



AUTUMN | April 2015

# HOTLINE

Newsletter of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria

# Control the things we can control

*"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,  
"Before the year is out."*

*In God's good time down came the rain;  
And all the afternoon  
On iron roof and window-pane  
It drummed a homely tune.*

*(Extract of Said Hanrahan by John O'Brien)*

Hopefully by the time this gets to you, Autumn is in full swing. Just like Hanrahan above, we must do the things we can control and do them well, and set ourselves up for the season ahead. Similar to the last Hotline, let's plan early and as the opening price comes around, please spend time reviewing price, and setting budgets that are for your business. We all have different priorities, so plan for your business and your family.

Outlined below is a snapshot of activities been and gone, some to come, and some thoughts as we motor full steam into 2015.

I attended the Gardiner Leader Luncheon in February where I was lucky enough to accompany Dr Aalt Dijkhuizen former chairman of Wageningen University. The Netherlands University is leading in agricultural research and development particularly in animal health, economic, feed and food manufacture, food health and safety. They are particularly experienced in the coordination of research and development coupled with advocacy enabling them to cut through the myths and perception about the future technologies in the pipeline and the importance of agricultural production. He stated that we need to produce as much food by 2050 (the next 35 years) as the world has produced in the last 8,000 years. Staggering to believe I know, but it highlights the importance of technology, accompanied by strong advocacy, to ensure we have the right to farm in a profitable and sustainable manner for the future generations.



## Strategy Planning

In mid-March the Policy Council met to have a strategy planning day and to prioritise our objectives for 2015 and beyond. With a new Government and new advisers, we see this as an opportunity to refocus and reset for the future. The Policy Council identified a greater need for grass-roots engagement to ensure we are advocating to maintain and grow a sustainable Victorian dairy industry.

Please use your Policy Councillor to discuss opportunities and raises issues, as they are your dairy industry advocates.

Until next time, happy farming.

*By Adam Jenkins, UDV President*

1. We need strong advocacy to ensure the right input from the farm level through the supply chain is adding value to all of us.
2. If we don't have strong advocacy, then the ramifications of market access, animal welfare and environmental impacts have the potential to reduce demand for our premium dairy products.

Dr Aalt Dijkhuizen indicated that when the Netherlands Government gave into social pressures and banned caged egg production, the flow-on economic and community effects closed down a whole industry. Ironically, the Netherlands have turned into a net importer of eggs, and yes they are from caged egg production from Eastern Europe.

## Conference and Annual Meeting

The 2015 Conference is well into final preparations. It will be a great opportunity to come and support our industry and listen to and question our key stakeholders. We will guide them and question the issues we see on farm and in our industry and the value of the levy spend. We will hear reports from ADF, ADPF and the VFF. It will also be an opportunity to discuss our social licence and right to farm with presentations from experts on how we lead the debate on this issue.

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# Speakers share on social licence



**Brian Ahmed**

Brian Ahmed will be the keynote speaker at the Dairy Farmers' Breakfast. Brian is an egg farmer and President of the VFF Egg Group.

After studying an Engineering Degree and working as an Engineer for a short period of time, Brian turned his focus back to the family farm by establishing L.Ts Egg Farm into an Australia-wide egg wholesaler.

Diversification into the Retail and Hospitality industry with Wyndham Cache and the Packaging Industry with Pakogen Australia Pty/Ltd has given the family a long-term sustainable business model.

Brian will give a unique insight into Social Licence, sharing his traumatic experience of his property being broken into last year by animal activists. His presentation will be a great way to kick off the official proceedings of the 2015 UDV Conference.



**Peter Thompson**

Peter, a farmer from Queensland, will share his experience of allowing onshore gas extraction on his farm. Peter and his wife Nikki and family own two properties north-east of Roma; Echo Hills & Nugget Hills, consisting of mixed beef cattle grazing, dryland grain farming and wilderness protection. They also share their land with the APLNG / Origin Spring Gully CSG project.

Peter is passionate about agriculture and its valuable contribution to modern society and he believes in operating as a team in conjunction with his urban counterparts for the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of Australia.

Peter and Nikki are co-founders of Soil2Soul a new social, structural & economic model for Agriculture.

Peter is totally committed to seeing a fair and equitable integration of energy and agricultural production that first and foremost protects the land and water for future generations. Peter has successfully concluded intensive negotiations with Origin Energy creating new paradigms for infrastructure placement, land access codes of conduct and heads of compensation.

He is a member of numerous state and federal agricultural entities and has held senior positions in many. These include Kondinin Group, GRDC, Farmsafe Qld, Australian Institute of Ag Science & Technology, GGL National Policy Group, AgForce & NFF.



**Andrew Weideman**

Having grown GM canola on his property since its introduction in 2008, Andrew will provide a first-hand account of the regulations necessary to grow GM and the impacts of GM on his business.

Andrew runs a large successful broad-acre farming business in the Wimmera district of Victoria. The farm business produces a mix of cereals and legumes, as well as producing prime lambs including a successful white Suffolk stud.

Andrew has incorporated the latest technology available in Precision Ag incorporating a Quality Assurance system, on-farm storage systems, and a road freight component for trucking grain direct

to port. The business trades domestically, through bulk-handlers, as well as exporting malt barley direct to overseas Japanese buyers with an associated quality assurance program.

Andrew has introduced sustainable farming practices to his business with a focus on maximizing productivity and efficiency with a goal of passing the business onto the next generation of farmers in the best possible condition.

Andrew is the current Chair of Grain Producers Australia, the Peak industry body for the Grains Industry. He was previously the VFF Grains Group President and Birchip Cropping Group Deputy Chair and Board Member.

Recently Andrew has become the face of Crown Lager in an advertisement profiling the raw materials used in its production.



**Katherine Teh-White**

Katherine, founder and managing director of Futureye, is a leading expert on sustainable development, strategic public affairs, project approvals and organisational transformation. Through her 20 years' experience in corporations and as a consultant she has developed unique experience in social licence to operate strategy, policy, organisational change, communication and engagement.

She has successfully created social license for projects ranging from \$40 million to \$40 billion to reduce political, regulatory and community risk. She has also developed sustainable innovations and processes for innovation that improve social, environmental and commercial outcomes including a process that led to the world's first non sniffable petrol. She is a former journalist and government relations/ public policy manager in a resources company.

## More water for Gippsland dairy farmers

### Alison Penfold

Alison Penfold is the CEO of The Australian Livestock Exporters' Council (ALEC), the peak industry body representing the livestock export sector.

ALEC is responsible for setting industry policy, providing strategic direction and representing its members at all levels.

ALEC Members include Australian Government licensed livestock exporters by sea and air of feeder, slaughter and breeder sheep, cattle (including dairy), goats, buffalo and camels. Its members account for more than 95% of Australia's annual livestock exports.

ALEC plays an active role in promoting the interests of the livestock export sector including industry's investment in improving animal welfare, encouraging the adoption of best practice across the industry and advising members on challenges and changes to the operating environment.

### Michael Pascoe

Michael is the keynote speaker for the UDV Presidents' Dinner. He is one of Australia's most experienced and thoughtful finance and economics commentators with four decades in newspaper, broadcast and on-line journalism, covering the full gamut of economic and business issues, as well as occasionally straying into more whimsical matters of the human condition.

Despite being a reporter of the "dismal science", he maintains a sense of humour and the ability to speak and write entertainingly about the state of the nation and world.

"I've sat through too many boring economics and business presentations to think anyone else should have to," he says. Increasingly, Pascoe's body of work represents a fight for keeping perspective amidst the noise and haste of a news cycle with a painfully short attention span and sometimes dubious motives.

"There's more data but less information, more opinion but less thought," he says. "The low ebb of Australian politics has reduced debate to three-word chants and name calling. Both sides of politics have put the pursuit of power ahead of the best interests of the nation, ahead of being honest with the electorate. It's never been more important to look through the headlines and political prejudices to find the facts."

Michael Pascoe is a contributing editor for the Fairfax Media BusinessDay web sites, a regular commentator on Channel 7's Sunrise and news programs, a columnist for Yahoo7 and Mining Monthly and in demand as a speaker and facilitator.

Following substantial investment in northern Victoria, the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has been lobbying at the federal and state levels to fund modernisation projects in southern Victoria.

Constructing the Southern Tinamba Pipeline is the next stage in the modernisation project for the Macalister Irrigation District (MID2030). The design is nearly complete, following discussions with irrigators. Replacing 85kms of old channels with 38km of pressurised pipes and 26km of automated channel will mean quicker, more efficient delivery of water to farms.

"At the moment we need to give three days lead time to order water; with the new system we expect this to be cut to 24 hours," said Neil Gannon, the local VFF Water Councillor.

"If we can get the water on when we need it then we can grow more pasture. And with the efficiencies gained it will give us more water to use," he added.

The pipeline is anticipated to deliver water savings of 9,700ML for the district's dairy farmers and vegetable growers. These savings are expected to generate a further \$45 – 50 million annually in regional economic growth through expansion of farm production. The pipeline will enable farmers to expand with confidence and help to secure long term food production in the region.

Southern Rural Water (SRW) is seeking to match the \$20 million contribution from the irrigators with equal investments from the State and Federal governments. The VFF will be doing all it can to convince both levels of government to fund the project.

Stage 1A of the MID 2030 project is continuing to deliver on expectations. To date SRW has upgraded 100 regulators, using flume gates to replace old timber bars and has removed 39 regulators where the project team and irrigators identified them as surplus. SRW has also upgraded 11 meter outlets, with a further 47 under review and planned

for upgrade over the next two years.

Land purchase for the balancing storage at Southern Cowwarr is progressing and SRW is in the process of applying for relevant permits and preparing for construction. This will help to make channel automation downstream more efficient.

Under the 2015 winter works program another 75 regulators will be upgraded and 65 kilometres of channel will be cleaned to improve water delivery. SRW is working with customers on another 61 regulator sites to identify future service needs.

In late February SRW held an auction of the latest tranche of water savings from the completed works on MID2030. All the available water shares were sold and the revenue is being returned to the district for further works.

David McCann, a local VFF member, has bought permanent water at several SRW auctions.

"I bought temporary water for four to five years, now I don't have to buy it. I've secured that water and am not at the whims of the market anymore," he said.

He is pleased about the opportunities that the project is generating for local dairy and veggie farmers.

"The greatest benefit of all is that it's creating confidence, for those of us who are here and the money we've spent."

SRW has set aside some water shares so that customers who did not have the money at the time of the auction would still have an option to buy. These water shares are now available at the shelf price - the highest auction price. Call Southern Rural Water on 1300 139 510 for more information.

*By Rachel Astle, VFF Senior Policy Adviser - Water*



# 2015 Conference Registration Form

Tuesday April 28th and Wednesday April 29th 2015

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Full name:

UDV/VFF Membership Number:

Mailing address:

Contact number:

Email address:

## REGISTRATION COSTS

- **No charge** associated with attendance to the Welcome Drinks, Dairy Farmers' Breakfast, Annual Meeting or Conference
- **UDV Presidents' Dinner** Members \$55 (inc. GST) Non-members \$110 per person (inc. GST)

## UDV ANNUAL CONFERENCE - ATTENDANCE AT SESSIONS

Please confirm attendance at each session and event as listed (numbers required for catering purposes):

**Tuesday April 28th** Locanda Private Dining Room, Rydges Melbourne

**Welcome Drinks: 7.00pm - 9.00pm**

**Wednesday April 29th** Olympic Room, Melbourne Cricket Ground (Gate 3)

**Dairy Farmers' Breakfast: 7.00am for a 7.30am start**

**UDV Annual Meeting: 9.30am**

**UDV Conference: 10.30am**

**UDV Presidents' Dinner: 6.30pm**

Please indicate any dietary requirements:

## PAYMENT OPTIONS

**Cheque** enclosed for \$  (Cheque to be made payable to the VFF)

**Credit Card** (Visa or Mastercard only)

Card number:

Card expiry date:

Name as displayed on card:

Signature

## Lodging your registration and payment

Please lodge your registration form by Tuesday April 21st.

**Email:** [ycaspi@vff.org.au](mailto:ycaspi@vff.org.au) • **Fax:** 03 9207 5611 • **Post:** UDV/VFF, Farrer House, 24 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

# 2015 UDV Conference and Annual Meeting Agenda

**Theme:** Social Licence and the Dairy Farm

*Sponsored by: Dairy Australia*

**Tuesday, 28th April** Rydges Hotel, Locanda Private Dining Room

**7.00pm – 9.00pm** UDV Welcome Drinks

**Wednesday, 29th April** Melbourne Cricket Ground, Olympic Room (Gate 3)

<b>7.30am – 9.00am</b>	Dairy Farmers' Breakfast	<b>Keynote speaker:</b> Brian Ahmed – Lessons from the egg industry
<b>9.30am – 10.30am</b>	2015 UDV General Meeting	Resolutions, reports, elections
<b>10.30am – 10.50am</b>	Report on VFF activities	VFF President Peter Tuohey
<b>10.50am – 11.10am</b>	Report on Australian Dairy Farmers activities	ADF President Noel Campbell
<b>11.10pm – 12.00pm</b>	NZ Study Tour Presentations <i>Sponsored by: The Gardiner Foundation</i>	Mike Taylor – Gardiner Foundation chairman & NZ Study Tour participants
<b>12.00pm – 12.30pm</b>	Official Opening	Minister for Agriculture & Regional Development, The Hon Jaala Pulford
<b>12.30pm – 1.15pm</b>	Lunch <i>Sponsored by: Fonterra Australia</i>	
<b>1.15pm – 2.15pm</b>	Accessing new technologies in dairy <i>Sponsored by: Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory</i>	Peter Thompson – 'Onshore Gas on my farm' Andrew Weidemann - 'GM on my farm' ADPF – Peter Stahle – The Processors' view
<b>2.15pm – 3.15pm</b>	Social Licence and the Dairy Farm <i>Sponsored by: Tatura Milk Industries</i>	Katherine Teh-White, Futureye Alison Penfold, Australian Livestock Exporters' Council Charlie McElhone, Dairy Australia
<b>3.15pm – 3.45pm</b>	Afternoon Tea	
<b>3.45pm – 4.45pm</b>	<b>Panel Session:</b> How do farmers lead the debate?	Peter Thompson Andrew Weidemann Katherine Teh-White, Futureye Alison Penfold Peter Stahle Charlie McElhone
<b>4.45pm – 5.30pm</b>	The road ahead – next steps for the UDV and Victorian dairy	
<b>6.30pm – late</b>	Pre-Dinner Drinks and UDV Presidents' Dinner <i>Sponsored by: Devondale-Murray Goulburn</i>	Michael Pascoe, Fairfax Financial Journalist - 'Where the bloody-hell are we?'





# Dairy is Michael's passion

Rising before the sun, wading through muddy paddocks and battling heat, rain and wind while others are still lying in their cosy beds is not something most young people aspire to – yet for young dairy farmer Michael Hawker, that is the life he dreams of.

Having grown up around his parent's dairy, Mr Hawker said the challenges of farming were what keeps him so enthusiastic.

"I guess you could say it was bred into me; I'd done it from such a young age that I didn't really know anything else," he says.

Though his passion remained for dairy, he strayed from it briefly to complete an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic.

This phase, while enjoyable, showed him where he really wanted to be – back on the dairy farm.

But Mr Hawker's involvement in the dairy industry goes beyond the boundaries of the farm; he has been involved with the Young Dairy Development Program (YDDP) for many years and was the overall winner of this year's National Young Dairy Challenge in South Australia.

In 2014, Mr Hawker was also runner up in the Young Farm Leader of the Year category in the Great South West Dairy Awards.

He said the unpredictability of the industry was something that keeps him on his toes.

"No two days are the same – I've never seen two days that are the same and I love that because you just don't know what tomorrow is going to bring," Mr Hawker said.

"(As a mechanic) You're still going to be changing oil and checking tire pressures and scrubbing that windscreen, whereas on the dairy farm – you know every morning and night you're going to milk those cows, but what happens in between there- who knows?" he says with a grin.

Mr Hawker believes the long outdated theory of the "simple" farmer is one which is dying with every day.

Initiatives such as the Legendairy campaign are assisting the demise of negative thinking towards dairy among non-farmers.

"There's not a simple farmer left in this country; there can't be. There's just too much to know, too much to have to understand," he said.

"Simple farmers just don't exist. You can't be silly on any sort of farm, let alone a dairy farm.

"I think (the reputation of the industry) has been jumping forward in the last three



months even. Just through Facebook I'm getting quite a lot of people that have known me through school seeing that I'm involved with the dairy industry, and they're contacting me asking where they can get a job, how they can get involved with this."

Michael Hawker said he was positive about the future of the dairy industry considering healthy pastures in 2014, a sustained milk price and favourable conditions – as well as the signing of a historic Free Trade Agreement with China.

"It's (dairy) governed off one per cent. One per cent better conception, one per cent less sick heifer calves, or one per cent more weight gain on my heifers - put all of those one per centers together and it's a huge difference," Mr Hawker says.

"I'm sometimes quoted as saying dairy is my vice. I'm so addicted to it, that I'll do anything to be still doing it, but at the end of the time it's not going to wreck my life, it's going to build a lifetime of skills and careers and hopefully I'll have a nice little retirement package."

## Conference Accommodation

Rydges, Melbourne at 186 Exhibition Street, is offering members a discounted rate for Tuesday, 28th April and Wednesday, 29th April.

Simply tell the staff you are a UDV Member attending the UDV Conference to receive a further discount off the VFF special rate and a complimentary welcome drink. You must book at least 7 days before your stay to receive the deal. Be sure to book in advance, as it is subject to availability.

Disclaimer: This publication is provided in good faith and as a guide only. It may be of assistance to you, but the VFF/UDV does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or consequence that may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

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