

# ANNUAL REPORT 2014



## An introduction

For more than a century, WAFarmers has been representing the interests of the agricultural sector in Western Australia. It is the largest agricultural lobby group in the state, and as such, has a very powerful and influential voice.

The strength of the WAFarmers brand means the organisation can successfully lobby government for positive change, form alliances with businesses and organisations and, most importantly, communicate with the rural and metropolitan public on important issues.

The WAFarmers 2014 Annual Report details much of the important work and achievements accomplished by WAFarmers in the past 12 months. The publication is an opportunity for members to see what their support enables WAFarmers to achieve on their behalf. For non-members, the information included in this report is intended to educate about the on-going work, challenges and successes of the organisation. It is hoped this report will encourage non-members to consider joining or supporting WAFarmers as it continues to fight for the agricultural community.

As a not-for-profit organisation, WAFarmers relies on the support of current and new members to be able to continue working for positive change.

Thank you for your support.



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The theme for WAFarmers in the past twelve months has definitely been 'rebuilding'.

In 2014, the main focus as an organisation has been to assess our current situation and find ways to improve our operating procedures so WAFarmers can continue to work in the best interests of the agriculture industry.

As has been well documented, our main challenge has been financial. As with a majority of member-based organisations, WAFarmers has faced an ongoing decline in the number of people signing up or renewing their memberships. As the number of farmers remaining in the industry has declined at a rapid rate, WAFarmers has felt the pinch.

This has meant WAFarmers has been forced to investigate other ways to both generate income and minimise costs in a way that doesn't affect our operations. In 2014, WAFarmers took a major step towards the latter by relocating offices from Burswood to Guildford, saving a significant amount in rental costs.

To generate income, WAFarmers has embarked on a commercial agreement, leveraging the power of our brand and the reputation of WA's local produce to launch the WAFarmersFirst brand of milk. This has been very well received and it is hoped, should the product prove successful, that WAFarmers will pursue other branded products and expand into other markets to provide a reliable alternate revenue stream. The income from the product will benefit industry, particularly through the development of a project trust.

Operationally, the board appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, Stephen Brown, in August. Stephen has more than two decades experience in the agriculture industry and has certainly hit the ground running with great enthusiasm.

WAFarmers has continued its association with the national peak body, the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), again this year. Delegates have attended a number of members' council meetings and engagement has again been positive. As NFF works through its own structural change, WAFarmers will be engaged in the consultation process to ensure WA is well represented in any future model for national representation.

When it comes to policy and advocacy, WAFarmers staff and representatives pride ourselves on our commitment to making a positive difference to your farming enterprise. As you will see in the pages of this report, WAFarmers has continued to advocate on your behalf on the issues which matter to you, and most importantly, to your bottom line. The issues are many and varied, and I urge you to look through this report to get an understanding of the work WAFarmers does.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank WAFarmers' staff and elected representatives, who continue to work tirelessly to assist the agriculture industry. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank members for their ongoing support – without you, WAFarmers could not carry out its exceptionally important work.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff who have worked with me during this six month period and welcome the new staff who have joined us, as well as extend best wishes to all our members for another successful and profitable year in 2015.



**When it comes to policy and advocacy, WAFarmers staff and representatives pride ourselves on our commitment to making a positive difference to your farming enterprise.**

*Dale Park*



By the time you are reading this report, I will have been in the role of chief executive officer for six months. It has been a very interesting six months to say the least.

Continuing the Recharge.Reconnect strategic planning and development process initiated in 2013, the board of directors has developed and commenced implementing a five-year corporate plan derived from the outcomes of Recharge.Reconnect, with the first year now complete. As we head into 2015, further new initiatives will be implemented with a focus on finances and membership.

As part of the Reconnect portion of the process, Dale and I have made the commitment that one or both of us will attend every Zone meeting in 2015, or will send a staff member in the rare event neither of us can attend. We have already started to fulfil this commitment at a number of Zone meetings in the final months of 2014. This will ensure a better level of communication between members and staff, and a far better level of understanding of grass roots issues.

When it comes to Recharging our finances, there will be a strong focus on membership going forward, particularly with regard to the younger generations. AgConnectWA will be used as an entry point for these members and I have already been in contact with agricultural colleges and young industry ambassadors to begin facilitating greater involvement by the farmers of tomorrow.

There will also be a greater emphasis on delivering events which are valuable to members. The Farm Finance Forums, which were very well received and attended by both members and non-members in the past, will be revisited in the next twelve months with a broader range of topics explored and a more widespread delivery throughout the regions in order to reach more people.

Another big focus for the year ahead will be on our sponsorship partners. It has been disappointing to see and hear that our members are not supporting the partners who contribute significantly to WAFarmers. It is well known that there is substantial pressure on the marketing and advertising areas of the types of companies who support our organisation and if they cannot see a return for their support then they will not continue it. It is therefore essential for our members to support the businesses who support our industry.

The WAFarmers Grains Council represents the largest number of grain growers in WA and is committed to promoting a sustainable and profitable industry into the future. The Council has been working with government, industry bodies and growers to help improve value across the supply chain and maximise value for grain producers.

Western Australia is in a unique position compared with other grain-producing states, exporting more than 80 per cent of its produce to more than 50 countries. This makes a cost-effective and efficient supply chain from farm to port essential for keeping the industry competitive internationally. There is increasing potential to expand and enter new markets as farmers throughout Australia increasingly become leaders in sustainable production and maintain one of the most pest and disease-free reputations in the world. WA is therefore well placed to take advantage of growing world demand for high-quality food.

Although WAFarmers represents the largest number of grain growers in the state, it is estimated that approximately two thirds of growers are not represented by any farming organisation. The Council hopes to increase representation in the coming years and work together with even more producers to improve conditions and return value back to growers.

## Storage, Handling and Rail

Domestic transport, storage and handling facilities are major contributors to the international competitiveness of Australian grain. With WA relying largely on the export market, it is essential for there to be efficiency in these areas. It remains vital to have well-organised and coordinated rail infrastructure, as well as continued investments in road and rail systems, to support the passage of WA grain to the world market.

The Council continues to communicate with government and Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH) to improve supply chain efficiency such as rail infrastructure, which is essential for the growth of the grains industry. The closure of Tier 3 lines on June 30 was a great disappointment to grain growers across the state and has prevented the safe and effective transport of grain from farm to port. Other than improvements created by growers and their co-operative, there has been limited growth in the below rail (track) network and rail performance continues to decline. This is despite growers paying millions of dollars each year in access fees and losing access to important sections of the track. Additionally, WA growers are charged significantly more in access fees than eastern states producers or international competitors.

Given the significance of the grain industry to this state,

farmers must be given relief from unnecessary cost burdens including access to efficient and cost-effective transport infrastructure. Transport of grain on rail is important for keeping supply chain costs low for growers and ultimately promotes competitiveness. The Council has continued to be active, opposing Tier 3 closures and promoting safe and efficient transport facilities.

## Port Access

The Mandatory Code of Conduct for port access was introduced on 30 September with the aim of ensuring that bulk wheat exporters have fair access to terminal facilities. Under the draft code, certain port regulations would be implemented which would add large unnecessary costs in the supply of WA grain to the world market, reducing international competitiveness.

The Council lobbied government to prevent the introduction of unnecessary port regulation and the addition of further costs along the supply chain. The Council supported repealing the Wheat Exporting Act 2008 as there is no proof of market failure since deregulation. The Council maintained that CBH should be exempt from Tier 1 obligations and growers should not incur further costs. CBH is in a unique position compared with all other bulk wheat exporters in Australia as it is owned and controlled by growers, acting to achieve the highest farm-gate returns possible for producers.

The implemented code contained an exemption for co-operatives and a three-year review rather than a five-year sunset clause. Being exempt from Tier 1 obligations enables CBH to compete on a level playing field and removes a large cost burden on growers.

## Multi-Peril Crop Insurance

The Council continues to be involved in dialogue which aims to develop a sustainable national model for multiperil crop insurance. An increasing number of producers across rural Australia have been affected by adverse conditions such as rising production costs, reduced profitability in a changing environment, long-standing and inherited debts and the inability to appropriately finance in the case of environmental disasters such as drought.

The Council attended meetings with other state farming organisation and representatives from major banks throughout the year to pave the way forward on the issue. This was made possible in 2014 by Latevo International offering financial relief for struggling farmers. The Council continues to support initiatives which provide a type of insurance product for growers given the increasingly difficult circumstances farmers are forced to deal with.



**There will be a strong focus on membership going forward, particularly with regard to the younger generations**

## Agricultural Chemicals

The Council maintains support for the retainment of agricultural chemicals on the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority's (APVMA) database. At present, farmers need every option for weed control as diversity in management practices is crucial for sustaining low weed burdens and addressing problems of developing resistance.

The Council liaises directly with the APVMA, as well as being involved in discussions by Grain Producers Australia (GPA), on issues regarding herbicide use and new recommendations.

The Council supported an application for a new use pattern of glyphosate on canola as a desiccant and pre-harvest herbicide to control annual weeds, which was accepted by the APVMA.

The Council is aware that WA growers need as many weed control and crop-management tactics as possible to ensure the growth of competitive and high-yielding crops.

## Biosecurity

The Council continues to monitor biosecurity concerns affecting grain production in WA and acknowledges the importance of protecting the industry and maintaining Australia's relatively disease-free status. The Council supports procedures which ensure robust arrangements are in place to minimise the risk of exotic pests and disease incursions into Australia.

The Council has commented against current import regulations of seeds used for broadacre planting, which do not adequately address risks associated with modern farming systems, and is committed to helping develop new initiatives to improve WA quarantine procedures, surveillance and emergency response capabilities.

Skeleton weed remains on the agenda and the Council maintains support for best practice management of this invasive perennial.

The Council retains members on the GrainGuard committee who meet yearly to discuss existing and emerging threats to crop productivity.

## Research and Development

The Council keeps updated on research and development projects and maintains a close relationship with the Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC).

Over the year, GRDC has undergone an independent review by Marsden Jacobs Associates to determine the future structure and direction of the organisation.

The Council is working with government, GRDC, other state farming organisations and levy-payers in support of the movement of the current research, development and extension (RD&E) model to one that allows greater input from levy-payers into long-term research priorities. This would include greater communication with levy-payers and more transparency in investments.

The Council believes there are current restrictions in GRDC operations which need to be removed in order to allow the GRDC to have more flexibility in its operations and investments, and that levy-payers should have voting rights to help direct the future direction of priorities for research and projects.

At this stage, it is unknown whether the GRDC will transition to a hybrid model with relaxed rules, or move directly to an Industry Owned Corporation (IOC) to enhance research outcomes, improve returns on investments and achieve greater adoption across the community.

The Council supports the IOC model, given the new structure is robust enough to minimise uncertainty and maintain the integrity and reputation of GRDC. The GRDC has worked very well to achieve R&D outcomes to benefit producers, however there is still room to improve these outcomes under a better operating structure.

## National Representation

The National Farmers' Federation Grains Policy Council (NFFGPC) includes representatives from NFF, WAFarmers, Grain Growers Limited, NSW Farmers, AgForce Queensland, the Victorian Farmers' Federation, Grain Producers SA and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association. The NFFGPC was established in 2012 as a means to unite organisations and ensure a unified voice on national policy issues affecting the grains industry. The Council continues to support this initiative which aims to benefit growers.

## Submissions

- ▶ Australian Competition and Consumer Commission – Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited's Proposal 2014
- ▶ Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority – Proposed variation to registration of Pintobi Attack Herbicide
- ▶ Department of Agriculture – Examination of the Import Risk Analysis Process
- ▶ Department of Agriculture – Mandatory Code of Conduct for Grain Export Terminals
- ▶ Grains Research & Development Corporation – Corporate governance review
- ▶ Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee – Inquiry into the Australian Grains Network
- ▶ Wheat Industry Advisory Taskforce – A Preliminary Assessment of Wheat Export Quality Management



The WAFarmers Dairy Council aims to support the long-term sustainability of the dairy industry and has been actively involved in representing the dairy members of the organisation for the past year. Council President Phil Depiazzi, Senior Vice President Michael Partridge and Vice President Paul Ieraci formed the year's executive and together with fellow councillors have worked with Executive Officer Stephanie Tarlinton to ensure dairy in Western Australia continues to be represented on a local, state and national level.

Dairy Council members have been active in attending industry events such as the Dairy Innovation Day in May, the Farmwest Discovery Day and Western Dairy's Spring Field Day. In February 2014, Council members and the Executive Officer were involved in attending Western Dairy's three year strategy planning workshop. It is important for the Council to be involved in such discussions to ensure members' views are represented. The Council continues to work closely with Western Dairy to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for both organisations. The memorandum of understanding between the two organisations was renewed for a further three years to be reviewed again at the end of 2016.

## \$1 per Litre Milk

The Dairy Council has continued to advocate against the \$1/litre milk campaign initiated by Coles at every available opportunity. In March, President Phil Depiazzi and Senior Vice President Michael Partridge attended the WAFarmers Annual Conference breakfast and took the opportunity to ensure all in attendance understood the Council's opposition to the Coles \$1/l campaign in the presence of Coles General Manager of Corporate Affairs Rob Hadler. Unfortunately, Coles and Woolworths have not given any indication of intending to change their campaigns. Despite considerable effort, it has been extremely disappointing to see no change in their attitude or retail price. The Dairy Council will continue to communicate with the big retailers on this issue as part of continual efforts to reinstate value back into the supply chain.

The Dairy Council was very pleased with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) findings that Coles' "Our Coles Brand Milk Story" video and cartoon were likely to have contravened Section 18 of the Australian Competition Law, which prohibits misleading or deceptive conduct. The ACCC's investigation followed complaints from dairy farmer organisations about the misleading nature of the video and cartoon, which was published on social media.

Dairy Council representatives met with Federal Member for Forrest Nola Marino during the year to discuss various issues including the retail market of milk and the power of the supermarket duopoly and advocated the need for a mandatory Food and Grocery code of conduct.

## Dairy Business

The Dairy Council watched the sale of Harvey Fresh to Parmalat in April with great interest. Dairy Council representatives met with the new management team soon after the sale occurred. This gave the Council the opportunity to inform the new management team of the current state of the dairy industry in Western Australia, raise concerns and establish a strong relationship to ensure member's interests were addressed.

In early September, the Dairy Council hosted the "Understanding your Milk Supply Contracts" workshops in Cowaramup and Harvey. The workshop was presented by Bailiwick Legal Director Phil Brunner and covered various aspects of contracts being offered from processors. Members were also provided with a one page information checklist to ensure they understood the significant terms of a contract.

During the year, the Dairy Council raised concerns with the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) regarding the Dairy Transformation project. The Dairy Council received a number of calls from members who were unhappy with some of the findings of this project. Dairy Council is pleased to have representatives on an advisory committee alongside representatives from Western Dairy. As a result of this committee being formed, relationships between the Dairy Council, the Western Dairy board and the dairy team at DAFWA have been strengthened.

Dairy Council representatives were involved in contributing to a submission to the Australian Productivity Commission on the costs of doing business in the dairy product manufacturing industry. The Commission was asked to undertake a case study on the cost structures of businesses operating in the Australian dairy product manufacturing industry and identify areas of cost advantage and disadvantage for these businesses

compared to international competitors. The Dairy Council was pleased to represent members in this submission and provide the commissioner with information based on the Western Australian industry from the farm gate perspective.

Dairy Council representatives had the opportunity to meet with the Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott late in the year to discuss various issues of importance, including the retail end of the supply chain and free trade agreements.

## Environment

The Dairy Council has been involved in representing members on several important environmental issues this year. The Dairy Council welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation concerning the Interim Natural Resource Management (NRM) Strategy for the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council. The Australian Government has committed to establishing the Peel-Harvey Catchment as an independent NRM Region from 1 July, 2014. Dairy Council's involvement and contribution helped ensure the dairy industry and associated infrastructure in this region will have its economic and environmental contributions recognised in future plans.

The second environmental submission was for the Independent Review of the Current and Future Management of Water Assets in the Geographe Catchment. Ensuring members can operate their businesses without excessive financial impediment is a priority and it is with this in mind that the Dairy Council strongly advocated against any increases in levies associated with the management of this catchment.

The Dairy Council recognises the need for continued awareness and uptake of Best Management Practice surrounding effluent, fertiliser management and riparian protection and actively encourages farmers to increase their management skills and capabilities in these important areas.



## Animal Health and Welfare

Dairy Council has continued to work with Western Dairy on the Animal Welfare Engagement Project (AWEP), with Dairy Councillor Warrick Tyrrell presenting an update of the project at the 2014 Dairy Innovation Day. Following on from Dairy Council's submission on the Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines, the revised legislation is yet to be passed and come into effect. The aim of the AWEP is to provide a resource to the dairy farmers of Western Australia offering information on the new requirements.

The Dairy Council has contacted Minister for Agriculture and Food Ken Baston to reiterate the need for the new standards and guidelines to be consistent across all states.

The Council provided a submission to the inquiry into the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment (Removing, Re-approval and Re-registration) Bill 2014. This submission advocated a reduction in red tape, thus reducing costs to agricultural and veterinary chemical manufacturers, which should ensure more competitive prices to farmers and possibly access to a broader range of products over time.

The Council is working to improve the welfare of young calves by proposing a change to the current requirements of ear marking. The Council is pushing for calves under the age of six weeks to be exempt from ear marking. The Dairy Council believes this prevents the unnecessary removal of ear tissue and the confusion of multiple ear marks when calves have been sold at a young age.

## Conference and AGM

On 24 July, the annual WAFarmers Dairy Conference was held at Busselton with more than 100 people attending. The conference theme was "Investing in WA Dairy", with an emphasis on the processing sector, and featured speakers including Harvey Fresh General Manager Paul Lorimer, Brownes' Ben Purcell, Lion's Peter West, local consultant Steve Hossen and Australian Dairy Farmers Chief Executive Officer Natalie Collard.

The conference was followed by the Farmwest gala dinner, where the Milk Quality Awards for being in the top 5 per cent of the nation's dairy farmers for bulk milk cell count were distributed. Seven WA farmers made the top 100 list this year. The prestigious Milk Bottle Award was this year awarded to Peter Evans, acknowledging the valuable contribution he has made to the dairy industry both locally and nationally.

## Members' Day and ADF Tour

As a result of successful application to the Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) Project Fund, the Dairy Council held a number of Dairy Members' Days throughout the year to visit with farmers in an effort to strengthen relationships, discuss work being undertaken on a state and national level and in turn boost membership numbers. The days have been successful in creating greater awareness of the organisation's efforts and building the number of members.

The second component of the application was to host ADF staff on a tour of WA to visit the three key dairying regions, including visits to farmers and speaking opportunities at WAFarmers events. The tour, held in April, commenced with a visit to WAFarmers head office and then travelled to Albany, Cowaramup and Harvey. ADF Policy Officer Rachel Jones and Senior Policy Manager Irene Clark were accompanied by the Dairy Council executive, with the trip providing an opportunity for farmers to discuss their concerns and ask questions on different areas of policy. The Council has again applied to the ADF Project Fund for the second year to ensure ADF staff and elected representatives visit WA again.

## National Representation

In March, Phil Depiazzi, Michael Partridge, Peter Evans and Stephanie Tarlinton attended the Australian Dairy Farmers summit in Melbourne. The event marked the first step towards developing an ADIC industry-wide vision for the future. Long-term profitability proved to be the key underlying theme throughout discussions. It was important for the WA dairy industry to be represented at this event to ensure the State was not excluded from outcomes.

During the summit, discussions were had with Federal Agricultural Minister Mr Barnaby Joyce on a number of issues impacting the dairy industry in WA, particularly farm gate milk prices and the dairy retail market.

The Council has worked with the other state dairy farming organisations and ADF to ensure dairy is the number one priority for the Federal government in trade negotiations with China. ADF and its members have been involved in numerous meetings and activities to advocate for a New Zealand-plus deal, which would greatly benefit the Australian dairy industry. Dairy Council members were involved in the Twitter campaign led by ADF which saw the FTA for dairy message reach over 1.6 million twitter users. Western Australia has continued to be well represented at a national level with a number of people filling positions on ADF's Policy Advisory Groups.

## Submissions

- ▶ Productivity Commission - The Cost of Doing Business: Dairy Product Manufacturing
- ▶ Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs - Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment (Removing, Re-approval and Re-registration) Bill 2014
- ▶ Australian Dairy Herd Investment Scheme National Breeding Objectives
- ▶ Australian Dairy Farmers - Project Fund
- ▶ Department of Water - Securing Western Australia's Water Future
- ▶ Department of Water - Independent Review of the Current and Future Management of water assets in the Geographe Catchment
- ▶ Peel-Harvey Catchment Council - Interim NRM Strategy
- ▶ Food Standards Australia - Proposal p1022 Primary Production & Processing Requirements for Approved Raw Milk Products
- ▶ Regulation of HGP's in WA
- ▶ Draft Dairy Industry Herd Improvement Strategy
- ▶ Federal government - Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper



# AgConnectWA

Kallum Blake President

2014 was a year of growth and development for AgConnectWA, the group for young farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in food production. The past twelve months has seen a significant increase in membership for the group, largely due to an increase in the number and popularity of events the group has held.

The group has continued with its focus on acting as a networking and development group for young people who have a passion for agriculture and progressing rural communities. At the annual conference, the group elected a new executive team – Kallum Blake was elected to the position of President and Katie Pole as Vice President.

## Heywire grant

This year AgConnectWA continued its work to bring agriculture to consumers through a grant awarded by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR). The funding has allowed the group to further develop the idea of Heywire competition winner Tiffany Davey – to give consumers the opportunity to use their smart phones to find out more about where the produce they buy comes from.

Using the grant, AgConnectWA committee members have put together a website containing profiles on common household items including lamb, beef, eggs, chicken and bread. With all the mechanics and specifics in place, the project is easily adaptable to any supermarket to allow consumers to find out the story behind the food they buy each week.



**The group has continued with its focus on acting as a networking and development group for young people who have a passion for agriculture and progressing rural communities.**





# Livestock

Jeff Murray President  
Jess Moniodis Executive Officer

## Events

AgConnectWA has continued its focus on hosting events which combine professional development with networking opportunities, hosting three major events this year. The first, a members' cruise on the Swan River in January, brought together members for the purpose of networking.

In July, the group hosted its largest event – the annual conference titled #GenerationforChange. This full-day event featured a marketing workshop hosted by Meg Coffey from Coffey & Tea, as well as speakers including Eric Broad from Minderoo Group and Nuffield scholar Robert Kestel. More than 50 people aged under 35 from across industry attended the conference at the Ocean Beach Hotel, with a strong enthusiasm for improving the future of the agriculture industry present.

Finally, AgConnectWA held AgTiki #2 in September – a tour of the Swan Valley region combining educational activities and networking. The first stop for the day was at the Lockridge High School farm, with attendees taken on a behind-the-scenes tour of the work that goes on at the facility, which allows city-based students to take on agricultural studies.

AgConnectWA is looking to increase the number of events it holds in the future to further engage members and give them better opportunities to get involved in agriculture beyond their studies or work.

The WAFarmers Livestock Council continues to work with a variety of industry groups and state farming organisations to promote strong outcomes for producers across WA.

There were many positive outcomes as well as a number of challenges for producers during 2014. Live exports reached record numbers and there have been some slow but significant advances in animal welfare outcomes in overseas markets. Producers still need to be active in educating the public on their commitment to improving animal welfare outcomes in order for the trade to expand and prosper. Other important issues faced by producers include high input costs and much-needed transparency in the supply chain. Producers across the whole country would agree that farm gate returns still need to be increased.

In 2014, the Section was involved in discussions to shape the future of the red meat and livestock industry by attending the Meat Industry Strategic Plan (MISP) workshop. The workshop's key objective was to formulate a strategy to increase the profitability and sustainability of red meat production into the future. The Council will continue to be part of any ongoing discussions.

The Council looks forward to working with the new owners of Harvey Beef in 2015 and into the future, as they have promised to invest in upgrades of current facilities, aiming to boost capacity to meet growing domestic and overseas demand and improve total agricultural output from WA.

## Live Export

The live export industry has been a vital component of livestock production and is integral to the livelihood and prosperity of farmers in many regions of rural WA. The live trade in 2014 generated more than \$1 billion in value, surpassing previous records and indicating a strong future for the trade.

Current markets for the live trade are good and there is increasing potential to expand existing markets and enter new markets. The Middle East remains a major market with Iran newly re-opened, Kuwait and Israel steady in their demand and Jordan becoming an interesting potential for more than 100,000 head. The Saudi Arabian market has been effectively closed since the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) was implemented and has been sourcing up to eight million head from Sudan. More work with the Saudi Minister needs to be done if this market is to re-open, which will be a major win for live exporters in the State.

The market in Bahrain needs to be watched and managed carefully. Egypt has slowed due to social unrest but is a massive country with the potential to rebuild capacity. The

growing economy in Indonesia could demand more than 700,000 head due to shortfalls in local production and markets in Vietnam continue to grow.

There is an increasing focus on China's growing middle class and their increasing demand for beef. There is also a willingness to sell and hold cattle at a good price. In Russia, restrictions still exist and the country is rebuilding their local herd. India has a sheep market and there will be a continued push for lamb (not mutton) from Australian stock. The Council will remain actively involved in safeguarding the trade and improving animal welfare outcomes.

The Council has been committed to improving animal welfare outcomes and has supported ESCAS as a means to improve standards throughout the supply chain. The Council has worked with government and other affected bodies to help reduce red tape in the ESCAS process, particularly the administrative burdens, which will increase efficiency and eliminate some of the costs involved.

In April this year, a website was launched by WAFarmers called Better Live Export ([betterliveexport.com](http://betterliveexport.com)). The website aims to educate the wider community about the real story and ongoing improvements in the live trade. The website has been well received and continues to be an educational and instructive tool for those who wish to learn more about live export.

## Free Trade Agreements

The Council supports free trade agreements (FTAs) which eliminate tariffs on Australian meat and deliver commercial benefits for WA producers. FTAs will be important for positioning WA meat in world markets and providing a major boost to trade, and play a key role in supporting global trade liberalisation and helping exporters access new markets and expand trade in active markets.

Several FTAs and partnerships have been signed or are being negotiated. Australia and the Republic of Korea signed a FTA to benefit producers and increase international competitiveness. The US has already concluded an FTA with Korea and is the major competitor supplying imported beef to this country. Japan and Australia have concluded an Economic Partnership Agreement (JAPEA), making Australia the first major agricultural producer to sign a meaningful deal with Japan. This will provide Australian exporters with a competitive advantage and the opportunity to expand trade into this country. The ongoing FTA negotiations with China will significantly benefit producers and the Australian economy. China is Australia's largest trading partner and shares a strong and growing business and economic relationship.

## Wild Dogs

The Council continues to support initiatives to eradicate the wild dog problem affecting agricultural productivity across the state. There have been some indicators that the wild dog control program is working in some regions and continues to need support from farmers and the wider community.

## Biosecurity

Farm profitability can be influenced by on-farm biosecurity measures which keep livestock and farms free of pests and diseases and minimise total loss from disease outbreaks. The Council remains involved in activities which improve management practises on-farm.

Earlier this year, the Council was involved in Exercise Odysseus which was aimed at preparing producers in case of a biosecurity incursion requiring a national livestock standstill. The activity was designed to increase government and industry preparedness across the country and implement a national livestock standstill if an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) were to occur in Australia. FMD is highly contagious and can affect key trading species of cattle, sheep and goats. It has been estimated that a large-scale outbreak of FMD would cost \$52 billion over ten years.

## National Representation

### Cattle Council of Australia

Geoff Pearson remains the WAFarmers representative for Cattle Council of Australia. Annabelle Coppin continues to represent WAFarmers in the animal welfare subcommittee, David Slade continues on the industry systems and food safety sub-committee and John Wallace is the representative on the research and development subcommittee.

### Sheepmeat Council of Australia

The Sheepmeat Council of Australia continues to work with industry and state farming organisations to improve outcomes for producers.

Livestock Council President Jeff Murray remains the representative for WAFarmers and producers across WA and has been actively involved in promoting trade opportunities and fostering relationships to improve farm gate returns and productivity.

## Submissions

- ▶ Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee – Senate inquiry into grass-fed beef cattle levies.
- ▶ Sheepmeat Council of Australia – National Livestock Identification System (Regulation Impact Statement).
- ▶ Department of Agriculture – Effectiveness of ESCAS in delivering animal welfare outcomes and facilitating trade.



The WAFarmers Wool Council continues to advocate on behalf of growers on issues of importance to the wool industry at a state level, and at a national level through its peak body, WoolProducers Australia.

## Marketing and Research

During the past 12 months, the Wool Council continued to provide submissions and write letters to the Federal government on a variety of matters pertaining to Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), including its research and marketing program, organisational governance and communication activities. WAFarmers is very pleased that the government called for public submissions in relation to industry structures and systems governing the imposition of and disbursement of marketing and research and development levies in the agricultural sector.

WAFarmers lobbied government for nearly 12 months to continue funding the Sheep Co-operative Centre model, which provides great benefit to the sheep community. WAFarmers is pleased the Federal government has shown support by providing funding for the next few years. It is unfortunate, however, that wool tax monies via AWI will not be used for this purpose going forward. It is hoped the board of AWI will change its position in due course.

## WoolPoll

2015 will see yet another WoolPoll take place, whereby growers will have an opportunity to vote on how much wool tax they wish to pay for research and development and marketing. Unfortunately, shareholders are still unable to vote on the level of split between the two categories. WAFarmers is hopeful positive outcomes will come as a result of the Senate inquiry into research and development bodies. Wool tax payers are urged to vote in the upcoming ballot in 2015.

## Health and Welfare

The consideration of Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Sheep by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ken Baston, is ongoing. WAFarmers has concerns in relation to some of the standards and guidelines that animal welfare groups have been pursuing and would like to see the Department of Agriculture and Food consider those before the implementation stage.

On the animal health front, cases of Ovine Johne's Disease and footrot in Western Australia are on the rise. Growers need to be vigilant when purchasing livestock and ensure they request that a National Health Certificate is filled out by the seller of livestock before purchase. The Livestock Biosecurity Network office in Western Australia has been working closely with WAFarmers' members and providing advice to producers on biosecurity matters at a farm level. WAFarmers Wool Section Vice President Ken Clark had the opportunity to have hands-on experience in Nepal this year on what signs to look for in animals and what protocols need to be put in place by being involved in real-time Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks.

The Wool Council made a submission to the review of the Australian Wool Exchange national wool declaration form which is aimed at producers indicating whether or not wool came from an animal that was mulesed or not. The act of doing so is not mandatory. Some sectors of the industry are identifying whether or not to use radio frequency identification on wool packs. At this point in time, the cost benefit ratio is unfavourable.

## Pest control

The national wild dog program was rolled out this year across Australia which provides strategies that States may wish to implement. WAFarmers has also worked in partnership with the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia to roll out the FarmerAssist program in Western Australia, which matches producers and shooters where control of wild or feral animals is needed.

## Submissions

- ▶ AgriFood Skills Australia - Mulesing Competency Standards
- ▶ Australian Wool Exchange - Review of National Wool Declaration
- ▶ Australian Wool Exchange - Radio Frequency Identification of Wool Bales
- ▶ Australian Wool Innovation - Genetic Benchmarking: Potential for Further Commercialisation of AWI Funded or Part Funded Projects post June 2015
- ▶ Federal government - Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper
- ▶ Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee - Levies in the Agricultural Sector
- ▶ WoolProducers Australia - Review of Wool Bale Weights
- ▶ WoolProducers Australia - National Wild Dog Action Plan



The past year has been very difficult for some beekeepers, with little production during the spring. The summer did produce some honey, so most beekeepers would have had an average year. With the winding up of the Pollination Association of WA Inc. and Wescobee Ltd being sold this year, a meeting of the Department of Agriculture and Food WA Bee Industry Consultative Committee has not been held. During the same time, only one meeting of the Department of Parks and Wildlife Bee Industry Consultative Committee has been held. If these consultative committees are to continue it needs to be determined how beekeepers are appointed to them and which body each of them will represent.

In the current climate, the WAFarmers Beekeepers Section is the only organisation representing almost all commercial beekeepers in the State. During the year, WAFarmers met with representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA), the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPW) and the Department of Environment Regulation (DER) to progress issues.

## Importation of Untreated Honey

An application was received by DAFWA to import untreated honey from interstate to re-package and export out of WA. The Beekeepers Section opposed this due to the biosecurity risk to the WA beekeeping industry. Despite lobbying efforts, the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ken Baston, approved the application believing importation of untreated honey, under certain conditions, would pose a low risk to the industry. The Section understands the company has made a decision not to import untreated honey into the State at this point in time.

## Honey Levies

Australian honey levies are set at 2.3c/kg for annual honey sales greater than 600kg. The funds are used for R&D, biosecurity and the national residue survey. During the year, beekeepers across Australia had the opportunity to vote for an increase in the honey levy. The vote indicated that beekeepers supported the recommendation by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) in raising the honey levy from 2.3c/kg to 4.6c/kg on 1 July 2015. The levy will raise an additional \$460,000 per annum for AHBIC to contribute to biosecurity activities across Australia.

## Training

Education and training is still an ongoing issue for the beekeeping industry. WAFarmers was successful in putting up a Skill Set which was then adopted and endorsed nationally. Unfortunately, training provider Burnham and Associates has not been able to deliver any on-the-ground training to date. This is an area that the Bee Executive will be looking to rectify going into the next 12 months to encourage newcomers into the industry.

## Land Access and Clearing

The clearing of apiary sites has been raised as an issue for members. The Section has been lobbying the Minister for Environment to allow for the issuing of apiary clearing permits at the same time as an apiary site is granted.

The Section continues to monitor and make submissions on forest management plans as they are reviewed. Submissions are made on any issues affecting beekeepers. Beekeepers who hold sites in these areas should be making direct comments to the relevant documents if their sites are affected.

Another successful Honey Week was held in 2014. The WAFarmers Beekeepers Section continues to support and contribute financially to this each year.

## Submissions

- ▶ Department of Agriculture - Increase of National Honey Levy
- ▶ Plant Health Australia - Code of Practice for Beekeepers
- ▶ Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee - Future of Beekeeping and Pollination Industries in Australia
- ▶ Legislative Council Public Administration Committee - Potential environmental contribution of recreational hunting in WA
- ▶ DAFWA - Importation of Untreated Honey
- ▶ Department of Parks and Wildlife - Kalbarri National Park Draft Management Plan 2014
- ▶ Federal government - Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper



# Annual Conference

WAFarmers hosted its 2014 Annual Conference at the Vines Country Club and Resort on March 19 – 20.

The first day of the conference was opened by Agriculture and Food Minister Ken Baston, followed by a panel discussion featuring Australian Livestock Exporters' Council Chief Executive Alison Penfold, Meat and Livestock Australia Chief Economist Tim McRae, Belay Consulting Director Maree Gooch and Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative Communications Leader Peter Newman.

Speakers on day two included Coles Corporate Affairs General Manager Robert Hadler, Professor David Lindsay, Australian Wool Exchange Chief Executive Mark Grave, Rising Beef Champion Blythe Calnan and Department of Agriculture and Food WA Director General Rob Delane.

Dale Park was re-elected as WAFarmers President for his second term, with Tony York re-elected as Senior Vice President and Marg Agnew elected to the vacant Vice President position. All other commodity executive members were re-elected unopposed.

The conference was concluded with the gala dinner and awards ceremony, featuring guest speaker Danny Green. Trevor De Landgraft was awarded life membership to WAFarmers, Jo Woodfield received the President's Award, Des Gooding and Max Watts received Distinguished Service Awards and the Industry Service Award was presented to CBH Group. Certificates of Merit were awarded to Matthew Swainston and Maitland and Margaret Davey, while the Young Farmer Award was presented to Kallum Blake.

▶▶ **Dale Park was re-elected as WAFarmers President for his second term, with Tony York re-elected as Senior Vice President and Marg Agnew elected to the vacant Vice President position. All other commodity executive members were re-elected unopposed.**



WAFarmers continues to work hard on a range of transport issues, aiming to keep as much grain on rail as possible, protect rural roads and reduce transport costs and levels of bureaucracy impeding industry profitability.

### Tier 3

The issue of grain on rail, particularly the Tier 3 network, has continued to be the central focus of the transport portfolio.

Following a State government decision in 2012 to close 500km of Tier 3 lines, WAFarmers and affiliate body the Wheatbelt Railway Retention Alliance (WRRRA) have continuously lobbied to have as much grain on rail as possible for safety, efficiency and economic purposes.

In an ongoing disagreement with respective below-rail and above-rail service providers, Brookfield Rail (BR) and CBH reached a stalemate on who should pay \$120 million to return the lines to a sufficient operating standard. Prior to this debate, the same argument presented itself between BR and the State government over whose responsibility it was to maintain lines not considered fit for purpose. To date, BR has received more than \$400 million in grower access fees and government support to maintain the lines, which are considered by BR to not be fit for purpose.

WAFarmers, through its membership of the Economic Regulatory Authority's (ERA) Consumer Consultative Committee (ERACCC), brought the Tier 3 issue to the ERA's attention in 2013, so it was pleasing to see the ERA analyse the business case and make recommendations that the floor and ceiling costs previously heralded by BR were inappropriate, with CBH paying too much.

Working closely with CBH, WAFarmers supported the offer of \$1.00 for CBH to lease the Tier 3 lines and keep them operating, after CBH claimed that the Tier 3 lines were still viable.

WAFarmers has always contended that if BR claims the lines required too much investment for the possible economic return, they should hand them over either to government or industry.

WAFarmers organised a truck rally in July following the closure of the lines which saw a convoy of trucks travel through Perth, visiting BR's office and Dumas House. Behind this bold action was a request to reopen the lines until October to allow 870,000 tonnes from 2013's massive harvest to be shipped out without extra truck movements. As a result, Minister for Transport Dean Nalder announced that a safety audit on the Tier 3 lines would be carried out.

After discussions with WAFarmers, Minister Nalder announced that a regional agricultural transport logistics report would be supported by government. At a cost of \$100,000, WAFarmers has played a significant role in gathering support, with the report process hoped to be commenced in 2015.

After continual lobbying over three years, and an appearance by WAFarmers President Dale Park at a parliamentary inquiry into the Tier 3 rail network, WAFarmers welcomed the tabling of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's report on the Management of Western Australia's Freight Rail Network.

This report highlighted the need for the lease agreement between the Public Transport Authority (PTA) and BR to be transparent.

From that process, it appears that there has been a secret profit-sharing arrangement on Tier 1 and 2 lines between the PTA and BR, as well as other previously undisclosed conditions that effectively increase the freight rate by up to 30 per cent over the next three years.

Although the much-awaited lease agreement is in the public domain, there is much to do before the Tier 3 lines will be potentially ready for industry's benefit. WAFarmers will continue to lobby hard to ensure the affected Tier 3 lines are reopened as quickly as possible.

### Safety and Awareness

One of the successes for WAFarmers was having the Department of Transport's Agricultural Vehicle Advisory Group (AVAG) update and reprint the Towed Agricultural Vehicle Guide, which provides a plethora of relevant information in a handy, glovebox-sized booklet. It covers pilot requirements, vehicle dimensions and permits, and general information related to moving agricultural vehicles.

Following on from that, WAFarmers successfully lobbied the Department of Transport and Main Roads WA (MRWA) to fund a roadshow, delivering comprehensive forums throughout regional areas to present valuable information regarding a range of transport issues including compliance and enforcement legislation, piloting rules, the movement of agricultural vehicles throughout WA and the Towed Agricultural Vehicle Guide.

WAFarmers continues to make progress with legislation involving agricultural vehicles through AVAG. Another success was the launch of the Class 1 Restricted Access Vehicle Agricultural Machine Notice, allowing applicable agricultural machines to operate on the road without the need to obtain a permit. Over the years, significant numbers of agricultural machines have operated on the roads without the required MRWA permits, leaving operators exposed to potential prosecution.

WAFarmers was successful in having the Heavy Vehicle Industry Consultative Group (HVIAG), formerly known as the Heavy Vehicle Advisory Group, reformed after a four year absence. Given that the Heavy Vehicle Operations section of MRWA now reports directly to the Main Roads Commissioner, this monthly forum will now ensure all issues pertaining to heavy vehicle transport have a rural voice.

Some of the issues that WAFarmers has been discussing, and will continue to highlight, include those related to Chain of Responsibility legislation, permitting and Restricted Access Vehicle network issues.

One particular item identified by WAFarmers and now under consideration by Minister Nalder is the review of accreditation for farm produce cartage operators, particularly those who have short bursts of a need for permits over a restricted time, such as harvest and hay season.

With the State government's focus to reduce red tape, WAFarmers - which is acknowledged by industry as a formidable lobbyist in the rural transport sector - will continue throughout 2015 to identify and target transport legislation that adds significant cost to industry.



## Economics and Farm Business

The past year has been one to remember – on this occasion, for all the right reasons relative to the past few years.

Witnessing one of the best harvest results in 2013-14, strong livestock prices and a renewed confidence in agriculture, WAFarmers Economics and Farm Business Section continued to push for improved outcomes for members.

The Section continued to engage with many industry and government stakeholders to discuss policy and industry development and how WAFarmers can play a role in helping improve members' bottom lines.

### Drought Reform Process

WAFarmers continues to have a significant input into the National Farmers' Federation's (NFF) Drought Reform Taskforce.

With the roll-out of the Farm Finance Concessional Loans Scheme, and the Federal Drought Loan Scheme now complete, WAFarmers has expressed its perspective on the various levels of support to farm businesses in drought. An additional focus for WAFarmers will be lobbying for the availability of low-interest loans for young entrants and development-style loans to give new and young entrants sufficient capital to combine with their education, youthful enthusiasm and diverse skill-base to grow the industry.

WAFarmers continues to believe that the Drought Reform package needs to encompass pre-drought preparation, in-drought responses and post-drought measures to ensure farmers not only continue to recover from drought, but build resilience and capacity to minimise the effects of drought in future. These measures include capacity-building, workshops, risk assessment measures such as multi-peril crop insurance, expansion of Farm Management Deposits, and the necessary support measures, such as the Rural Financial Counselling Service WA.

### Rural Financial Counselling Service

WAFarmers continues to work closely with the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) WA in order to lobby government for further funding and ensure the continuation of a service that delivers real outcomes for farming family businesses experiencing financial stress.

WAFarmers made a submission to the National Rural Advisory Council regarding a review of RFCS, stressing the importance of having continuity of service, long-term

funding and expanded criteria to give at-risk clients much earlier access to maximise available options in their adjustment.

WAFarmers also extensively highlighted to government and NFF the inherent dangers of allowing poor policy within the Farm Household Allowance agreement with the Department of Human Services (DHS). Under the agreement, Centrelink Case Officers effectively duplicated the existing RFCS service, but without the RFCS's professional experience and background in counselling and business planning. Additionally, where stressed farming clients shared both DHS and RFCS, DHS took precedence and inadvertently risked DHS giving advice on clients' future planning. Due to WAFarmers lobbying, some of those powers were revoked.

### Farm Finance Forums

The WAFarmers Farm Finance Forums continued to deliver high-quality presentations to farm businesses, with a workshop each at Tammin and Cranbrook, with more than 120 farm business operators attending. It is planned that more Finance Forums and related events will be delivered in 2015.

### Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper

In April, the Federal government commissioned a White Paper to boost agriculture's productivity and profitability. The White Paper will identify the pathways for growing the industry's economic development and drive the long-term agricultural policies of the government to ensure the sector remains a significant contributor to the economy and local communities.

WAFarmers dedicated significant resources to ensure its submission to the associated issues paper reflected not only WAFarmers members' views, but contained effective solutions-based strategies to help improve overall profitability and sustainability.

The subsequent Green Paper, released in October, identified a number of key areas the government would consider adopting, and confirmed many of the strategies that WAFarmers had suggested were within the scope of consideration.

WAFarmers will continue to work directly with Federal Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce's office, and indirectly through NFF, to develop these key strategies.

## Trade

With WAFarmers highlighting its policy on foreign investment to NFF this year, it gave the WAFarmers leadership the opportunity to explore the issue in depth, including meeting with various advisors and the finance industry to gain various perspectives.

WAFarmers believes that the issue of insufficient capital within agriculture is just as great as where the capital originates from, whether it be the lack of investment from superannuation companies, Australian and local investors or government incentives.

WAFarmers continues to believe that if foreign investment or any external capital is good for the overall industry, then foreign investment and external capital providers have a valuable role within Australian agriculture.

The next twelve months will see WAFarmers work closer with corporate agriculture, the superannuation industry and other stakeholders to identify pathways forward which accept foreign investment that is directed in a sustainable manner to benefit Australian agriculture.

WAFarmers still awaits the finalisation of the foreign direct investment register, promised more than two years ago by the then-government and receiving an equal commitment from the Coalition.

Additionally, the organisation has been watching the development and finalisation of a number of Free Trade Agreements throughout the past year with great interest to ensure the government is securing the agreements in the best interests of industry.

## Occupational Health and Safety

The WAFarmers Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) portfolio has continued to work on extremely important issues on behalf of members this year.

In 2013, there were 49 deaths in the agriculture industry, with workers experiencing a fatality rate eight times higher than the rate for all Australian workers. The first nine months of 2014 saw more than thirty fatalities, which represents 20 per cent of all workplace deaths despite the industry employing only 2.6 per cent of Australia's working population.

As a member of Worksafe's Agricultural Industry Safety Group (AISG), WAFarmers represents farmers on many safety issues and assists with the development of policies which will improve safety procedures affecting the farming community without adding complicated levels of bureaucracy.

Undoubtedly the biggest issue for AISG and WAFarmers continues to be quad bikes, which are the leading cause of farm-related deaths in Australia, contributing to more than a third of all farm-related deaths.

One of the achievements of AISG this year was having Standards Australia invite the committee to put forward a submission proposal designed to allow testing for helmets from other countries which have shown to not only be safe, but more comfortable in Australian conditions, which will encourage use. Previously, Standards Australia outright rejected any proposal to test helmets from countries that there was no current agreement with – a lobbying point for this organisation. WAFarmers is leading a sub-committee within AISG to help prepare the submission.

WAFarmers has lobbied in the past for a rating system

as a complementary measure to roll-over protection devices and the use of helmets similar to the ANCAP car rating system. The Quad Bike Performance Project is being conducted by researchers from Transport and Road Safety Research as part of a strategy of the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities to reduce the high toll of fatal and serious injuries associated with the use of quad bikes in the farming environment.

WAFarmers continues to lobby for the support of research into quad bike fatalities and looks forward to much-needed research into the effectiveness of roll-over protection devices, so that affirmative action into reducing injuries can occur.

WAFarmers is also looking to ensure further accredited training on OH&S issues, including on dangerous goods and piloting farm machinery, is available in 2015.

Probably the biggest amount of work for 2014, and certainly into 2015, will be a review of the draft legislation into the Work Health & Safety Bill 2014 as part of the intended national harmonisation of the legislation surrounding workplace health and safety.

The harmonisation process, upon creation in 2008, was intended to increase productivity and safety standards in the workplace while lessening overall bureaucracy. However, WA was reluctant to implement what became a national program as it created productivity barriers for Western Australian workers and extra cost impositions for small WA businesses.

The WHS Bill is a Western Australian version of the model Work Health and Safety Bill developed by Safe Work Australia for implementation by Australian states and territories.



## WA Farmers First

In November, WAFarmers launched its first branded product – WAFarmersFirst milk, available in more than 80 Coles stores around Western Australia.

The initiative was made possible through a licensing agreement with South West processor Harvey Fresh, with 40 cents from the sale of each 2 litre bottle of milk returning to WAFarmers to assist with industry development, including through a dairy project trust.

WAFarmers President Dale Park, joined by Harvey Fresh General Manager Paul Lorimer and Coles Managing Director John Durkan, launched the product at the Heart of WA gala dinner.

The initiative means consumers can now use their buying power to make a difference to the future of the agriculture industry. The product has been well received so far, surpassing sales expectations in the first week of being on the shelves. WAFarmers is already looking into expanding the brand to other products.



**The initiative means consumers can now use their buying power to make a difference to the future of the agriculture industry.**

## Property Rights

In the past year, WAFarmers has made significant progress in the area of property rights which will greatly benefit the future of many farm businesses.

Given concerns regarding the circumstances surrounding property access when it comes to oil and gas exploration, WAFarmers actively engaged with the oil and gas industry to address this issue.

In conjunction with the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), the oil and gas exploration industry's peak body, and other organisations including the Pastoralists and Graziers Association

of Western Australia and VegetablesWA, a template guiding land access arrangements has been established. This template will outline the areas growers should be concerned about and the questions they should ask in such circumstances.

This initiative aims to ensure fairer and more even agreements between landowners and drillers when it comes to exploration, as well as prevent legal cases similar to Arc Energy & Origin Energy v Rodney and Annette Copeland. Members interested in accessing the template can contact WAFarmers' head office.

## Trade

The battle to ensure common sense prevails in Western Australia's land clearing legislation has continued this year. WAFarmers continues to advocate to ensure growers and producers can farm as much land as they require, as profitably as possible, without the burden of overly restrictive regulation.

Superficial changes made to the Environmental Protection Act 1986 during the year have had very little effect on the everyday activities of farmers. The ten year rule for the clearing of regrowth has been pushed out to 20, essentially reverting back to the original date of 1994.

The ability to clear one hectare has been expanded to five hectares, which can still only be used for non-productive purposes – of little assistance to farmers looking to make their property as productive as possible.

WAFarmers has met with an Adviser to the Premier, seeking further changes to the land clearing legislation, as well as having met with the Department of

Environment Regulation in the ongoing search for clarity on Environmentally Sensitive Areas. As this report goes to print, further changes to the land clearing legislation appear imminent.

In July, WAFarmers welcomed the abolition of the carbon tax, which had been opposed by the organisation since it was proposed due to the negative effect it had on farmers' bottom lines, jeopardising the competitiveness of the agriculture industry.

The reality of climate change still exists and year after year growers and producers witness the impacts first hand. There needs to be legitimate policy steps taken to tackle climate change which do not negatively impact the profitability of industries such as agriculture. While farmers continue using targeted farming practices to reduce emissions, investment is needed for industry in order for the greater challenge of climate change to be met adequately.

## Water

In late 2013, the Department of Water (DoW) released its position paper titled Securing Western Australia's water future – reforming water resource management. This position paper was formulated by DoW working in close partnership with a State-level industry reference group which included WAFarmers, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia, Water Cooperatives (represented by Harvey Water), VegetablesWA, Potato Growers Association of WA, Carnarvon Growers Association and many more.

A total of 98 submissions were received and have been considered by DoW and the Industry Reference Group. Progress now relies on government issuing drafting instructions for new legislation to replace the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 and five other water-related Acts, which also includes WA's obligations under the National Water Initiative.

WAFarmers continues to advocate strongly for grazing

stock and domestic water use to continue to be exempt from licensing, for irrigation dam water to be measured and not metered, and for license tenure be increased to 40 years, or where possible, perpetual water entitlements issued.

Critical to the success of future water resource management in WA will be the commitment of both DoW and water users to work together in partnership at both a local and State level.

Under the leadership of DoW Director General Maree De Lacey, the old isolationist ways of previous administrations have gone and been replaced with a genuine will to work in partnership with water users. Unfortunately, Ms De Lacey has unexpectedly resigned from her position and WAFarmers extends its thanks for her commitment to cooperation with industry during her tenure.

## Biotechnology

WAFarmers has continued to keep informed about developments in biotechnology and supports the choice of each grower to adopt technology suitable to their farming enterprise. This year, WAFarmers watched closely as the court case between neighbours Michael Baxter and Steve Marsh was finalised in the WA Supreme Court.

It is the view of WAFarmers that cases such as Marsh v Baxter should not be hijacked by external parties and taken to court, and rather settled between neighbours over the back fence.

The case itself has highlighted a number of aspects of WAFarmers' policy when it comes to Genetically Modified (GM) crops, which supports the technology through the appropriate use of GM crops governed by industry-agreed protocols relating to storage, transport and buffer zones.

WAFarmers' policy on GM also supports:

- ▶ The lifting of the State government moratorium on the commercial release of GM canola.
- ▶ Future research and development into GM crops and pastures.

- ▶ Federal and State government GM material tolerance levels of 0.9 per cent in crops and 0.5 per cent in seeds.
- ▶ The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and its charter to protect the health and safety of Australians and the Australian environment.
- ▶ Further development of protocols for the commercialisation of GM grains in the WA grains industry on issues including intellectual property rights, contamination, segregation, licensing, protection of individual growers and legal liability issues.

This year, the Grains Council resolved it would not be a signatory to the GM Wheat Trilateral Statement between Australia, Canada and the United States because it did not support all of the statements included in the document and had concerns about potential damage to the WA wheat market.

The Marketing and Communications team continued to pursue its ongoing objectives of enhancing the profile of WAFarmers in the public domain, delivering appropriate communications to members, reaching out to existing and potential stakeholders and organising interesting and timely events in 2014.

## Marketing

Two large marketing projects were undertaken by the Marketing and Communications team this year – re-branding the organisation with a new logo and launching the WAFarmersFirst brand of milk.

The new logo was officially launched in September and was initiated through the Recharge.Reconnect process. The purpose of the re-branding was to give the organisation a more modern and corporate appearance, more accurately reflecting the evolving nature of the work the organisation carries out. The re-branding has been well received over the past few months by all stakeholders.

Secondly, the launch of the WAFarmersFirst branded milk in November was another project aimed at building the recognition of the WAFarmers brand while creating an alternate income stream for the organisation as membership income declines. The project has been well received and the outcomes of the milk will determine whether the brand is expanded to other products in the future.

## Communications

WAFarmers continued to have a fruitful relationship with both the rural press and mainstream media. The organisation remains an authority on many agricultural matters for journalists from around the State and nation. As such, WAFarmers enjoyed largely positive coverage across a variety of media – including radio, television, print and online.

A major focus for the Marketing and Communications team continues to be on communicating effectively with members. A majority of member communications are now carried out online, with the weekly newsletter moving entirely online this year due to the improved capabilities of the updated WAFarmers website. The organisation continues to communicate highly critical information to members through post, particularly for those without internet access.

## Events

WAFarmers' major annual event, the annual conference, was held on March 19 and 20 at the Vines Resort. The event featured a range of speakers on relevant topics and was well received by a majority of attendees.

In November, WAFarmers held the inaugural Heart of WA gala dinner to celebrate agriculture and launch the WAFarmersFirst brand of milk. More than 250 people attended the dinner, which will become an annual flagship event for the organisation as a way to bring together people from the agriculture industry and consumers to recognise those who feed Western Australia.

Another inaugural event in 2014 was a beef forum, Future Opportunities for Beef, held in Busselton in August. The event featured a range of speakers including Senator Richard Colbeck, Meat and Livestock Australia Managing Director Richard Norton and Minderoo Group's John Hartman.

Alongside these major events, WAFarmers held another round of successful Farm Finance Forums, which will be expanded upon in 2015.

## Membership

WAFarmers has continuously suffered from decreasing membership for the past ten years and 2014 was no different. Membership recruitment activities have continued and although many new members have signed up, the decline continues. It is an unfortunate fact that in Western Australia the number of farmers is dwindling at a steady rate each year. It is for this reason WAFarmers continues to recruit new members, as it is more important than ever for the agricultural industry to stand together.

In order to attract new members, WAFarmers has increased visibility in the regions by attending and hosting regular events, with a concentrated effort on attracting the next generation of farmers.



# Heart of WA

More than 300 people joined WAFarmers at the inaugural Heart of WA gala dinner in November – a celebration of agriculture and Western Australia’s excellent fresh produce.

Attendees from across the agriculture industry and the community experienced a three-course meal using produce from Western Australian suppliers alongside entertainment from former MasterChef contestants, comedian Luigi, musician Monty Cotton and Basil Zempilas as Master of Ceremonies.

The evening also served as the launch of WAFarmersFirst milk, the first branded product under the WAFarmers banner.

Heart of WA was a great evening and would not have been possible without major sponsor Coles and supporters including Linley Valley Pork, Harvey Beef, CSBP, CropLife Australia and mix 94.5.



Major Sponsor



# Financial Report

## For the year ended 30 November 2014

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Financial Report has been viewed purely on a financial basis and the Federation experienced another trying year recording a net loss of \$117,680. Although recording a loss for the year many positive initiatives were introduced by the WAFarmers Board during 2014 where the benefits will begin to be recognised during the 2015 Financial Year.

#### Expenses

The expenditures have been well managed under continuing austerity measures with total expenses decreasing by 2% to \$1,748,392 with employee expenses decreasing by 11% to \$767,230 which represents 44% of total expenses, slightly lower than last year.

The total expenses for 2014 also included some one of costs associated with implementing the Federations 5 year corporate plan. The WAFarmers brand WAFarmersFirst was one strategy implemented during 2014 with unbudgeted setup costs for trademarking and designs of \$24,152.

The WAFarmers office relocated in August 2014 at a total cost including rent and relocations of \$53,915. As a result of the move the savings for the federation in rental expenses for 2015 will be approximately \$120,000.

#### Income

Membership income disappointingly decreased again in 2014 by 4% to \$1,018,463 and \$170,000 shy of budget.

Sponsorship income decreased by 8% to \$273,190 which was \$91,560 less than budget. However WAFarmers has strategically moved towards events based income in 2014 as an alternate income source resulting in a total profit earned from events of \$142,397.

A new initiative, Grain Donations introduced by the WAFarmers Board in 2014 provided a lower than expected return with the total earned being \$5144.

Once again a drop in expected revenue significantly affected the bottom line.

#### Summary of Balance Sheet

The board has been extremely diligent on its measurement and considerations on all financial matters and continues to provide outstanding value for its members.

- ▶ Members' funds decreased by 32% on the \$117,680 operating deficit, taking the capital of the business or net asset position to \$251,049.
- ▶ It is important to note the Federation does not carry any debt or borrowings and is therefore conservatively leveraged.
- ▶ The total liabilities of the Federation are \$127,471 of which subs received in advance (3yrs fixed membership) represents \$81,218 (64%) of the total liabilities.

The balance sheet has been weakened by the depletion of reserves by the year's trading loss of \$117,680.

#### Cash Position

The cash position worsened from \$417,965 to \$303,689 on the back of the profit result.

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2014	2014	2013
	ACTUAL \$	BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>			
Beyond the Farmgate	191	10,000	3,331
Farm Weekly	6,335	7,000	7,095
News Research	7,500	12,000	14,299
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>14,026</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>24,725</b>

#### MARKETING & PROMOTION

Membership Promotion	8,994	15,000	20,337
Marketing Promotion	4,885	20,000	2,874
Sponsorship/Awards	1,550	2,500	945
Field Days & Shows	2,382	10,000	8,926
Website Development	1,513	6,000	14,631
Database Upgrade	10,000	10,000	11,342
Wheatpool Marketing	0	0	970
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>29,324</b>	<b>63,500</b>	<b>60,025</b>

#### PERSONNEL

Salaries & Wages	631,868	735,508	747,544
Superannuation	60,869	50,440	70,801
Zone Co-Ord's Wages	40,175	73,604	43,502
Zone Co-Ord's Expenses	0	5,000	1,534
Payroll Tax	9,826	10,000	0
Fringe Benefits Tax	437	3,500	45
Recruitment & Training	3,652	8,000	2,536
Workers Compensation	5,462	6,000	
Staff Travel	14,941	9,500	10,439
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>767,230</b>	<b>901,552</b>	<b>876,401</b>

#### OFFICE SERVICES

Rent & Variables	218,645	215,000	209,115
Car Parking Additional	0	2,000	1,245
Office Relocation Expenses	37,415	0	
Electricity	12,132	21,000	19,913
Office Operating Expenses	86,257	100,700	109,109
Repairs & Maintenance	1,669	1,500	824
General Expenses	10,138	12,000	12,453
Minor Assets	1,539	1,000	714
Periodicals & Publications	7,374	6,000	6,990
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>375,169</b>	<b>359,200</b>	<b>360,363</b>

#### FINANCIAL SERVICES

Bank Fees	3,701	3,000	2,521
Insurance	14,480	15,000	21,369
Audit Fees	10,940	11,000	10,640
Accounting Fees	3,550	17,500	16,105
Legal Expenses	9,980	25,000	22,576
WAFIA Expense	0	0	30,498
Bad Debts Expense	404	0	
Depreciation	11,000	12,500	11,981
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>54,055</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>115,690</b>

<b>TOTAL ADMIN. EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,239,804</b>	<b>1,437,252</b>	<b>1,437,204</b>
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	2014	2014	2013
	ACTUAL \$	BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$
<b>INCOME</b>			
Members subscriptions	1,018,463	1,189,329	1,065,704
Zone Membership Drive	0	0	0
Allied Industries/Associate Members	7,227	0	8,864
Affiliation Fees	2,000	4,000	0
Contract services	0	0	54,917
Commission	2,686	5,000	5,727
Sponsorship Income	273,190	364,750	295,513
Recharge Reconnect Income	20,909	0	
Interest-Main A/C & Term Deposits	14,886	20,000	16,525
Aus Dairy Farmers Project Fund Inc	8,433	8,051	
Commodity Sections Income	23,677	21,558	16,947
National Representation Income	25,071	38,144	10,277
Heart Of WA Dinner Income	168,045	0	0
Zone Investments Income	9,283	3,000	1,265
Rental Income	6,764	4,764	8,191
Sundry Income	1,889	3,000	2,187
Datamars Income	7,045	6,500	6,346
Advocacy - Grain Growers	36,000	48,000	12,000
Grain Donation	5,144	50,000	0
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,630,712</b>	<b>1,766,096</b>	<b>1,504,462</b>

#### LESS EXPENDITURE

Affiliation Fees			
National Farmers Federation	40,000	40,000	40,000
Cattle Council of Australia	28,607	23,520	19,600
Sheepmeat Council of Australia	16,250	15,000	15,000
Grains Expense Account	0	13,000	3,111
WoolProducers Australia	17,730	16,366	16,367
Australian Honey Bee	1,012	2,300	0
Australian Dairy Farmers	27,653	19,101	17,547
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>131,252</b>	<b>129,287</b>	<b>111,625</b>

General Section Executive Expenses	3,449	3,500	4,611
Board Expenses	3,620	8,000	4,123
President's Allowance inc Super	58,002	63,430	63,283
President's Expenses	17,175	35,000	13,586
Annual Conference	46,030	70,000	65,219
Recharge Reconnect Expenses	23,303	0	
Heart of WA Dinner Expense	102,911	0	
WAFarmersFirst Branding	24,152	0	
General Council	1,452	12,000	12,229
Aust Dairy Farmers Proj Fund Exp	8,433	8,050	
Commodity expenses	62,980	70,870	48,903
Commodity Pres/Portfolio Allowance	20,000	21,000	20,750
Datamars Expense	5,643	5,050	5,058
Zone Levies	189	1,000	931
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>377,337</b>	<b>297,900</b>	<b>238,693</b>

OTHER EXPENSES	508,588	427,187	350,318
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES	1,239,804	1,437,252	1,437,204
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,748,392</b>	<b>1,864,439</b>	<b>1,787,522</b>

<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>-117,680</b>	<b>-98,343</b>	<b>-283,060</b>
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# Financial Report

## For the year ended 30 November 2014

# WA Farmers Committee Representation

## BALANCE SHEET

	NOVEMBER 2014	NOVEMBER 2013
Bank - Operating Account	35,587	285,338
Westpac Bank-Term Deposits	0	0
Westpac Cash Reserve	126,192	0
Petty Cash	250	250
Accounts Receivable	42,035	15,046
Zone Bank Accounts	141,660	132,377
Prepayments	8,814	15,714
Sundry Debtors	2,000	7,032
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>356,538</b>	<b>455,757</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Furniture & Fittings	11,611	12,817
Lease Hold Improvements	467	6,516
Plant & Machinery	1,117	1,352
Telephone System	499	711
Computer Hardware	1,775	1,527
Computer - Software	2,437	2,154
Investment -Westralian Farmers	2,734	997
Investment - Trust Fund WAFF	10	10
Investment - Farmwide	1,334	1,334
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>21,984</b>	<b>27,418</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>378,522</b>	<b>483,175</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	1,249	0
Payroll Liabilities-Group Tax/Super	1	2
Provision for Holiday Pay	21,872	52,854
Staff Contributions-Xmas Function	-325	-925
Accruals	20,500	17,384
Subs in Advance 2015	40,609	
Subs in Advance 2016	40,609	0
Income Received in Advance	4,439	16,297
Sundry Creditors	0	0
GST Collected	8,174	7,085
GST Paid	-23,175	-15,962
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>113,953</b>	<b>76,735</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Prov for Employee Long Service Leave	13,519	37,710
National Affiliation Fees	0	0
<b>Total Non Current Liabilities</b>	<b>13,519</b>	<b>37,710</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>127,472</b>	<b>114,445</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>251,049</b>	<b>368,731</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Surplus	368,731	651,792
Current Surplus	-117,681	-283,061
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>251,050</b>	<b>368,731</b>

WAFarmers' representatives sit on a number of government and industry committees. Below is a list of committees that WAFarmers is currently sitting on, as of November 2014:

COMMITTEE NAME	HOST	REPRESENTATIVES
<b>Dairy</b>		
Animal Health and Welfare Policy Advisory Group (PAG)	Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF)	Phil Depiazzi
Markets, Trade and Value Chain PAG	ADF	Michael Partridge
Farming Systems PAG	ADF	Peter Evans
Human Capacity PAG	ADF	Tammy Negus
ADF National Council	ADF	Michael Partridge
ADF Board	ADF	Peter Evans
Animal Welfare Engagement Project Committee	Western Dairy/WAFarmers	Warrick Tyrrell
Dairy Industry Consultancy Panel	DAFWA	Phil Depiazzi, Peter Evans
<b>Farm Business</b>		
Consumer Consultative Committee	Economic Regulation Authority	Tony York & Chris Wyhoon
WA Small Business Liaison Committee	Australian Tax Office	Chris Wyhoon
Agricultural Committee	Australia China Business Council	Tony York & Chris Wyhoon
State Revenue Liaison Committee	Department of Finance	Chris Wyhoon
<b>General Council</b>		
Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council	Department of Education Services	Trish Leake
WA Firearms Consultative Working Group	Western Australian Police	Dale Park
Agriculture and Community	National Farmers' Federation (NFF)	Mary Nenne
AgVet Chemicals Taskforce	NFF	Des Seymour
Animal Welfare Taskforce	NFF	Lyn Slade
Biosecurity Taskforce	NFF	Mike Norton
Competitiveness Committee	NFF	Marg Agnew
Drought Taskforce	NFF	Tony York
Innovation Committee	NFF	Dale Park
Natural Resources Committee	NFF	Dale Park
Trade Committee	NFF	Tony York
Water Taskforce	NFF	Steve Dilley
Workforce Productivity	NFF	Dale Park
<b>Transport</b>		
Heavy Vehicle Advisory Group	Department of Main Roads	Chris Wyhoon
Agricultural Vehicle Advisory Group	Department of Main Roads	Chris Wyhoon
Gateway Project Stakeholders Consultative Group	Department of Transport	Chris Wyhoon
<b>Occupational Health and Safety</b>		
Farmsafe WA Management Committee	Farmsafe WA	Ken Clark & Chris Wyhoon
WA Agricultural Industry Safety Group	Worksafe	Ken Clark & Chris Wyhoon
Austchem Board (formerly Chemcert)	AustChem	Des Seymour

# WA Farmers Committee Representation

COMMITTEE NAME	HOST	REPRESENTATIVES
<b>Meat</b>		
WA Livestock Exporters Association Delegate	WALEA	Malcolm Edward, Geoff Pearson & Jeff Murray
WA Cattle Industry Consultative Group	DAFWA	Mike Norton, Michael Campbell & Tony Pratico
National Livestock Identification Service (NLIS) (Cattle) Working Group (WA)	DAFWA	Mike Norton, Michael Campbell, Tony Pratico & Jeff Murray
WA Southern Australian Meat Research Cooperative (SAMRC) Discussion Group	DAFWA/ Southern Australian Meat Research Cooperative	Jeff Murray
WA Southern Australian Meat Research Cooperative (SAMRC) Discussion Group (Cattle)	DAFWA/ Southern Australian Meat Research Cooperative	Ken Sue
State Indonesian Live Export Taskforce	DAFWA	Dale Park
National Live Export Taskforce	Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)	Dale Park
WA Long Haul Cartage Working Group		Lang Coppin
Animal Health, Welfare and Biosecurity Subcommittee	Cattle Council of Australia (CCA)	Anabelle Coppin
Industry Systems and Food Safety Subcommittee	CCA	David Slade
Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA)	SCA	Jeff Murray, John Wallace
Cattle Council of Australia	CCA	Geoff Pearson

COMMITTEE NAME	HOST	REPRESENTATIVES
<b>Meat / Wool</b>		
WA Sheep & Goat Industry Consultative Group	DAFWA	Jeff Murray, Malcolm Edwards, Ken Clark & Tony Gooch
National Livestock Identification Service (NLIS) (Sheep & Goats) Working Group WA	DAFWA	Jeff Murray, Malcolm Edward & Ken Clark
WA Ovine Johne's Disease Advisory Committee	DAFWA	Jeff Murray, Ed Rogister, Malcolm Edward, Ken Clark & Tony Gooch
National Wild Dog Management Advisory Group	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (Queensland)	John Nankivell
WA State Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to Minister for Agriculture and Food WA	DAFWA	Tony Gooch
Industry Funding Scheme – Sheep & Goats WA Sheep & Goats Industry Management Committee	State Government of Western Australia	Jeff Murray, David Slade, John Moyes & Ed Rogister

COMMITTEE NAME	HOST	REPRESENTATIVES
<b>Grains</b>		
GrainGuard	DAFWA	Kim Simpson

COMMITTEE NAME	HOST	REPRESENTATIVES
<b>Wool</b>		
WA Wool Production Forecasting Committee	Australia Wool Innovation (AWI)	Ed Rogister
Food, Fibre & Timber Industries Training Council Rural Production	Food, Fibre & Timber Industries Training Council	Ken Walker
WoolProducers Australia Board	WoolProducers Australia	Ed Rogister
AWI Shearer & Shedhand Training Committee	AWI	Dane Sieber

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WAFarmers would like to thank all its generous sponsors for their support during 2013 and looks forward to continuing to work closely with them well into the future. WAFarmers would also like to take this opportunity to encourage members to consider the following sponsors when purchasing products and services.

The work WAFarmers does to represent the agricultural community would not be possible without the financial support given by these organisations. It is also important to remember these organisations have chosen to support WAFarmers, which in essence supports all Western Australian farmers.

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# WAFARMERS



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