New Staff Member

Australian Farm Institute welcomes the appointment of Clare Belfield as the Institute’s new Research Assistant. Clare grew up on, and maintains an involvement in a family owned grazing property in New England, NSW. She has completed a Bachelor of Business (Agricultural Management) and an Advanced Diploma (Farm Business Management) at Marcus Oldham College, Victoria. After graduating Clare worked for a year with a rural software company in Armidale before taking up a role with a financial and succession planning business in Sydney.

Current Research Program

Australian Farm Institute research projects which were commenced during 2004 are nearing completion and it is anticipated that project reports will be available for purchase from the Institute’s website from March 2005.

The first project, ‘Australia’s Farm Dependent Economy’, involves an analysis of the full economic impact of agriculture on the Australian economy. The research quantifies the GDP and employment impact of agriculture at a regional and national level as well as modelling the impact of a range of different farm-sector economic shocks. The results of the research will be released at Parliament House in Canberra in March 2005.

A second Institute research project examined changes that are occurring in the marketing of farm produce as agriculture becomes progressively integrated with downstream industries. This research will be completed during March 2005 with preliminary results presented in the February edition of the Farm Policy Journal.

The third research project commenced in 2004 and examined the changing demographics of farming in Australia. Stage one of this research compiled relevant statistics and is nearing completion with the final report to be released during February 2005. The second stage of the project will consider the policy implications arising from these changes, and should be completed by April 2005.

2005 Research Program

Australian Farm Institute held its inaugural Strategic Roundtable Conference in Sydney in December 2004. A number of prominent national and international speakers presented at the Conference providing valuable insights into some of the major issues impacting on agriculture, both within Australia and internationally. Hard copies of the Conference Proceedings can be obtained by contacting the Institute on 61 2 9690 1388.

The Conference brought together key decision-makers in agriculture and agribusiness, who identified a range of strategic issues that are challenging agriculture. These issues will be subject to rigorous analysis by the Institute’s Research Advisory Committee, with the aim of developing a shortlist of research projects to be recommended to the Institute’s Board for implementation during 2005.

The Institute has instigated some smaller-scale projects that will be carried out internally in 2005. The first project involves an analysis of developments that are occurring in the agricultural sectors of Brazil and Argentina, and the likely future implications of these developments for Australian agriculture. This research will take 4–5 months to complete with the results published in a report and available for download from the Institute’s website at www.farminstitute.org.au/publications

Latest Publications

The November edition of the Farm Policy Journal is now available for download from the Institute website at www.farminstitute.org.au/publications/journal2 This edition of the Journal, discussing climate change, has received considerable media attention, being featured in The Australian and The Australian Financial Review, as well as being carried in all State rural newspapers and nationally by ABC radio. Copies of the media articles are available on the Institute website at www.farminstitute.org.au/publications/articles
The February edition of the Farm Policy Journal will be published during the first week of March 2005. This edition of the Journal will focus on farming’s transformation into a vertically-organised industrial sector. Papers in the Journal will provide some useful discussion on the development of food supply chains, and the growing dominance of major retail chains in food marketing; not just in developed countries but also in developing countries such as China.

The Journal’s release will be timely, given the current debate about mandatory Codes being implemented under the Trade Practices Act for fresh produce markets in Australia. The ACCC has contributed an interesting paper discussing its role, and the extent and nature of competition complaints it deals with in relation to the rural sector.

Copies of this edition of the Journal can be obtained by taking an Individual Membership with the Institute, or by purchasing a Journal Subscription. These are available online at www.farminstitute.org.au/memberships Individual articles and complete editions of the Journal can be purchased in either electronic or hardcopy format online at www.farminstitute.org.au/publications/journal2

Each edition of the Farm Policy Journal is structured around a specific theme, and a number of leading researchers are invited to prepare papers that address that theme. Themes for the remaining editions for 2005 follow:

- May edition - Europe’s changing agriculture sector, and its implications for Australia and New Zealand
- August edition - the role of market based instruments for natural resource management
- November edition - the relevance of agricultural research and development policy in Australia in the light of changes that are occurring in the farm sector and in international markets.

Australian Farm Institute welcomes articles contributed by suitably qualified persons. Contributed articles should address contemporary public policy issues impacting on agriculture, and be no more than 4,000 words in length, including an abstract not exceeding 250 words. Contributed articles are subject to a single blind refereeing process. If you would like to contribute a paper to future editions of the Journal please contact the Executive Director, Mick Keogh on 61 2 9690 1388 or email keoghm@farminstitute.org.au

Is your organisation committed to the future of Australian agriculture? Australian Farm Institute has developed a corporate sponsorship package which enables agribusiness, farmers and regional communities to make a contribution, and in doing so invest in the long-term future of Australian agriculture. Corporate Membership of the Institute is available on an annual basis. Three levels of Corporate Membership are available: Platinum, Gold and Corporate. If you are interested in offering the Australian Farm Institute corporate support, contact the Executive Director, Mick Keogh on 61 2 9690 1388 or via email keoghm@farminstitute.org.au

Membership is available to individuals or organisations who would like to support the Australian Farm Institute. An annual fee of A$200 applies for an Individual Membership which entitles the member to:

- an annual subscription to the Farm Policy Journal
- access to most other Institute publications
- access to all Institute seminars and research briefings
- access to most Institute website publications.

Membership to the Australian Farm Institute can be purchased online at www.farminstitute.org.au/memberships If you would prefer to apply offline, please contact the Institute on 61 2 9690 1388 or email your enquiry to info@farminstitute.org.au

The Australian Farm Institute hopes to distribute Farm Institute Insights electronically in the future. If you would like to be added to the electronic distribution list please forward your email address to info@farminstitute.org.au