

3 April 2008

Dear Members,

This newsletter is emailed and faxed to all financial members of the Association within Region 7.

Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss any of the following or would like something included in a future edition.

Frances Vella, Mobile: 0428 228 818 or Email vellaf@nswfarmers.org.au

WHAT'S ON?

- 8 April – Maitland Town Hall, Public Information Session on the Draft Hunter Water Sharing Plan, 10am-11.30am Dept of Water & Energy PH: CMA 4930 1030
- 8 April – Singleton Civic Centre, Public Information Session on the Draft Hunter Water Sharing Plan, 6pm-7.30pm Dept of Water & Energy PH: CMA 4930 1030
- 9 April – Morisset Memorial Hall, Public Information Session on the Draft Hunter Water Sharing Plan, 10am-11.30am Dept of Water & Energy PH: CMA 4930 1030
- 9 April – Clarence Town School of Arts, Public Information Session on the Draft Hunter Water Sharing Plan, 6pm-7.30pm Dept of Water & Energy PH: CMA 4930 1030
- 10 April – Maroota, Chemical Card Training NSW Farmers Association Training PH: 6884 8822
- 17 April – Mangrove Mountain Memorial Club, Region 7 Convention 10am-4pm with registration commencing at 9.00am
PH: Ted Byers 9826 1371
- 28 April - Online Chemical Card online refresher training, NSW Farmers Association Training, 9am-12pm PH: 6884 8822
- 28 April – Richmond Club, Cumberland Branch and District Council AGM, start 7pm PH: Ted Byers 9826 1371
- 28 April – Richmond Club, Hunter/Hawkesbury Horticultural District Council AGM, start 8pm PH: Glenn Fahey 0408 426 061
- 29 April – Mangrove Mountain Memorial Club, Central Coast Horticulture Branch AGM, 7pm start PH: Michael Champion 4374 1036
- 2 May – Richmond UWS Campus, Pioneer Room (K28), Lettuce IPM NSW Workshop 2-4pm. PH: DPI's Katina Lindhout 024348 1905
- 17 May – Yeoval Memorial Hall, Junior Farmer and Rural Youth Reunion, 6 for 7pm. PH: Audrey Tremain 6887 8338
- 20 May - Online Chemical Card online refresher training, NSW Farmers Association Training, 9am-12pm PH: 6884 8822
- 11 June - Online Chemical Card online refresher training, NSW Farmers Association Training, 1pm-4pm PH: 6884 8822
- 30 June - Online Chemical Card online refresher training, NSW Farmers Association Training, 1pm-4pm PH: 6884 8822
- 26 July - Darling Harbour, NSW Horticultural Industries Dinner 2008. To purchase a ticket or to sponsor the event please contact the Event Organiser, Kirsty John (0438 602 763). For more information please contact Frances Vella (0428 228 818), Leigh James (0412 429 418), Tally Matthews (0438 644 753) or Alison Anderson (0409 383 003)
- 26 July, Dural Country Club, What's New for Flower Growers Seminar PH DPI's Bettina Gollnow 4640 6437.

ISSUES UPDATE

Workers Compensation

The NSW Farmers' Industrial Association welcomes recent changes to the Workers Compensation Scheme that have been announced by the NSW Government, as they reduce the burden of workers compensation insurance for many small farmers. Under the amendments, from 30 June 2008, only employers whose annual wages declared for workers' compensation are greater than \$7,500 will be required to take out an insurance policy. Also announced was the reduction of the requirement to keep records for the purposes of workers' compensation from seven years to five.

For more information, contact our Industrial Relations team via the Member Service Centre on **1300 794 000**.

Industrial Update

The Federal Government's *Workplace Relations Amendment (Transition to Forward with Fairness) Act 2008* (the 'Act') received proclamation by the His Excellency, the Governor General on 27 March 2008 and commenced at midnight, 28 March 2008. In particular the amendments it introduces to the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*:

- removes the ability to make Australian Workplace Agreements;
- introduces Individual Transitional Employment Agreements that may be made in limited circumstances;
- replaces the Fairness Test with the No Disadvantage Test for all agreements; and
- commences the process towards the Federal Government pre-election promise of a "Modern Award System" which is the key focus of the Federal Government's 'Forward with Fairness Industrial Relations Policy'.

A briefing note outlining the provisions of the Act is being forwarded to all members of the Industrial Association. If you are not already a member of the Industrial Association and would like to become a member, please contact Frances Vella.

Occupational Health & Safety ('OHS') Reform

At the recent meeting of the Council of Australian Governments ('COAG'), the Federal Government as well as the State and Territory Governments have agreed to enter an Intergovernmental Agreement by May 2008 to harmonise occupational health and safety laws. COAG further agreed that Governments should aspire to reduce the five-year implementation timeframe for OHS, and that it would consider the scope for a reduced implementation timetable at its meeting in July. The Federal and State Governments also agreed model legislation will be developed and submitted to the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council by September 2009. The COAG Communiqué can be viewed online:

<http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/260308/index.htm>

DECC Compliance Campaign

NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) is continuing its compliance campaign. Chemical user accreditation/training, record keeping and spray drift are the focus of this campaign.

Import Risk Analysis – Apples Biosecurity Australia has advised commencement of an Import Risk Analysis for Apple Fruit from the Peoples Republic of China, and another from USA. For further information, contact Darral Ashton PH: Phone: 02 6949 1654

Visa Entitlement Verification

Growers convicted under the employer sanctions laws for employing illegal workers face fines of up to \$13 200 or two years' imprisonment per illegal worker. Companies face fines of up to \$66 000 per illegal worker. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) service allows employers to provide relevant identification details of prospective employees with their consent to quickly confirm that they are eligible to work in Australia. Growers can register for VEVO at www.immi.gov.au/evo. Once registered, growers can check a visa holder's work entitlements at any time free of charge. Growers can also use DIAC's toll-free faxback service to check visa holders' work

entitlements. For more information about the employer sanctions legislation, VEVO or the faxback service, call DIAC's employers' immigration hotline on 1800 040 070 from 8.30am-4.30pm Monday to Friday. Further Information is also available at www.immi.gov.au/employer-obligations

Policy Update

For the latest Policy Update Newsletter, please head to the website www.nswfarmers.org.au/media_centre and follow the links. If you would like further information on any of the issues listed please contact me. The information on our office bearers and Advisory Committees for 2007/08 is also listed on the website.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

The Association is offering practical, relevant training specifically designed for farmers. Workshops currently available include Succession Planning, Farm Safety Management, Understanding Farm Financial Statements, First Aid and Chemical Card™. If you would like a workshop in your area, please contact Kathy Sims or Robyn Diamond on **(02) 6884 8822** to register your interest. Please note that workshops require a minimum of 10 participants.

OF INTEREST

WorkCover - Power Take Off Guarding Rebates, \$ for \$ rebate subsidy for 100% of the price, up to the value of \$200, for PTO guarding on tractors and equipment. For a rebate form, WorkCover PH: 1800 300 377 or 13 10 50.

WorkCover - Silo Safety Improvement Rebates, for improvements to Silos and field bins to reduce the need to climb them and to provide safer access and egress. \$ for \$ rebate subsidy (excluding GST), up to \$750. One rebate per farm. For a rebate form, Workcover Ph: 1800 300 377 or 13 10 50.

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) - Workplace Modifications Scheme provides assistance to employers and workers with disabilities by removing barriers to employment. Claims that amount to less than \$10,000 from DEWR-funded employment assistance providers may no longer need a workplace assessment. Quotes won't be required for items under \$2,500. Items between \$2,500-\$5,000 will require 1 quote. Items over \$5,000 will require 3 quotes. One application form. DEWR PH: 1800 814 838.

Rainwater Tank Rebate is available for the installation of any new rainwater storage system for residential properties in NSW. Households not connected to the mains supply are eligible for a rebate for the purchase of the tank only. The tank(s) must have a minimum 2000-litre capacity and be purchased in full and installed between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2009. The rebate of up to \$1500 is based on the size of the tank and whether the rainwater is plumbed into your toilet or washing machine. Customers of all other NSW water utilities outside Sydney Water, apply through the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW (DECC). Visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/reabtes/index.htm or contact DECC on 1300 361 967.

David Green, Rural Services Officer, Centrelink, has an out-posting with Horticulture Australia Council and can be contacted (02) 6273 8115 every Tuesday & Thursday with an answering machine available to take calls on the days that he is not in the office. In addition, **Chris Styles, Rural Services Officer with Centrelink is based in our Head Office on Tues & Wed**, and can be contacted on 82511 812. Please feel free to contact David or Chris to discuss Centrelink associated issues. Centrelink has a range of payments and services specifically for rural people and it is important that people don't self assess eligibility. David also has access to a network of other government agencies as well as non-government organisations to assist growers obtain support during these difficult times.

Hail netting assistance for fruit growers

The Special Conservation Scheme now includes hail netting, allowing individual fruit growers to apply for a concessional loan of up to \$150,000 through the Rural Assistance Authority to install hail netting.

Nuffield Australia Scholarships

Applications for the 2008 industry-sponsored scholarships, valued at \$25,000 each, are now open and close on 30 June 2008. Applications are available through the Nuffield Australia office on 02 6964 6600, enquiries@nuffield.com.au or on the website: www.nuffield.com.au

Termination of FarmBis program

The specific timelines regarding the conclusion of the program are as follows:

(Registration and approval of training courses will no longer be accepted)

- FarmBis subsidies are to remain available only to courses completed up to and including 29 February 2008; and
- Training providers and individuals will have until 14 March 2008 to lodge claims for a subsidy (note that claims lodged more than 30 days after course completion will not be accepted).
- The position of NSW FarmBis Networker which was undertaken by Gerard McEvelly concluded on 4 March.

At this stage DAFF are unable to confirm any replacement or similar program which will be introduced. The Association in conjunction with NFF will be pursuing this issue with the Federal Government.

Poultry Meat Manager, Peter Cashman, started with the Association on 25 February 2008. Peter will provide services specific to poultry meat growers, essentially:

1. Supporting the activities of grower representatives within processor groups, negotiating groups and Association branches
2. Identifying and coordinating resources and skills needed by processor groups, negotiating groups and branch representatives
3. Identifying and reporting on existing and emerging issues affecting poultry meat growers

The growers' payments for this position are still coming into the Association, however, those that have not yet contributed will be receiving a reminder invoice shortly. If you need to discuss this invoice, please contact Gary Ekert, Chairman of the Contract Poultry Group on 0428 689 656.

Minister's Awards for Excellence for Employers and Australian Apprentices

Applications are now open for the Minister's Awards for Excellence for Employers and Australian Apprentices. The 22 regional awards recognise employers who demonstrate commitment, innovation and outstanding achievement in training apprentices. Each regional winner will be awarded \$5,000 and the opportunity to attend the presentation dinner in September hosted by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, the Hon Julia Gillard MP.

http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/awards/AA_MinAwards_08_EmployerApplicationForm.pdf

Farmer of the Year Award and Young Farmer of the Year Award. \$10,000 prize for Farmer of the Year, and \$5,000 for Young Farmer of the Year Awards, plus other benefits to the winners' knowledge and business, and the capacity this title gives them to meet so many people in the industry. Go to www.nswfarmers.org.au for details.

ADF Young Dairy Farmer New Zealand Study Tour 2008 The two week tour is planned to enable participants to spend a day at the New Zealand National Agricultural Field Days held at the Mystery Creek Field Centre on 11-14 June 2008. Contact Australian Dairy Farmers 03 9642 8066.

DRUMMUSTER COLLECTION SITES AND TIMES

Bargo	Waste Management Centre	5 Jun , 1-3 pm	Bookings essential	4677 1156
Hawkesbury	Windsor Waste Management Facility	ongoing	Bookings essential	4572 5489
Hornsby	Arcadia Park, Arcadia	7 May	Bookings essential	9847 4858
Kiama	Minnamurra Waste Depot	1 st Monday every month	Bookings essential	4237 5148
Mangrove Mt	Rural Fire Service shed	17 May, 10-2	other times by appt	4374 1127
Sims Minto	79 Airds Rd	Last Friday of month	Bookings essential	9820 8500
VIP Penrith	182 Andrews Rd	ongoing	Bookings essential	4730 2800
Warragamba	Waste Management Centre	5 Jun 9-11 am	Bookings essential	4677 1156
Wyong	Buttonderry Waste Management Facility	27 May	Bookings essential	4350 5410

CHAIRPERSON & SECRETARIES' CORNER

1. Please advise the Member Service Centre if your Branch or District Council elects new office bearers, or if your branch merges with another branch - call 1300 794 000 for further details.
2. Pre-conference meetings need to be held prior to the last week of April, as the deadline for motions is 2 May. Please contact me when you have decided upon your Branch and District Council meeting dates.

ATTENTION: FRUIT & VEGIE GROWERS

The following valid permits for NSW have been issued by APVMA.

- PER9103** – Tilt & others (propiconazole) / Spinach (field) / suppression of Leaf spot (*Cercospora* spp)
Valid 4/01/08 to 30/06/11 APVMA require residue data to renew this permit.
- PER9918** – Switch (cyprodinil + fludioxonil) / Cucumber, capsicums (greenhouse) & lettuce (head - greenhouse) / *Botrytis cinerea* Valid 4/02/08 to 30/06/10 APVMA require efficacy and crop safety data to renew this permit.
- PER10091** – Acramite (bifenazate) / Snow peas & Sugar snap peas (greenhouse and field) / Mites
Valid 3/02/08 to 31/03/11 APVMA require residue data to renew this permit.
- PER10311** – Eco-oil (botanical oil) / Greenhouse and hydroponic capsicums, cucumber and lettuce / Greenhouse whitefly & Silverleaf whitefly. Valid 7/02/08 to 30/09/13
- PER10184** – Natrasoap (potassium salts) / capsicum, lettuce & cucumber (GH & hydro) / Greenhouse and Silverleaf whitefly. Valid 20/02/08 to 28/02/13
- PER9839** – Ambush (permethrin) / celery / Heliothis & Looper. Valid 20/02/08 to 31/03/13
- PER10273** – Talstar (bifenthrin) / sweet potato / Sweet potato weevil & Bean spider mite.
Valid 22/02/08 to 30/09/13
- PER10279** – abamectin / cucumber, zucchini & squash / Two-spotted mites. Valid 22/02/08 to 30/09/13
- PER10511** – Surflan (oryzalin) / garlic / broadleaf & grass weeds. Valid 18/03/08 to 31/03/13
- PER10265** – methidathion / peppers, ornamentals, eggplant & tomatoes / Western flower thrips.
Valid 18/03/08 to 30/09/12
- PER10335** – Petroleum oil / lettuce (greenhouse & hydroponics) / Leafhoppers, Green vegetable bug, Grey cluster bug, Rutherglen bug & Green mired. Valid 18/03/08 to 31/03/11. APVMA required crop safety data on leafy lettuce varieties.
- PER10427** – Regent (fipronil) / swede & turnips / Diamondback moth. Valid 24/01/08 to 31/01/10

Full details of the permits are available on the APVMA website, <http://www.apvma.gov.au/permits/permits.shtml>

MEMBER BENEFITS

2008 Membership Renewals Due

2008 membership renewals are currently being received by the Member Service Centre. Ensure you are getting the most out of your membership by utilising our business partners and sponsors, and our wide range of in-house services such as our Industrial Relations team. Take advantage of our member benefits and discounts to offset your membership fee such as:

- **AgCentral** – Special prices on farm chemicals, fertiliser and animal health products
- **Manchester Unity** – Corporate Rate
- **Prime Super** – Superannuation tailored to the rural industry
- **Westpac** – 20% discount on Beyond Survival Seminars; and free admission to other financial seminars
- **Mitsubishi Motors** – Members receive Mitsubishi's National Fleet Discount & \$500 worth of free genuine Mitsubishi accessories
- **Wesfarmers Feration Insurance (WFI)** – Farm & Business Insurance tailored to the rural industry. Personal service with traditional values
- **Tax Advice Service** – Free of charge personalised online tax advice service for personal and business taxation matters
- **Beaurepaires** – Large discounts to list prices including tyres & batteries (varies per product). Congratulations to Goodyear who was named one of the "100 Best Corporate Citizens" in the current issue of CRO (Corporate Responsibility Officer) magazine. Goodyear came in at No. 72, the first time the company made the list in nine years of ranking the top corporate citizens.
- **Regional Express (REX)** – Cheapest available airfare OR 20% off full economy fare
- **HE Silos** – 5% discount on all silos
- **Diamond Petroleum** – Discounts on bulk fuel purchases (35,000) litres
- **Maddison Safety** – 20% off Personal Protective Equipment and signs
- **Repco** – Various discounts at all auto part outlets in NSW
- **David Benn fine jewellery** – 10% Discount on all jewellery items (*formerly Arthur C Easy*)
- **SoilTech Australia** – 15% discount on soil tests
- **Golden Chain Motor Inns** - 10% discount on rack rates
- **Hertz Car Hire** – Corporate discount on car hire

Note: privileges are subject to change and are current at time of publication.
