



WAFARMERS

Annual Report

2024



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Introduction

Welcome to the 2024 Annual Report. Over the past year, three major issues—firearms regulations, APVMA chemical reviews, and the future of live exports—have dominated our advocacy efforts.

By the end of 2024, all three had reached a conclusion, though two resulted in serious setbacks for the industry. The Federal government pushed ahead with legislation to phase out live sheep exports within four years, and the State government passed new firearms laws that impose severe restrictions on farmers' access to firearms.

WAFarmers worked closely with the 'Keep the Sheep' movement, which raised over \$1 million to fight the live export ban. Despite a relentless campaign, it was clear the Federal government was unwilling to listen to the farming community, instead catering to a vocal minority. The drawn-out consultation process appeared designed to push the issue beyond the 2025 federal election rather than engage in genuine discussion.

In contrast, the State government's new firearms laws were strategically timed to coincide with the 2025 state election, with the regulations deliberately released to pressure the Opposition.

The one notable win for the industry was the APVMA's review of two key herbicides, glyphosate and paraquat. Widely seen as a politically motivated review, it threatened to undermine access to two of Australia's most important agricultural chemicals. Fortunately, both chemicals survived the review, though their long-term future remains uncertain.

Without the lobbying efforts of WAFarmers, alongside Sheep Producers Australia, WoolProducers Australia, Grain Producers Australia, and the National Farmers' Federation, Western Australian growers would be facing even tighter restrictions on our ability to farm.

The threats to our industry are growing. International, national, and local activist groups continue to push for bans on long-distance livestock transport, intensive feedlots, agricultural and veterinary chemicals, and even farmers' right to use firearms as a tool of the trade. These challenges reinforce the critical role of WAFarmers in fighting for the future of agriculture in Western Australia.

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 Australian Dairy Farmers along with the National Farmers' Federation.

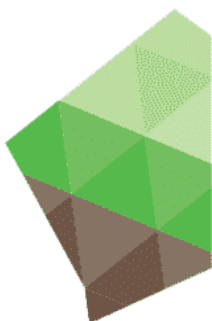
What we don't want to see is peak bodies outbidding each other on the speed and amount they can reduce emissions without understanding the full costs that industry will bear.

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 2024 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 Report

John Hassell

While driving along to an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage meeting Trevor and I wrote a list in a couple of minutes of some of the issues coming at us. It didn't take much more than 2-3 minutes to come up with a list of twelve things, six at a state level and six at a federal level that were coming at us hard and fast... and some of things have gone away but there is still a huge list.

While there is a huge amount of work done behind the scenes which most people, mostly those who are not members don't see, we have had some very front facing issues.

As you are all aware we have a livestock section, a grains section and a general section which covers things such as transport and other regulations and proposed laws.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage was one of these and while it seems like it was a long time ago there has been a continuous push to divide us on the basis of race; the Voice debate being the main one.

Collectively we had a significant win with the reversal of the State government on that.

We now have regular meetings with Hon Tony Buti MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to genuinely engage to get better policy. I think it's a good lesson for all politicians.

Grains has had some serious work to do throughout the year and Mark Fowler has written a very comprehensive report for this Annual Report.

Livestock has also had a very big year on numerous issues and of course with the transition advocate has lots more to do even though we vehemently oppose the phase out of the live trade of sheep by sea.

Firearms were very front and centre and I think the minister and his staff have been quite duplicitous in divide and conquer and then not allowing any oversight or view on the regulations before they were dropped on or very close to Christmas eve.

My main concern is they are not targeting illegal guns, but law-abiding firearms owners and they have failed in their own actions to prevent deaths. Additionally, we are the only state in the country where recreational shooters are not allowed to shoot in public land for feral animals. This will come at a huge cost to doing environmental culling.

As you know WAFarmers is apolitical and while it has been challenging keeping the issues separate (and I think we have done a fairly good job of that) the Keep the Sheep campaign has been very successful in the money it has raised and the public relations exercise it has achieved. It led to the 'Keep Farmers Farming' rally in Canberra which saw nearly 2,000 people attend. It was amazing that the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council (ALEC), stud merino breeders, shearing contractors, trucking contractors and farmers have all come together to try to save our communities.

Membership is always an issue in membership organisations. Due to the public nature of the work we have been doing and the efforts of people like Mark Fowler, Geoff Pearson, our elected representatives and staff, we have retained good membership. This is unusual across Australia, but we still have more work to do.

We have reached out to the corporate farming world and are having dinner with them in 2025. They recognise that until now they have subsumed farms and not been part of membership organisations for their benefit too.

We are of course members of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF). The NFF is active on many fronts and will continue to advocate very strongly for our membership. It is currently going through a review of the membership model brought on by the Victorian Farmers Federation who, like all other membership organisations in agriculture, are suffering from lack of membership and the ability to fund the work they do. Their call for a review was backed by NSW Farmers Association and Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association is ongoing.

Issues which are front and centre are live sheep trade, superannuation changes, agricultural visas, carbon treatment of farmers, Murray Darling basin buybacks, compulsory land acquisition for renewables... and the list goes on.

All in all, a very busy year for your organisation.



Keep Farmers Farming Rally in Canberra

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.

John Hassell



Addressing the Keep Farmers Farming Rally



At the Bringing Dowerin Downtown lunch
Hon Steve Martin MLC, Libby Mettam MLA and John Hassell



Grain Report

Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich

In defence of our key farming practices

2024 has been another busy year for the WAFarmers Grains Council (WAFarmersGrains). But never before have we witnessed such serious threats to our key farming practices and our farming system in general. Australian grain growers depend on the use of BOTH glyphosate and paraquat as part of our minimum tillage system and, without this system, the entire basis upon which we now farm would be in question. And yet we have seen a class action around glyphosate use, an APVMA review of paraquat proposing unworkable restrictions and an activist ABC team wrongly (but persistently and sensationally) alleging a link between paraquat and Parkinson's Disease. We have also seen government meddling with our chemical regulation system, European markets continuing to project their restrictive ideas on our practices via the ISCC system and government undermining our rights to use our own land via cultural heritage and environmental regulation. Through it all, WAFarmersGrains, either directly or via Grain Producers Australia (GPA), have been at the forefront strongly defending the farming practices of grain growers so that they can do what they do best – growing crops in one of the most challenging agricultural ecosystems in the world.

That is why it is so important that grain growers get behind us. Growing our membership at this time is absolutely critical to give legitimacy and 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 necessary.

As you can see from my detailed report below, there is a lot going on.

1. PARAQUAT & DIQUAT

No sooner had the ink dried on the Federal Court decision in *McNickle v Huntsman Chemical Company Pty Ltd* [2024] FCA 807 (whereby Lee J rejected the class action alleging a link between glyphosate and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma), the APVMA issued its provisional decision severely and unworkably limiting the use of paraquat and diquat.

While we expected and were prepared for scrutiny in the area of operator safety, what we did not expect was that the decision would be made on the basis of off-target effects on fauna (mostly birds and rodents).

Realising what this would mean for Western Australian grain growers, WAFarmersGrains immediately developed a multi-faceted strategy to do all we could to reverse or modify this potentially unthinkable outcome. That included:

(a) working through GPA and other stakeholders, including Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), to collect, generate and articulate the science necessary to disprove the weak scientific claims that formed the basis of the APVMA findings;

(b) producing our own detailed written submission to the APVMA (which was co-signed by the Pastoralists & Graziers Association (PGA) and the West Australian Grains Group (WAGG)) to complement the GPA and GRDC submissions by focussing on:

- government interference in this process;
- a perceived change in methodology by the APVMA,
- the agronomic consequences for grain growers;
- measures to improve the safe use of paraquat and diquat; and
- criticising and discrediting the sensational media campaign around paraquat;

(c) media work to put our case, including by:

- fighting a concerted (yet misguided) campaign led by elements of the ABC rural investigative team to sensationalise this issue by opportunistically attempting to establish a link between paraquat and Parkinson's Disease; and
- through GPA, bringing a formal complaint against the ABC alleging a breach of its charter;

(d) eliciting local support including by meeting and coordinating our response with the State Minister for Agriculture, Jackie Jarvis, and CBH Group;

(e) meeting with the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Julie Collins, (which meeting took place at my farm when she visited Western Australia) and strongly putting the case of Western Australian grain growers;

(f) undertaking to pursue further improvements in operator practices including banning the use of paraquat and diquat in 20L drums, mandating the closed loop system and improving training and licensing systems;

(g) advocating for a Western Australian specific label for paraquat and diquat that recognises the different considerations that apply in Western Australia (in the event that the APVMA do not accept our main arguments); and

(h) being prepared to seek legal advice and commence possible legal proceedings (judicial review) in the event of an adverse decision from the APVMA.

It has been pleasing to see how all elements of the grains industry have come together to coordinate and collaborate on this important work.

Originally the APVMA was to make their determination in February 2025. However, that timeline has been deferred ostensibly to give the APVMA more time to consider the significant volume of information put to it. This will also give the grains industry more time to develop our science based case in this area.

2 REVIEW OF APVMA & GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE

In 2023, the Federal government initiated a structure and governance review into the APVMA. At the time, we were concerned:

(a) that the appointment of Dr Ken Mathews (who had previously advocated for a role for the Agriculture 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;

Grains Report cont.

Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich

(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 expressed this concern via media engagement, by written submission and by face-to-face meetings with the then Minister for Agriculture, Murray Watt.

Dr Matthews' final report was issued in 2024 justifying our deepest fears. But we were pleased when (possibly due to strong lobbying on our part) the then Minister, Murray Watt, rejected many of Dr Matthew's recommendations, leaving the APVMA seemingly free of government interference (albeit with the right to leave Armidale).

However, since that time we have seen chlorpyrifos banned and paraquat and diquat (potentially) severely restricted, in each case on the basis of weak and/or inappropriate science and a subtle pivot in methodology (hazard versus risk based approach). We think that this is the product of ministerial pressure which is contrary to the then Minister's own undertaking to preserve the independence of the APVMA.

We will continue to vigorously lobby the Federal government to maintain the independence and exclusive science remit of the APVMA.

3. GRAIN SUPPLY CHAIN

The structure and functioning of the WA grains supply chain has been the single biggest issue confronting grain growers in recent years and WAFarmersGrains remains firmly focussed on this. While the smaller harvest in 2023 provided some capacity breathing space, the 20m tonnes grown in 2024 in a largely average season, foreshadows that this will once again be front and centre as an issue for WA grain growers. This will be exacerbated as the state sheep flock continues to shrink and more crop hectares are planted as a result.

3.1. Supply chain meetings

During the supply chain crisis in 2021-2023, WAFarmersGrains, PGA & WAGG met regularly with senior management of CBH to discuss the progress of shipping and freight from up-country to port and the then estimated carry-out of grain to the next season. While we haven't met as often in recent times, that process has continued which has been an excellent mechanism to be kept abreast of all issues relating to the CBH supply chain, including projects being developed as part of the Path-to-2033 strategy.

3.2. Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre (AEGIC) review

In 2024, (largely at the instigation of GPA) GRDC commissioned AEGIC to undertake a detailed review of the national grain supply chain. This process was led by Professor Ross Kingwell who engaged in frank conversations with GPA and who ultimately produced a detailed report entitled Future-Proofing Australian Grain Supply Chains. This is an excellent paper which offers some important insights into the current landscape and future challenges and opportunities in this space. However, we were then and remain now concerned that the initial views of Professor Kingwell were significantly watered down after consulting with the trade and will be pursuing this in 2025.

3.3. Supply chain competition

During 2023, WAFarmersGrains, PGA and WAGG were involved in discussions with parties potentially seeking to develop transshipment loading facilities together with upcountry accumulation sites at various locations around the Western Australian coastline. As part of that, we toured similar facilities at Wallaroo and Lucky Bay (and upcountry sites at Lucky Bay and Kimba) in South Australia. While we heard little from the project proponents in 2024, we understand that due diligence continues and that the project proponents remain optimistic about the prospects for developing this infrastructure.

3.4 Stevedoring charges for containers

In 2024, WAFarmersGrains (together with PGA and WAGG) met with members of the ACCC regarding the on-going fee increases and arbitrary new charges that are being applied by Australian stevedores to the container trade, including those containers used for grain. In our opinion, these charges are excessive and arbitrary and are undermining the economics of the grain container trade which is adversely affecting its ability to compete in the export market for grains. It is also restricting the growth of a key alternative pathway to our markets which is important for market development, to ease pressure when the supply chain is overloaded and to access more niche markets. In our view, the ACCC should be given oversight of all such fees and charges as previously recommended by the Productivity Commission and that is what we put to the ACCC, both in writing and at the meeting. We do not think this is likely though unless and until there is a change in government, as maritime workers are the indirect beneficiaries of these cost rises.



GPA meeting in Canberra in March 2024

Grains Report cont.

Mark Fowler and Melanie Tolich

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

4.1. 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 and 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 (ie 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 Western Australian 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.

This resulted in some negative media with ABC programme Landline misrepresenting this as a relaxation of aerial spraying regulations, overlooking the scientific basis for this exemption and over-representing the views of minority groups such as regenerative farmers.

The farm dam and lake issue is, of course, only part of the problem and CBH and WAFarmersGrains 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 (ie determined by the APVMA in accordance with the best available science specifically for each chemical).

4.2. GRDC study

WAFarmersGrains, directly and via our membership of 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 two drafts of this document and have provided extensive commentary back to GRDC and LEK Consulting, the consultants engaged for this purpose. Unfortunately, the first two attempts were deeply flawed due to improper sampling, the preconceived views of the consultants and a misunderstanding of the subject matter.

Our specific concerns are that:

1. The report fails to address many of the terms of reference.
2. The report appears to defend the ISCC scheme rather than to objectively evaluate it.
3. Key criticisms of growers have been underrepresented, inadequately addressed or completely overlooked.
4. By contrast, the views of the trade, corporate farms and growers nominated by Grain Growers Limited are over-represented.
5. The report fails to provide the quantitative analysis that we would reasonably expect from this report, including:

- What is the actual premium achieved using the ISCC scheme (both for the trade and grain growers)?
- How much do the trade pay to the ISCC to use the ISCC brand?
- What are the potential benefits of using an Australian designed and administered sustainability accreditation scheme?

6. We would question how LEK were chosen to carry out this analysis. AEGIC would have been far more appropriate and cost effective.

We will continue to work with GRDC to ensure that this important work is done properly. Unfortunately, this has been delayed by the considerable focussing of resources that occurred around the paraquat review. We hope to resume this work stream early in the new year.

4.3. 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.

5. WHEAT PORT CODE

In January 2024, WAFarmersGrains made a submission to the Second Review of the Wheat Port Code. After consulting widely, including with Mick Keogh of the ACCC, senior management of various third party exporters, Professor Ross Kingwell from AEGIC and with Grain Producers Australia and other state farming organisations, we came to the view that:

(a) The Wheat Port Code is not fit for purpose in its current form. The main reasons for that is that it only applies to wheat, there are so many exemptions that it is creating an uneven playing field (particularly for new entrants), the market has evolved since 2014 when it was introduced and it has inadequate enforcement mechanisms.

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(b) If the Wheat Port Code is permitted to sunset, it should be replaced with some other form of (mandatory) regulation to ensure that the Western Australian grain supply chain is and remains subject to the forces of competition for the benefit of grain growers. We do not think that competition issues in the market for port terminal services would be adequately addressed by the Competition & Consumer Act 2010 (Clth) alone. That is because those laws are 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. Crucially, it does not deal with systemic competition issues.

In late 2024, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry published its recommendations in the Report on the Second Review of the Wheat Port Code. Among other things, they have recommended that the Wheat Port Code should be permitted to sunset but that, rather than replacing it with a prescriptive code, it should be replaced with a voluntary code to be developed and managed by Grain Trade Australia (GTA) which should apply to all grains with no parties to be granted exemptions (whether a cooperative or otherwise).

While WAFarmersGrains welcomes the application of this code to all grains and to all port terminal service providers, we do NOT agree that a voluntary code is adequate, nor do we think that GTA is the appropriate entity to develop or manage any system of self regulation.

Firstly, while the market for port terminal services may have changed in other States, in Western Australia the competition landscape remains largely as it was in 2014 when the Wheat Port Code was introduced. Secondly, GTA exclusively represents the trade so we have little confidence that the interests of grain growers will be given any weight. GTA are also dominated by the three largest port terminal service providers (CBH, Viterra and GrainCorp) that operate vertically integrated regional monopolies in their respective markets, the very parties any such code would be seeking to regulate. Given the reluctance of third party exporters (ie that are not also port terminal service providers) to respond to the Second Review, it is clear that there is an issue here that should be investigated further.

WAFarmersGrains has made a further submission to the Second Review on this basis.

6. ELDERS ACQUISITION OF DELTA AG

On 18 November 2024, Elders Limited entered into an agreement to acquire all of the shares in Delta Agribusiness Pty Ltd (Delta). As this could involve a substantial lessening of competition in the market for crop protection products in Australia, the ACCC is scrutinising the acquisition to determine whether to recommend that the Federal Treasurer exercise his power under the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Clth) to stop the sale proceeding.

WAFarmersGrains has objected to this sale on the basis that:

(a) It will reduce competition in the RETAIL market for crop protection products in Western Australia.

- This market is already dominated by Elders and Nutrien with the only effective competition provided by Delta and independent retailers operating under the NRI banner.
- There are 11 towns in regional Western Australia where there are both an Elders outlet and a Delta outlet (Northampton, Geraldton, Dalwallinu, Moora, Hyden, Narrogin, Beverley, Lake Grace, Donnybrook, Albany and Esperance). If the acquisition goes ahead, we would expect these to be consolidated into single branches to be operated under the Elders banner.
- With less competition in these and surrounding areas, Elders and Nutrien will have significantly greater market power to keep prices higher and only offer products that produce the best profit margins.
- That market power would make it more difficult for existing competitors (such as independents in the NRI group) to compete, possibly leading to a further rationalisation of market participants, and which would also discourage the entry by new players.
- It would be a situation not unlike Coles and Woolworths in the groceries market.

(b) It will reduce competition in the WHOLESALE market for crop protection products in Western Australia.

- Both Delta and Elders are vertically integrated in both the retail and wholesale markets for crop protection products. Delta own Conquest Crop Protection Pty Ltd (Conquest) and Elders own Titan AG Pty Ltd.

- This acquisition would strengthen that vertical integration reducing actual competition at the wholesale level.
- It is also difficult to see how Conquest would survive as a separate entity and fit into the Elders supply chain.
- Elders and Nutrien would be a powerful duopoly, with enough market power to squeeze suppliers leading to a departure of participants from that market and/or a disincentive for new participants to enter the market.
- Once again, it would be a situation not unlike Coles and Woolworths in the groceries market where farmer suppliers have been squeezed by loss leading marketing campaigns and other predatory pricing practices.

(c) It is not in the public interest.

- The acquisition would lead to a loss of jobs in regional communities, especially in those towns where there is currently both an Elders outlet and a Delta outlet.

7. BIOSECURITY LEVY

During 2024 WAFarmersGrains has continued to lobby against the Federal Government's proposed 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, we remain concerned that:

(a) this money would 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 was originally estimated that more than half of the \$47.5m to be raised by the levy would be paid by the grains industry;

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

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(d) levies are usually a joint initiative between government and industry with a mechanism in place to ensure industry money (ie OUR money) is spent most effectively – like in relation to the levies funding GRDC and Plant Health Australia (PHA) - 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:

- PHA (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 government schemes (state);
- indirectly priced into imported farming products due to biosecurity costs passed on by importers;
- when there is a biosecurity breach that results in extra costs in pest control (eg fall army worm, Russian aphids, etc); and
- as a tax payer generally;

(f) Western Australian 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 announcement amplifies this structural unfairness so Western Australian 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.

As a result of the combined lobbying of WAFarmersGrains, GPA, the National Farmers Federation (NFF) and others, the bill to date has failed to pass the Senate. Our hope is that the Government will now revisit the idea of a container levy or some other means of extracting the true cost from the creators of the risk.

8. NATIONAL GRAINS REPRESENTATION

8.1. National issues

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 (SFOs). Through GPA, we have been involved in discussions and policy formation in relation to:

- the APVMA review;
- the paraquat review;
- the GPA governance review;
- the biosecurity levy/tax;
- LEK 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)
- grains levy review regarding “fit-for-purpose” levy rates and funding biosecurity (including Plant Health Australia) and GRDC’s strategic reserves;
- the results of the National Residue Survey;
- GRDC (Grains Australia, IOC structure and 5 year RD&E plan) ;
- varieties and end-point-royalties;
- competition issues in the grains sector (Wheat Port Code, agricultural machinery and canola seed);
- whole of industry sustainability (Behind Australian Grain) and ISCC; and
- farm labour/visa regulation.

9. OTHER MATTERS

9.1. 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 2 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.

9.2. Democratic process

The strength of WAFarmersGrains has always been its strong connection to grassroots membership which help form its policies. Each council delegate is appointed by its zone, and it is their job to continually liaise with members from their zone to distil their views and represent these through the council. It also their job, using that understanding, to vote on behalf of their zone. This is a system of representative democracy not unlike our state and federal parliamentary systems. So, if any member feels that WAFarmersGrains is not properly taking their views into account, they should contact their grains delegate to ensure that they are aware of their views. You can find your zone council delegate listed below. Please contact the office if you require their contact information for that purpose.

9.3. Thank you

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 2024 and acknowledge the work of our Policy Manager, Melanie Tolich, for conveying and preparing all grains council documentation and delivering the resulting actions.

Mark Fowler (President)	Upper Great Southern Zone	Geoff Cosgrove	North Midland
Matt Hill (Vice President)	Esperance Ravensthorpe Zone	Mike Norton	Vasse Zone
Mic Fels (leave of absence)	Esperance Ravensthorpe Zone	Vacant	Stirling Zone
Mark Adams	Albany Zone	Vacant	Northern Zone
Duncan Young	Avon Zone	Vacant	North Eastern Zone
Nathaniel O'Hare	Blackwood Zone	Vacant	Miling Zone
Sam West	Central Great Southern Zone	Vacant	Lower South West Vacant
Noel Bairstow	Corrigin Lake Grace	Vacant	Harvey Zone
Josh Fuchsbichler	Merredin Zone	Shannen Barrett	Special Expertise - Avon Zone
Peter Henning	Mortlock Zone	Vacant	AgConnectWA



Livestock Report

Geoff Pearson and Melanie Tolich

Again in 2024, WAFarmers Livestock Council has been busy with the industry facing challenges on several fronts. The council continues to work hard for members in developing and driving key livestock policy areas that help build a sustainable Western Australian Livestock industry. Below are the highlighted key policy areas the council has been working on throughout 2024:

Live Exports – Phase out of live sheep

The Phase out of the live sheep trade by sea has remained the number one advocacy topic for the WAFarmers Livestock Council throughout 2024. 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.

Industry united to fight this policy and created the “Keep the Sheep” campaign. It was developed to undertake the political lobbying activities required to gain public support and pressure the Federal government in to overturning its decision. WAFarmers fully support the “Keep the Sheep” campaign.

When the Albanese Government announced the decision to phase out live sheep by sea exports by May 2028, they initially committed \$107million of funding to assist the industry to transition, which they further increased to \$146m in October 2024. The announcement confirmed that \$46 million of these funds were allocated to assist producers and supply chain participants to transition. WAFarmers reinforced that this level of funding was insulting and meagerly a drop in the ocean against the value of the trade to Western Australia.

In December 2024, the Albanese Government announced that a co-design process with industry wide consultation will be established to determine the allocation of the \$46m of producer and supply chain funds. WAFarmers has been invited to participate in the process and has accepted the invitation. WAFarmers assures members that accepting this invite does not indicate that we accept the policy but instead ensures that we have a seat in the consultation process and our voice is heard. WAFarmers will keep members updated on this process as information comes to hand early in 2025.

Rest assured WAFarmers will continue to work closely with our national peak councils ((Australian Livestock Export Corporation (ALEC), Sheep Producers Australia (SPA), WoolProducers Australia (WPA), National Farmers’ Federation (NFF)) and locally in Western Australia with the Pastoralists and Graziers Association (PGA) and Western Australian Livestock Exporters Association (WALEA) to ensure the continuation of the live export trade.

Biosecurity and Traceability

Biosecurity remains a hot topic for the council in 2024 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.

Given the heightened threat level with FMD and LSD on our doorstep, to significantly improve traceability, and to allow for timely management, control and eradication of biosecurity threats a 2022 meeting of Federal and State Agriculture Ministers advised industry that eID’s for sheep and goats will become mandatory by January 2025. Legislation to enforce this policy decision was passed by the Western Australian Government during 2024.

With legislation passed, WAFarmers Livestock Council, as part of the industry-wide Western Australian Sheep and Goat Advisory Group, continues to work to get the best possible outcome for our members. As a result, the State government funded “Tag Incentive Program” continues for 2025 with a 75 cent discount applied to accredited white year of birth eID tags.

WAFarmers understands members concerns in relation to this mandatory decision and the associated cost incurred through this process but also understands the benefits of traceability in managing biosecurity outbreaks that have the potential to wipe out the livestock industry Australia wide.

In understanding members’ concerns of the increased cost of implementing eIDs, during 2024, WAFarmers collaborated in a project with Curtin University that secured almost half a million dollars of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) funding to research consumer willingness to pay more for a traceable meat product.

The project will also fund assistance for farmers in recording and updating their sheep and goat eID transactions in the NLIS database.

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 in early 2024. Prices have been slowly recovering late in 2024, but still remain relatively low.

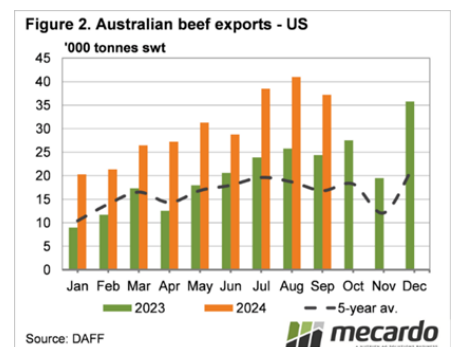
The low prices are reflective of oversupply in the marketplace, as slaughter rates increased as farmers continue to turn off stock, due to lack of confidence in the industry and dry season conditions for Western Australia. Farmers turning of their stock still struggle to find buyers for their stock with continuing issues of lack of kill capacity in WA abattoirs.

WAFarmers Livestock Council continues to work with our national peak bodies, SPA and WPA along with the processors to identify potential markets for our product and to manage seasonal conditions across the industry.

Market Updates 2024:

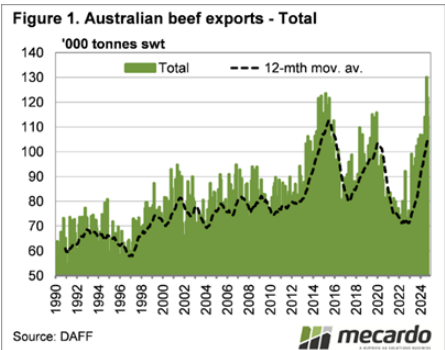
Beef International

- Beef exports to Japan have fallen relatively heavily in August and September, from peak numbers in June and July.
- US has taken market share from China and South Korea this year.



Livestock Report cont.

Geoff Pearson and Melanie Tolich

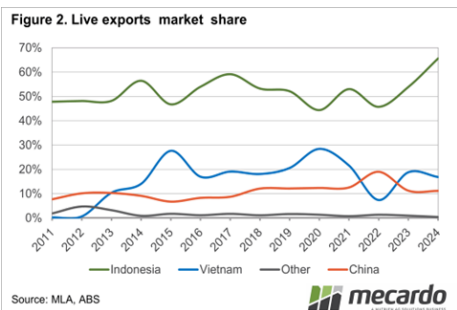
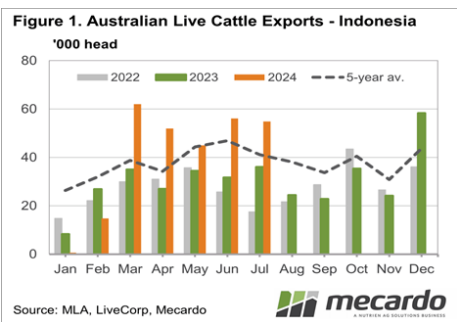


Sheep

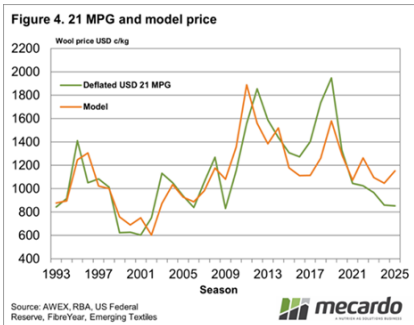
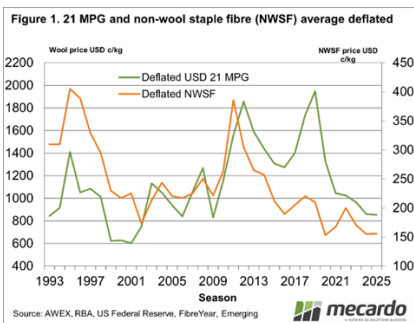
- Lamb exports recorded lowest monthly totals since January in August and September but are still tracking higher year-on-year for the year-to-date.
- September mutton exports lift to the highest level for the year, 36% above the five-year average for the month.
- The Middle East picks up market share of both lamb and mutton exports, filling some of the gap left by China.

Live Export

- Live cattle exports have been tracking above year-ago levels since March, with July recording the highest numbers for that month since 2019.
- YTD live cattle exports still sits 15% below the five-year average.
- The importance of Australia's closest market Indonesia continues to grow as they make up 65% of destination share so far this year.



Australian Wool Production



Australian Bureau of Statistics Industry Slaughter / Production Figures

Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/livestock-products-australia/latest-release>

Key statistics
In seasonally adjusted terms for the June 2024 quarter:

- Red meat production increased 3.6%

Cattle

- Cattle slaughtered in the June 2024 quarter increased 2.8% to 2.0 million.
- Beef production in the June 2024 quarter increased 2.8% to 626,781 tonnes.

Sheep

- Sheep slaughtered in the June 2024 quarter increased 18.3% to 3.1 million.
- Mutton production in the June 2024 quarter increased 24.5% to 80,652 tonnes.

Lambs

- Lambs slaughtered in the June 2024 quarter increased 0.3% to 7.1 million.
- Lamb meat production in the June 2024 quarter decreased 0.3% to 170,194 tonnes.

Gross value of livestock (original)

- The gross value of cattle and calves slaughtered increased 13.8% to \$3.6 billion.
- The gross value of sheep and lambs slaughtered increased 12.3% to \$1.4 billion.

Saleyards Viability

Muchea Livestock Facility

Western Australian Meat Industry Authority (WAMIA) is a Western Australian government agency working under the State Government oversees the management of Muchea Livestock Facility which operates on a policy of full cost recovery. Price decreases implemented in 2018/19 heavily impacted the facility and in turn WAMIA financials. In more recent years users of the facility have experienced price increases as the facility and WAMIA endeavours to bridge the gap on meeting the policy of operating at full cost recovery, but are yet to be successful. In 2023 a loss of \$1.5m was recorded and in 2024 a further loss of \$908,000 was reported. In order to remain financial, an equity contribution from the State government was required. WAMIA continues to review and put in place strategies to improve its financial sustainability and will be compiling a scoping document on future options for the facility and have sought input for a from the WAFarmers Livestock Council.

The State government is investigating land use for the Government owned land surrounding the facility and how it can potentially be used to generate revenue to assist in covering the operating costs of the facility.

Resolution

"WAFarmers is supportive of

- the Muchea livestock centre as it is important to the sheep and cattle, supply chains in WA
- being involved the discussion of exploring options for long term viability of the Muchea Livestock Centre including the investigation of alternative income sources.

Boyanup

In 2023 Capel Shire and the Western Australian Livestock Salesmen's Association (WALSA) agreed and signed 10-year lease for Boyanup Saleyards with conditions to improve the facilities given industry concern over animal welfare issues. Capel Shire advised it was their goal to find a new site for the saleyard to be relocated to at the end of the lease period. The Capel Shire has commenced enquiries exploring potential land options and in late 2024 identified a suitable piece of land and are now exploring funding opportunities for the development. The WAFarmers Livestock Council will continue to work with the Capel Shire and will keep members updated as details come to hand.

Livestock Report cont.

Geoff Pearson and Melanie Tolich

Sustainability

From 1 January 2025, many large Australian businesses and financial institutions need to prepare annual sustainability reports containing mandatory climate-related financial disclosures, following the passage of a major bill through Parliament in 2024.

With the reporting of Scope 1,2 and 3 emissions this will have a flow on effect for farmers that are supplying large Australian businesses. Despite an ongoing lack of clarity on the complex nature of the methodologies and associated carbon calculation tools, there are options out there for farmers including workshops to assist farmers in commencing the process of baselining the carbon footprint of their farming enterprise. It is important for farmers to be aware of what is required should the supply chain or government enforce future reporting upon them.

WAFarmers Livestock Council provides input to both the Sheep Sustainability and Beef Sustainability Frameworks to ensure workability in what is being asked of farmers in relation to all criteria used to determine a sustainable farming business.



WAFarmers Livestock Council Meeting
Muchea Livestock Facility

Key policy areas for the WAFarmers Livestock Section into 2025 include:

- Advocating to retain the Live Export trade for sheep and cattle and maintaining market access and international demand for live, chilled and frozen meat products and for Australian wool.
- Assisting the industry supply chain to improve access to meat processing facilities within Western Australia.
- 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.



Hon David Littleproud MP and Geoff Pearson
Press conference about live export



Geoff Pearson
WAFarmers 2024 Annual Conference

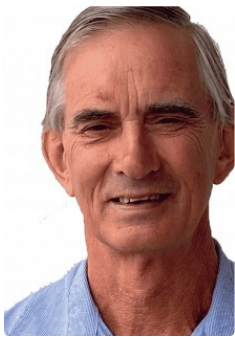


Meeting with Senator Fatimah Payman
to discuss the live sheep export trade



Makaela Knapp, Steve McGuire, Hon Julie Collins MP
and Geoff Pearson at Bombara shearing shed
Boyup Brook

Name	Zone	Name	Zone
Geoff Pearson (President)	Harvey Zone	Makaela Knapp	Miling Zone
David Slade (Vice President)	Albany Zone	Tamara Michalek	Mortlock Zone
Ed Rogister	Albany Zone	Vacant	North Eastern
Jeff Murray	Avon Zone	Vacant	North Midland
Steve McGuire	Blackwood Zone	Vacant	Northern
Mal Baxter	Central Great Southern Zone	Vacant	Stirling Zone
Tahryn Trevenen	Corrigin Lake Grace Zone	Sam Weightman	Vasse Zone
Mark Walter	Esperance Ravensthorpe Zone	Dr Elizabeth Jackson	Special Expertise
Michael Campbell	Lower South West Zone	Lucy Morris	Special Expertise
Jessie Davis	Merredin Zone		



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 our people, environment and animals; and valued by the community. 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.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

State of the WA Industry

Unfortunately, our market situation has slipped back. Data presented at Dairy Australia's (DA) recent Dairy Competitiveness workshop show that WA's milk prices remain well below the rest of Australia, and in fact the gap is widening (Source, Marsden Jacobs/DA).

The 2023/24 Dairy Farm Monitoring Project (DFMP) report for Western Australia shows that profit per DFMP farm (average \$349,683) across the State was lower than the long-term average of \$628,087. This was the lowest in the 11 years of the DFMP project.

On DFMP farms, average Western Australian milk prices rose 3% (to 69.0c/L) in the last year. Milk prices now account for nearly 90% of gross DFMP farm income. For several years, cattle prices carried the poor milk price, but this is no longer the case as livestock profit has been down. Fertiliser costs are down, which is welcome; but shed costs, total feed costs and overhead costs are all up.

Finance and lease costs increased by 36%, driven by an increase in long term liabilities. Net DFMP farm income was - 0.8c/L compared to + 13.4c/L in 2022/23. ROTA is now the lowest on DFMP record. The need for a flat milk supply curve comes at a huge cost to Western Australian dairy farmers especially in harsh seasons like 2023-24 FY.

Due to this pain, we are still seeing more exits from industry, and we have probably dropped below 100 dairy farmers in the State.

WA Dairy Industry Five Year Development Plan

The WA Dairy Industry Working Group (WADIWG) has a 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, DA, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Lactalis, Brownes and Bega. We have been looking for funds for the implementation plan developed by BlueSee.

A Dairy Producers Committee?

Our progress with developing a Dairy Producers Committee has stalled due to the Agricultural Produce Committee's (APC) being unable to find a complete list of eligible dairy producers to poll. However, under the new Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 (PRIS Act), the APC will be able to obtain Health Department and DPIRD data so we are still hopeful that the Dairy Producers Committee (DPC) poll will happen in 2025.

Trade and Market Access

We have been exploring possibilities of milk exports to Malaysia and heifer exports to Indonesia and had hoped to see some results in 2024. However, we have been disappointed that there seems to be a communication breakdown between dairy farmers, processors and the Government.

WAFarmers Dairy Conference and AGM, 1 August 2024

The WAFarmers Dairy Council ran our annual Dairy Conference on 1 August at the Abbey Beach Resort. We had a full house and an excellent line up of speakers, with a theme of The Future of Advocacy, Technology and Digital Dairying. We were welcomed by President Ian Noakes, and the Conference was opened by Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food.

Keynote speaker, John Perry from Dairy Australia, talked inspiringly about virtual fencing/herding, irrigation and facial recognition. Another highlight was the Young-ish Dairy Farmers Panel who shared their own on-farm experiences with technology. At the AGM, Ian Noakes was re-elected unopposed as President. The Conference was ably MCed by Phil Depiazzi.



Dairy Australia's John Perry addresses the 2024 WAFarmers Dairy Conference

Dairy Regional Roundabout, 15-18 April 2024

WAFarmers Dairy Council completed its annual Regional Roundabout during 15-18 April 2024. We met over meals with farmers from the South Coast, Northcliffe, Margaret River, Capel and Harvey. Catherine O'Keefe APC CEO joined us on the Roundabout and helped answer the curly questions about a proposed Dairy Producers Committee. Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) also joined us for several of the meetings.



Northcliffe Regional Lunch



Harvey Regional Dinner

Dairy Report cont.

Ian Noakes and Laura Stocker



Harvey Regional Dinner

Dairy Pavilion, Perth Royal Show, 21-28 September 2024

The Show enjoyed record-breaking attendance this year, with 490,000 people through the gates. Feedback on the WA Dairy Pavilion was once again overwhelmingly positive. The expanded Calf Crèche was enjoyed by visitors. The large screen in the Milking Station, showcasing “a day in the life of a WA dairy farmer,” along with nutritional information about dairy products, added an extra educational aspect.

Visitors appreciate that the Dairy Pavilion focuses on supporting Western Australian dairy producers; they clearly want to local brands; and value interacting with “real dairy farmers”.

The Dairy Council appreciates the hard work and commitment that coordinator Louise Cashmore, key dairy farmers, DA and our own WAFarmers staff team put into this event.



FarmersFirst Coffee Bar at the Dairy Pavilion



Ian Noakes chatting with the public at the Dairy Pavilion

Advocacy

The WAFarmers Dairy Council has had a busy advocacy year yet again, working with ADF on national dairy issues, and with WAFarmers on cross commodity issues. At a state level the Dairy Council:

- made a submission to the Western Australian government supporting Harvey Water's proposal to upgrade the Collie River Irrigation scheme
- argued for a workable approach for farmers in the new Firearms Legislation
- strongly supported overturning the ban on live sheep exports, with submissions and media release
- made a submission on the Veterinary Practice Amendment Regulations
- made multiple radio and television interviews explaining the state of the industry and our needs and sent numerous releases to the print media.

Australian Dairy Farmers Policy Advisory Groups

The Dairy Council has also been actively engaged with ADF to support national advocacy on issues such as the proposed National Water Agreement, biosecurity, the review of the Dairy Code of Conduct, the Mandatory Food and Grocery Code, the Supermarkets Inquiry, and live sheep export. We aim to bring a Western Australian perspective to national issues.

The 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 represented the Dairy Council at the Australian Dairy Farmers Economics and Trade PAG.

Tammy Negus was the Dairy Council representative at the People and Communities Policy Advisory Group.

PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Our main concerns are about the continuing number of exits from the industry and the difficulty in new entrants being able to afford to join. We know there are people looking to start but finding available land and then the capital cost of establishing a dairy is prohibitive.

We hope to improve channels of communication, trade and market access for the dairy industry into Malaysia and Indonesia.

We are looking forward to establishing a DPC in Western Australia in the hope that this will help secure a positive future for our industry.

THANK YOU

I thank the WAFarmers Board and all staff at WAFarmers for their support, including Laura Stocker for her role as Dairy Council's Executive Manager. I acknowledge our relationship with Western Dairy and Dairy Australia and the mutual benefit of our collaboration. Finally, I thank my fellow Dairy Councillors for their solidarity.



Armstrong's cown and calf



General Report

Trevor Whittington

INTRODUCTION

2024 has been a pivotal year for the agricultural sector in Western Australia. Farmers across the State have faced both opportunities and challenges as political, environmental, and economic pressures continue to shape the industry.

Through it all, WAFarmers has remained steadfast in its commitment to advocating for the interests of Western Australian farmers at both the state and federal levels. This report outlines the key issues WAFarmers has engaged with over the past year, as well as the major political decisions impacting the sector.

KEY ISSUES ENGAGED BY WAFARMERS

1. Water Security and Drought

Water remains one of the most critical resources for farmers across Western Australia. With a dry start to the year, WAFarmers has actively lobbied the State Government to implement long-term solutions that ensure the sustainability of water resources for both dryland and irrigated agriculture.

This included advocating for:

- Increased investment in water infrastructure;
- Modern desalination technologies; and
- Revisions to water licensing policies to better align with on-farm realities.
- Farm Water Supply Grant scheme.

2. Labour Shortages

The ongoing workforce crisis, exacerbated by visa restrictions and skilled worker shortages, remains a significant burden on the industry. WAFarmers worked closely with the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) to ensure that the review of backpacker working visas did not result in further restrictions on farm labour availability.

Additionally, WAFarmers lobbied for a fast-track skilled migration visa for farm workers with strong English skills who are willing to work in regional areas. With the Federal Government under pressure to cut migration, WAFarmers continues to fight to ensure farm worker visas are not sacrificed in broader immigration policy changes.

3. Rising Input Costs

The soaring costs of fuel, fertiliser, and chemicals have placed a significant financial burden on farmers. WAFarmers has been highly critical of federal spending and taxation policies, which have driven up interest rates and increased financial pressure on farmers carrying debt.

4. Climate and Sustainability Initiatives

WAFarmers has actively engaged in climate action discussions, ensuring that government policies do not undermine farm profitability.

This year, efforts focused on:

- Pushing for a workable soil carbon calculator; and
- Engaging with the Federal Government to ensure policies tied to its 43% emissions reduction target by 2030 do not place unfair cost burdens on farmers

5. Regional Infrastructure and Telecommunications

Reliable infrastructure is essential to rural productivity. WAFarmers successfully secured increased federal funding for regional road, bridge, and rail upgrades to improve the transportation of agricultural goods.

On the telecommunications front, WAFarmers worked with the State Government and private providers to support the rollout of high-speed broadband and mobile coverage for regional and remote communities.



6. Firearms

The State Government's redraft of the Firearms Act resulted in the introduction of the new 2024 legislation and regulations, which place significant restrictions on farmers' access to firearms. WAFarmers strongly opposed the changes, highlighting the critical role firearms play in pest control, livestock management, and farm safety.

Despite intense lobbying efforts, the Government pushed ahead with reforms that increase red tape, licensing requirements, and limitations on firearm ownership for primary producers. WAFarmers will continue to advocate for practical amendments that support farm operations while maintaining public safety.



7. Biosecurity Tax

WAFarmers fought back against the Federal Government's Biosecurity Protection Levy, which places an unfair financial burden on farmers. While WAFarmers supports strong biosecurity measures, we strongly opposed a tax that makes farmers pay for risks introduced by other industries, including imports and tourism.

Despite industry objections, the Government was intent on pushing ahead with the tax, claiming it was doubling the biosecurity funding pool but failing to fairly distribute costs across all sectors that contribute to biosecurity risks.

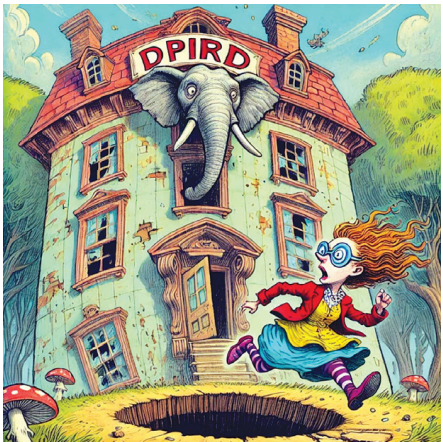
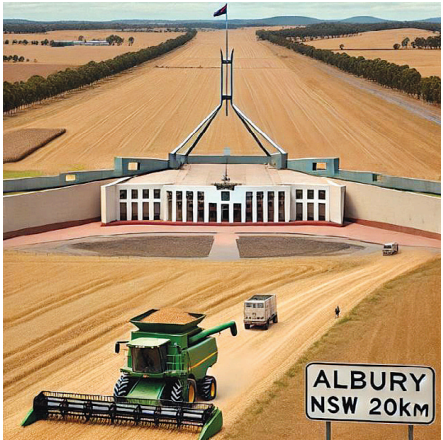
Ultimately the Government walked away from the bill in the lead up to the 2025 Federal election.

General Report cont.

Trevor Whittington

POLITICAL ARTICLES BY TREVOR WHITTINGTON

- The Fight for Fair Water Policy: Are WA Farmers Being Forgotten?
- Why Labour Shortages Are Driving Australian Farmers to the Brink
- Trade Wars and Tariffs: How China's Policies Impact WA Agriculture
- The Real Cost of Going Green in Agriculture
- What the New Biosecurity Laws Mean for WA Farmers
- Fuel Prices and Fertiliser Costs: A Double-Edged Sword for Farmers
- The Push for Better Roads and Rail: WA's Lifeline to Global Markets
- Why Carbon Credits Should Benefit Farmers, Not Corporations
- WA Farmers and the UK FTA: Too Little, Too Late?
- The Importance of Telecommunications for Modern Agriculture
- Will the New Federal Budget Deliver for Regional Australia?
- Climate Policy and Farming: Can WA Balance Sustainability with Profitability?
- Navigating the Risks of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in WA
- The Growing Divide: Urban Policy and Rural Reality in Australia
- Farming and Activism: Why Stronger Farm Trespass Laws Are Vital
- The Impact of Renewable Energy Subsidies on WA Farmers
- Can WA Farmers Compete in a Global Grain Market?
- Why Infrastructure Spending is Critical for WA's Ag Sector
- Agricultural Innovation: The Key to Feeding Future Generations
- 2024 in Review: The Wins and Challenges for WA Farmers
- What a Waste: Empty Country Town Shops
- Go West Young Man: A Story of an Esperance Pioneer
- Better Late than Never: The Liberal who learned to love Live Exports
- The Groundhog Day on the Wharfs
- The Ute is Going Going
- Firearms Reform: Missing the Target
- Long Weekend: Where are the Country Car Chargers
- The Ute is History
- Some Facts About EU Farmers
- Time to Address the Shortage of Ag Mechanics
- Equity and Diversity Fatigue
- Speak Up Before They Lock the Gate
- Something Stinks with Biofuels
- Dr Who Says No Gun for You
- At this Rate the Family Farm is Doomed
- The Live Sheep Decision is a Slap in the Face to Muslims
- Murray Watt is a Wounded Minister
- DPIRD Devoted to People of Indigenous Racial Diversity
- The Decline and Fall of DPIRD
- Does RSPCA Approved Extend to King Charles
- RSPCA Judge Jury and Executioner
- Why Don't More Farms Go Off Grid?
- Russian Agriculture Running Hot and Cold
- Don't Buy One of These Tractors
- The French Green Left are Truly Mad
- Woodside, we Don't Want you as our Neighbour
- Growing Grain for Gluttons
- Woodsides Carbon Farming Plan is Destroying Family Farms
- Please Explain: DPIRD HQ Mess
- GPChat vs The Dry Farmer
- Terra Nullius Aqua Nullius Farming Nullius
- The Blind Spot in Animal Activism
- Don't You Love the Smell of Burning Jarrah in the Morning
- How South32 is Worshipping False Gods
- Paraquat, Ploughs and Perils: The Future of Global Grain
- Play the End Game and Take your Carbon Footprint to Zero
- From the Wheatbelt to the War Zone, Why Ukraine Farmland is Good Buying
- Nothing to Fear: It's Just a Statement
- Canberra a Capital Blunder
- Market Failure and Middlemen
- Aboriginal Farming Systems Will Not Save us from the next Drought
- Yes Minister - There are no cuts in your Budget
- Tax Exodus: All roads lead to the Airport
- Make our Farmers great Again
- What Exactly Does the Minister for Food Do?
- A Generational Journey through Farm Utes
- Teenagers will Always Outsmart Politicians: The Absurdity of the Online Safety Bill
- Premier Roger Cook: Keeps the Green Left out of the State
- Closing the Gap on Connectivity
- Lost in the Signal - Mobile Connectivity
- From Paddock to Plate to Purgatory: Why Jim Chalmers Future Fund Should Keep the Sheep
- Labors Left Faces off in Tasmania
- Is 2025 the Year the Millennial Boys Wake Up



General Report cont.

Trevor Whittington

WAFARMERS ZONES

The year 2024 saw WAFarmers engage actively with its zones and members, addressing critical agricultural and rural issues through a range of motions and advocacy efforts.

These motions, raised and debated by members at various meetings, reflect the grassroots concerns and priorities of Western Australian farmers. This report highlights the key motions and actions taken throughout the year, providing an overview of the organisations ongoing commitment to advancing the interests of its members and rural communities.

MOTIONS FROM ZONE MEETINGS

Motion 1:

From: Central Great Southern Zone
Issue: Biosecurity Levy.
Motion: “That the Federal Government rescind the Biosecurity Levy on Agriculture and replace it with a levy on incoming container movements.”

Motion 2:

From: Central Great Southern Zone
Issue: Exemptions for Low-Risk Quarries.
Motion: “That WAFarmers call for the State Government to provide exemptions for low-risk quarries – e.g. gravel, sand, and lime pits on farms – in regard to revised mining regulations.”

Motion 3:

From: Central Great Southern Zone
Issue: Farm Water Supply Grants.
Motion: “That the Farm Water Supply Grant scheme be reinstated by the Western Australian Government.”

Motion 4:

From: Central Great Southern Zone
Issue: Truck Licensing Standards.
Motion: “That all people sitting for truck licenses need to meet the requirements for levels of licenses – no fast-tracking for non-Australian residents.”



Avon and Morlock Zone Meeting
14 March 2024

Motion 5:

From: Esperance-Ravensthorpe Zone
Issue: Carbon Credits for On-Farm Trees.
Motion: “The Esperance-Ravensthorpe Zone of WAFF asks WAFF to lobby the relevant research institute to scientifically study the baseline measurements for Carbon Credits from on-farm planted trees. Farmers need the evidence of research-based findings on what species of tree, and at what age, will produce carbon credits that can be utilized by the farming business.”

Motion 6:

From: Lower South West Zone
Issue: Air Freight Support.
Motion: “WAFarmers LSWZ calls on the Federal Government to support more airline flights from Western Australia for the purpose of increasing air freight out of this state.”

Motion 7:

From: Esperance-Ravensthorpe Zone
Issue: Stamp Duty Reform.
Motion: “WAFarmers Esperance-Ravensthorpe Zone calls on the State Government to abolish Stamp Duty on insurance and licenses in Western Australia.”

The motions put forward by WAFarmers members in 2024 illustrate the breadth and depth of issues affecting Western Australian agriculture. From water security and biosecurity levies to infrastructure efficiencies and carbon credit frameworks, WAFarmers has worked tirelessly to represent the voices of farmers across the State.

These efforts will continue to shape our advocacy priorities as we move into 2025 and beyond.



Albany Zone Meeting
15 April 2024



Esperance-Ravensthorpe Zone Meeting
16 April 2024

CONCLUSION

2024 has been a year of significant activity and progress for Western Australian agriculture. WAFarmers remains committed to representing the interests of farmers and ensuring their voices are heard at both the state and federal levels.

While challenges persist, we believe the resilience and ingenuity of Western Australian farmers will continue to drive the sector forward.

Together, we will continue to tackle the issues impacting our industry, ensuring a prosperous future for all farmers across Western Australia.



Blackwood Zone Meeting
20 May 2024



Lower South West Zone Meeting
22 May 2024



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



مكتب الوزير
Minister's Office
Senator the Hon Mr Murray Watt MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Canberra ACT
Australia



Quarrels in Far Away Lands
The Cold War on Coal



Better late than never to the political fight Equality and diversity fatigue
Buti needs to study harder

BoM El Niño and La Niña The Magic Millions of Ag Tech Washing the Decks Letter from a sheep farmer to senator Ghosh

Where are all the car DPLH versus Maddox Can this new senator save live exports?

chargers? Go west young man Time to address the shortage of ag mechanics

The Ute is Going Going The Government is lost at sea



What a waste The hollowing out of the bush



Foreign land buyers quietly backing the Live Exports gone movement

Build it and they will come

\$400m Waste of Money

Missing the Target

The Market Never Lies



Carbon farming meaningless media

29 January 2024
Muhammad عثمان Al Alban
Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs
Ministry Complex
PO Box 2944
Safat Code 13030
Kuwait

Something is on the nose with biofuels

Dr Who says No Gun for You

Cattle producers be afraid, very afraid



What Activists Want, Watt Delivers
Watt Farmers Fear

Live cattle are one political deal away from a ban

What's next on Watt's Hit list
What to do with Watt

Don't Cry for me Albanese
You Can't Fix Something that is Free

The family farm is doomed Speak up before authorities shut the gate

Watt's not working for agriculture

The decline and fall of DPIRD
Regional Renovate to Rent

The Live Export decision is a slap in the face

Burning Man does not like Prescribed Burns

Pasta versus rice

Selecting Lamb over Mutton

Who will the government target next?

RSPCA judge, jury and executioner

Keeping drought funding focused on drought

An open letter to the people of Western Australia

Another brick in the wall

The galling manner of this government

By JOHN HASSELL
President's Speech to the WAFarmers Conference 2024

The French Greens are truly mad
The hidden factor of EV depreciation

Open letter to the PM: Are cattle next?

The Nationals WA needs to Does 'RSPCA Approved' scope in its political radar extend to King Charles

Russia running hot and cold

Where is Bob when you need him

KEEP THE SHEEP

Watch this Space to Keep the Sheep

THE 13 KILLER ARGUMENTS TO KEEP THE LIVE SHEEP TRADE

Why aren't more farmers going off grid?

Woodside's Carbon Farming Plan



Abattoirs can't compete with the miners

is Destroying Family Farms

Chat GPT4 vs The Dry Farmer
Time to give the lolly pop to AI
Please Explain – DPIRD HQ Fiasco
Setting the record straight with the shooters

Waiting, Waiting, Waiting on Jackie

The cost of infrastructure is clearly out of control

Woodside, we don't want you as our neighbour

Growing Grain for Gluttons

Albanese in costume

Albanese + Watt = Keep the Sheep
Live X + Processing = Ewes x Rams
Labour + Labor = Live x Votes
Labour = Live X = Votes
Labour x Animal Activists = Livestock Farmers
Processing x Live X = Processing x Jobs
Processing = Live X = Farmers = Jobs
Processing = Live X = 0



Terra nullius, aqua nullius, farming nullius

"Don't you love the smell of burning jarrah in the morning?"

The blind spot of animal activism: Why targeting Australia misses the bigger picture

Nothing to fear – It's just a statement

How green are the Greens?
Will this Senator one day save live exports?

How South32 is worshipping false gods

Closing the gap in connectivity

PETA seeks perfection at the cost of protection

Make our farmers great again

Canberra is a very strange place

What exactly does the Minister for food do?

FREE, FREE AT LAST – National Statement on First Nations in Agriculture

Yes Minister – there are no cuts in your budget

From Paddock to Plate to Purgatory: Why Jim

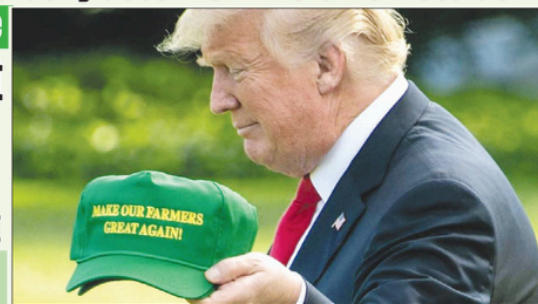
Aboriginal farming

Chalmers' Future Fund Should Keep the Sheep

systems – will not save

Is 2025 the year the Millennial males wake up? us from the next drought

The farm rubbish tip is in the sights of the EPA





Article: The West 15 February 2024

Liz Jackson and Trevor Whittington

UNREASONABLE FARMING REGULATION WILL DRIVE UP FOOD PRICES

No one yet has the answers on why food prices are so high while farms are not seeing the types of returns that are usual during these market conditions.. Credit: Denys Kurbatov - stock.adobe.com.

Across the western world, there is a growing backlash against governments from farmers concerned they are bearing the brunt of emissions targets and other policies they believe to be unachievable.

Though Australian farmers have not reacted as aggressively as their European counterparts, who have hit the streets in their tractors, our government policies related to agricultural production are increasing the costs and complexity of farming which will inevitably lead to higher food prices at the supermarket.

The cumulative impact of governments lifting the regulatory bar on farmers is impacting their ability to efficiently produce enough food to service growing Australian and global populations. Independent research by the Federal Government's own agricultural economics research organisation ABARES from 2023 shows Australia is one of the world's most sustainable agricultural producers, so we know we are already doing a good job.

The global farming industry has a long track record of producing more agricultural output from less inputs to meet growing population demands – notwithstanding Australian farmers produce increasing quantities of food on the most depleted soils on earth.

Farmers accept they are expected to continuously improve their environmental and social outcomes. But when governments begin pushing the bar too high and too fast, farmers cannot keep up with the required pace of change.

As a result, food production begins to suffer and food prices rise.

One case in point is the push to remove agricultural chemicals such as glyphosate in weed management.



Sixteen countries, including seven in Europe, have recently banned glyphosate despite overwhelming evidence the chemical is safe when used correctly.

Without glyphosate, farmers are forced to switch to other chemicals, many of which have known negative health and environmental impacts.

Sri Lanka recently banned all agricultural chemicals and synthetic fertilisers to make the country organic overnight, which led to food production collapsing in half and the population's poorest people lacking access to nutritious food.

A similar risk exists should governments impose net zero targets on their farmers without the energy and systems to replace the current global agricultural system which can comfortably feed 10 billion people.

Given 26 per cent of global emissions are linked to food production and 31 per cent of these are livestock emissions, achieving global carbon neutrality will inevitably impact the cost of meat production, which means higher prices for all.

As the price of carbon continues to rise ahead of 2030 and 2050 targets, the world's biggest carbon emitters will seek out farmland as a sink for their emissions – land that will be planted with trees, not crops.

This is an example of a Federal policy which is unreasonably detrimental to agricultural productivity and will flow on to consumers.

Other government attempts to solve one problem while creating another and impacting the cost of food by adding to production costs include the water buy-back scheme in the Murray-Darling Basin, the loss of the agricultural visa and changes to the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme which makes it harder to find seasonal workers.

Take the chemicals, fertiliser, animals, labour, land and water out of the equation and there is not much left to grow and sell food at the prices consumers have enjoyed since the early 2010s, when food price inflation was at an all-time low of -3.2 per cent.

The sale of food in Australia is currently under scrutiny with two national-level inquiries taking place to keep supermarkets honest: the Select Committee on Supermarket Prices announced in December and ACCC inquiry into supermarket prices announced in January.

No one yet has the answers on why food prices are so high while farms are not seeing the types of returns that are usual during these market conditions.

It is expected these inquiries will shed some light on the problem. In the meantime, the global market for food continues with business-as-usual with increasing domestic and international populations not only demanding more food, but higher quality produce with greater variety than ever before – all at a lower price.

Liz Jackson is an Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management and Logistics at Curtin University. Trevor Whittington is the chief executive of the WAFarmers' Federation.





Membership & Events

Julie Lloyd and Melanie Tolich

WAFarmers membership numbers held steady in 2024 with a pleasing membership retention rate of 98%. In 2024, we welcomed 24 new farm businesses and approximately 100 new 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.

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.

WAFarmers board members, staff and members were part of the 'Keep the Sheep' convoy to Muchea in May and subsequently attended the House Standing Committee on Agriculture's inquiry into the Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024 at Muresk in June where John Hassell and Steve McGuire had an opportunity to address the committee. In September, members travelled to Canberra to be part of the National Ag Rally.

The increase in membership revenue assists WAFarmers to contribute to the national peak body for farm advocacy, the National Farmers Federation (NFF). 2024 has been a landmark year for Australian agriculture. The NFF, with the backing of WAFarmers, has tackled significant policy hurdles like environmental reforms and the live sheep trade ban to standing up against union access to farms and making sure farmers can retain access to overseas workers. Despite these challenges, NFF celebrated some significant wins in relation to stronger competition and merger laws, greater engagement on trade and sustainability, headway on Right to Repair for agricultural machinery, stopping the Super Tax from becoming law and making sure farmers don't get slugged with the new biosecurity tax.

As was the case in 2023, WAFarmers Executive in 2024 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.

Again in 2024, the media proved a useful tool for attracting and retaining membership.

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. Engagement across numerous age and gender demographics is a challenge and requires the right balance to ensure that inclusivity is demonstrated.

As WAFarmers embraces the changing habits of its membership base, the WAFarmers membership portal, which is accessed through the WAFarmers website, went live in October. Members can now easily login, update and pay their membership directly online and potential members can join and pay immediately, completely digitalising and streamlining the membership renewal and application process.

Under the guidance of the WAFarmers Board, Management continues to modernise the organisation, as work continued through 2024 to develop a new streamlined version of the constitution for the organisation. The process has faced some delays as advocacy work on a myriad of legislation took 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 2025 for comment.

We 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 2024 season was productive for you as we now look forward to a successful 2025 farming season.



Presentation by Simon Quilty, Global AgriTrends Down Under at the WAFarmers Annual Conference

EVENTS

The WAFarmers AGM's and Annual Conference was held on 21 June at the Westin attracting an audience of over 150, consisting of members, non-members and industry stakeholders. Hon David Littleproud MP opened the conference, and the event showcased a great array a speaker 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 "Beefing up for the Future" which discussed how global meat and livestock trade flows are set to change in the future and is Australia ready for capitalise on this. Other topics presented were sustainability on farm, policy settings for agricultural chemicals and challenges of creating and developing new markets.

We received positive feedback on the event, venue and the speakers. The WAFarmers Board have made the decision to hold the WAFarmers Conference every two years and the AGM's annually in accordance with the WAFarmers constitution.

Entertainment at the Gala Dinner and Awards was provided by Monty Cotton and his crew. The keynote dinner speaker was Julia Jones, a trailblazer in navigating tomorrow's uncertainty.

The 2024 award recipients were:

- Mark Harvey-Sutton, Industry Service Award for his work and dedication to our industry.
- Mandy Matthews, Industry Service Award for her tireless and fearless support of live export through social media.



Presentation by Colin Bettles, Grain Producers Australia Chief Executive Officer at WAFarmers Annual Conference

Membership and Events cont.

Julie Lloyd and Melanie Tolich

As you look to your farm calendars for 2025, put in a save the date for Friday 21 March 2025 the WAFarmers AGM's being held at QT Perth.

This event and dinner will be free for members to attend, and we look forward to welcoming you all on the day.



John Hassell and Mark Harvey-Sutton



John Hassell and Mandy Matthews



Trevor Whittington, Melanie Tolich and Hon David Littleproud MP at Dowerin Field Days

WAFarmers sponsored the AgZero2030 Forum; The Power Shift: Transitioning Farm Communities to Renewables also in June. This well-attended event was a one-day forum for farmers, government officials, industry bodies and renewable energy system providers to hear from thought leaders about the challenges and opportunities facing rural and regional towns, industry and farming businesses as they transition to renewable power generation and energy systems.

The WAFarmers Dairy Section AGM and Conference was held at the Abbey Beach Resort on Thursday 1 August. This was the final large event for WAFarmers for 2024, which again had a great turnout.

The Conference was opened by Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food and other speakers included John Penry from Dairy Australia, Johnny Machon and Danny Roberts from DPIRD, Stephen Sheridan from Australian Dairy Farmers, Mike Wilson from NEDAP and Salman Ghazali from FGV Holdings Berhad.

The theme for the Conference was the “Future of Advocacy, Technology and Digital Dairying” and the topics covered were virtual fencing and facial recognition, emissions research and cattle monitoring technology. The prestigious Milk Bottle Award was awarded to Rod Brasher for his involvement in setting up the company FarmWest who specialise in herd improvement.

Field Days again featured in the WAFarmers events calendar during 2024. WAFarmers had trade stand activations at both Wagin Woolorama and Dowerin Field Days and had a presence at the Newdegate Field Days with staff being in attendance and engaging with farmers and industry participants. WAFarmers have decided not to participate in trade stand displays at any of the field days in 2025.

However, in an effort to improve and effectively engage with current and potential members, we will organise two roadshows: one south in February and the other north in July. The roadshow events will include zone information sessions and finish with a networking dinner. Once again, these events will be free for members to attend, so watch your emails for details of when WAFarmers is in your region.

The WAFarmers team, sponsors and industry people spent National AgDay in the Swan Valley. The group visited Lamont Wines and the House of Honey for some tastings and Oscar's in the Valley for a gin blending class. The day finished with spit lamb and salad and magnificent Croatian hospitality at Baba and Didas.

In closing for 2024, WAFarmers cannot hold or participate in any events without the support of our corporate partners. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for their ongoing support in helping to run these member events that are a great avenue for information on factors affecting farm profitability but additionally provide the opportunities for networking and engagement.

We hope to see you at our events in 2025!

AGCONNECTWA UPDATE AND EVENTS
AgConnectWA held their annual forum in May. The event was held at Muresk with lots of students and young people in Ag in attendance. The event featured a big line up of speakers including Marion Lewis from Livestock Collective, Elizabeth Owens from Milne Feeds, Simon Foley from Agworld, Elizabeth Brennan from agdots, Laura Butler from Women in Farming and Julianne Hill from Grain Growers Australia.

AgConnectWA also put on a great fundraising event for the “Keep the Sheep” campaign in August 2024, at Chapel Farm in the Swan Valley. The event was a great success, raising well over \$30,000 for the campaign and attracted overwhelming support from both city and agriculturally based attendees. WAFarmers congratulate the AgConnectWA committee on an incredible effort.

In late 2024, the committee of AgConnectWA, seeking independence and new direction, established a new organisation called AgVocateWA. Each generation brings fresh approaches and priorities, reflecting the changing nature of the industry, so it was no surprise when they made the decision to establish a new, independent entity, which marks an exciting new chapter for them. WAFarmers wish the committee every success in building a strong, well-resourced organisation with a thriving membership base.

National Farmers Federation Report

John Hassell

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

Seven Committees and one Taskforce are the 'engine room' of this process facilitating evidence-based, democratic policy formation driven by farmers.

The committees are:

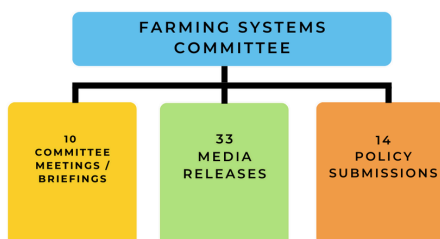
- Economic Policy and Farm Business Committee
- Farming Systems Committee
- Sustainable Development and Climate Change Committee
- Telecommunications and Social Policy Committee
- Trade Committee
- Water Committee
- Workforce Committee

The Farming Systems Committee (FSC) is focussed on issues that relate directly to farm management including:

- biosecurity;
- animal welfare;
- Agvet chemical regulation;
- research and development; and
- social licence.

In 2024 the FSC engagement included:

- 10 committee meetings/briefings;
- 14 policy submissions; and
- 33 media releases.



POLICY AREAS

Key policy areas and the percentage of time that the FSC spent working in each area is highlighted below.

Biosecurity (30%)

- Biosecurity Protection Levy (BPL)
- National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation
- Decade of Biosecurity
- Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity
- Established pests and weeds
- Disease-specific advocacy

Animal Welfare (20%)

- Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS)
- Live Animal Exports
- Standards and Guidelines
- Animal Sentience
- Other

AgVet Chem reform, technology access and stewardship (20%)

- Review of the AgVet Chemical Regulatory System
- Paraquat and diquat chemical reviews
- AgVet Chem/Medicines best practice and stewardship promotion
- Minor use access program
- Anti-microbial stewardship

Innovation (15%)

- Emerging National Rural Issues (ENRI) Program
- AgriFutures Representative Organisation responsibilities
- Levy legislation reform

Other & Administration (15%)

INFLUENCE AND IMPACT

NFF celebrated some significant wins in 2024, and also faced some significant challenges. Some of the policy areas that FSC had direct involvement in are listed below.

Biosecurity Protection Levy (BPL)

The NFF led Scrap the Tax campaign to oppose the BPL. United industry efforts successfully blocked the BPL legislation (for now), including securing support for our position from the senate crossbench and Greens.

Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel

Born from industry advocacy on the BPL issues and lack of transparency.

National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan

NFF and FSC input saw stronger and more ambitious actions on sustainable funding particularly. In alignment with the Plan, DAFF released new public reporting on biosecurity expenditure.

Australian Animal Welfare Strategy

NFF and industry input to AAWS consultation was reflected in the National Statement. The National Statement and AAWS vision reflect NFF policy, supporting 'the development and adoption of animal welfare practices and standards that are underpinned by science and evidence.' Several objectives also now align with NFF policy on animal welfare.

Phase-out of live sheep exports by sea

Supported Keep the Sheep campaign efforts, increasing public awareness of the issue including through attending Canberra delegation, securing senate crossbench meetings, and supporting the National Agriculture Rally in Canberra.

IGAB review

Committee input to IGAB review was well received by Independent Reviewer, Dr Michele Allan.

APVMA chemical reviews

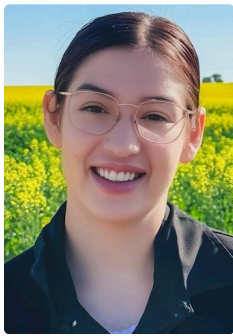
Strong industry engagement in significant chemical reviews, particularly paraquat and diquat. The NFF met regularly with APVMA, DAFF and the Minister's office to advocate the importance of critical inputs and due process.

APVMA reform

Informed the Australian Government's Detailed Response to APVMA reviews, and in ongoing talks to prioritise reforms which will improve access to new products and increase certainty and consistency.

THE 14 SUBMISSIONS

- 29 January - Senate Inquiry into Red Imported Fire Ants in Australia
- 10 April - RRAT Senate Inquiry into the Biosecurity Levy legislation
- 23 April - Modernising Agricultural Levies Legislation: Consultation on draft regulations, rules and supporting materials
- 12 June - Inquiry into Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024
- 18 July - Update on Australian Animal Welfare Strategy
- 26 August - National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan consultation
- 9 September - Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Proposal P1055: Definitions for gene technology and new breeding techniques
- 17 September - Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity Review
- 20 September - NSW Parliament Inquiry into the impact of the phase-out of live sheep exports on NSW
- 15 October - APVMA Draft Guidelines for determining minor use
- 24 October - APVMA Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) 2025-26
- 24 October - Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024
- 7 November - Paraquat and diquat proposed regulatory decisions
- 11 November - Proposed amendments to the Gene Technology Act



Future Leaders

Elyssa Giedraitis

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Every year the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) run their National Agricultural Leadership Program, a leadership and capacity development program for Australian agriculture.

Through three components - the advocacy retreat, the policy project and a mentoring program, participants are provided with targeted activities and unique experiences in leadership, advocacy and policy development.

In August 2024 I was lucky enough to have my place in the competitive program sponsored by WAFarmers, something I am incredibly grateful for.

The program began in Canberra for the advocacy retreat. Day one was held at NFF Leaders Summit where I was surrounded by other incredible leaders, advocates and agricultural industry identities while hearing from professionals and experts on topics aligned with the five pillars of the Roadmap to 2030.

Day two in Canberra was mostly spend 'up the hill' at Parliament House where we met with multiple politicians and staffers including Hon David Littleproud MP, Senator Pauline Hanson and Hon Kristy McBain MP, as well as a quick peek at Question Time.

Throughout day two and during day three, we also met with industry professionals such as Charlie Thomas, Jo Eady and Tony Mahar, learning different aspects of the agricultural industry and public policy.

The program continued until October from home. Mentoring sessions with our mentors, mine being Robert Hardie, Executive Manager of health and agriculture at NBN, and Zoom sessions with the team at NFF while working on our policy projects to submit and present at graduation.

My final policy project focused on gender equality in agriculture leadership roles, highlighting the need for more female representation in executive roles in agriculture.

I would like to express my gratitude to WAFarmers for their sponsorship and support throughout the program, I have come away with knowledge and skills that I will be able to use in my agricultural advocacy and marketing career for years to come.



AGRICULTURE AMBASSADOR SCHOLARSHIP

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 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 2024 scholarships were:

- Ryan Ward: WA College of Agriculture - Cunderdin
- Jacinta Cooper: WA College of Agriculture - Denmark
- Chelsea Bario - WA College of Agriculture - Harvey

Congratulations to our 2024 winners!



Jacinta Cooper and Principal Wayne Austin
WA College of Agriculture - Denmark



Chelsea Bario and Michael Partridge
WA College of Agriculture - Harvey



Ryan Ward
WAFarmers Scholarship





Financial Report

Melanie Tolich

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Executive Summary

The 2024 Financial Statements have been audited with WAFarmers recording an operating surplus of **\$71,291** for the year ended 31 December 2024. WAFarmers Board are pleased to record another year of surplus assisting to build cash reserves and total equity in the organisation to **\$1.44m** placing us in a very sound financial position.

Total revenue for FY24 was **\$1.48m** declining by \$25k on FY23 total revenue. The major contributor for the decline in revenue was recognised by reduced income from WAFarmersFirst Royalties payable on product, as a result of supermarket deletion of the eggs product and reduced sales of the milk product.

Total expenditure for FY24 was **\$1.4m** increased from \$1.3m in FY22. The major attributor of increased expense was within Financial Services due to the recognition of impairment loss on the land and buildings **\$54,370** on the Brodie Hall property, with a valuation completed every three years. Another contributor to the increase in expenditure related to Personnel with increases in staff long service leave entitlements.

WAFarmers submitted an operational budget for FY24 that budgeted for **\$10k** surplus, pleasingly due to sound financial management the organisation returned a surplus of \$71k, **\$60k** over budget, while still delivering valued service to our members.

WAFarmers total membership remained steady in FY24 with total membership revenue **\$1.09m** which was reflective of membership revenue in FY23. This is a commendable result and is testament to the advocacy efforts of the organisation in driving relevance to our loyal membership base. Although pleasing, the Board recognises the risk to the organisation of having 74% of the organisational revenue stream derived from voluntary membership.

The Board continues to seek diversified income streams to alleviate this risk.

Attracting corporate farm membership remained 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. In early 2025 WAFarmers will host its first Corporate Farms dinner event to continue to build the membership relationship with the Corporate Farming sector.

WAFarmers Board and Management is confident moving into FY25 that we can continue to build on the pleasing financial results from the past six years while further cementing WAFarmers' position as Western Australia's peak, broadacre advocacy group.

Income Reporting 2024 – Summary Notes

Income for the year decreased by 1% from \$1.5m in FY23 to \$1.48m in FY24. The notable contributor to the decrease in revenue was due to the royalties being paid on the WAFarmersFirst products decreasing by 50% from **\$152K to \$76k**. The future of the WAFarmersFirst brand is unclear with the eggs products already ceasing production and decreased volumes of milk processing due to reduced sales and supermarket appetite for the product.

All other areas of revenue performed on par or better than in financial year 2023.

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 organisation's sound financial position.

Despite the tight financial management, the cost-of-living crisis has also been felt by the organisation with expenses increasing in FY24 by 8% to \$1.4m from \$1.3m in FY23 however was still under budget by \$47k.

The highest savings against budget were realised on Commodity Expenses, Personnel Expenses and 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.

Financial Services resulted in being \$40k over budget. This was attributed to the recognition of the Impairment loss on land buildings. As part of our financial governance a valuation is conducted on the building asset every three years with any loss or gain recognised through the organisations profit and loss statement. As a result of the valuation a loss against the land and buildings of \$54,370 was recognised in FY24 for the three years since purchase in 2021.

Balance Sheet and Cash Position

The Board and Management in FY24 strategically focused on building cash reserves and equity. To this end, we note:

- Total cash held by the organisation is \$1,458,675 with \$276,404 of these funds being restricted to specific projects and activities.
- Members' funds increased to \$1,440,291 between December 2023 and December 2024 which includes and auditing reallocation of provision liabilities to retained equity surplus (see Table 1 below).
- Total assets increased by \$177,369 by 31 December 2024, to \$2,505,551.
- The total liabilities of WAFarmers increased by \$106,078 over the reporting year to \$1,065,260.

In summary, FY24 has been a successful year for WAFarmers financially, building on the previous surplus in FY23. The Board, the CEO and staff are continually committed to ensuring the long-term financial strength of your organisation.

The Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc) Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Retained surpluses	Building maintenance reserve	Dairy milk fund reserve	Future advocacy reserve	Asset replacement reserve	Total Equity
Balance at 1 January 2023	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
Surplus for the year	71,291	-	-	-	-	71,291
Transfer to/from	20,047	14,324	34,371	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2024	1,213,973	41,124	16,011	169,186	-	1,440,294



Income and Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2024	2023
	Actual	Budget	Actual
	\$	\$	\$
INCOME			
Members subscriptions	1,094,322	1,121,192	1,098,428
WAFarmers First Royalties	76,147	84,800	152,208
Sponsorship/Events	141,457	154,582	124,181
AgConnectWA	59,404	30,000	37,572
Interest	15,639	14,400	14,691
Commodity Income	47,086	27,000	31,678
Rental Income	21,151	26,800	27,120
Sundry Income	24,722	7,000	19,454
Invest Fund Trust	0	0	0
TOTAL INCOME	1,479,928	1,465,774	1,505,332
LESS EXPENDITURE			
Affiliation Fees			
National Farmers	44,000	44,000	44,000
Cattle Council	25,000	25,000	25,000
Sheepmeat Council	13,682	15,000	13,682
Grains Expense Account	40,000	40,000	19,333
WoolProducers	25,000	25,000	25,000
Australian Dairy Farmers	22,272	23,000	22,071
Aust Live Export Council	1,685	0	0
Sub Total	171,639	172,000	149,086
General Section	3,207	26,000	31,835
Board Expenses	11,436	28,000	3,335
President's Allowance	47,874	52,000	44,591
President's Expense	18,496	20,000	26,321
President Election	0	0	0
Motor Vehicle Expense	8,840	10,000	10,021
Events Expense	78,501	78,225	65,841
AgConnectWA Expense	60,489	30,000	33,325
WAFarmersFirst Expenses	7,522	20,200	22,210
Dairy Industry Milk Trust	38,537	0	58,360
Commodity Expenses	48,594	103,850	52,368
Commodity Rep Allowances	11,000	11,000	11,000
Zone Expenses	5,528	5,000	2,363
Investment Fund Expense	0	0	0
Sub Total	340,024	384,275	361,570
TOTAL EXEC EXPENSES	511,663	556,275	510,656

	2024	2024	2023
	Actual	Budget	Actual
	\$	\$	\$
COMMUNICATIONS			
Newsletter Ag E News	2,781	2,520	2,448
Farm Weekly/Countryman	23,107	23,000	21,920
Media Sundry	0	10,000	0
Sub Total	25,888	35,520	24,368
MARKETING & PROMOTION			
Membership Activity	4,832	11,500	12,123
Marketing Promotion	6,661	15,000	6,828
Sponsorship/Awards	14,667	5,000	5,485
Field Days & Shows	25,707	24,000	24,659
Website Development	4,052	1,000	836
Membership platform	9,428	6,000	12,450
Hosting Associated Costs	1,539	1,500	697
Sub Total	66,886	64,000	63,078
PERSONNEL			
Salaries & Wages	404,404	399,133	394,545
Contract Services/Expenses	43,785	43,500	44,127
Superannuation	45,501	44,794	40,020
Consultants	14,000	35,000	0
Zone Coordinators Wages	4,716	5,004	4,342
Zone Coordinators Expenses	35	1,000	35
Payroll Tax	0	0	0
Fringe Benefits Tax	11,212	5,000	2,820
Recruitment & Training	8,002	11,000	1,414
Workers Compensation	3,471	3,793	3,176
Staff Travel & Attendance	34,631	32,000	27,649
Sub Total	569,757	580,224	518,128
OFFICE SERVICES			
Brodie Hall Maintenance Fund	0	28,400	0
Strata and Services Office	35,423	21,184	35,288
Electricity	5,114	6,540	5,907
Office Operating Expenses	22,604	29,520	29,208
Repairs & Maintenance	3,098	3,000	2,565
General Expenses	17,666	20,480	17,248
Minor Assets	246	4,000	3,580
Periodicals & Publications	12,919	10,000	12,032
Sub Total	97,070	123,124	105,828
FINANCIAL SERVICES			
Bank Fees & Stamp Duty	4,836	8,000	5,821
Interest Payable TH Peterson Loan	10,350	8,800	8,800
Insurance	13,290	13,000	12,448
Audit Fees	14,715	13,000	12,677
Accounting Fees	5,017	5,000	3,900
Legal Expenses	0	5,000	1,800
Bad Debt exp	770	0	0
Depreciation	34,025	43,680	36,682
Impairment loss on land & bulding	54,370		
Sub Total	137,373	96,480	82,128
TOTAL ADMIN. EXPENSES	896,974	899,348	793,530
TOTAL EXEC EXPENSES	511,663	556,275	510,656
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,408,637	1,455,623	1,304,186
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	71,291	10,151	201,146

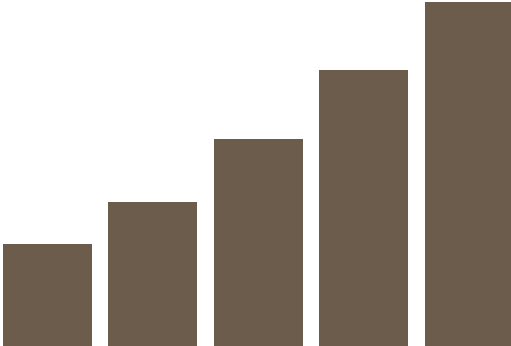


Balance Sheet

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	DEC 2024	DEC 2023
Bank Accounts		
Bank - Operating Account	390,358	241,190
Westpac Cash Reserve	768,538	624,413
Petty Cash	250	250
Zone Bank Accounts	115,476	115,457
AgConnectWA Account	23,125	23,320
Total Bank Funds - Unrestricted	1,297,747	1,004,630
Restricted Funds		
Donations Account	28,608	28,608
WAFF Invest Fund	128,393	128,393
Fundraising live Export	3,927	13,927
Total Restricted Funds	160,928	170,928
Other Current Assets		
Accounts Receivable	31,824	40,394
Prepayments	58,164	64,395
Sundry Debtors	18,580	25,321
Total Other Current Assets	108,568	130,110
Total Current Assets	1,567,243	1,305,668
Non-Current Assets		
Property - Brodie Hall Drive Bentley	840,000	899,568
Furniture & Fittings	13,261	14,477
Motor Vehicles	61,374	81,747
Plant & Machinery	11,971	14,936
Telephone System	52	66
Computer Hardware	7,392	7,424
Computer - Software	198	236
Investment - Westralian Farmers	2,716	2,716
Investment - Trust Fund WAFF	10	10
Investment - Farmwide	1,334	1,334
Total Non-Current Assets	938,308	1,022,514
Total Assets	2,505,551	2,328,182

	DEC 2024	DEC 2023
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	19,382	14,204
Accruals	27,200	22,275
Payroll Liabilities		
Payroll Liabilities-Group Tax/Super	19,531	14,055
Payroll Provisions		
Provision for Holiday Pay	68,909	62,591
Prov for Employee Long Service Leave	54,907	47,730
Corporate Cards	3,303	8,815
Donations Payable		
Fundraising Account Prov	2,421	12,421
Building Fund	24,303	26,083
WAFarmersFirst Provisions		
Provision for Dairy Projects	0	0
Other Current Liabilities		
Provision Asset Replacement	0	0
WAHDRG Bees Project	0	3,200
Food Alliance Projects	2,509	2,509
Dairy Farmers Project Events	304	304
Conversion & Cleaning	45	45
GST Liabilities	19539	6225
Total Current Liabilities	242,353	220,457
Non-Current Liabilities		
TH Peterson Trust Loan	440,000	440,000
Subs Received in Advance	359,157	270,100
Other Income in Advance	23,750	28,625
Total Non Current Liabilities	822,907	738,725
Total Liabilities	1,065,260	959,182
NET ASSETS	1,440,291	1,369,000
EQUITY		
Current Surplus	71,291	201,144
Retained Earnings	1,142,679	921,488
Building Asset Maintenance Reserve	41,124	26,800
Future Advocacy Reserves	169,186	169,186
Dairy Milk Fund Reserves	16,011	50,382
TOTAL EQUITY	1,440,291	1,369,000





Corporate Sponsors



WAFarmers Supporters

