

Our Australian Idol - Joan Tully

Roy Murray-Prior (Curtin University), Jess Jennings (UWS) and Christine King (UQ)

How many of you know the name Joan Tully?

As the motto at the bottom of some of our emails proudly proclaims APEN is about 'People successfully managing change'. In managing change we are always looking for new ways of working and understanding so we are keen to get information from the latest conference or the latest guru or from a web site. The last 20 years has seen a paradigm shift from the Technology Transfer or Diffusion paradigm to Farmer First or Participatory paradigms. But what many of you may not realise is that much of the initial impetus for this change started over 40 years earlier, with the teaching and writings of 'Our Australian Idol', Joan Tully.

Sadly Joan Tully died 33 years ago, but her legacy lives on and as we come to the 100th anniversary of her birth in 1907 we would like to pay homage to her. Joan was an amazing woman who has directly and indirectly influenced generations of extension practitioners. Prior to Tully's contribution to extension, a farmer's life experience and understanding (now referred to as indigenous knowledge or farmer knowledge) were commonly overlooked as valuable to changing farming practice, with expertise and expert knowledge taking precedence. It appears reasonable to suggest that the early beginnings of an Australian-based, constructivist approach to extension methodology, based on the importance of farmer's personally constructed reality, was present in Tully's conception of extension.

Importantly, Tully recognised that farmers were not the sole barrier to technology adoption and hence agricultural productivity, but that all stakeholders, including extension



officers, shared the responsibility of improving farm sector performance. In one reference group experience Tully reported that extension students were also beneficiaries who "have changed their attitudes toward helping farmers with their problems just as radically as the farmers have changed their attitudes toward the use of improved pastures" (Tully 1966).

She was not afraid to attack her audience to make her point. As early as 1953 Tully presented a report to government that boldly challenged her officious, high-ranking and (presumably) male-dominated and non-farmer audience:

You as directors of agriculture probably visit the more progressive farms in your States ... [and] you will probably agree that, on these progressive farms, living conditions are fairly good and the people, including the wife and family, are keenly interested in improving their farming and productivity. On the way to these farms you will all have passed many that are not so progressive and will have seen the typical 2 or 4 roomed house with a verandah front and back and a single tank

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Our Australian Idol - Joan Tully

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for a water supply, no paint, no trees, no garden, naked under the blazing sun[,] ... a battered utility in the shade of the house, an untidy woodpile, ... a little house about a chain away, a few dejected fowls scratching round and a few grubby children. ... [These are our] rural slums. Could you be an alert and progressive farmer under these living conditions? Would your wife be a happy, energetic and enthusiastic partner in such a farming enterprise? (Tully 1953).

Tully powerfully linked farmer's social and economic context to the determinants of diffusion and hence agricultural productivity. Through personal application and research, Tully used group-based techniques to improve extension communication systems in Australia, with such concepts as the Membership Reference Group, the Socialisation Process, and Group Control. One of the earliest papers (Tully 1966) we have access to outlines her thoughts on these topics and how they relate to creating a learning situation. Interestingly it documents more than an approach to working with farmers, but also a problem centred and participatory approach to teaching, where *"the learning situations have been carefully structured but the discussions have been very free"*, causing a change in motivation and change in attitudes.

Although not wholly or explicitly rejecting Rogers' technology transfer theory of diffusion, Tully questioned some of its traits and strongly promoted farmer-centric approaches for conducting effective extension. For Tully, the socio-economic context within which extension occurred was crucial, with the farmer, his/her immediate family and his/her social group being the central focus, rather than the attributes of the technology being disseminated by one-way communication (down to farmers).

She was also an early systems thinker, but took it beyond the approach of many by incorporating people as part of the system. In 1967 Tully presented a paper to the Australian Agricultural Extension Conference titled *The Farm as a Complex System: The Implications for*

Extension. This paper was unlike most at the conference because it focused on the position of the farmer within on-farm decision-making, and attempted to identify the complexity of barriers to adoption by defining farms as systems in their own right. Tully (1967) provided the following:

Our technical research men are specialists, who from their research, produce discrete pieces of information about parts of the ecological system. Extension then disseminates these discrete pieces of information to farmers. The farmer is given the very difficult job of fitting these discrete pieces of information into the very complex ecological system that is a farm If this problem of introducing change into a very complex ecological system has proved too difficult for research scientists, it is little wonder that farmers and extension men find it difficult.

Any farming system consists of at least six different, complex, and dynamic sub-systems all interacting with each other and all interdependent. Some of these subsystems are more under man's control than others. The manageable factors are climate, soils, plants, animals, economics, and man himself with his managerial skills, value systems, beliefs, and attitudes.

Any change, either voluntary or involuntary, in such a complex system of interrelated variables sets off a chain-reaction throughout the system. Some may be desirable and others most undesirable. Some will be immediate, others long-term and cumulative, such as that produced by a crop-fallow rotation in low rainfall areas.

Tully's second paper at the 1967 conference, titled *The Principle of Relevance: Implications for Extension*, drew out the importance of extensionists' understanding of farmers and their different frames of reference (Tully 1967a). Again Tully approached the adoption decision from the farmer's perspective, emphasising several ways in which a farmer must perceive technology as relevant on a range of measures before utilising it. Tully's approach could perhaps be considered the farmer's side

of the Technology Transfer coin because she recognised the difficult conditions under which individual farmers made adoption decisions.

The key to Joan's influence on those who followed her was the underlying philosophy of her approach which can be boiled down to people's views are valid, they have to participate in any change, and they are most likely to participate when their friends and neighbours are involved also. This is a simple message which is at the core of all good extension process.

Tully J (1953) Report to the agricultural council on the need for a rural home advisory service, Canberra, Australia.

Tully J (1966) Changing Practices: A Case Study, *Journal of Co-operative Extension*, Fall, 1966, pp143-152.

Tully J (1967) *The Farm as a Complex System: the Implications for Extension*, in Australian Agricultural Extension Conference Working Papers, conference held in Hobart, Tasmania May, 1967, proceedings published in Melbourne 1967.

Tully J (1967a) *The Principles of Relevance: Implications for Extension*, in Australian Agricultural Extension Conference Working Papers, conference held in Hobart, Tasmania May, 1967, proceedings published in Melbourne, Australia.

Walters, D.V. (1973) Joan Tully 1907-73. *Journal of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science*. Vol. 39 (3), p174.

Joan Tully held a number of posts at the Council for Scientific Research (CSIR) and later the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. In 1952, she was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship and studied at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, USA. From 1957-1972, she held research positions at the University of Melbourne, followed by academic posts at the University of New England, New South Wales, and the University of Queensland.

Ed sez ...

- Christine King

This Christmas edition of APEN is packed with treats. While it was unintentional at the time of collecting stories for ExtensionNet, many of the articles featured in this edition relate to the contribution of women to both Extension and Sustainable Agriculture.

Our feature article, 'Our Australian Idol' by Roy Murray-Prior, Jess Jennings and myself, highlights the contribution of Dr Joan Tully to Extension Theory and Practice, who introduced many of the concepts we talk about today. Before working at UQ, she also held academic positions with the University of Melbourne and the University of New England.

Dr Emma Jakku, Jenny Bellamy and Dr Iris Bohnet from a collaborative research team have also provided an article for ExtensionNet on 'Enhancing women's participation in the sugar industry'. They illustrate how the contribution of women is an important aspect of the social, economic and environmental sustainability of communities that support the sugar industry.

Our student contribution this edition

comes from Kamal Gaire, a Masters (research) student from the University of Melbourne. Kamal believes that grassroots mobilisation can address gender and development issues and is exploring how to sustain grassroots women's groups in Nepal.

And what else is in ExtensionNet? If you are interested in what typical APEN member's do when they sit around at airports, the article on 'Digging for Gold' by Austin McLennan will interest you. And if sitting at airports does not seem unusual to you ... how about SELN members sitting in crocodile infested waters in the Northern Territory? Also meet two of our new members, Jenny Cleary and Jessica Sheppard.

As with previous APEN Christmas editions, we present the usual APEN Annual Report! See who is now on the Management Committee (Welcome Jenny Cleary and Alison Medhurst!), find out what was considered APEN's highlight of the year, and read the President's Report featuring the Top 6 APEN achievements



for 2006. Also apparent in the Annual Report is the overwhelming number of 'THANK YOUs' to Roe Currie (Secretariat), who seems to have held APEN together through a year of resignation, renewal and transition!

Suggestions for future editions very welcome (christine.king@uq.edu.au)

Merry Christmas or Merry Holidays!

Exet

APEN's Annual Report 2005/2006

APEN's AGM was held by teleconference on Thursday November 16, 2006 from 2.00pm to 2.25pm EST. There were eleven apologies while fifteen members attended the third AGM held by teleconference and we were effectively and efficiently able to deal with the required official AGM business.

Part of the official business was to elect the **Management Committee for 2006/2007**. Two members joined the committee for the first time – **Jenny Cleary** from **South Australia** (also a new member – see her bio in the new members section) and long time member, also part of the 2006 International Conference organising committee, **Alison Medhurst** from **Victoria**.

Amabel Fulton, Tasmania and **Derek Foster, Queensland** were officially elected as Regional Coordinators after having been seconded during the year when Jane Weatherley and Jeff Coutts had to leave due to changing work commitments.

Others taking on their second terms as Regional Coordinators were **Tracey Gianatti, Western Australia**, **Jess Jennings, NSW & ACT** and **Neels Botha, New Zealand/Overseas**.

The APEN Management Committee (contact details on the back page) for 2006/2007 is:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| President: | Neale Price | Queensland |
| Vice President: | Jess Jennings | New South Wales |
| Secretary: | Amabel Fulton | Tasmania |
| Treasurer: | Jess Jennings | New South Wales |
| Committee: | Greg Owens | Northern Territory |
| | Derek Foster | Queensland |
| | Jess Jennings | New South Wales |
| | Alison Medhurst | Victoria |
| | Amabel Fulton | Tasmania |
| | Jenny Cleary | South Australia |
| | Tracey Gianatti | Western Australia |
| | Neels Botha | New Zealand |
| | John James | Queensland |
| | Chrissy King | Queensland |
| Past President: | | |

APEN's Public Officer is Heather Shaw, Victoria, a past APEN Secretary and the **Auditor for 2006/2007** will again be Bob Travers & Associates of Albury, NSW.

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APEN President's Report for 2005/06

Neale Price, President

The last APEN AGM was held on November 15th 2005 by teleconference. This was the 2nd AGM held by teleconference and the 2005/06 AGM will also be held via teleconference.

The very successful International Conference held in Beechworth, Victoria in March was the APEN highlight of the year. In my report I will outline our activities conducted throughout the past year.

Achievements

To my mind the main achievements for this year were:

1. In response to comments from members who felt APEN was sending around too many emails the Management Committee (MC) altered our communication strategy to our members by increasing the frequency of the eBulletins to monthly and at the same time reduced the email traffic to members by incorporating messages from or to the network into the eBulletin.
2. APEN helped establish the State Extension Leaders Network in 2005. APEN has been represented either by myself or John James at the State Extension Leaders Network (SELN) meetings during this year – in Brisbane, Darwin and Adelaide. That group continues to progress the development of policies on issues affecting those involved in extension in Australia.
3. We also progressed APEN's involvement in policy when a submission was made to the Australian House of Representatives Agriculture Committee inquiry into rural skills training. Subsequently, Greg Leach, John James and I attended an interview in Toowoomba as part of the inquiry into rural skills training.
4. We applied for funding from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to progress two of the initiatives from the 2005 Leadership Series and from membership surveys – namely a mentoring scheme and professional development and training for extensionists. Unfortunately that application was not successful. However, we have decided to continue to progress the initiatives as best we can. We are soon to launch the mentoring scheme and will continue to provide opportunities for professional development.
5. The **2006 APEN International Conference** committee (based around the Melbourne Cluster) worked hard and we were treated to an exciting conference with the theme 'Practice Change for Sustainable Communities: exploring footprints, pathways and possibilities'. The conference in Beech-

worth last March had a wonderful array of plenary sessions, concurrent sessions, a practice change expo, workshops and a wrap up session called the Possibilities Café – all extension techniques meant to push the envelope. The social events were very enjoyable too. I would again like to acknowledge the great job done by the conference organising committee which was based on the Melbourne Cluster – Jo Vigliaturo, Jess Connor, Chris Williams, Emily Tee, John Petheram, Liz Patterson, Ben Neil, Alison Medhurst, Cynthia Mahoney, Catherine Johnston, Vanessa Hood, Janine Dridan, Robert Chaffe, Kevin Balm, Gavin Brock and Roe Currie.

Thanks also to the major sponsor, the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and also the other sponsors, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, the Cooperative Venture for Capacity Building in Rural Australia, Land and Water Australia, Grain and Graze, the Grains Research and Development Corporation, the North East Catchment Management Authority, the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal and Dairy Australia.

Many thanks to all the presenters and participants too for contributing to the success of the conference. The venue was great for our purposes and I enjoyed seeing many of you at the conference. I was honoured along with Laura Schibrowski to receive an APEN Award for Excellence in Extension. After the event the Management Committee were pleased to be able to act on the suggestion of the conference committee to put some money towards tree planting to recoup the carbon dioxide emissions from the conference.

6. We have entered into a partnership with the Australian Farm Business Management Network in production of a journal with extension content. We look forward to seeing more of our members' work written up and published.

Regional activities

The rationale for having Regional Coordinators on the Management Committee is that we hear about things happening around the APEN Regions (the seven states of Australia and NZ/ Overseas).

In conjunction with the Co-operative Venture for Capacity Building, Capacity Building roadshow workshops were held in Qld, NT, WA, SA, Vic and NSW in November 2005.

There has also been APEN activity occurring in some of our Regions and I congratulate those who have done the organising and kept things moving. Theses include:

- The WA Region held a workshop on **"Practical and Creative Tools for Extension**

Workers" June 6th at Trinity Conference Centre, University of Western Australia with 23 participants. The cluster is currently developing a combined event with the Department of Agriculture and Food which will focus on the sharing of real life extension case studies.

- The SE Qld Cluster ran a post conference event at the Maroochy Research Station, Nambour on June 22nd (**"Digging for gold – gems from the Beechworth conference"**). The 24 participants also planned more activities for later in the year.
- The APEN NZ cluster, in collaboration with AgResearch, ran an **Industry Development and Practice Change (Adoption)** conference on 4 October 2005 in Hamilton, NZ, with around 80 people attending. Members also met after the Beechworth conference to keep the interest levels up.
- The NT Region hosted several informal gatherings of extension people after the successful CVCB Roadshow workshop.

All these activities have had both member and non-member presenters and participants. They have provided valuable networking and professional development opportunities. Our intention is that all members will have more opportunity to be involved in such activities, and encourage more clusters to meet within regions and interest group clusters to meet over the Internet in email discussion groups.

Although we have a number of Cluster Coordinators, some Regions do not have a representative and therefore the level of local activity has not been as great as we would have liked.

Other activities

ExtensionNet only had two issues in the last financial year due to the volunteer nature of the Editor's job and a longer than expected change over to the new Editor, Dr Christine King. Many thanks Chrissy for taking over from Darren Schmidt. Thank you Darren for the four years of creative effort you invested with us. Congratulations Chrissy on your first issue and we look forward to your upcoming issues. As always, the Editor would appreciate any contributions from the members for ExtensionNet.

As you will have seen from our recent eBulletin the **APEN Forum 2007** and the **Australasian Extension Publication** have been combined. Many thanks to Jess Jennings for his passion and work towards achieving this valuable APEN publication and we look forward to a big rollup at the Forum towards the end of next year to take advantage of the professional development and networking this Forum will provide.

The **Management Committee** has met by teleconference every second month to progress a range of issues, all under the umbrella of the

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Business plan. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of the members... John James (Past President), Jess Jennings (Vice-president, Treasurer & NSW RC), Jane Weatherley (Secretary & Tasmanian regional coordinator (RC)) and then Amabel Fulton who took over this role from Jane, Chrissy King (Editor), Jeff Coutts (Qld RC) and then Derek Foster who

took over from Jeff, Cynthia Mahoney (Vic RC), Greg Owens (NT RC), Tracey Gianatti (WA RC) and Neels Botha (NZ RC). There has been movement off and on the committee because of changing job commitments and we hope for a full contingent and a period of stability and further achievement in the coming year. I would also like to thank Rosemary

Currie, our Secretariat, who enables most of the management committee work to actually happen.

As a matter of accountability, the following were the meetings we held and the participants at each.

| Meeting | Date | NP | JJ | JRJ | JW | CK | JC | CM | GO | TG | NB | RC | Total |
|-------------|----------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| #061 | 8/12/05 | Y | Y | Y | | | Y | | Y | | Y | Y | 7 |
| #062 | 9/2/06 | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | Y | | Y | 7 |
| #062(Beech) | 5/3/06 | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | 9 |
| #063 | 3/4/06 | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | Y | | Y | | Y | 7 |
| #064 | 1/6/06 | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | | | Y | | Y | 6 |
| #065 | 27/07/06 | Y | | Y | AF | | DF | | Y | | | Y | 6 |
| #066 | 28/9/06 | Y | Y | Y | | | Y | | | Y | Y | Y | 7 |
| Total | | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 7 | |

Conclusion

So in conclusion, I have had an enjoyable first year as President and particularly enjoyed meeting many members at the International

Conference and getting to know the workings of the Management Committee. I believe we have made steady progress in working towards the APEN mentoring scheme, being

involved the development of extension policy in Australia through SELN and providing professional development opportunities for members. Next year will see greater strides in these areas.

APEN Treasurer's Report for 2005/06

Jess Jennings, Treasurer

This report is based upon an audit of APEN's finances conducted by Bob Travers & Associates, Chartered Accountant, Albury, NSW.

The APEN financial position at June 30, 2006 remains reasonably sound with total equity of \$63 019. APEN's operating surplus for the 2005/2006 financial year was \$11 798.

Tables 1 and 2 record the profit and loss situation and Table 3, the Assets and Liability situation.

Some salient points include:

- Historically, APEN is dependent on

conferences generating a surplus of around \$20,000 and forums \$10,000. The surplus is from sponsorship deals and registration income. This is shown in Table 2 where figures from 2001 to the present show that the larger surpluses indicate a year with an International conference, a smaller surplus the year with a National forum and years with losses indicate that no national event was held. The Queensland NRM Symposium in September 2005 and the International Conference held in March 2006 resulted in a surplus for the events of about \$43,000. Since the end of June we have been able to donate some money towards carbon credits for the conference.

- Chapters assets have been transferred to the APEN account with only the Melbourne account still operating (See Table 3).

The Melbourne Cluster has continued to operate their account to assist with the 2006 Conference Committee meetings and has now closed the account and transferred their remaining funds.

A healthy surplus is essential for APEN to be able underwrite future conferences and forums as well as cluster activities. Therefore steps are being taken to increase general (non-conference or forum) income by at least 20% to ensure the efficient and effective running of APEN. The amalgamation of funds from the Chapter accounts has reduced money lost in bank fees and enabled us to put seed funding into the 2006 Conference. Improving industry sponsorship receipts and the increased APEN annual membership fees are other likely sources of revenue to stabilise APEN's financial base.

Table 1 2005-2006 Income and Expenses

| Income | 2004-05 Total \$ | 2005 -06 Total \$ |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Advertising | 118 | 59 |
| APEN Forum (Policy forum July 04 support from RIRDC and CRRI-Q) | 9 386 | - |
| APEN Conference | | 36 102 |
| APEN CVCB Workshops | | 17 919 |
| DAFF Project: Leadership series | 87 937 | 9 436 |
| Membership | 28 400 | 25 178 |
| Reference Resources | - | 32 |
| Region Activities (formerly Chapter Activities) | 4 984 | - |
| Region Events (formerly Chapter Events, 0506 Qld NRM Symposium & WA workshops) | 4 872* | 39 500 |
| Sundry Receipts | 2 301 | 15 292 |
| Sponsorship (0405 HAL sponsorship of ExtensionNet, 0506 DA sponsorship for APEN Awards) | 4 788 | 5 000 |
| Interest Received | 769 | 542 |
| TOTAL | 143 555 | 149 060 |

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| Expenditure | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Accountancy & Audit Fees | 1047 | 1030 |
| Administration | 24 483 | 20 163 |
| APEN Award | - | 2 328 |
| APEN / CVCB workshop expenses | | 13 184 |
| Bank & Government Charges | 2 503 | 3 751 |
| Catering | 3 245* | - |
| Cost of Meetings | 1 498* | 2 790 |
| Conference Costs APEN | 2 065 | 18 959 |
| DAFF Young People's Project | 68 980 | 29 998 |
| ExtensionNet | 14 435 | 9 793 |
| Insurance | 382 | 382 |
| PAIDS AusAID Project | 8 139 | - |
| Policy forum | 9 417 | - |
| Printing, Stationery and Postage | 682 | 268 |
| Promotion (Members Directory & membership brochures) | 1 852 | 3 079 |
| Provision for impairment of receivables | - | 604 |
| Region Events Payments | 4 876 | 27 433 |
| Speaker Expenses | 1 023* | - |
| Sundry Expenses | 265 | - |
| Website | - | 3 500 |
| TOTAL | 144 892 | 137 262 |

* held prior to amalgamation of Chapter Accounts at end of 2004

Table 2 Profit and Accumulated funds

| | 2001-2002 Total \$ | 2002-2003 Total \$ | 2003-2004 Total \$ | 2004-2005 Total \$ | 2005-2006 Total \$ |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Net Profit/Surplus | 17 079 | -5 043 | 6 207 | -1 337 | 11 798 |
| Accumulated Funds | 51 394 | 46 351 | 52 558 | 51 221 | 63 019 |

Table 3: Assets and Liabilities as at June 30 2005

| | | 2003-2004 | 2004-2005 | 2005-2006 |
|-------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Assets | Cheque Account | 20 359 | 47 174 | 28 380 |
| | Term Deposit | 6 000 | 6 000 | 6 000 |
| | Chapter Accounts | 13 581 | 810 | 753 |
| | Grant Account | 615 | 4 | 0 |
| | Cash | 65 | 0 | 0 |
| | Accounts receivable | 11 253 | 9145 | 34977 |
| | Provision for impairment of receivables | | | -604 |
| | Total | 51 873 | 63 133 | 69 506 |
| Liabilities | Accounts owing | 0 | 11 116 | 6 487 |
| | GST owing | -685 | 796 | 0 |
| | Total | -685 | 11 912 | 6 487 |
| Equity | | 52 558 | 51 221 | 63 019 |

As Treasurer I would like to acknowledge Rosemary Currie's diligent and efficient management of the organisation's finances, and input that makes my role considerably easier to perform.

ENET

SELN:

The State Extension Leaders Network



The State Extension Leaders Network (SELN) formed in April 2005 following the APEN National Extension policy Forum at Coogee Beach in July 2004 to progress some of the issues arising that related to State agency extension services. The Network is made up of one representative from the extension service of each State Primary Industry Agency, one Natural Resource Management Agency (we would like more!) and three invited members (APEN President Neale Price, Prof Frank Vanclay and John James).

- In that time SELN has released a dis-

cussion document, Enabling Change in Rural and Regional Australia: The role of extension in achieving sustainable and productive futures. (can be downloaded from the SELN website, www.seln.org.au)

- The group is compiling a set of case studies intended to highlight the role of extension in achieving desired outcomes and measurable or evidence-based change.

- It hosted a workshop in March 2006 at Sydney for the Communication Officers from the various Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) to help them

and the State agencies to work together to achieve real outcomes and effective change.

- A follow up activity with the RDCs is planned for late 2007.

- The group meets 3 times a year at rotating state venues and has monthly teleconferences to keep the tasks between meetings happening.

To find out who is in the network, or to see our purpose and mission statements go to www.seln.org.au

... see photos on opposite page



SELN Members go bush:

The July 2006 meeting of SELN was held in the Northern Territory at the Douglas-Daly Research Station, approximately 150km south of Darwin on the junction of the Douglas River and the mighty Daly River.

Temperatures plummeted to 3 degrees overnight leaving many a bit cool but back up to 32 by midday. After each day's work in the farm's laboratory-turned-meeting room, SELN members were given guided tours of the Research Station and the spectacular local environment. Many thanks to the farm's staff for their friendly welcome and assistance.

Q. Who was spotted having a beer while sitting in the rapids of the crocodile infested Douglas River?

Greg Owens
Senior Extension Officer
Crops, Forestry and
Horticulture
NT DPIFM
Darwin NT



Enhancing women's participation in the sugar industry

By Dr Emma Jakku, Jenny Bellamy and Dr Iris Bohnet



Dr Emma Jakku

What are women in the sugar industry involved in? What are the factors that motivate or limit their participation? And what else could be done to encourage women to become more involved in all facets of the industry?

The contributions of women to their enterprises and communities often tend to be under-recognised and under-valued in the sugar industry. However, in the current context of industry reform, women are making vital contributions on farm and in sugar communities. Increasingly, women are also taking on greater roles at the industry level to support innovation and facilitate change that will contribute to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of sugar communities.

A CSIRO and University of Queensland research team is collaborating with local people in two regions to study the participation of women in the sugar industry. This understanding will be used to identify practical ways to encourage and strengthen women's roles in ensuring the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the sugar industry.

So far, the researchers have met with local people from industry, extension, government and community sectors in far north Queensland and southern Queensland to discuss the project objectives. They have received valuable feedback and advice on the direction of the study and identified a wide variety of issues relevant to women's participation in each region.

The researchers are eager to interview women involved with the sugar industry who live in either of the two regions - Herbert Mossman and the Bundaberg/Isis district - to hear first-hand about their experiences.

"We're really keen to talk to women who can help us understand the role they play in the sugar industry," says CSIRO researcher Emma Jakku. "We need to know what makes them get involved and how they would like to contribute in the future."

A later stage of the project will involve working with local collaborators to identify existing sugar industry activities that could benefit from greater engagement of women, and then trialling new strategies to enhance women's participation in those activities.

This study is funded by the Sugar Research and Development Corporation, the CSIRO and the University of Queensland.

For more information contact Emma Jakku: 07 3214 2231 or Emma.Jakku@csiro.au; or Jenny Bellamy: 07 3365 2163 or jenny.bellamy@uq.edu.au



Photo courtesy of the Bundaberg Women in Sugar Group.

Students' Segment

This edition – Kamal Gaire (The University of Melbourne)

I am Kamal Gaire, currently undertaking a Master in Agriculture (by research) at Faculty of Land and Food Resources, University of Melbourne. My research focus is on sustaining grassroots women groups in Nepal.

I have got a bachelor degree in Agricultural science from Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science (IAAS), Tribhuvan University, Nepal and a Graduate Diploma in Agricultural Science from the University of Melbourne. In Nepal I worked for agricultural extension agencies for more than six years both at the field and central level. My last job was as an agricultural economist at the Gender and Environment Division of The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives with the responsibility of planning and monitoring of extension programs mainly for women farmers.

Despite poor infrastructure and services many women farmers I visited and interacted with, are doing well and showed exceptional energy to do something good for themselves and their communities. However, I found that once the term of projects supporting these groups expired, communities' enthusiasm and eagerness to do something also expired, often well before achieving their ultimate goals.

As an extension officer I wanted to know why most Nepalese grassroots groups, and women's groups in particular, do not last longer. I believe that if this question is properly answered both group members, extension agencies and the community will benefit, because sustained grassroots mobilization has the potential to address gender and development issues. Questions about the sustainability of grassroots women groups are therefore the main focus of my master's research project.

Grassroots groups are a forum for local people to identify, prioritize, and solve their problems. Problems related to livelihood improvement and resource management are of a re-occurring nature. To solve these problems, sprouting one after another, farmers need access to a well developed institution.

My aim was to conduct semi-structured interviews back in Nepal with farmers and extension officers to develop a better understanding of what sustains a group. However, people's demonstrations against the king's direct rule in Kathmandu made Nepal a 'politically unstable country' (in the language of DIMIA) which delayed my field work. Thankfully the revolution in Nepal succeeded and finally I was able to spend a few months in Nepal interviewing grassroots group members and extension officers and analysing what they said.

One of my key findings is that the government's policy of promoting conversion of grassroots groups into cooperatives as an exit strategy has caused problem for the sustainability of women's groups in particular. Without proper capacity development, women's groups may be weaker within formally structured cooperatives.

In addition to my field work in Nepal, I have also had the opportunity to visit some Victorian farms and talked to farmers to understand difference in farmers and farming systems. I noticed that gender roles and relations were surprisingly different here. Farmers with hundreds of hectares of land practicing precision agriculture and robot milking changed my perception on the definition of a farmer and farming. For me a farmer is a poor, largely illiterate man or woman who works hard on the farm to earn his/her livelihood. My participation in the APEN International Conference on Practice Change for Sustainable Communities helped me to better understand Australian grassroots groups mainly in the field of agriculture and natural resource management.

I am currently completing my analysis and hope to submit my masters in May 2007. I will then return to Nepal where I will continue my work in extension.



Kamal Gaire

Without proper capacity development, women's groups may be weaker within formally structured cooperatives.

If you are a student undertaking research in the area of extension, participatory research or rural community development, and would like to share your story in a future edition of Extension Net, please contact APEN. Your story can provide APEN members with an idea of the current research taking place in Australia and Internationally.

Extension gems unearthed at Nambour

By Austin McLennan (SE Queensland / N NSW cluster co-ordinator)

I would suggest that it's a rare person who goes to a conference or workshop, gets completely inspired or convinced by a different way of doing things, and then goes back makes radical changes to the way he or she works.

More typically, we go away from these events with a few 'gems' in our pockets – these 'gems' might be a turn of phrase that caught our attention, a certain process, or any idea we picked up that we think could be useful in our work.

So it was that, sitting around at the Albury airport after APEN's successful International Conference at Beechworth, several of us hatched the plan to get together again and share our conference gems - not so much with each other, but with those who hadn't made it to the conference. And thus the idea for 'Digging for Gold – Extension gems from the APEN 2006 International Conference 2006' was born.

And if the gold and gem metaphors were a little mixed, so what!

What happened?

After various organisational matters had been attended to by the cluster co-ordinator and his helpers, twenty three extension practitioners eventually gathered at Nambour in southeast Queensland in June.

They had all gathered to hear, and some to share, the pearls of wisdom being dispensed that day- yet another mixed metaphor!

First John James (DPI&F) filled us in on what 'Knowledge Management' is and what it can offer extension. We then turned to chickens and macadamias as Alison Spencer (DPI&F), Paul O'Hare (DPI&F) and Kevin Quinlan (NSW DPI) highlighted projects they've been involved with in these industries.

Even more 'down to earth', Abigail Jenkins and Rebecca Lines-Kelly (both NSW DPI) reprised their Beechworth presentation on how they go about making soils extension sexy.

After lunch, we had a look at an extension process called the 'World Café'. This was used at the conference and was new to many people. The idea for Nambour was to demonstrate it and



give others a chance to see if they could adapt it to their own situations. We did, and at least one of the participants went back and tried it in the 'real world'!

Scattered among these snappy presentations we're many more extension gems from the Beechworth conference.

We collected a number of these during the day and have included them in our 'treasure chest' below. Perhaps you too will find something there that will be useful in your extension work.

If you want some more information on a particular gem, you could contact me and I will put you in touch with the person who shared it

Extension gems from Nambour

[from Peter: These notes were intended just as a memory trigger of the GEMS learned and are not intended to provide all detail/procedure behind each GEM]

1. Importance of Telling a Story (Paul O'Hare)

- o Related to a story about an Extension Officer telling a grazier his sheep flock had a devastating disease – on CHRISTMAS EVE!!!
- o Don't underestimate the importance of telling a story
- o It's not always about Facts & Figures
- o **IDEA** – utilise QLD Police/Emergency

Services to train Extension Officers in delivering bad news

2. Plastic Table Cloth (John James)

- o Great Facilitator's Tool
- o Buy a cheap white plastic table cloth
- o Spray it with 3M 'Repositional Adhesive Spray' about 1 hour before use
- o Ordinary paper can now be moved around – like a giant 'Post-It' note
- o Spray available from Office Works or any decent Photo Shop

3. Brief Note on Communities of Practice (John James)

- o CoP share a concern, set of problems, passion to deepen knowledge & experience – by interacting on an on-going basis
- o CoP are useful to help disseminate, enable rapid problem solving, help knowledge flow
- o CoP – must always have a learning for **someone**
- o John used the example of the DPI&F Information extension Officer group – shared issue = production of information resources such as websites, editing etc.
- o "Mayor" or "Chain Captain" **MUST** have the means & capacity to influence change

Continued page 11 ...

New APEN members

If you've recently joined APEN, welcome! You'll reap plenty of professional and personal rewards. If you've been in

APEN for a few seasons now, be sure to say hello to the new members.

Welcome to these new members who have joined since last edition.

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Jacqui Doyle | VIC |
| Ketut Puspadi | Indonesia |
| Regina Fogarty | NSW |
| Anthony Sim | VIC |
| Peter Metaclife | WA |
| Jessica Sheppard | WA |
| Jenny Cleary | SA |

Jenny Cleary



Jenny has more than 20 years experience working in community-focused organisations, within multiple contexts, including roles as an administrator in Community Health, a lecturer within the vocational education sector specialising in entry level training, and as communications specialist with the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. She is currently working with Rural Solutions SA, a South Australian Government owned consulting business. Her role is Program Leader in the area of Community Development and she continues to work with a diverse range of communities from her base in the South Australian Rangelands.

As part of her work across a range of settings, Jenny has undertaken a number of action research methodologies focussed on developing and enhancing community capacity and engagement strategies. She has presented internationally on this topic, and undertook a study tour to parts of Canada in 2005 to share with and learn from other practitioners in this area. Jenny is currently completing a Masters in Social Policy and Planning with Charles Sturt University, and she is keen to pursue research interests in the area of developing social indicators for rural community innovation and sustainability.

Jessica Sheppard



I have recently been employed by the Avon Catchment Council as a Soil Health Extension Officer. This is a new position designed to provide coordinated, accurate soil health information to the WA agricultural community. I'm really excited to be in a pure extension position after working for 3 years as a Research Officer for the Department of Agriculture. As a researcher, I found myself craving more interaction with the public. As a consequence, in the third year of my time in the Department, I completed a graduate certificate in public relations. However, once my project finished, I wanted a complete break and went travelling for 2 years in New Zealand and Europe before returning to WA to resume my career in Soil Science. I have a Bachelor of Science in Soil Science and Plant Nutrition (Hons) from the University of Western Australia.

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4. Bright Ideas Out-of-the-Box (Simon Newett)

- o Related a story of an Extension Officer having trouble engaging a community due to language barriers
- o Organised a Buffalo Ploughing Competition – the entire community came out for the day
- o Moral of Story – try to come up with a bright idea that is out-of-the-box thinking to **break engagement boundaries**

5. Map of the World & Digital Camera

(Kevin Quinlan)

- o Photos/maps tell a story better than words
- o Don't forget the other gender – partners play a key role also

6. Regional Health Project (Rebecca Lines-Kelly)

- o Gave free medical check-ups to all farmers in one district
- o Found that 80% required referral to a specialist for serious health concerns
- o We need to realise that we are dealing with people operating/functioning on the edge of physical & emotional

capacity

- o Important to realise that if we implement something, we need to **MAKE** the time to **ENJOY IT!!!**

7. Sending Screen Projector blank (Scott Ledger)

- o Rather than placing the cap on an operating projector (heat/fire risk), simply press 'B' on the computer keyboard and light turns off
- o To turn light back on, press 'B' again (or any other key)

Continued page 12 ...

8. What is Evaluation (Paul O'Hare & Kevin Quinlan)

- o "Evaluation is about INFORMING THE FUTURE rather than criticising the past", Unknown, Beechworth 2006
- o Evaluation is a balance between 'Facts & Figures' and 'Telling a Story'
- o Gave example of 2 different stories, one more quantitative (decreased packing shed costs) vs one more qualitative (felt better about being in the orchard as a result of certain practices). Asked us to vote on which one we like best using post it notes. About 50-50 split in our group.
- o 'Facts & Figures' are the skeleton;

stories (such as those from the Best Practice Mac Groups) are the meat on the bone that makes it all worthwhile

9. "Most Significant Change" Technique (Paul O'Hare & Kevin Quinlan)

- o A way of QUALITATIVE assessment
- o Asks the question about what is the most significant change that growers have noticed – often ends in 'stories'
- o Check out paper on APEN Conference Website re: LandLearn (?)

10. 4 x 4 x 4 - more than just increased production and profit (Alison Spencer – did not have time to give this GEM)

- o 4 training days a year
- o 4 new initiatives a year
- o 4 weeks holiday a year
- o These were the results of an extension project; which achieved increase in participation and enhanced aspirations as well as increased production.
- o The 4x4x4 principle was also presented as a useful benchmark for what makes a healthy farming business.

ENET

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Guidelines and deadlines

Submissions should be made in MS Word 6.0 with minimal formatting. A portrait photograph of the author is required. All photographs, figures and/or tables ought to be provided as separate files (preferably TIF or JPEG; photos scanned at 300 dpi). Feature articles should be around 1000 words and minor articles 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material to meet space restrictions. Letters to the editor or general items of news of interest to the network are welcome. Articles should be submitted at least four weeks prior to publication. Preference is given to articles that are grounded in some form of project or event.

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