



2005 Strategic Roundtable Conference

The Australian Farm Institute's Strategic Roundtable Conference, to be held at the Sofitel Wentworth Hotel, Sydney on 21 and 22 November 2005, has created widespread interest from a variety of agribusiness organisations, government agencies, farmers and rural consultants.

The event, which is proudly supported by Landmark, an AWB company, will focus on the topical issue of 'Keeping Australian Agriculture Globally Competitive'. For more information about the Conference go to www.farminstitute.org.au/News_and_Events or contact the Institute on 61 2 9690 1388. Final registrations for the Conference close Friday, 28 October 2005.

Farm Sector Demography Research Report

The Australian Farm Institute hosted a seminar to launch the 'Australian Farm Sector Demography' Research Report in August 2005 in Sydney.



Above: (Left to Right) Report research team - Bob Hudson, Bob Hudson Consulting Pty Ltd; Cheryl Kalisch Gordon, Hassall & Associates; Tony Gleeson, Synapse Research & Consulting Pty Ltd; Mick Keogh, Australian Farm Institute, Menzies Hotel, Sydney.

The recent report provides essential data and information and a detailed profile of Australian Farm Sector Demography over the past decade including changes in key physical, social and economic indicators. Interest in the project results has come from a diversity of sources including government agencies, union groups, rural consultants, agribusiness organisations and many other businesses within and also outside the agricultural sector.

Brazil/Argentina Research Report

The Institute has now completed the Research Project titled 'Agricultural Development in Argentina and Brazil'. The research report will be launched on 27 October at the 2005 Australian Agri-food Forum, held by the Agribusiness Association of Australia at Monash University, Melbourne.

The research highlights the rapid and significant agricultural development that has occurred in Argentina and Brazil over the past decade, with a focus on key commodities. The research report discusses the likely implications for Australian agriculture and makes a series of policy recommendations to the Australian Government and research and development corporations. Copies of the research report can be purchased by non members for \$66 (incl. GST) after the report is released.

Corporate Membership

Over the past three months the Institute has gained a number of new Corporate Sponsors with Rural Press Limited as a new Gold Corporate Sponsor.

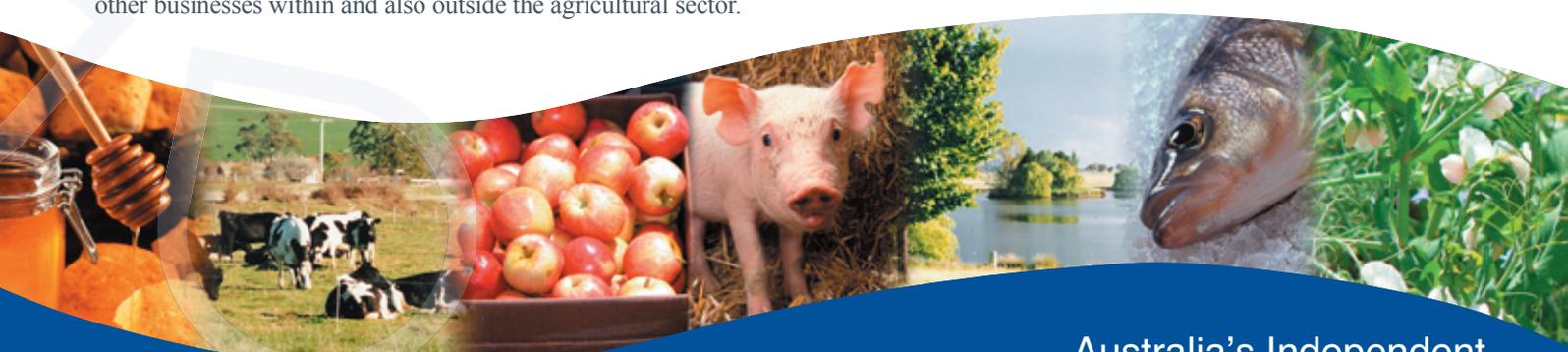


Rural Press was formed in 1911 and has since undergone considerable expansion to become Australia's largest rural and regional publisher and printer. In Australia, New Zealand and the United States, Rural Press publish 156 regional mastheads, 2 metropolitan mastheads and 55 agricultural mastheads; print at 16 web printing and 4 commercial sheet printing sites; operate 10 Farm Shows, and own and operate 9 radio licences.

Other new Corporate Sponsors include Queensland Farmers' Federation, Ridley Corporation Limited and Ruralco Holdings Limited. For further information about Corporate Supporters, go to www.farminstitute.org.au/sponsorship/corporate_sponsors

Institute Publications

Back copies of all Institute Publications are available for purchase including all editions of the *Farm Policy Journal* and Research Reports. Current Members are able to access hardcopies of past publications at a discounted rate (Journal \$25 incl. GST; Research Report \$44 incl. GST). Please contact the Institute if you are interested in purchasing back copies publications.



Farm Policy Journal – Nov Quarter 2005

Native Vegetation and Salinity – Rational Policy Required!

Two interrelated and contentious policy issues that have generated significant controversy over the past decade in Australia have been policies aimed at native vegetation conservation and dryland salinity mitigation.

Much of the policy development and implementation has occurred against a backdrop of strident warnings of impending ecological disaster, but in the absence of sound, objective information. Not surprisingly, a decade after some of the more dramatic policy decisions were implemented, serious questions are now emerging about the impact of those policies – ecologically, economically and socially.

The November 2005 edition of the *Farm Policy Journal* will contain papers addressing the policy implications of these issues from a range of perspectives.

New Research Advisory Committee Members

The Australian Farm Institute Board is pleased to announce the appointment of two additional members of the Institute's Research Advisory Committee: Dr Ray Johnson and Dr Ross Kingwell.

Dr Johnson is the Chief Executive Officer of NSW Farmers' Association. Dr Johnson is the former National Research and Development and Technical Manager of Ridley Agriproducts. He also has an extensive research background attained from his role as a Senior Research Scientist at the Victorian Department of Agriculture, Animal Research Institute. He was appointed an Adjunct Professor of Animal Science at the University of New England in 2002.

Dr Ross Kingwell is currently employed as a visiting senior lecturer in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of Western Australia and as manager of economic services in the Western Australian Department of Agriculture. Dr Kingwell is an agricultural economist with over 20 years experience in research and provision of policy advice.

Temporary Staff Changes

The Institute's Research Officer, Karen Romano has taken 6 months maternity leave. Two temporary staff members have been appointed to work on a part-time basis during this period.

Kerry Moran is an experienced administration officer and will assist with the Institute's accounting and administration.

Mai Pham-Nguyen is a third year Bachelor of Agricultural Economics student studying at the University of Sydney and will assist with the publication of the Journal and Research publications.

Farm Policy Journal 2006

Editions of the *Farm Policy Journal* are structured around specific themes and a number of leading researchers are invited to prepare papers that address that theme. Themes for 2006 include:

- **February Edition:**
Farm Research and Development – Policy at the Cross-Roads
An increasing focus on security of Intellectual Property rights generated from agricultural research, combined with continuing real declines in public funding of agricultural research and development is leading to reduced public investment in agricultural research in Australia. This edition of the *Farm Policy Journal* will explore whether this trend is inevitable and whether the private sector should be provided with greater encouragement to commercialise innovations.
- **May Edition:**
Drought Policy – Will Progress Ever be Made?
This edition of the *Farm Policy Journal* will contain a series of papers discussing Australian drought policy in the light of the most recent drought, with the emphasis being not so much on what is deficient about current policies, but what steps might be necessary to move towards a better set of policies.
- **August Edition:**
Regional Development – Any Alternatives to the 'Five Teeming Sores?'
Australia's population is drifting towards the major cities and coast with just 8% of Australia's population classified as 'rural' and 85% of the population living within 50 km of the coast. The drift of population towards urban centres and the coast is still continuing. This edition of the Journal explores the value of implementing policy options that may reverse this trend.
- **November Edition:**
EMS and Farm Accreditation – Value Adding or Cost Adding?
This edition of the Journal explores the merit of formal environmental management systems as a tool to differentiate Australian farm produce, especially in higher value markets. Papers will also address questions such as how to achieve critical mass and customer-recognition, how to deliver systems in a cost-effective manner and the appropriate role for governments in such systems.

Out & About

Over the past few months the Institute's Executive Director, Mick Keogh has spoken at a variety of events. These include the South Australian Farmers' Federation annual conference in Adelaide and the Banana Growers Conference in Cairns. He was also invited to participate in the NFF staff strategic planning meeting in Canberra providing an insight into key policy issues impacting on Australian agriculture.

During early November Mick will present at the 2nd Annual Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics Research Symposium, Clare Valley, South Australia. Conference papers are available for download on the Institute's website, www.farminstitute.org.au/publications/papers

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The NSW Farmers' Association is the founding member and principal supporter of the Australian Farm Institute.