

Speaker Program

– Agribusiness and Climate Change Program 7th October 2009

NB: Program in process of being finalised

Keynote Session:

Minister Tony Burke - Federal Minister Department Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry *(to be confirmed)*

Our first Keynote session will present the Australian Government initiatives to address climate change. Climate change is one of the greatest economic, social, and environmental challenges of our time. Expert scientific evidence confirms that human activity is altering the climate. This is changing rainfall patterns, reducing water availability in Australia and increasing the frequency of severe weather events such as bushfires and storms.

Panel (15 minute presentation followed by 5 minute question time):

Martin Kneebone from **FreshLogic** has a detailed knowledge of the food industry. He has worked at general manager-level in supermarket retail, and developed the first large-scale direct buying links between growers and retailers. He has developed a reputation for his ability to draw out useful and workable commercial applications from his reviews and analyses. As director of the former consulting firm *RETAILworks*, Martin has been engaged in projects with specialist retailers, suppliers and producers in the various segments and has also conducted many consumer studies.

Martin's presentation will discuss the drivers of innovation and implications for Australian Producers.

Dr Steve Edwards from **Pitt & Sherry**. Steve has extensive experience and has originally a background of organic and natural products chemistry. He has over 25 years of scientific experience including business management and as a company director on start-up ventures. He has published widely on medical science, food chemistry, aquaculture and the timber industry. His commercial experience includes systems economic and production model development along with the application of these to industry, aquaculture, energy and environmental optimisation projects as well as the invention patenting and onsale of significant IP. Most recently these skills have been used on carbon modelling, life cycle assessment, renewable energy and resource efficiency projects for a wide range of business clients. Steve has strong "bottom up" knowledge of options and control systems for resource reduction efficiency projects as well as considerable experience of the commercial and cultural challenges around innovative approaches.

Steve's presentation will highlight what climate change means for Tasmanian rural businesses and what are three simple things that people should consider when thinking about their own enterprise.

Morning Tea

First session after morning tea – choice of two sessions:

Agribusiness:

Soils:

Agribusiness Session

15 minutes for each speaker then 5 minute panel discussion

Martin Kneebone from **FreshLogic** will broaden his theme of innovation and implications for primary producers.

David Nelan from **Houstons Farm**. Houstons Farm led an Environmental Sustainability Project which was successful in winning the inaugural 2007 Woolworths Fresh Food Grant. Houston's Farm chose to leverage award funds with Horticulture Australia Limited to develop a carbon (greenhouse gas) calculation tool which could be extended to the vegetable industry and act as a single validated method for determining an enterprise carbon (greenhouse gas) using product life cycle methodology. Following a workshop of vegetable industry stakeholders in October 2008, industry chose to use the Houston's Farm tool as the basis for the development of a carbon (greenhouse gas) footprint tool.

James McKee from **NRM North**. James McKee is CEO of NRM North. He has been actively involved in natural resource management (NRM) for over 10 years both on his family properties and professionally. He was the inaugural chairman of the Toowoomba Landcare group and helped to develop it from a small group to a multi-million dollar business. James has come from a farming background in broadacre and intensive agriculture and has undertaken formal studies in agricultural science and sustainable agriculture management. He is a graduate of the Murray-Darling Basin Leadership Program and has helped develop Landcare in the USA and India. James will be talking about a number of the projects that are being initiated with the aim to develop property management planning modules on energy efficiency and climate change adaptation to assist primary producers.

Soil Session

15 minutes for each speaker then 5 minute panel discussion

Andre Leu from **Daintree**, tropical North Queensland is a world board member of IFOAM, the world peak organisation for Organic Systems and is Chair of the Organic Federation of Australia. Andre has been involved in the organic industry since 1972 and has extensive experience in organic systems in Australia and around the world. Andre has published papers on ameliorating the effects of climate change with soil carbon and will discuss how increasing soil carbon can ensure good production outcomes and farm profitability.

Declan McDonald is the Manager of the Sustainable Land Use section of the Land Conservation Branch of DPIPW. This section is responsible for all aspects of soil management in the state. With a background in dairy and mixed farming, Declan has over 25 years experience in land management which includes 10 years in the horticulture and fertiliser industries, 12 years with local government and 3 years with Catchment Management Authorities in NSW. His work has covered many aspects of land management including production agriculture, policy and planning, and development of industry partnerships for improved NRM outcomes.

Declan has a passion for sustainable agriculture with a focus on soil management. He encourages the concept of ecosystem health to understand the meaning of sustainability in agricultural landscapes. Investigations of soil carbon and soil biodiversity have been central to the work of the section.

Declan holds a degree in Horticulture and a Masters in Sustainable Agriculture.

Third Speaker – to be confirmed

Lunch

Second session after lunch – choice of three sessions:

Renewable Energy:

Emerging Opportunity and Tasmanian Advantages:

Grazing:

30 minutes for each speaker then 15 minute panel discussion

Renewable Energy:

30 minutes for each speaker then 15 minute panel discussion

Rob Nichols from **Nichols Poultry**. Nichols Poultry is a fully vertically integrated poultry producer and processor of chickens. In 2008 the company installed a Vestas V27 wind turbine to enable the company to produce power and help reduce the carbon footprint through the use of renewable wind energy. The benefits of this will see the company reduce energy costs by around 50% each year, with the project becoming self sufficient within 5 years. The company is investigating using waste products to produce bio fuels and alternative heating fuels for its broiler growing operation.

Nick Cracknell from **Granton in Tasmania** has recently invested \$1million into a new greenhouse system that produces Tomato's all year round. The large state of the art greenhouse has a boiler keeping the room temperature steady. Nick will talk about their changing operation and highlight how their boiler system burns sawdust and waste products from local saw mills with the system having minimal environmental impact.

Third speaker currently being confirmed.

Emerging Opportunity and Tasmanian Advantages:

30 minutes for each speaker then 15 minute panel discussion

Jane Bennett from **Ashgrove Cheese**. Ashgrove Cheese is owned and operated by the Bennett families on their dairy farm located in the picturesque countryside of Elizabeth Town in central Northern Tasmania. Recent achievements for Jane have included being awarded a 2007 Nuffield Farming Scholarship and representing Tasmania at the 2008 Australia 2020 Summit in Canberra, as part of the group who discussed the

Productivity Agenda (education, skills, training, science and innovation). Jane will be presenting a summary of her findings from the Nuffield Scholarship and how Ashgrove have altering their marketing focus.

Jane Huntington from **Two Metre Tall Company**. Jane and Ashley Huntington grow cereal crops and beef cattle on 600ha on the banks of the Derwent River. They grow barley on their property which they use to develop their Ales and are creating Australia's first "Real Ale Farm" which they aim to have as a carbon neutral enterprise. Jane is the RIRDC 2009 Tasmania Rural Women's Development Award Winner.

Rose Grant – **ABC Northern Tasmania** Communicating the message and the carbon club

Grazing: 30 minutes for each speaker then 15 minute panel discussion

Rick Jordan from **Advantage Ag** presenting practical information about whether irrigation is a viable option, the pros & cons of various irrigation methods, how to implement the most cost effective irrigation system and monitoring of the system once it is in place.

Eric Hall, Senior Technical Officer with TIAR, who will talk about changes in rainfall patterns in Tas and about new cultivars which have been developed to take this change into account. There will be a brief overview of the "Evergraze" programme, which focusses on the suitability of pasture species; this will be very relevant information for graziers in the Midlands who have large areas of degraded pastures with depleted seed banks.

Peter Ball, Team Leader (Red Meat Marketing and Extension) DPIPWE, presenting options for grazing management. Peter will also touch briefly on the Winnaleah trial results and information will be given about the implementation of a low cost rotational grazing system.