



EXTENSIONNet

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Newsletter of the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (Inc)

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Capture, Consolidate & Communicate at the APEN National Forum 2007

13-14th November 2007 University House, ANU Canberra

The Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) will deliver an historic publication as the theme of this year's National Forum.

Leading professionals across Australia and New Zealand are combining forces to author the first ever Australasian Extension Publication for all stakeholders engaged in the improvement of natural resource management (NRM) and agricultural production systems.

APEN's **Forum07** is a unique opportunity for delegates to access major authors and contribute their own insights across the entire spectrum of successful NRM and production extension, including:

- NRM and production extension methodology, methods, and practices;
- Case study analysis in NRM and production agriculture;
- Working beyond NRM and production extension practices;
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting good extension;
- The history and development of extension to the latest contemporary directions in
 - capacity building, change management strategies, design of learning systems,
 - farming systems research, participatory research approaches, planning good extension,
 - decision support systems, culture and community issues;
- Contemporary issues in extension such as
 - the institutional landscape, policy and funding frameworks, gender issues,
 - personality profiles, economic perspectives on extension,

- public and private extension, extension research and

- Career development in NRM and production extension

- building networks, personal skill development, professional organisations in extension

We encourage you to attend to **Capture, Consolidate and Communicate** the ideas we all have.

WHEN & WHERE:

13-14th November at University House, Australian National University, Canberra.

REGISTRATION:

EARLY BIRD PRICE: \$440 members (incl GST), \$550 non-members (incl GST & APEN membership) till 31st August 2007.

STANDARD PRICE: \$550 members (incl GST), \$660 non-members (incl GST & APEN membership)

To register visit the website www.apen.org.au or contact Roe Currie directly on 02-6024 5349 or info@apen.org.au.

ACCOMMODATION:

Delegates book directly at University House on +61 2 6123 5276 (www.anu.edu.au/unihouse) other accommodation information is available on www.canberratourism.com.au

MORE INFORMATION:

See the APEN website at www.apen.org.au for the latest information and online registration.

IN THIS ISSUE

Capture, Consolidate & Communicate at APEN National Forum 2007 1

2007 Awards for Excellence in Extension 2

- call for nominations

Ed Sez... 2

A Facilitated Approach to Training 3

by Nicole Sallur

Some More Gems Unearthed at Nambour 5

by Austin McLellan

Enabling Change in rural and regional Australia 6

Students Segment 7

Emily Mendham (Charles Sturt University)

Why Write a Paper - for a peer reviewed publication? 8

By R. John Petheram

Vegvision 2020 10

New Members 11

2007 Awards for Excellence in Extension - nominations called

The APEN Award for Excellence in Extension is open to APEN members, either individuals or groups, who have demonstrated excellence in extension through a work program completed within the last five years.

The Awards are presented in the Open or Experienced and Young Professional (under 35 years of age) categories. In 2003 the Awards were sponsored by the Grains Research and Development Corporation and in 2006 the Awards by Dairy Australia. Past winners and their project titles are listed on the APEN website: www.apen.org.au which also gives further information about the Awards.

The award includes a plaque, travel within Australia to the 2007 APEN National Forum, registration and accommodation

at the forum and the opportunity to give a presentation about the extension work for which the prize has been awarded, for an individual or one person from within a group. The award is not transferable.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations can be received direct from the nominee(s), or from other persons or organisations on behalf of the nominee(s). Nominations should include a summary of the work addressing the selection criteria, a copy of any written material or reports produced, and the names of two independent referees able to comment upon the work. An electronic version as well as four hard copies would be preferred.

Nominations for the 2007 Awards are due to the APEN Secretariat by Friday August 3, 2007.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- The use or development of extension principles in the work.
- Evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of the work.
- The applicability of the work in the broader practice of extension

Nominations are to be sent to:

Rosemary Currie,
APEN Secretariat,
PO Box 1239,
WODONGA VIC 3689, AUSTRALIA
Ph 61 (0)2 6024 5349
Fax 61 (0)2 6056 1967
Email: info@apen.org.au

ENET

Ed sez ...



- Christine King

The stories in ExtensionNet this edition show the diversity of activities related to extension that are happening around Australia, including on-ground action, policy formulation, professional development and publication; not to mention the diversity of membership and alternative careers. What an achievement for any professional community! Thankyou for sharing your stories.

First of all, read about APEN's Forum07 in November, Canberra; where extension professionals will come together to capture insights for the first Australasian Extension Publication. This publication will focus on providing a resource for all stakeholders involved in NRM and agricultural production improvement; and will include features on contemporary extension practice and policy, career development, and how we have arrived at where we are today (ie. the history); not to mention a range of case studies to 'ground that theory'. This will definitely be a publication worth being involved with and to look out for in the future!

Nicole Sallur, an Extension Officer from DPI&F, shares her (and her teams) experiences of implementing Pastoral EMS training in western Queensland. Nicole provides some interesting observations on the differences between working with producer groups or individuals, which is most successful, and talks about the need for support networks.

John Petheram (Honorary Research Fellow, The University of Melbourne) enlightens us on the benefits of writing a paper for a peer-reviewed publication. He not only illustrates the benefits such as reflection and gaining feedback, but also gives us some tips on 'where to start'.

In this edition, we also have an excellent contribution for our student segment. Emily Mendham, who grew up in rural NSW herself, is undertaking a PhD in Environmental Science at Charles Sturt University. Her research on the topic of 'Rural Property Turnover and the Rural Rebound: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities for Natural Resource Management' is already producing some interesting findings, such as differences between new residents and longer-term residents in the way they plan for and manage NRM.

And what else is in ExtensionNet? Check out the Australian vegetable industry's new strategic plan (Vegvision 2020), a plan that was developed by the 'collective wisdom' of the vegetable industry and also developed across the supply chain. This must have been a challenge! Also – read about the two current documents that SELN is producing on 'Extension's role' and 'Extension's value'. And if you enjoyed Austin McLennan's article on 'Digging for Gold' in the last edition, read an addition to this article by Austin who highlights some more 'gems'. Also meet our new members, who definitely show the expanse of membership throughout Australia, Amie Bolton (WA), Alison Derry (NT), Annette McCaffery (NSW) and Lauren Rickards (Vic). But where are the boys?

And.....don't forget to take part in nominating either an individual or a group that you know, who are eligible for the APEN Award for Excellence in Extension. How to nominate is also inside!

If you would like to submit an article in our next edition, we will be taking submissions until July 20. So please – get those legs and fingers active now! Suggestions for future editions also very welcome (christine.king@uq.edu.au)

Cheers !

ENET

A facilitated approach to training – more successful with groups

By Nicole Sallur, Extension Officer, DPI&F, Qld

A facilitated approach to Environmental Management Systems (EMS) training was successfully used by the Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries (DPI&F) project team working with producers in western Queensland. The objective was for producers to learn about EMS while developing one for their property. The main training material used was the Pastoral EMS Guide, developed by the project team, and it contained explanations, examples, templates and instructions for completing the EMS steps.

Producers from 40 properties received EMS training, 21 in groups and 19 individually. Thirty-two out of the original 40 producers fully developed an EMS for their property and commenced on-property implementation, 20 in groups and 12 individually.

Groups of producers

Four producer groups (one group of nine properties, one group of six properties and two groups of three properties) were trained in EMS during two group workshops, which were generally held on-property. These workshops occurred one to two months apart, and involved taking producers through the individual steps of EMS. The two group training workshops went for half to a full day, depending on the size of the group and the amount of detail necessary.

During the workshops producers were given an explanation of the steps, shown relevant examples of these completed steps and then had time to work on their own, with the option of sharing with the group. The producers working in groups generally developed and documented most of their EMS during the two group training workshops, with the exception of a few producers who wrote drafts before the workshop and continued working on them after

EMS is a tool for improving the environmental performance of a business or enterprise. It is based on the continuous improvement cycle of 'Plan, Do, Check and Review'.

the workshops.

This project has had more success working with groups for the following reasons:

- Groups have a momentum which encourages all participants to maintain a certain standard and

timeline for EMS development. There are set meeting dates when tasks need to be completed and the influence of peer pressure encourages participants to complete these tasks.

- Group members benefit from the experience, diversity of views and knowledge of the group during discussion.

- It is more efficient for the project team as one meeting can be spent with many producers, allowing the project team to work with a larger number of producers.

While group work was most effective here, we do recognise that group leaders can also persuade the rest of the group to try new things e.g. EMS, which may mean more producers are recruited but some of them may be less committed.

The training provided to groups of producers was more structured, with predetermined meeting dates and agendas, more detailed explanations and discussion generating activities as well as time for producers to develop their own EMS during meetings. These factors are probably the reason why groups have made more progress with their EMS than individuals.

Individual producers

Due to extensive travel distances or a lack of interest in participating in a group, producers from 19 properties were trained individually over a period of one to six months. These producers were trained in one of two ways,



Nicole Sallur,
Extension Officer,
DPI&F, Qld

If possible, training in a group situation is preferable, as producers gain immense benefits from the motivation, enthusiasm, support and discussions that groups generate.

depending on their need for assistance. Producers either completed the majority of their EMS on their own after an introductory visit, or did so after an additional one to two visits. Each visit lasted about half a day.

During the first visit, producers received training in the EMS process using the Pastoral EMS Guide. Subsequent visits to producers desiring further assistance allowed the project team to provide more detail on the EMS steps and help with EMS development. These visits were relatively unstructured compared to producer group workshops, with outcomes dependent on the progress made by each producer and the time available for the meeting.

EMS development with individual producers has varied:

- Some made little or no progress.
- Others have only developed their EMS while one of the project team members was there.
- A few have made significant progress without much help.

Generally it has been more challenging to work with individuals than groups, for the following reasons:

- They were more difficult to motivate.
- Harder to arrange meeting times and easier for them to cancel meetings.
- Less time was spent with some of the individual producers and hence their progress

was harder to track.

- Progress with EMS was variable as it primarily relied on their own motivation to put the time and effort in.
- Not exposed to the discussions of a group.

Conclusions

Training in EMS needs to be delivered so that producers can learn about EMS while they are developing one for their property. Training needs to be flexible, interesting and relevant. It must also fit in with the busy schedules of producers.

If possible, training in a group situation is preferable, as producers gain immense benefits from the motivation, enthusiasm, support and discussions that groups generate.

However, for those producers who have to work individually, either by choice or due to geographic location, some form of support network is vital. This support can come from other producers and/or organisations with a vested interest in the outcomes of EMS, such as government departments, catchment organisations and industry groups.

This support network is vital for producers working in groups or individually, to encourage and maintain EMS development and implementation, particularly where no drivers for EMS adoption exist.



These findings are from an EMS pilot project, one of 16 projects funded under the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Natural Heritage Trust National EMS Pilot Program. Funding and support was also provided by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland. The final report for this pilot project is available at http://www.daffa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/116341/qdpi-final-report.pdf or there is a paper published in the Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture at <http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/72/issue/3746.htm>

Some more Extension gems unearthed at Nambour

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

This article appeared in the last issue of ExtensionNet reporting on a Cluster event held after the conference last year and we were not at that time able to fit in all those Extension gems so here they are now. (Ed)

Traits of an Extension Officer etc. (Rebecca Lines-Kelly)

- o In the US study, Extension Officer Meyers-Briggs Personality Type was more often ESTJ

- o It's important that we take time out to REFLECT on OURSELVES

- o Are Women Extension Officers more likely to document stories for evaluation than men???

- o A presenter/Extension Officer MUST ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE!!!

World/Possibilities Café (Austin McLennan)

- o Each table has a Host/Hostess

- o Over a series of questions the others move from table to table, but not as a group.

- o It's important to come up with meaningful, even inspiring, questions for the table groups to discuss.

- o Bringing the 'Café conversation' together at the end is a real challenge. The idea we tried at Nambour was to include a question about what seeds need to be planted by extension, to grow the desired fruit (for extension and the communities we work with). Cardboard cutouts in the shape of fruit and seeds were provided for the participants to write down their thoughts. These could then be gathered together on a whiteboard out the front, with similar ideas grouped and linked.

- o The 'seeds and fruit' idea was inspired by one technique the developers of the 'World Café' use to summarise the outcomes of a Café. This method involves a graphic artist who goes around from table to table 'drawing' the conversations as she listens. I didn't want to take that on, but I started thinking of a visual metaphor that might capture (a) the interconnectedness of the



ideas emerging (a vine?), and (b) capture the idea of our thoughts and actions (seeds) producing desirable results (fruits). Having the participants write on the cut-out shapes helped me sidestep an otherwise daunting artistic task!).

- o For more information on the World Caf_ process, including facilitator guidelines, check out the following website: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/worldcafe.html>

An inspiring story of change management

- o For an account of change in a multinational corporation (Hewlett-Packard) and the powerful questions that helped generate the ideas and energy for change, take a look at the following website:

- <http://www.fastcompany.com/online/20/waugh.html>

- o The person credited with being the change agent (extension officer?) in this process was a lady called Barbara Waugh. Her website contains her book about her HP experiences 'The Soul in the Computer' - a good read that includes a tool kit for change agents, and is available for free download. All here at:

- http://www.hpl.hp.com/personal/Barbara_Waugh/index.html

Increasing producer participation rather than just those that always attend.

An extension project contacted all the individual producers in an area, engaged with them on a topic of interest and this increased their participation rates in other projects – over 8 years from 5 to 56 % of producers in a district. Took a lot of effort but achieved great results.

Deliberation forums for public participation (see paper on APEN site)

- o A way to get from 'me' to 'we'; think, talk and action where no optimal solution and diverse stakeholders.
- o Takes a lot of time to gather information – tech, social, environmental etc and put into issues book for prior reading.
- o Shared power in forum – if not present, get others to stand in
- o Aim:
 - o to find common ground
 - o understand what is important to them

- o find the real issue
- o to make choices and consequences – can't have it all.
- o it forces choice. People end up with a reason for their choice eg technical, feasible, so that it makes sense.
- o are usually 3 contentious choices and an action to take.

Other GEMS from Alison Spencer

- Are we affecting/changing the power in a group?
- Inspire learning.
- Aim for little steps where complex behavioural change required; and celebrate.
- Is information a delicious chocolate?
Rebecca Lines-Kelly
- Use relations, passion through photos, music and quotes to get a message across eg in a presentation Rebecca Lines-Kelly
- Farmers really liked the information prepared for kids, with drawings/cartoons.
Rebecca Lines-Kelly and Abigail Jenkins

ENET

Enabling change in rural and regional Australia

The State Extension Leaders Network (SELN) represents state government extension service providers, and is dominated by primary industry agencies but does have some natural resource management agency representation.

The group strongly agrees that **extension** is about **enabling change** and that **extension officers**, under their myriad of titles, are **change managers**. It was also agreed that extension wasn't the only change tool that our government's have at their disposal.

So SELN is producing two documents:

- **Extension's role:** a discussion document that puts extension in context with other government change tools. **This document is enclosed with this edition of ExtensionNet.**

- **Extension's value:** a set of case studies that illustrate and, where possible quantify,

examples of extension enabling change to meet government outcomes. This is currently being compiled.

This discussion document sets out to frame the conversation about the evolution of the role of extension and where it is applicable now. It is a walk and talk document that is only worthwhile if it challenges our thought processes and improves delivery of real and measurable outcomes for all our clients. For example, extension is traditionally linked with research and development but works equally well with other change tools like legislation and regulation. What other combinations would prove effective in different circumstances?

The document has been endorsed as a discussion document by our respective agencies and is already a part of the R, D&E review discussions. To see SELN's membership, purpose and other documents, visit our website www.seln.org.au.

ENET

Student's Segment

By Emily Mendham (PhD Student, School of Environmental Sciences, Charles Sturt University)

My keen interest in the environment and rural sustainability led me to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Science. I grew up in rural NSW and attended the Thurgoona campus of Charles Sturt University. After completing a Bachelor of Applied Science, I decided to pursue research in the social dimension of natural resource management and completed Honours in 2005 on "Factors Affecting Landholder Adoption of Native Vegetation Best Management Practices in the Murray Irrigation Region".

[Article available: 'Landholder participation in native vegetation management in irrigation areas', Journal of Ecological Management and Restoration, Vol. 8(1), pp. 42-48.]

In 2006 I commenced my PhD entitled "Rural Property Turnover and the Rural Rebound: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities for Natural Resource Management". The aims of my research are to determine the past and future extent of property turnover in regional Victoria and whether this trend is part of a 'rural rebound' (people moving into rural areas). I will also investigate if new residents are different from longer-term residents in their characteristics, the way they manage the land and their plans for natural resource management (NRM). Implications of these changes for NRM will be explored. I am undertaking the research in two Victorian regions, the Wimmera and Corangamite Catchment Management areas.

To conduct this research I have employed state government property sales records provided by the Victorian Valuer General and existing Charles Sturt University regional landholder surveys. I am currently in the process of conducting district level case studies using semi-structured interviews with landholders and others such as real estate agents.

My research has predicted a substantial and increasing rate of rural property ownership turnover, approaching 50% in the next ten years in the Corangamite region. Assuming that changes in property ownership result in changes in property management, the transfer of 50% of rural properties over the next ten

years is likely to have significant implications for NRM in the region. For example, new residents to the region may have different values, knowledge and skills regarding land management. Perhaps they will have less time to devote to on-property management, or maybe new settlers will be more interested in biodiversity conservation?

Over the past few months I have enjoyed analysing the regional landholder surveys and some interesting findings are beginning to emerge. For example, new residents in the Corangamite region are less likely to be farmers by occupation, value their properties for different reasons and have different levels of knowledge on environmental topics compared to long-term residents. Interviewing landholders is another interesting part of the research process and I am thoroughly enjoying hearing landholders' stories and what locals think these changes will mean for their communities and environment.

I am continuing to analyse my results and am preparing to attend several conferences in the coming months. I look forward to sharing my results with local communities, agencies and other researchers and to continue working in the area.

For more information contact Emily Mendham on (02) 60519839 or emendham@csu.edu.au.

www.csu.edu.au/faculty/sciagr/ses/



Emily Mendham

My research has predicted a substantial and increasing rate of rural property ownership turnover, approaching 50% in the next ten years in the Corangamite region

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.

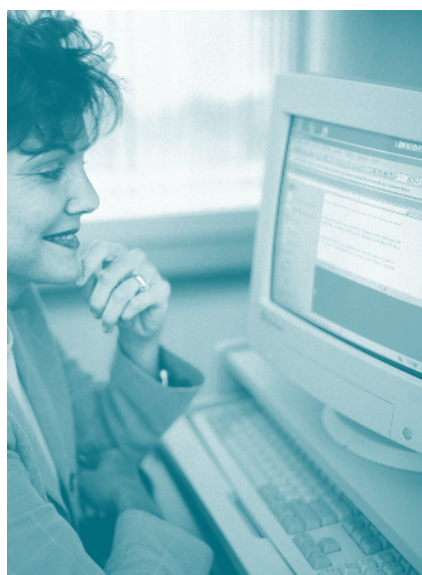
Why write a paper - for a peer-reviewed publication?

By R. John Petheram (Honorary Research Fellow, School of Forest and Ecosystems Science, Creswick Campus, The University of Melbourne)

Introduction

Although we all write regularly as part of our work, most extension professionals let themselves down badly when it comes to writing for the more 'reputable' journals. These publications have highest status in academic and employer circles because they are 'peer-reviewed'. This means submitted papers are sent to other professionals for comment and suggestions for improvement. The process requires authors to answer reviewers' queries and to make amendments if required – before publication of the article.

Our reluctance to write for peer-reviewed journals probably arises from our belief that farmers are our clients, and that only they should evaluate our extension work. I suggest that this failure to publish in journals has been a serious detriment to the extension profession, and also to personal advancement within the R&D industry. Because 'research scientists' must constantly write journal papers in order to advance their careers, our publication records in extension usually compare poorly with those of research professionals.



Writing for career flexibility

Apart from its value in improving our prospects of promotion within extension agencies, a good publication record can greatly enhance one's prospects of moving into new areas of employment. In my own career I was able to move from extension into vocational education, and later into social research – mainly by producing papers in new areas of interest to me. When offered work with FAO I was told that one particular paper on my CV had secured me that job. Without a list of peer-reviewed papers it is almost pointless applying for work with a university or CSIRO, or an international R&D agency. A lack of publication cuts our chances of moving around, and can also reflect on the credibility of our work.

Writing as a means of reflection and gaining feedback

Research scientists know that their results are not accepted until subjected to tests (usually statistical) and then publication. But in extension our work is not often amenable to statistical testing, so it is all the more important that we expose our methods, the underpinning theory and the results of extension, to critical review by others with appropriate expertise.

The process of writing about our work can often reveal serious flaws in our thinking about our methods and design in extension, or the interpretation of results. Reviewing of papers for recent APEN conferences showed many instances of unclear logic or invalid conclusions: 90 percent of papers submitted needed further reflection and rethinking, before amendment, and final acceptance. This is quite normal in any paper review process.

New authors often fail to justify the design of their extension efforts in terms of existing theory or previous experience

in extension. We can expect reviewers to guide us on theoretical aspects and to suggest new sources of literature, as well as point out flaws in our logic. Without proper reflection and review there is strong danger of papers being published that are invalid or misleading – so peer-review is a standard tactic sought out by good extension agents.

Where to start writing

We are all involved in extension initiatives that have some unique or interesting feature that is worth writing about for a professional audience. The challenge is to select and produce an article that is of topical interest, deals with valid questions, has logical structure and makes useful conclusions. An important first step is to ensure you have read widely about the theory underlying the work and the approaches used by other professionals. Also study closely the requirements of the journal to which you plan to submit. Co-authorship can be highly beneficial in writing your first papers, especially if your colleagues have high publication success rate. A writing mentor can be invaluable, and numerous good books exist on academic writing.

If you believe that extension agents are immune from the employer scrutiny of publications faced by our colleagues in research – then I suggest you think again – as writing about our achievements (and failures) should be a vital part of extension work.

In a future article we will look at some options for publication in extension, and criteria used to guide reviewers in assessing papers for journals and peer-reviewed conference proceedings.

petheram@ncable.net.au



The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension

Editor-In-Chief: Martin Mulder,
Wageningen University, The Netherlands

The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension is published to inform experts who do or use research in the field of agricultural education and extension about research conducted in this field worldwide. Information about this research is needed to improve policies, strategies, methods and practices for agricultural education and extension. The *JAEE* accepts authoritative and well-referenced scientific articles within the field of agricultural education and extension after a double-blind peer review process.



Agricultural education and extension faces profound change, and therefore its core area of attention is moving towards communication, competence development and performance improvement for a wide variety of fields and audiences, most of which can be studied from a multi-disciplinary perspective, including:

- Communication for Development
- Competence Management and Development
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Human Resource Development
- Design and Implementation of Competence-based Education
- Environmental and Natural Resource Management
- Entrepreneurship and Learning
- Facilitating Multiple-Stakeholder Processes
- Health and Society
- Innovation of Agricultural-Technical Education
- Innovation Systems and Learning
- Integrated Rural Development
- Interdisciplinary and Social Learning
- Learning, Conflict and Decision Making
- Poverty Reduction
- Performance Improvement
- Sustainable Agricultural Production

The *JAEE* sees as the purposes of agricultural education and extension to prepare students for leadership, management, and technical support roles, to further develop the public, independent workers, volunteers and professionals, and to improve practices in the fields mentioned. This should be achieved whilst balancing people, profit and planet interests.

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Personal Rate (print only)

US\$115; £70

Reduced Rate (print and online access)

US\$40; £25

(available to subscribers in low- and middle-income countries).

For further information on this journal visit:

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www.informaworld.com

Vegvision 2020: A Strategic Plan for the Australian Vegetable Industry

The Australian vegetable industry is being encouraged to support a range of new industry initiatives being established as part of the roll out of the industry's strategic plan.

The Vegvision 2020 plan presents the collective wisdom of the whole vegetable industry and the entire supply chain.

It condenses the keys to success into a plan which applies equally to individual businesses as well as the entire vegetable industry.

The plan is being driven by the industry through the Australian Vegetable Industry Group (AVIDG) which is made up of representatives of all sectors along the supply chain.

Chair of the Group, Tasmanian vegetable grower Richard Bovill, says the plan was developed by growers, processors, wholesalers, and retailers and has drawn on the successes and challenges being faced across the industry.

"The most successful businesses within the vegetable industry are developing and maintaining the right skills. They seek and maintain good relationships with their customers and understand their ever changing needs. These businesses have developed networks and relationships which allow them to function and grow. The common thread for these businesses is both energy and commitment.

"However there are problems within the industry that need to be addressed if the whole of the Australian vegetable supply chain is to prosper into the future," Mr Bovill said.

One challenge is to increase consumer demand for Australian vegetables, on both an international and domestic level. Others include targeted skills

development, better information for benchmarking, and working with our industry organisations to ensure we have the best leadership and structure for our industry's future.

The AVIDG is charged with the job of engaging with the Australian vegetable industry supply chain to drive the strategic plan through investing in selected Foundation Projects and then encouraging industry to manage them longer term.

Already four projects have been commissioned.

An Export network has been developed to better understand Australia's key markets. The Network is made up of seven of Australia's larger vegetable exporters and will initially focus on China to understand more about its potential as both a competitor and a future market for Australian vegetables. If successful this approach could be used as a blueprint for other potential export markets in the future.

In a second project, a survey being undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) in April this year will provide some benchmark data about the status and profitability of the vegetable industry around the country.

Growers can have a say in the future policy directions of their industry by participating in the ABARE grower survey.

A leadership and industry structures project is now underway and will involve opportunities for the industry to

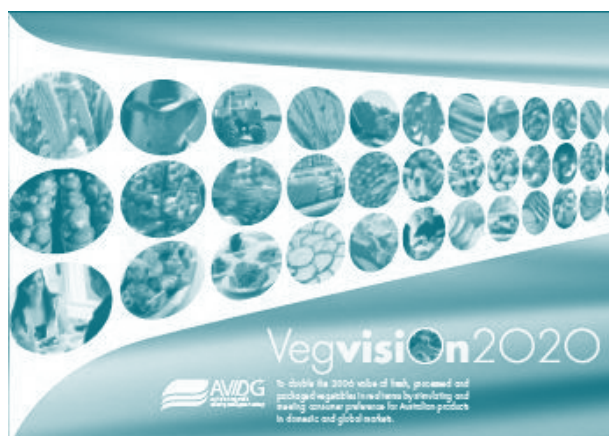
participate in discussions to help shape the future organisational arrangements that are best placed to drive the strategic plan forward when the AVIDG wraps up in June 2008. A number of grower meetings are expected to be held around the country in May to discuss the industry's future structure.

The AVIDG has also approved funding for the appointment of a People Development Coordinator through a grant to AUSVEG.

The role of the Coordinator is to enhance human resource capacity across the vegetable industry supply chain. The Coordinator will review existing business skills and training programs and put together a People Development Investment Plan for the whole vegetable supply chain. This position will be funded by the grant until June 2008.

Read or download Vegvision 2020 at www.avidgroup.net.au

ENET



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.

Amie Bolton



I graduated from Muresk Institute of Agriculture in 2004 with a bachelor of Agribusiness Marketing. I began with the Facey Group as the Executive Officer based in Wickiepin WA in early 2005. The Facey Group is an innovative, highly motivated & organised grower group with a strong focus on our local region with the aim of bringing the community together to work towards achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability for the region. It is a forum for people in the district to discuss and question current farming systems and how we can improve them, and to explore and trial new systems and methods.

My role at the Facey Group involves working alongside growers to plan, develop and implant a range of activities including R&D, workshops, forums, events and training in which the group has identified under its 5 specialty groups; Cropping, Women in Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, Sheep & Pastures & Grain Marketing. I assist each of these specialty groups to identify and set goals, develop budgets, plan & conduct trials & demonstrations & access funding. My other key roles involve the marketing of the group to the wider community along with communication and the dissemination of relevant, local and current information to members and sponsors.

My role keeps me extremely busy; there is never a dull moment! I really enjoy working with farmers across the region, particularly my members and assisting them to conduct & access information at a local level. I enjoy the vast variety of activities involved in my role and constantly being challenged.

I am currently participating in the APEN mentoring scheme and I am really looking forward to working with my mentor and developing the process further.

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

Tom Davison	<i>VIC</i>
Melinda Mann	<i>VIC</i>
Joe Seepersad	<i>West Indies</i>
Lauren Rickards	<i>VIC</i>
Nicole Sallur	<i>QLD</i>
Carolien Hoogland	<i>The Netherlands</i>
Alyssa Schembri	<i>NSW</i>
Annette McCaffery	<i>NSW</i>
Amie Bolton	<i>WA</i>
Brigid Nelson	<i>QLD</i>
Natalie Moxham	<i>VIC</i>
Ian Coldwell	<i>NSW</i>
Karen Baum	<i>VIC</i>
Tom Phillips	<i>England</i>
Alison Derry	<i>NT</i>
Col Freeman	<i>QLD</i>
Kerrie Murnane	<i>VIC</i>



Alison Derry

Extension Coordinator: Weed Management Branch (Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts)

I have been acting in the position of Extension Coordinator for the past 16 months and have recently become permanent in this position in the last 2 months. My role working in weed management is principally focussed on extension including a strong focus working with local communities and schools as far as education is concerned. It is a particularly challenging job as the position covers the whole of the Northern Territory including offices in Darwin, Katherine, Borroloola, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.



Annette McCaffery

Annette McCaffery is currently a Project Officer with the NSW Department of Primary Industries Weed Management Unit in Orange, NSW. She is primarily involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Units Statewide communication strategy. Prior to this Annette spent many years in the southern irrigation areas of NSW working in both research and extension. She was involved in the initiation and development of the Coleambally and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) Land and Water Management Plans (LWMP) within her role as a Salinity Advisory Officer with NSW Agriculture. Following this she provided consultancy advice on the development of: the education programs attached to both LWMPs; the water use efficiency programs for the MIA; and the branding, promotion and community engagement plans for the MIAs LWMP.

Lauren Rickards



Lauren has a Doctor of Philosophy in agricultural education from the University of Oxford. Involving in-depth primary research in agricultural institutions, her thesis critiqued agricultural higher education in England since its inception in 1845 and examined how cultural barriers to sustainability thinking have been constructed. An Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Lauren has since written on the importation of this agricultural education model to Victoria.

While in Oxford on her Rhodes Scholarship, Lauren also completed an interdisciplinary Masters in Environmental Change and Management, building on her science background with a thesis in forest ecology. While studying and since, she has worked in a variety of teaching, management and consultancy roles. Before joining RMCG, she was a consultant with the Nous Group, which specializes in strategic planning for government, and Vice-Principal at one of the residential colleges of the University of Melbourne. At RMCG, Lauren is primarily involved in social and policy research.

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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