

Young Farmers update

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PLANNING PROCESS

It has been a long process but behind the scenes the NSW Farmers' Young Farmers' Committee is working through a planning process that will set the platform for future growth and development.

It has been a turbulent six months since Annual Conference 2007 with a number of changes to the Committee. Several Members have resigned, including the Chairman, which has delayed progress.

The Committee has been working closely with the Chief Executive Shaughn Morgan and Commercial and Rural Services General Manager Guy Hannan to develop a strategic plan for the Young Farmers. From this we have developed an operational plan that will come into effect early in 2008.

This process has involved allocating funds and a budget to justify to the NSW Farmers' Association Board that we are a worthwhile investment and where we would like to spend the money available to us. There has been a face to face meeting in Sydney and countless teleconferences to get us to this point.

Using the feedback form Annual Conference and various other gatherings of rural youth around the State we have come up with five key focus areas and developed the strategic plan around these topics, which are:

- Developing a Membership base;
- Tailoring Membership benefits for Young Farmers;
- Improving communication;
- Increasing resources; and
- Developing the Committee.

TAMWORTH & WAGGA WAGGA FORUMS

Our operational plan is set to kick off shortly with two forums planned for early 2008, one to be held at Tamworth in the north of the State and the other at Wagga Wagga in the South.

The aim of these forums is to debate the content of the strategic and operational plans, elect more Committee Members, and develop motions to take to Annual Conference 2008.

The Committee believes that work has to be put in to develop a greater understanding within the youth members as to how the NSW Farmers' Association works. For this reason, both forums will be structured along similar lines to Annual Conference so youth members get comfortable with the process we will follow at Conference when we put our motions forward.

“Together we're a force to be reckoned with”

We have also planned a third meeting for a delegation of Members to come together and finalise motions for Annual Conference 2008. Again we are trying to get as many people to Annual Conference as possible, although funding constraints may not allow this to happen in the same fashion as it did last year. However, we believe that the two forums to be held early in the year in conjunction with planned functions in the second half of 2008 will provide sufficient value to Members.

That is a brief recount of what your Committee has been busy doing over the past eight months. It has been painfully slow at times but we feel we are putting in place a plan that will ensure a solid base for the development of this Committee.

CCA and MLA hit Rockhampton

As a representative of the NSW Farmers' Cattle Committee and flying the Young Farmers' flag I recently attended the Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) AGM, the Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) Beef Industry Forum and the MLA AGM in Rockhampton. It was a very exciting and thoroughly enjoyable week.

The CCA AGM reinforced for me the importance of the NSW Farmers' Association. The members of our Cattle Committee represent six seats on the Board of 22, so as a group we have a significant influence. The meeting ran over two days and encompassed a huge range of topics. The CCA is represented on 63 committees ranging from animal health and welfare to research and development and climate change. It demonstrated the diverse and complex nature of agripolitics and the importance of producer representation.

After two days of sometimes very heavy meetings a more informal beef industry forum was held at Paradise Lagoons, which was a fantastic setting for a great day that attracted

over 600 people. Twelve speakers spoke to us on topics grouped together in the three categories of production, promotion and planning. It was a brilliant day for meeting people and seeing how they operate in other regions of Australia.

The MLA AGM was not as lively as it has been in the past but I feel it was a very productive few hours for the beef industry. There was a lot of focus around the lack of under 35 year olds entering into the beef industry. This was a claim I felt compelled to clarify and did so.

It was also very interesting to see what they are doing in Queensland and other parts of Australia in terms of youth development and I am excited to report that there is a lot going on. Agforce in Queensland is doing some great things and I believe that NSW Farmers' is also on the right track.

The whole week in Rockhampton highlighted that agriculture in Australia is alive and well and I feel there is a very dynamic and focused group of young people re-entering agriculture. The quantity might not be what our forebears would like but I feel the quality of people will bridge that gap.

I encourage you all to get involved with NSW Farmers'. The best place to start is with your local branch and from there it is up to you.

"Together we're a force to be reckoned with"