act and the Federal government policy to phase out of live sheep exports by sea. Farmers joining as members cements the value of WAFarmers as the peak advocacy body for voicing farmers positions on what can only be described as anti-farming policies. WAFarmers strength is demonstrated in its membership numbers. The more members we have, the more attention we receive from government.

The increase in membership revenue derived from new membership also assists WAFarmers to contribute to the national peak body for farm advocacy the National Farmers Federation (NFF). During 2023 NFF launched their “Keep Farmers Farming” campaign, aimed at addressing the large amount of anti-farming legislation that is being delivered from the current Federal government. WAFarmers supports this campaign both in revenue and activity and we ask all farmers to get behind this vital advocacy campaign.

As was the case in 2022, WAFarmers Executive in 2023 continued to drive relevance through our media streams with delivery of a weekly page in the Farm Weekly featuring commentary on time sensitive policy issues that have ability to effect on farm sustainability and profitability.

The media has been proven very useful in attracting and retaining membership through demonstrated growth in membership.

AgConnectWA’s membership remained at approximately 5% of our overall membership base in 2023. President, Josh Fuchsichler and his committee, have worked diligently to evolve the offering of AgConnectWA membership beyond networking with the additions such as professional development opportunities. It is important for WAFarmers to keep engaging with the younger generation of farmers through AgConnectWA, allowing a strong future for WAFarmers and Western Australian agriculture.

WAFarmers is continuing its adoption of improved technologies for membership engagement. During 2022 and into 2023 we have been working towards installing a new membership portal that will be accessed through the WAFarmers website. Through this section members will be able to renew their membership directly online and additionally provides the ability for potential new members to immediately join and pay online, completely digitalising and streamlining the membership application process. We did hope to have this facility launched at the end of 2023 in time for our membership renewals, but some issues were identified during testing with the launch now delayed until mid-2024.

Members and our grassroots policy formation are critical to our advocacy efforts and for delivering valuable return on investment back to our loyal and strong membership base. In recognising this, WAFarmers activated a WhatsApp group for the entire membership during 2023 which encourages members to participate in direct policy engagement, allowing for agile member interaction on time sensitive policy decisions.

If you are not already part of this WhatsApp group, please call the office and we will be able to share the link.

The WAFarmers Board and Management is continually looking to evolve our interaction and communication process to endeavour to meet the changing needs for our membership demographic. Engagement across numerous age and gender demographics is a challenge and requires the right balance to ensure that inclusivity is demonstrated across all demographics.

Management, under the guidance of the WAFarmers Board, continues to work on the process of developing a new streamlined version of the constitution for the organisation. This work commenced in late 2021 and continued through 2022 and 2023. The process has faced some delays as advocacy work on a myriad of legislation has taken centre stage for our staff. It is now envisaged that the working draft of the new constitution will be circulated to zones and councils during 2024 for comment prior the AGM in 2025.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our members, for your continued support. Any membership organisation is only as strong as the members that support it. If you have any issues that you wish to raise, please do not hesitate to pick up the phone or send us an email, and we will do our best to find a resolution. I hope that despite some of the difficulties that the 2023 season presented, the 2023 was productive for you in some capacity as we now look forward to a successful 2024 farming season.



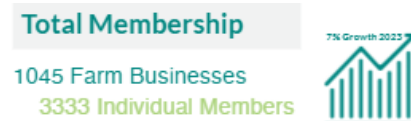
Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Hon Peter Dutton MP, Rick Wilson MP and John Hassell in WAFarmers tent at Wagin Woolorama

MEMBERSHIP AND EVENTS CONT.

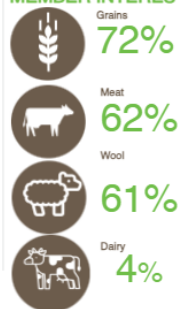


Melanie Tolich

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH, TYPES, INTERESTS & ZONES **Membership grew in 2023**



MEMBER INTERESTS



The first major event for 2023 was the WAFarmers AGM's and Annual Conference, attracting an audience of 130, consisting of members, non-members and industry stakeholders to Mineral Resources Park in Lathlain on Friday 17 March 2023. The event showcased a great array of speakers presentation across grains, livestock and general issues which sparked healthy debate from the floor and concluded with the Gala Dinner and Awards. Some of the policy issues that were presented covered: Climate and Methane, Sustainability, Market access, grains and livestock and Regional Connectivity.

The 2023 award recipients were:

- Jack Nixon, Industry Service Award for hard work and endeavour in the cattle industry.
- Liz Jackson, Industry Service Award for valuable contribution to WAFarmers Livestock Council and our agricultural industry.
- Peter Trefort, Industry Service Award for his contribution to the WA meat industry.

We received positive feedback on the event, venue and the speakers with planning well under way to make the 2024 Annual Conference even bigger and better. The event in 2024, with COVID well and truly behind us, will return to our old stomping ground of The Westin in the CBD. The event is shaping up to be a very good event with some great entertainment in the evening, you may even want to pack your dancing shoes. We hope to see as many farmers in the audience as possible and look forward to welcoming new faces to the event in addition to the familiar faces that regularly attend.

In June 2023, AgConnectWA held their annual forum where they celebrated 10 years of AgConnectWA. The event at Tradewinds Fremantle was a sold-out event with lots of students and young people in Ag attending. The event featured a big line up of speakers including the Minister of Agriculture, Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC who opened the forum and gave an overview about what is happening in the Ag industry.

The Dairy Section AGM and Conference was held at the Abbey Beach Resort in Busselton on Thursday 21 July which had a great turnout and was the final large event for WAFarmers in 2023. The Conference was opened by Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food, who updated the audience on the WA Dairy Industry 5 Year Development Plan, on behalf of the WA Dairy Industry Working Group (WADIWG).

WAFarmers continued with its revised approach to field days in 2023 with only committing to tent activations at Wagin Woolorama and Dowerin Field Days. Although not pitching a tent at all 4 field days, WAFarmers still has a presence at all field days with staff being in attendance and engaging with farmers and industry participants. The field days are an avenue for networking and engagement with both members and non-member farmers, and with our industry counterparts. WAFarmers plans to continue with this new strategy on field days into 2024.

The WAFarmers team, sponsors and industry people spent National Ag Day in the Swan Valley. The group visited Mash Brewing and Lancaster Wines for some tastings and finished off with magnificent Croatian hospitality at Baba and Didas. Attendees enjoyed traditional shot of rakija along with a local feast of WA spit lamb cooked to perfection, chicken, potato and pork peka along with various salads and traditional European biscuits and cakes to finish off.

WAFarmers cannot hold or participate in the above outlined events without the support of our corporate and event partners.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for their ongoing support in helping us to run these member events that are a great avenue for information on factors affecting on farm profitability but additionally provide opportunities for networking and engagement.

We hope to see you at our events in 2024!



John Hassell and Jack Nixon



Liz Jackson and John Hassell



Celebrating National Ag Day at Baba and Didas in the Swan Valley



AGCONNECTWA REPORT



Josh Fuchsichler

AgConnectWA has had a busy year. **HARVEY AG COLLEGE OPEN DAY**
 The year. Our year started off with a cocktail party aboard the Crystal Swan on 28 January. This was followed by the joint AGM with WAFarmers in March at Mineral Resource Park in Lathlain and the new committee was sworn in.

AG INSTITUTE CAREERS NIGHT
 We were invited to the Ag Institute Careers night at the Claremont Showgrounds in April. We spoke with other Ag industries about what AgConnectWA is and does. Committee member Erin Schilling and Secretary Laura Cala attended this event.

CURTIN AGRICULTURE ASSOCIATION COMBINED INDUSTRY & STUDENT NETWORKING NIGHT
 Our next event was the Curtin University Agriculture Association Combined Industry & Student Networking Night in May where we spoke to students and possible members. This was our second year attending and sponsoring this event.



AgConnectWA River Cruise

At the end of May, Vice President Tiara Kenny and I attended our first of many open days at the Western Australian Agricultural Colleges at Harvey Ag College at the end of May. Tiara and I spoke to other Ag industries and potential students about AgConnectWA. We also talked with students and some of the teachers. It was a bit of a cold day.

AGCONNECTWA FORUM
 In June we held our own annual forum at the Tradewinds Hotel in Fremantle where we celebrated 10 years of AgConnectWA. This year the forum was a sold-out event with lots of students and young people in Ag attending.

We had a big line up of speakers for the day. The Minister of Agriculture, Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, opened the forum and she gave an overview about what is happening in the Ag industry. Dr Elizabeth Jackson from Curtin University then spoke about logistics and the supply chain. Holly Ludeman from the Livestock Collective was the next speaker and provided information on what was happening in the livestock industry.

Next was Sarah Woolford and Daniel Parker from Nufarm who spoke about careers at Nufarm, followed by Tori Kirk from AWI speaking about AWI Future Wool.

After morning tea, we moved into the tech part of the day with Darren Gibbon from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) talking about challenges in sharing farm data. That was followed by John Henchy talking about the farm mechanization industry in Western Australia and the role tech plays in the industry.

It was only a couple of months after our forum that we heard the very sad news that John had passed away. He did a great deal for the agricultural industry and for young people in agriculture.

We finished the morning session with a mindfulness workshop followed by some meditation after lunch. This was followed by workshops with Ann Maree O'Callaghan from Value Creators on effective goal planning and then Maree Gooch from SafeFarms WA talking about Workplace Health and Safety.

The afternoon finished with the CBH Group talking about employment opportunities, Elders talking about growing your career, and finally a Grain Growers update from Rhys Turton which was good with Innovation Generation coming up.

I closed the forum with a raffle and thanked all the sponsors and Troy Stockten from Triple M Rural Focus who was MC for the day before we headed off for the sundowner.



Josh Fuchsichler, Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC and WAFarmers President John Hassell



John Henchy

AGCONNECTWA REPORT CONT.



Josh Fuchsichler



AgConnectWA Forum

INNOVATION GENERATION

In late July I headed to Adelaide for Innovation Generation. It was my first time attending the event. There was strong representation from WA, including some AgConnectWA members and South East Premium Wheat Growers Association (SEPWA) members. The highlights of the conference for me were the talk about the start of the Thankyou Brand, the quiz night and the dinner on the final night. It was a good opportunity for people to catch up and make new friends.

FIELD DAYS

I attended both Dowerin and Newdegate Field Days where I was able to talk with past sponsors and potential sponsors as well as a chat with Rural Focus about the sundowner at Dowerin.

CUNDERDIN AG COLLEGE OPEN DAY

In September I attended the Cunderdin Ag College open day where Amber Balfour-Cunningham and I spoke to students about our pathways into the Ag industry. My path was very different to Ambers as I grew up on a family farm. Amber spoke about how she came from a different country, attended university and then secured a job in research with DPIRD.



Maree Gooch, Steven Bolt and Andrew Peters

SUNDOWNERS

This year we held our Merredin Sundowner and Walkaway Sundowner on the same weekend in September.

The numbers were down for the Merredin event due to some of the sporting clubs holding their windups and there was also a wedding the next day.

We had Steven Bolt, Corrigin Farmer and Director of the Livestock Collective speak about what was happening with the live export ban and the low sheep prices. Maree Gooch also spoke to us about Crisp Wireless which is a rural internet provider and some of the issues with connectivity in the Wheatbelt. The night finished with Andrew Peters talking about the labour shortages for business in rural WA and what we can do to get people to move to the regions for work. It's not only farmers that are struggling to get labour, but also our local businesses.

The Walkaway event was well attended once again with about 50 people there. It was a late night but a good night. Our guest speaker cancelled at the last minute, so I spoke to everyone about AgConnectWA, on what we do and how we are affiliated with WAFarmers.



Sundowner at Merredin

CBH TOUR

Before the Walkaway Sundowner, between 15 and 20 people had a tour through the CBH Geraldton port. This was a great opportunity for our members to see how our grain gets from country receival sites to port then onto ships which gets exported.



PHOTO COMPETITION

Over the harvest period we ran a photo competition to get photos for some new banners as ours are getting a bit old and worn out.

This year we have grown a lot with a steady stream of new members joining. I have also had regular interviews with Troy Stockten from Triple M Rural Focus throughout the year on what has been happening.

This will be my last report as President. I have enjoyed my four years on the AgConnectWA committee with two years as President and being a member of AgConnectWA since its inception in 2013.

I would like to thank everyone that I have served on the committee with over the years. You have been a good group of people to work with and I have made many friends as well. I feel like I have achieved my goal of leaving AgConnectWA in a better position than it was when I took the presidency post COVID.

Membership has more than doubled over two years and I hope AgConnectWA will continue to grow with a new committee in 2024. I'll still follow and support AgConnectWA into the future.

Thank you to all those involved and with very best wishes for ongoing success into the future. I believe AgConnectWA can play an important role for young people involved in agriculture in WA.



The 2023 AgConnectWA Committee



WAFARMERS FIRST



Michael Tarling

WAFarmersFirst was created by WAFarmers to help secure the future of farming in Western Australia. The brand offers consumers both Milk and Free Range Eggs. Beyond paying the farmer, every sale contributes towards the agricultural industry to fund education, training, advocacy, and projects.

WAFarmersFirst milk is an initiative aimed at investing funds back into the state's dairy industry. We market two different varieties of milk, Full Cream and Hi-Lo which are sold in 2 litre bottles in Coles Supermarkets.

Competition increased in the dairying sector during 2023, with price increases due to tightening milk supply and rising input costs being reflected in retail pricing.

These rises resulted in the premium for branded milk offers such as WAFarmersFirst increasing relative to house brand milk, which had a negative impact on WAFarmersFirst sales volumes and the subsequent royalty payments to WAFarmers.

It took a period of several months before pricing settled down, with one processor during this period treating their branded offer like a defacto house brand in order to achieve sales volumes.

The end result was WAFarmersFirst are now achieving a royalty that is below that of previous years. We do remain grateful for the support that we receive from Coles Supermarkets in listing our branded milk offer.

Unfortunately, the support we receive from other retailers and producers has not extended to the supply of WAFarmersFirst Eggs, and we received notice of deletion of our egg range. That was obviously very disappointing and has impacted an important revenue source for both WAFarmers and the Commercial Egg Producer Association of Western Australia (CEPA).

Attempts are underway to source an alternative supplier, at which point other retailers will be approached with a view to listing our egg offer.

YOUNG FARMERS COUNCIL



Elizabeth Brennan

WAFarmers sponsored Elizabeth Brennan, to attend the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) Annual General Meeting and Conference in October 2023.

Elizabeth is a member of the Young Farmers' Council (Council).

The Council is the NFF peak council representing young people in agriculture.

It provides a platform for young farmers to participate in discussions and decisions shaping the future of Australian food and fibre production.

This council is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of agricultural leaders, vital for the long-term success of the sector.

The support of the NFF enables the Council to empower emerging farmers to actively contribute to crucial decisions and issues affecting agriculture.

These issues include climate change, infrastructure, research and development, investment and land-use management, all of which significantly impact the long-term success of agriculture and the nation's ability to produce top quality food and fiber.

Council members also have the opportunity to work with Telstra to promote digital adoption and innovation within Australian agriculture.

While in Canberra, Elizabeth and other members of the Council:

- attended the address by outgoing NFF President, Fiona Simson, at the National Press Club;
- met with Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;
- met with Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories;
- met with Hon David Littleproud MP, Leader of the Federal National Party;
- attended the AGM and Members Council Meeting; and
- attended the Welcome Sundowner, NFF Diversity in Ag Leadership Program Graduation and the Telstra Breakfast Bite.

STOP THE LIVE EXPORT BAN

keepfarmersfarming.org.au

Authorised by Tony Mahar, National Farmers' Federation, Canberra

KEEP FARMERS FARMING

WA sheep and

NFF REPORT



John Hassell

Few farmers understand the breadth and width of the issues that the National Farmers Federation (NFF) covers each year.

A look back over the media statements released in 2023 gives WAFarmers members a taste of some of the issues that their national peak body has covered with the support of their 27 staff and over 100 farmer members on their committees.

- NFF criticised government for giving up on controlling Varroa
- NFF welcomes the return of the live cattle trade with Indonesia after concerns over lumpy skin disease.
- NFF calls for Federal government not to sign the free trade deal with EU.
- NFF opposes a new biosecurity levy imposed on farmers.
- NFF calls on cross benchers to hold out on the governments Industrial Relations Bill.
- NFF launches the Australian Farm Data Code to protect farm generated data.
- NFF welcomes the Federal government's announcement of second review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.
- NFF welcomes the Federal government holding firm on the EU trade deal.
- NFF launches national campaign against anti farming practises.
- NFF comes out against the deal done between the Government and the Greens on Murray Darling water buybacks.
- NFF welcomes doubling of the Roads to Recovery fund from \$400m to \$1 billion.
- NFF welcomes Europe's decision to roll over glyphosate to 2022.
- NFF targets marginal seats in WA to Keep Farmers Farming.
- NFF calls for a review of supermarkets pricing strategy.
- NFF urges Federal Government to settle live cattle case.
- NFF welcomes Senate inquiry to scrutinise the impact of supermarket pricing.
- NFF backs WA Premiers call for live sheep rethink.
- NFF welcomes Productivity Commission view that the proposed Biosecurity Levy is deeply flawed.
- NFF visits UAE sheep facility to understand fallout if the live export bans goes ahead.
- NFF welcomes new panel to review regional connectivity.
- NFF points out that the cost of living starts at the farm gate.
- NFF rejects new compensation offer for the live cattle claim.
- NFF calls on Food and Grocery Code review to be given more teeth.
- NFF welcomes the independent ANU Tax and Transfer Policy Institute criticism of the new biosecurity levy.
- NFF points out holes in supermarket chains defence of their pricing.
- NFF calls on Canberra to recognise agricultures productivity slump.
- NFF disappointed in backroom deal to push new IR laws through.

- NFF call on the Federal government on action the Productivity Commission report on the \$600m cost the unions impose on our ports.
- NFF locks in a commitment by the Prime Minister to leave the Fuel Tax Credit Scheme unchanged.
- Following the announcement of the independent Panel on Live Exports NFF came out with 24 farm peak bodies against the proposed phase out.
- NFF calls for the Federal government to work with the Chinese on reviewing their import restrictions on barley exports to China.
- NFF call on Federal government to extend their instant tax write-off.
- NFF, Rural Transporters Association and Grain Growers raised concerns on the state of rural roads.
- NFF calls on Federal government to pay far more than the offer of \$215m on the 2011 live export class action.
- NFF slammed animal rights activists for illegal activities on farms and processing facilities.
- NFF welcomes the return of the Chinese barley trade.
- NFF warns of problems with agriculture in the trade negotiations with the EU.
- NFF working on establishing the Australian Agriculture Sustainability Framework rather than leaving other bodies to set our standards.
- NFF comes out against Burkes IR reforms saying they will hurt productivity.
- NFF raises red flag over proposed superannuation tax changes impacting farmers.
- NFF first National Farmer Survey identifies market fairness, environmental laws and rural roads as top three priorities.



Melanie Tolich and Steve McGuire in Canberra



Steve McGuire, John Hassell and Melanie Tolich at NFF Conference in Canberra



David Jochinke addressing delegates at the NFF Conference

FINANCIAL REPORT



Melanie Tolich

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 Financial Statements have been audited with WAFarmers recording an operating surplus of **\$201,146** for the year ended 31 December 2023. WAFarmers Board are pleased to record another year of surplus assisting to build cash reserves and total equity in the organisation to **\$1.37m** placing us in a very sound financial position.

Total revenue for FY23 was **\$1.50m** declining by \$207k on FY22 total revenue. The major contributor for the decline in revenue was recognised by reduce income from grant funding. The grant funding related to the Educating Kids About Agriculture (Ag Academy) project with the project completing at the end of FY22 and the budget reflected this.

Total expenditure for FY23 was **\$1.3m** decreasing from \$1.52m in FY22. The major contributors in reduced expenses were office/premise, marketing, financial services, and grant expenditure.

WAFarmers submitted an operational budget for FY23 that budgeted for **\$16k** surplus, pleasingly due to sound financial management, while still delivering valued service to our members we returned a result of **\$185k** over our predicted surplus.

WAFarmers total membership grew significantly by over 100 members in FY23. Revenue from membership subscriptions rose to **\$1.1m**. The growth in membership is reflective of the positive advocacy that WAFarmers has been undertaking on issues that affected members private property rights, i.e., Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and our strong stance on the proposed live sheep export ban.

Attracting corporate farm membership remains a strategic focus for the Board in 2024, although proving difficult. Many corporates believe they have the ear of the government without the assistance of WAFarmers, however in the meantime they continue to reap the benefits of the advocacy work paid for by our members.

WAFarmers Board and Management is confident moving into FY24 that we can continue to build on the pleasing financial results from the past five years while further cementing WAFarmers' position as Western Australia's peak, broadacre advocacy group.

Income Reporting 2023 - Summary Notes

Income for the year decreased by 12% from \$1.71m in FY22 to \$1.5m in FY23 despite a growth in membership income of \$88k. The notable contributors to the decrease in revenue were grant funding decreasing to \$0 from \$256k in FY22 due to project completion and commercial revenue from WAFarmersFirst products decreasing by 33% from \$224k in FY22 to \$150k in FY23.

The decrease in WAFarmersFirst commercial product revenue was reflective of retail price squeeze that saw the WAFarmersFirst retail milk price increase triggering a need to reduce the royalty payable to WAFarmers to ensure the product remained at a competitive price point. Concurrently the WAFarmersFirst egg sales remained strong with \$74k of revenue, assisted by an Australia wide egg shortage.

Sponsorship and events income increased by \$20k in FY23 to \$162k and was slightly under budget by \$7k for the year. All other areas of revenue income were reflective of revenues received in FY22.

Expense Reporting 2023 - Summary Notes

The Board and Management have worked hard to ensure expenses were tightly managed under a financial management strategy to grow cash reserves securing the organisations sound financial position.

Expenses decreased in FY23 by 14% to \$1.3m from \$1.51m in FY22 and significantly was under budget by \$109k. The highest savings against budget were realised via 45% decrease on Commodity expenditure, 8% decrease on budgeted staff and personnel costs and 10% saving of office services. Although the office and staffing resources have been streamlined, management has been very aware that the level of service to members must be maintained.

Balance Sheet and Cash Position

The Board and Management in FY23 strategically focused on building cash reserves and equity. To this end, we note:

- Total cash held by the organisation is \$1,172,059 with \$286,386 of these funds being restricted to specific projects and activities.
- Members' funds increased to \$1,369,003 between December 2022 and December 2023 which includes and auditing reallocation of provision liabilities to retained equity surplus (see Table 1 below).
- Total Assets increased by \$144,034 by 31 December 2023, to \$2,324,632.
- The total liabilities of WAFarmers decreased by \$122,097 over the reporting year to \$1,201,997.

In summary, FY23 has been a successful year for WAFarmers financially, building on the previous surplus in FY22. The Board, the CEO and staff are continually committed to ensuring the long-term financial strength of your organisation.

WAFARMERS FIRST *Nourishing the community and our WA farmers*

A portion from every milk sale goes back to the Western Australian farming community.

You can find our milk at Coles supermarkets across Western Australia.

40% SUPPORT LOCAL FARMERS

www.wafarmersfirst.com.au

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT



For the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2023	2022
	Actual	Budget	Actual
	\$	\$	\$
INCOME			
Members subscriptions	1,098,428	1,037,120	1,009,641
WAFarmers First Royalties	152,208	140,000	224,612
Sponsorship/Events	124,181	150,691	134,313
AgConnectWA	37,572	31,000	7,711
Interest	14,691	2,500	3,232
Commodity Income	31,678	30,000	31,129
Zone Income	0	0	1,200
Rental Income	27,120	27,084	27,002
Building Fund	0	0	0
Sundry Income	19,454	10,800	12,784
Invest Fund Trust	0	0	2,511
Ag Academy	0	0	256,203
TOTAL INCOME	1,505,332	1,429,195	1,710,338
LESS EXPENDITURE			
Affiliation Fees			
National Farmers	44,000	44,000	44,140
Cattle Council	25,000	25,000	25,000
Sheepmeat Council	13,682	15,000	13,351
Grains Expense Account	19,333	40,000	9,000
WoolProducers	25,000	25,000	21,252
Australian Dairy Farmers	22,071	23,000	21,581
Sub Total	149,086	172,000	134,323
General Section	31,835	18,000	6,316
Board Expenses	3,335	15,000	7,611
President's Allowance	44,591	52,000	47,232
President's Expense	26,321	20,000	21,014
President Election	0	5,000	0
Motor Vehicle Expense	10,021	10,000	8,618
Events Expense	65,841	64,520	67,066
AgConnectWA Expense	33,325	31,000	5,341
WAFarmersFirst Expenses	22,210	19,000	18,264
Dairy Industry Milk Trust	58,360	28,000	39,946
Commodity Expenses	52,368	96,850	36,927
Commodity Rep Allowances	11,000	11,000	12,500
Zone Expenses	2,363	7,000	6,822
Investment Fund Expense	0	0	52,466
Contingency Expense	0	0	0
Sub Total	361,570	377,370	330,125
TOTAL EXEC EXPENSES	510,656	549,370	464,448

	2023	2023	2022
	Actual	Budget	Actual
	\$	\$	\$
COMMUNICATIONS			
Newsletter Ag E News	2,448	1,500	1,314
Farm Weekly/Countryman	21,320	23,000	21,640
Media Sundry	0	10,000	0
Sub Total	24,368	34,500	22,954
MARKETING & PROMOTION			
Membership Activity	12,123	7,000	6,006
Marketing Promotion	6,828	15,000	10,163
Sponsorship/Awards	5,485	5,000	1,540
Field Days & Shows	24,659	20,000	19,535
Website Development	836	1,000	591
Database Upgrade	12,450	13,300	41,027
Hosting Associated Costs	697	1,500	1,214
Sub Total	63,078	62,800	80,076
PERSONNEL			
Salaries & Wages	394,545	390,796	343,848
Contract Services/Expenses	44,127	41,750	37,609
Superannuation	40,020	40,549	35,757
Consultants	0	41,750	0
Zone Coordinators Wages	4,342	5,000	5,123
Zone Coordinators Expenses	35	1,000	161
Payroll Tax	0	0	0
Fringe Benefits Tax	2,820	2,000	859
Recruitment & Training	1,414	11,000	7,311
Workers Compensation	3,176	3,516	2,426
Staff Travel & Attendance	27,649	32,000	24,578
Sub Total	518,128	569,361	457,670
OFFICE SERVICES			
Make Good Belmont	0	0	49,701
Brodie Hall Maintenance Fund	0	25,980	0
Strata and Services Office	35,268	17,805	47,878
Electricity	5,307	9,000	6,344
Office Operating Expenses	29,208	29,800	24,410
Repairs & Maintenance	2,565	3,000	1,096
General Expenses	17,248	20,480	11,858
Minor Assets	3,580	2,000	1,349
Periodicals & Publications	12,032	10,000	8,974
Sub Total	105,828	118,065	151,608
FINANCIAL SERVICES			
Bank Fees & Stamp Duty	5,821	4,000	3,052
Interest Payable TH Peterson Loan	8,800	8,800	8,800
Insurance	12,448	10,500	10,428
Audit Fees	12,677	13,000	10,440
Accounting Fees	3,300	5,000	2,549
Legal Expenses	1,800	5,000	5,045
Asset Replacement Fund	0	0	20,000
Depreciation	36,682	32,700	22,823
Sub Total	82,128	79,000	83,137
AG ACADEMY			
Project Expenses	0	0	256,194
TOTAL ADMIN. EXPENSES	793,530	863,726	1,051,640
TOTAL EXEC EXPENSE	510,656	549,370	464,448
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,304,186	1,413,096	1,516,088
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	201,146	16,099	194,251

BALANCE SHEET

For the year ended 31 December 2023



BALANCE SHEET-DECEMBER 2023		
	DEC 2023	DEC 2022
Bank Accounts		
Bank - Operating Account	237,690	226,552
Westpac Cash Reserve	624,413	481,291
Petty Cash	250	250
Zone Bank Accounts	115,457	114,571
AqConnectWA Account	23,320	19,031
Total Bank Funds - Unrestricted	1,001,130	841,695
Restricted Funds		
Donations Account	28,608	28,608
WAFF Invest Fund	128,393	128,393
Fundraising live Export	13,927	11,654
Total Restricted Funds	170,928	168,655
Current Assets		
Accounts Receivable	40,344	51,662
Prepayments	64,395	48,029
Sundry Debtors	25,321	30,178
	130,060	129,869
Total Current Assets	1,302,118	1,140,219
Non-Current Assets		
Property - Brodie Hall Drive Bentley	899,568	905,343
Furniture & Fittings	14,477	14,913
Motor Vehicles	81,747	59,338
Plant & Machinery	14,936	17,700
Telephone System	66	82
Computer Hardware	7,424	9,424
Computer - Software	236	301
Investment - Westralian Farmers	2,716	2,716
Investment - Trust Fund WAFF	10	10
Investment - Farmwide	1,334	1,334
Total Non-Current Assets	1,022,514	1,011,160
Total Assets	2,324,632	2,151,379

BALANCE SHEET-DECEMBER 2023 - Cont.....		
	DEC 2023	DEC 2022
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	14,204	12,793
Accruals	22,275	33,650
Payroll Liabilities		
Payroll Liabilities-Group Tax/Super	14,055	15,385
Payroll Provisions		
Provision for Holiday Pay	62,591	64,073
Prov for Employee Long Service Leave	47,730	28,171
Corporate Cards		
	5,315	7,271
Donations Payable		
Fundraising Account Prov	12,421	11,752
Building Fund	26,083	39,083
WAFarmersFirst Provisions		
Provision for Dairy Projects	50,382	89,699
Other Current Liabilities		
Provision Asset Replacement	0	20,000
WAHDRG Bees Project	3,200	3,200
Food Alliance Projects	2,509	2,509
Dairy Farmer Project Events	304	304
	0	0
GST Liabilities	6218	-882
Total Current Liabilities	267,287	327,008
Non-Current Liabilities		
Perth NRM Bond	0	0
TH Peterson Trust Loan	440,000	440,000
Subs Received in Advance	270,100	316,922
Other Income in Advance	28,625	32,292
Total Non Current Liabilities	738,725	789,214
Total Liabilities	1,006,012	1,116,222
NET ASSETS	1,318,620	1,035,157
EQUITY		
Retained Surplus	1,167,857	973,607
Current Surplus	201,146	194,250
TOTAL EQUITY	1,369,003	1,167,857

Summary of Retained Earning 31 December 2023

	Retained surpluses	Building maintenance reserve	Dairy milk fund reserve	Future advocacy reserve	Asset replacement reserve	Total Equity
Balance at 1 January 2022	840,907	-	92,902	-	-	933,809
Surplus for the year	194,251	-	-	-	-	194,251
Transfer to/(from)	-	13,000	(3,203)	-	30,000	39,797
Balance at 31 December 2022	1,035,158	13,000	89,699	-	30,000	1,167,857
Surplus for the year	201,146	-	-	-	-	201,146
Transfer to/(from)	(113,669)	13,800	(39,317)	169,186	(30,000)	-
Balance at 31 December 2023	1,122,635	26,800	50,382	169,186	-	1,369,003

CORPORATE SPONSORS



WAFarmers Supporters



