



Gippy AGchat

December 14, 2009 – Issue 21

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Gippy land health tender scheme launched

The Gippsland Lakes, far East Gippsland and Western Port eco-systems are among 13 priority areas listed by the state government in a recent white paper.

Farmers will gain access to new income sources under the new plan which will build on programs such as EcoTender and BushTender, which provide incentives to farmers to improve land health.

A share of \$105m will be used to protect eco-systems and create a biolink from the Gippsland Lakes to Wilsons Promontory.

The Government will increase funding to market-based programs by an additional \$1.5m under the plan entitled Securing our Natural Future – a white paper for land and biodiversity at a time of climate change.

Landholders will be encouraged to develop a package environmental goods and services and will be offered advice on how to access developing ecosystem markets.

Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, said the plan will significantly change the way Victoria's natural resources are managed.

"As we enter our 13th year of drought, Victoria's regional communities are given the tools they need to stay economically strong in the face of the growing threat of climate change," he said.

CMA's and regional coastal boards will form the basis of new regionally-based Natural Resource and Catchment Authorities responsible for coordinated management across catchments and coastal and marine ecosystems.

Mr Jennings said: "The aim is to bring together the management of catchments and coastal and marine ecosystems in the region and adopt a broader scale approach.

"We want to build on the best elements of the community-based approach of the catchment management authorities and capitalise on the joint strengths of the various agencies to better manage the important natural assets of the Gippsland region."

More? <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrence.nsf/childdocs/-A87712F40FADECFFCA25767300162346?open>

An important message: plan to be around next year

An increase in farm deaths – most recently a slasher accident in Gippsland – has prompted a call for greater safety during hay season from Worksafe.

With good rain in many parts of the state, harvesting underway, haymaking and general cleaning-up ahead of the fire season, there is enormous pressure to get work done.

The leading cause of deaths on Australian farms involves tractors and farm vehicles while dams, rivers and creeks are major risk areas for children on farms.

The farm workshop is the most common place for farm injuries to eyes and hands.

Unguarded grain augers and PTO shafts are the most common cause of injury resulting in amputation.

During haymaking, look for the hazards: People being hit by, or falling from, vehicles; unguarded machinery, use of attachments not suited to the job; securing of loads being moved, poor stacking of bales; falling from height and contractor management.

There is also often a spate of injury around January and February as feed is being moved, particularly with grain augers, belts and pulleys, and people falling off silos and trucks.

Simple things such as fitting rollover protection to tractors, installing silo lids that close from the ground or guards to grain augers can save lives and avoid injury.

More? www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Have you got it right?

The Gippsland Dairy Extension Centre is organising a series of days to discuss many of the key messages to come out of Project 3030 and how farmers are using them in their own farming systems.

The following questions, and many others, will be discussed:

- How did the 3030 Ryegrass Max and Complementary Forage farmlets at DemoDairy, SW Victoria, make such good profits, even in the drought year?
- Do alternative forages have a place on your farm?
- How does the host farmer integrate 3030 messages into his farming system?
- How do farmers balance risk and resources in a variable climate?

The discussion days will be held:

- February 4 with Joe Connelly, Marlo Road, Orbost from 6:30pm to 9:30pm and BBQ tea beforehand.
- February 5 with Lesley Samuel, DPI Offices, Maffra from 10.30am to 12.30pm and free lunch.
- February 8 with Geoff Warriner, 1515 Drouin-Korumburra Road, Poowong from 10.30am to 12.30pm and free lunch.
- February 9 with Stuart Bland, 199 Meadows Road, Alberton from 10.30am to 12.30pm and free lunch.

More? [Frank Mickan 5624 2259](tel:56242259) or frank.mickan@dpi.vic.gov.au

Diploma of Sustainability comes to GippsTAFE

GippsTAFE Warragul is offering a Diploma of Sustainability in 2010, starting in February. The one-year course is offered either full-time (one day/week), for people not currently studying or holding a diploma or higher, or as a post-graduate dual diploma (12 full-day workshops).

Recognition of prior learning might apply in some enrolment applications. Visit GippsTAFE's website and search for 'sustainability' for information on the diplomas.

More? [Kelvin Slade 5622 8526](tel:56228526) or KelvinS@gippstafe.vic.edu.au



CLASSIC COUNTRY CLOTHING THAT MEANS BUSINESS

For the past 20 years, Gippsland-based Port Phillip Shop has supplied smart casual, eye-catching corporate clothing embroidered with the customer's logo.

No customer is too small and our service is friendly and helpful. Our family-owned business offers a prompt and free sampling service. Wherever possible we supply Australian-made products: Clothing, footwear and gifts sourced from R M Williams, hats from Akubra and Barmah, knitwear from Merino Gold, Tooralie and Geccu.

Our customers include rural supply houses, stock agents, industry groups,

breed associations, wineries, tourist organisations, local government, family companies and individuals. Even if it's not on our website, we'll hunt it up for you because, like you... we mean business.

CONTACT US: Ph (03) 5623 4369 Fax (03) 5623 4575 Visit our shop ... 1a Barkly Street, Corner Smith St, Warragul 3820 [see map](#) Or browse <http://www.portphillipshop.com.au> ... you'll be welcome!



South Gippsland sustainability wish list forum

More support for small-scale intensive farming was a suggestion offered in a recent sustainability forum organised by South Gippsland Shire.

Rate reductions for Landcare members – such as the discount offered by Bass Coast Shire – was another.

Other items on the wish list included better weed control, encouraging organics and more regional trading.

The forum, attended by more than 30 people, was one of a series being run by the shire to background its sustainability policy.

Attendees were asked to suggest ways of boosting farming's sustainability. Among their suggestions were for the shire to identify best-practice sustainable farming, identify best soil types locally, and limit housing development within these zones.

Another suggestion was to accept a wider range of activities alongside conventional agriculture: seedbanks, native plant reserves and wildlife conservation areas.

One attendee asked the council to impose controls on rabbits and pensioners!

The next meeting will be on February 15 at 1.30pm at Korumburra library.

A policy will be drafted from the consultations and circulated for public comment in 2010.

More? Christine Hamilton 5662 9314

Local food producers wanted

The Inverloch Food and Wine festival is seeking Gippsland-based food producers to participate in the 2010 festival on Saturday, March 13.

More? Kate 0438 535 166 or ked27168@bigpond.net.au

Training in soil management

A four-day soil health course will be held from February to April in south and west Gippsland.

The course, offered by Vital Soil Consulting focuses on the chemical (nutrients, fertilisers, amendments), physical (soil structure, compaction, water holding) and biological aspects of soil management.

The cost of the four-day course (one day/week) is \$1200 plus GST, however full reimbursement is available to primary producers, their families and management teams under the FarmReady scheme. The training will be held:

- Corinella Saturdays: February 6, 13, 20, 27 (9.30am - 4.30pm)
- Poowong Thursdays: February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25 (5 days: 10am - 3pm)
- Corinella Tuesdays: March 2, 9, 16, 23 (9.30 am - 4.30 pm)
- Fish Creek Wednesdays: March 17, 24, 31 April 7 (9.30 am - 4.30 pm)
- Drouin Fridays: March 19, 26, April 9, 16 (9.30am - 4.30pm)

Half-day training workshops (\$150 + GST, FarmReady approved) will also be held in:

- Meeniyan Tuesday February 23, 11am - 3pm
- Toora Wednesday February 24, 11am - 3pm

Places are limited so book early.

More? Sonia Lee 5674 1543 or vital.soil@internode.on.net

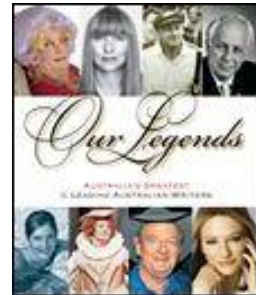
Just Released

Our Legends

Australia Post's Australian Legends Award was launched in 1997 to honour living Australians who have made a unique contribution to the Australian way of life, have inspired the community and influenced the way Australians think about themselves and their country.

Each Australian Legends Award is commemorated by the release of a set of Australia Post stamps. Forty-two famous names were honoured as Australian Legends over the first 13 years that the Award was presented.

Our Legends Australia's Greatest by Leading Australian Writers brings all of these great legends and their stories together for the first time in one collection. From sporting heroes Don Bradman, Dawn Fraser and Rod Laver, to our ANZAC heroes, pioneering individuals in the world of fashion, philanthropy, medicine, music and entertainment; the best of the best are on show in this commemorative book.



You can order online at www.wilkinsonpublishing.com.au – Click [here](#)
Every order is backed with a 100 per cent money back guarantee.

Incentives for proving Gippsland is TSE-free

Incentives are available for Gippsland sheep and cattle farmers who provide eligible stock for examination for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs).

These fatal degenerative diseases of the nervous system affect both humans and animals, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or 'mad cow' in cattle and scrapie in sheep.

The National Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Surveillance Program (NTSESP) monitors TSE and aims to demonstrate Australia's on-going freedom from BSE and scrapie. It examines several hundred cattle and sheep annually. Animals identified for inclusion must be:

- Cattle at least 30 months of age and no more than nine years of age.
- Sheep at least 18 months of age.
- And displaying progressive clinical neurological signs (for example circling, blindness or abnormal behaviour)

A maximum of two animals per property is permitted.

The animal must be alive at presentation to DPI staff. A producer incentive of \$300 for cattle and \$50 for sheep is available.

More? Report to your local vet or by contacting their nearest DPI Animal Health officer at DPI Ellinbank on (03) 5624 2222, DPI Maffra (03) 5147 0800, DPI Bairnsdale on (03) 5152 0400 or DPI Leongatha on (03) 5662 9900.

Become a Climate Champion

Are you a farmer who believes that managing climate risk is an important part of running your business? Are you interested in getting early previews of research in this field? Would you like to offer feedback to researchers and share information with other farmers? Managing Climate Variability is looking for up to 15 farmers from across Australia to be Climate Champions and supported through training and resource kits.

As Climate Champions, the farmers will benefit from access to the latest weather forecasting tools and can share their experiences with other progressive farmers who are adapting to the increasingly variable climate.

Farmers interested in nominating can complete a short form online at www.climatechampions.net.au. The closing date for nominations is January 14.

Australian growers for horticultural tour

Australian vegetable growers are invited to apply to visit a leading trade fair in Berlin and view horticultural facilities and on-farm practices in Israel and Spain from 27 January to 12 February.

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy said: "The tour will take 10 growers through horticultural regions in Israel and Spain, where they'll learn about cutting-edge water management technologies and view innovative growing practices in climates similar to those in Australia."

Supported by vegetable levies with matched funds from the Australian Government, the tour will coincide with the Fruit Logistica trade fair in Berlin, one of the world's largest events of its kind.

Tour costs will be significantly subsidised although growers will be asked to contribute \$3000. All accommodation and most meals will be included, along with economy airfares and land travel. Applications close 24 December.

More? Erin 03 9544 8098.

Tender for bio-study for cropping soils

The Grains Research & Development Corporation is calling for multi-stage tenders that assist in harnessing some of the biological potential inherent in cropping soils.

Tenders are called for in four theme areas:

1. Monitoring soil quality for better decision making;
2. Management systems for enhanced nutrient availability (incorporating rhizosphere);
3. Suppressive soils: traits and transferability;
4. Education and training (incorporating building research capacity)

Full documentation, including specific selection criteria, is available here: [Soil Biology tender document \(187k - doc\)](#) [Soil Biology Business Plan \(93k - doc\)](#)

Tenders must be submitted using these forms by 1700 EDST on Monday, 15 February 2010.

More? Gabrielle Bush on 02 6166 4500 or click here to [email](#)

Non-compliance brings prosecution

Southern Rural Water has prosecuted a Newry driller for failing to comply with licence conditions.

Patrick Smythe, of Able Drilling, appeared before the Sale Magistrates Court on November 17 and entered into an agreement to donate \$500 to the CFA, paying legal costs of \$1500 to Southern Rural Water (SRW), and writing a letter of apology for not complying with licence conditions.

Evidence presented to the court stated that Mr Smythe drilled two dry bores at Fernbank and left the site without filling them in, and that in a second incident, he drilled a bore at Yanakie which produced insufficient water, and then drilled another one without decommissioning the first bore.

SRW Manager Groundwater and Rivers, Craig Parker, said: "If drillers want to vary their licence – for instance, drilling more holes, changing location or drilling deeper – they need to contact us first."

More? Ph 1300 139 510 or visit www.srw.com.au

Who said this?

Visit one of the most interesting ag speeches of the past month to find out who said:

- Farming is a sunset industry and manufacturing and tourism will take its place.
- Rural broadband is to agriculture and horticulture what electricity was to the last century.
- 20 percent of the diet for 2.6 billion people is fish.
- The seas provide the largest carbon sinks on earth

More? <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU0912/S00049.htm>

An old hand with the camera?

Home footage of Phillip Island shot between 1950 and 1980 is sought by a film maker. Documentary-maker Sally Ingleton is seeking images to accompany a six-part natural history series for the ABC.

More? info@360degreefilms.com.au or 9948 1922

New glasshouse training facility

A new \$1.2m horticulture facility is to be built at the Chisholm Cranbourne campus. The facility will feature a giant commercial glasshouse containing the latest in controlled environment training technology.

Chisholm has been working closely with the Hydroponic Farmers Federation and the Australian Hydroponic and Glasshouse Association to design the facility.

Initially a 1000 sq m, 6m-high, commercial glasshouse will be constructed and a further 1000 sq m glasshouse is also proposed.

Netherlands-based Priva is supporting the project, which will be completed next June.

Festival focuses on sustainability

Sustainable farming practices and water use efficiency are the focus of the inaugural Sustainability Festival, hosted by South Gippsland Shire, at Coal Creek on March 14.

The event will also include sustainable food production, home food processing, recycling, energy-efficient home design and first-person presentations by regional speakers.

Agribusiness Gippsland will have a stand there – wander up and say hello!

More? Alycia Stivic 5662 9271 or alycias@southgippsland.vic.gov.au

Got a better widget?

Farmers are often inventors and small engineering companies are often the home of great ideas. Government assistance is available to help commercialise new creations.

More?

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/Section/Innovation/Pages/CommercialisationAustralia.aspx>

Re-tooling for Climate Change

The Re-tooling for Climate Change program helps small and medium-sized Australian manufacturers reduce their environmental footprint, through projects that improve the energy and/or water efficiency of their production processes.

Round 6 of the Re-tooling for Climate Change program is open for applications until 5pm on March 22, 2010.

The program provides grants of between \$10,000 and \$500,000, up to a maximum of half of the cost of each project.

The Re-tooling for Climate Change program is one of the three elements of the \$240 million Clean Business Australia initiative. The other elements are the Climate Ready Program and the Green Building Fund.

More? AusIndustry hotline on 13 28 46 or hotline@ausindustry.gov.au

Want to run climate change workshops?

The Organic Federation of Australia (OFA) has received funding from the Australian Government to run Climate Change workshops for organic farmers.

The OFA is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified individuals and organisations to run these workshops around Australia.

More? [Cathrine De Danann accounts@ofa.org.au](mailto:Cathrine.DeDanann@ofa.org.au) or 1300 657 435

New mayor for Casey

Cr Lorraine Wreford has been sworn in as Casey Council's new mayor with Cr Shar Balmes as deputy mayor.

New standards for handling livestock

New laws have been introduced relating to animal welfare, biosecurity and traceability standards for Victoria's livestock industry.

State agriculture minister Joe Helper said: "Operators will have a choice in how they demonstrate their compliance. Those who don't participate in an approved program will still be able to demonstrate that they meet the standards through inspection and auditing by the DPI."

The move will reflect national standards in Victorian legislation and follows several national reviews. The first set of national standards, relating to the land transport of animals, is expected to start in early 2010.

Looking for a venue for 20 people? Or 20,000?

Look at Lardner Park, near Warragul.

We have a reputation for large-scale events, such as Farm World, Trucks In Action and the Civil Works Expo.

We also have flexibility for smaller meetings, conferences and workshops. The Lardner Park board room and pavilions are ideal for equipment and product launches.

Our location is convenient for Melbourne and Gippsland attendees.



For further information

email mark@lardnerpark.com.au, visit www.lardnerpark.com.au or phone 5626 1373

Landcare grants announced

The South Gippsland Landcare Network (SGLN) has announced funding for on-ground works with more than \$50,000 to be allocated in the coming months.

The funding is from two Network Projects:

- One Million Trees for South Gippsland Round 1 offers grants of \$1,000 for plants and fencing to protect and enhance waterways
- New Landholder grants as part of the Revitalise, Renew and Regenerate Landcare in South Gippsland. \$1000 grants are available for new Landcare members who have joined since July 1, 2008. Funding for remnant protection, revegetation, weed control, waterway protection.

All Landcare members have been sent an Expression of Interest form and guidelines on the grants available.

Expressions of Interest must be received by Friday January 29, 2010.

More? Belinda Brennan sgln@landcare.net or 5613 5972

Back to the Agfutures forum

Recent Department of Primary Industries (DPI) AgFutures forums focussed on themes nominated by Gippsland farmers.

DPI AgFutures Project Officer, Karen Thomas said farmers were keen to discuss grazing viability and the growing issue of residential lifestyle properties being developed in land traditionally utilised by grazing industries.

Ross Batten, from DPI's Meat and Wool team, told the forum that good farmers are naturally strategic planners that constantly think about outcomes for the future.

Martin Gill from Bass Coast Shire Council said that the shire recognised the 'right to farm' and the need to protect its agricultural industries. Martin said that fragmentation of rural land through the creation of small rural lots within the Farming Zone and Rural Conservation Zone would be strongly discouraged.

Details of a new series of AgFutures forums for Gippsland will be announced early 2010.

More? Karen 0488 372 411

Macalister discovers the trials of trials

Cows at the Macalister Demonstration Farm are again having trouble grazing the sub-surface drip irrigation trial paddocks with what appears to be nitrate poisoning.

Frank Tyndall reports: "Lower milk production; grey, shiny manure; most cows edgy and a couple crook. The suspected cause (not this time the applied effluent) but the fertiliser nitrogen being applied immediately after grazing to the dry surface and not much of it entering the plant until it rains. In effect, the grazing can then occur far too soon, before the nitrogen is converted to leaf protein. The trials and tribulations of trials!

"There are plans to deliver the nitrogen via the underground piping in the irrigation water. This will solve the "applying N to a dry surface" problem. However some water seems to be going to deep drainage and it's assumed some nitrogen will be lost with it."

More? Frank Tyndall 0409 940 782 or ftyndall@ozemail.com.au

Honey bees don't look after themselves

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is urging hobby beekeepers to register as beekeepers.

The reminder follows recent discoveries of unregistered beehives in Gippsland.

DPI Apiary Inspector Ray Gribbin said that under the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994 and the Apiary Code of Practice (May 1997) it is mandatory for anyone who owns, or who has charge, care or possession of one or more hives of bees to register as a beekeeper with DPI.

There are currently 2117 beekeepers in Victoria, who manage over 100,000 hives.

Honey bees and beehives can harbour both endemic and exotic pests and diseases that could seriously threaten the Victorian honey bee industry.

The current annual fee for one to 60 hives is \$15. When 61 or more hives are kept, the fee is calculated at 25 cents per hive.

Mr Gribbin said there are other benefits to registering with DPI, including access to the free American foulbrood disease honey testing program, known as AFB Smart, as well as a beekeeping advisory service supplied by DPI apiary staff.

To register as beekeeper online visit the DPI website at www.dpi.vic.gov.au or DPI Beekeeper Registration Hotline 1800 356 761.

More? Ray Gribbin 5152 0600 or ray.gribbin@dpi.vic.gov.au

Rise to the challenge

The 2010 Premier's Sustainability Awards recognise and reward Victorian businesses, institutions, communities and individuals that demonstrate outstanding leadership and contribute to a more sustainable future for Victoria. Sustainable organisations do things more productively while reducing their everyday environmental impacts.

The 2010 awards focus on organisations and people who have chosen to act now rather than deem it too difficult to meet the sustainability challenge head-on.

2010 categories for submission are:

- Large Business
- Small Business
- Built Environment
- Community
- Products and Services
- Local Government (new)
- State Government (new)
- Tertiary Education (new)

An information session will be held at Sustainability Victoria, Level 28, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne on Thursday January 28, 2.30pm-3.30pm.

Email Wayne Slattery at Banksia at info@banksiafdn.com to register for the information session. Please include: "Registering for Premier's Awards Information Session" in the subject line and include your name, organisation and email address.

The awards are open for applications now and close on February 10, 2010.

More? http://www.sustainabilityawards.com.au/?page_id=2

Scholarship opens to young rural students

The Elmore Charity Ball Committee is inviting applications for a \$5000 Rural Scholarship.

The scholarship aims to provide a young member of the rural community with the opportunity to further their education in an agricultural field by assisting with the cost of accommodation for the first year of their agricultural course at a TAFE or university.

The scholarship is open to students who wish to take up farming as a career, provide consultancy, research, technical and other services to agriculture.

Students may apply if they are entering their first year of full-time study in an Australian Tertiary Institution or TAFE course related to agriculture, and require accommodation during the course of study. Applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents under 24 years of age on January 1, 2010.

Applications close on January 31, 2010 and application forms can be obtained by emailing elmorecharityball@iinet.net.au or from www.elmoresummersendoff.org.au

More? Sam Shotton 0418 506 228

ALDI seeking suppliers for expansion in Australia

Discount grocery chain ALDI is looking for new suppliers as part of its plan to continue expanding in Australia.

The chain first opened in Australia in January 2001 and now has over 200 stores operating across New South Wales, ACT, Queensland and Victoria – with a growth rate of around 25 stores a year.

The company has started a program of open days, which allow prospective suppliers to visit its new head office and learn more about it does do business.

Discussion groups provide added benefits

Connecting Dairy Communities discussion groups are providing an extra benefit to participants across Victoria.

The groups are designed to promote meaningful discussion and information sharing about dairy-related issues, but the social support and camaraderie from the groups is most valued by members.

Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Connecting Dairy Communities Coordinator, Janet Sloan, said a strong level of trust and support had developed among members of the groups.

More than 60 groups operate across Victoria and provide dairy farmers with a safe, secure, social, learning environment in which to share experiences.

As well as sessions on pasture, feed, silage and weed and pest management the groups organise forums on industrial relations issues, genetics, fertilisers and breeding. They also plan visits to field days, dairies and a range of current on-farm research projects.

Ms Sloan said the state-wide network was also a valuable way of sharing information about what was happening in other dairy regions in Victoria, Australia and overseas.

More? Janet Sloan 5561 9906 or visit www.dairyextension.com.au

There's water in them there bugs!

Bacterial photosynthesis constitutes a novel and sustainable means of water production, according to work presented at the Carbon Conference in Orange in November 2009.

Bacterial photosynthesis is exhibited by most bacteria and differs significantly from the more common form of plant photosynthesis.

Ken Bellamy, from VRM Pty, reported that the bacterial process differs in how it replaces electrons in its pigments. The more commonly understood form of plant photosynthesis requires water to provide missing electrons to photon-absorbing pigments, while bacteria do not require water to undergo photosynthesis.

Both of the photosynthetic processes result in the output of water and carbon, however, bacterial photosynthesis is unique in that it produces water.

More? <http://www.slideshare.net/secret/NJY6v7yZNWep5n>

Agritourism dossier available

Agribusiness Gippsland is compiling a dossier of agritourism in Gippsland, drawing on the learnings from this and two other regional forums it has organised this year. It contains some early data on regional agritourism operations, along with ideas from existing successful operators, emerging regional trends and possible challenges.

The cost will be \$30 plus GST and we are taking orders now at susanw@ptarmigan.com.au or via www.aginc.wordpress.com

Adventures into hyperspace

Here at Agribusiness Gippsland we've been fossicking around in hyperspace. You can see the results at www.aginc.wordpress.com

Have a look at our latest news, read some of the presentations from the Cowes agribusiness summit and the Warragul Food Farming and Health Conference.

Catch up with some of the great ideas from the Maffra agritourism forum.

And have a little visit to Gippytable – the page of locally inspired, locally derived recipes.

We're on the scout for more of them... if you're a local food or drink producer with a recipe – and a story – send it down the wire to madfuj@yahoo.com.au. Thanks.

New fertility/survival focus for dairy sire ranking

The Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme (ADHIS) will update its main breeding index for dairy sires, the Australian Profit Ranking (APR) from next April. The updated formula places more emphasis on daughter fertility and survival while increasing overall profit, compared to the current APR. ADHIS GM Daniel Abernethy said the change followed a periodic review of the APR which included feedback from dairy farmers.

Council inspects properties for fire risks

Casey Council's municipal fire prevention officer is undertaking the annual fire prevention inspection program to ensure private properties are fire risk-compliant. The council will be inspecting properties less than five acres throughout the municipality to ensure grass, weeds or undergrowth does not exceed 30cm in height. Any properties identified as requiring works to be undertaken will be issued with either a Fire Prevention Notice or a Notice to Comply. Reinspections of these private properties will then be undertaken to ensure compliance with the notice.

2010 Apprentice of the Year

The 2010 VFF/Elders Insurance Young Agricultural Apprentice of the Year Award seeks to acknowledge and celebrate the exceptional contribution that young agricultural apprentices make to their workplaces.

Applications are now being sought from full or part-time Certificate 3 or 4 Apprentices from each of the VFF commodity groups: chicken meat, dairy, eggs, grains, horticulture, livestock and pigs.

The 2010 VFF/Elders Insurance Apprentice of the Year will win the latest Honda CTX200A valued at over \$5,000. Every applicant will receive a free 12 month VFF Student Membership. Marcus Oldham is providing two scholarships to the one week Rural Leadership Program – one for both the winner and the runner up.

Applications close Friday February 19, 2010.

More? VFF Membership Services 1300 882 833

Don Campbell Memorial study tour departing again

The annual Don Campbell Memorial study tour will be heading to the dairy belt of northern Tasmania from February 22-26, 2010 looking at farming systems with a focus on managing livestock systems.

Highlights of the trip include:

- a great social experience and chance to develop friendships
- first hand observation of different farming systems and taking ideas back home
- an innovative way to study a diploma level unit through NCDEA.

The cost to participants is approximately \$100, which includes airfares, bus travel and accommodation. There will be an additional enrolment fee and participants will need to purchase dinners and some lunches.

The trip has been heavily subsidised by GippsDairy. Applications close on Friday December 18. Applicants will be notified of a result by Wednesday, December 23.

More? Kylie Barry 03 5624 3904 or yddpgipps@dcsi.net.au

Tips for safe grain storage

About to harvest grain? Or getting ready to store it?

Well-managed aeration and effective hygiene can overcome 85% of storage pest problems. A few relatively simple strategies can ensure on-farm storage systems maintain grain quality.

Philip Burrill leads a national program funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) to improve on-farm grain storage and reduce the damage done to stored grain. "The first priority should be to minimise insect pest carry-over," he said.

"Make sure you thoroughly clean all equipment before you use it each harvest, including headers, field bins and silos. Any of these sheltered sites containing left-over grain provide attractive breeding locations for insect pests which can quickly infest the newly harvested grain."

Ideally silos and equipment should be cleaned and structurally treated as soon as harvest or grain outturn activities are completed for the season. However, effort put into hygiene just prior to harvest is still valuable.

Sealable silos and storages are required when it is necessary to fumigate grain infested with storage pests. Fumigation with phosphine in unsealed storages will not control all stages of the insect lifecycle and will contribute to the build up of resistant insects on your property," Mr Burrill said.

Ideally, have a minimum of two sealable, aeratable silos as part of your storage system. Sealable silos should be checked once a year with a simple pressure test. It only takes 10-15 minutes and quickly identifies leaks or damaged rubber seals.

Once you start loading grain into the silo, use aeration to reduce the grain temperature to around 20 degrees C. This not only helps to maintain grain quality, but slows or stops insect pests breeding. Aeration also creates uniform moisture conditions throughout the grain storage, reducing the risk of 'hot spots' and mould.

More? Listen to the interview online at <http://grdc.com.au/drivingagronomy>

Mountain cattlemen get together 2010

The Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria will hold its annual get together at Wombat Crossing, Boisdale, via Maffra, on January 8, 9 and 10.

The event includes:

- Mountain Cattlemen's Cup
- Bush Poetry
- Wood chop
- Dog high jump
- Kids games
- Whip cracking
- Stockman's challenge
- Live music and more.

The cost of the three-day event is \$70 for adults and \$40 for kids and includes all camping. Two-day tickets are \$60 and one-day tickets \$35.

More? www.mcav.com.au

New mayor for Bass Coast

Cr Peter Paul has been voted in the new mayor for Bass Coast Shire.

Field days focus on soil acidity tips

Farmers keen to understand how they can tackle soil acidity, build healthier soils and run a profitable business are invited to attend two free field days to be held in Maffra and Leongatha in February.

The first field day will be held at the Macalister Demonstration Farm on February 2, while the second will be held the following day, February 3, at Max Jelbart's property at Leongatha South. Both of these properties are run to produce optimal pasture for a profitable dairying business.

The field days are being held as part of the Healthy Soils, Sustainable Farms - Tackling Soil Acidification in West Gippsland project being funded by Caring for Our Country. As well as looking at soil acidity, its impacts on production, and the options for reversing soil acidification, the project will explore several other issues related to soil health in Gippsland. These include the functions of soil biology, the impacts of different land management practices, and the role of carbon in building healthier soils.

Each field day will feature a farm walk to examine selected paddocks used for dairying. Participants will be able to examine soil tests carried out in late 2009, as well as soil pits to observe soil structure and root growth.

Expert speakers, including Graeme Sait of Nutri-Tech Solutions and Dr Damian Bougoure and Doug Crawford (from the DPI's Healthy Soils Program,) will be on hand to give their views about the results and observations, and discuss options for more effective soil management.

The paddock to be viewed at the Macalister Demonstration Farm is a highly productive, predominantly ryegrass paddock that, until fairly recently, was affected by distichum (water cooch). Changes in irrigation management and the use of spinner cuts have transformed the pasture composition, but the affects of laser-grading carried out about 15 years ago can still be seen in the soil structure, which is quite talcy. This paddock also has quite high levels of phosphorus.

Participants at the Jelbart field day will be able to compare paddocks that have been treated over the past twenty years for soil acidity, and two paddocks which have just come under Max's management. Max has used ripping and the application of large amounts of lime to break up the acid mat, with great success.

A light lunch will be served at each field day. RSVP before February 1 for catering.

More? Jenny O Sullivan 5663 2386

Plenty of advance notice...

The Victorian Food and Wine Festival will be held from March 12-23, 2010.

More than 250 events will be held across the State. This popular festival attracts food and wine experts from around the world, including world-renowned chefs and winemakers, growers, purveyors, authors, food and wine commentators and critics to present alongside some of Australia's best food experts.

More? www.melbournefoodandwine.com.au

Country racing is off and ... well ... racing

Meetings this month are:

- December 21: Bairnsdale
- December 26: Drouin, Moe
- December 27: Woolamai
- December 28: Stony Creek

More? Call 1300 139 402 or visit www.countryracing.com.au



Want to reach the right audience? Nearly 2000 'yes-please' subscribers read GippyAGchat.

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JOBS: A free feature in GippyAGchat

Times being what they are, we are running free job ads. If you're seeking work, or workers, please flick an email to susanw@ptarmigan.com.au and we'll give you a free plug to our 1800-plus readers. No large files, no photos, no sales pitches and full contact details, please.

WORK SOUGHT:

Positions Wanted

For any type of administrative/ clerical type work (consulting, part time or job share – even if it is only a few hours per week).

I have tertiary qualifications in business studies, taxation and financial planning and am looking for work in any of these related areas.

Please ring Greg Lewis on 0439 523 871 or gippswealthadvice@bigpond.com

Consultant available to undertake:

- vegetation assessments, net gain assessments or offset reports
- whole farm plans
- environmental management plans
- facilitation of meetings, planning sessions, or any group process
- education and training sessions

Please ask me for a quote! Cassie Wright

cassiewright@alphalink.com.au

Ph: 5674 8242

Mob: 0429 061 161

35 Sail Street, Cape Paterson, VIC 3995.

Need staff?

Try 12 or six months of cost-effective undergraduate recruits from accounting, sciences, marketing, HR and PR/comms/media.

Candidates available from early December for paid full-time or half-time 2010 placements.

More? Annette: Issibl@swin.edu.au or ph: 9214 8753 or Karen: kpomeranz@swin.edu.au or ph: 9215 7136

Information published is intended to provide general information only. Agribusiness Gippsland Inc (AGInc) does not endorse or recommend any of the listings, nor does it guarantee every advertisement represents an actual job vacancy. AGInc reserves the right to refuse an item. In no event will AGInc be liable for any decision made or action taken as a response to information contained on or omitted.

Filling in the Gippy-gaps

The rapid growth of GippyAGchat has left us with a data gap ... we don't know who you all are! Could you please underline which of the following best describes you, and forward this message to madfuj@yahoo.com.au. No prizes, no steak knives, just our thanks...

1. Farmer/landowner/agri-tourism operator
2. Consultant/service provider
3. Government employee or agency
4. Food processor/manufacturer
5. Other

The most important item in this entire e-newsletter

Annual subscriptions to Agribusiness Gippsland Inc are due, only \$50 plus \$5 GST individual/or a farm business and \$200 plus \$20 GST corporate. Our postal address is PO Box 1312 Warragul 3280.

[More? 9456 9791](mailto:94569791) or visit www.aginc.wordpress.com

Anyone we've forgotten?

Gippy Agchat is prepared by Sue Webster (0402 267 802 or 9456 9791) and Madeline Toner for Agribusiness Gippsland Inc and circulated in Word format to subscribers and supporters. Please circulate this newsletter by email or printout/fax to your colleagues. GOT SOME NEWS? Phone or email the news to susanw@ptarmigan.com.au

AND LASTLY! ... The chair of Agribusiness Gippsland, Alex Arbuthnot AM, and the board extend their thanks for all your support in 2009. GippyAGchat now goes into the back paddock for a break, but we'll return on February 1, revived and ready to roar into 2010. See you then. Sue

Gippy Diary

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
Jan 8-10	Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Get Together 2010	Boisdale	www.mcav.com.au
Jan 28	2010 Premier's Sustainability Awards information session	Melbourne	Wayne Slattery info@banksiafdn.com
Feb 2	Soil acidity field day	MDF, Maffra	Jenny O'Sullivan 5663 2386
Feb 3	Soil acidity field day	Leongatha South	Jenny O'Sullivan 5663 2386
Feb 4	Project 3030- Have I	Orbost	Frank Mickan 5624 2259

	got it right?- discussion		
Feb 5	Project 3030- Have I got it right?- discussion	Maffra	Frank Mickan 5624 2259
Feb 8	Project 3030- Have I got it right?- discussion	Poowong	Frank Mickan 5624 2259
Feb 9	Project 3030- Have I got it right?- discussion	Alberton	Frank Mickan 5624 2259
Mar 6	Summer Send Off	Elmore	
Mar 12 – 23	Victorian Food and Wine Festival		www.melbournefoodandwine.com.au
Mar 13	Inverloch Food and Wine festival	Inverloch	Kate 0438 535 166
Mar 14	Sustainability Festival	Coal Creek	Alycia Stivic 5662 9271
Mar 19 - 20	Energy Innovation Festival	Wonthaggi	Susan 5657 3108
May 1-31	Gippsland Festival of the Arts		Josephine Kent 1300 226 278
Jul 21-23,	6th biennial Enviro Conference and Exhibition	Melbourne	Veronica Dullens 02 8746 5055
Aug 1-6, 2010	19th World Congress of Soil Science	Brisbane	www.19wcoss.org.au

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