



Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group

December 2015 Newsletter

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AGM – Chairman’s Challenge and Board Membership Update

As part of his Annual Report, Chairman Jim Wilson challenged everyone involved in agriculture to recognise and support the emerging importance of data in modern farm management. He was specifically speaking with regard to TAPG’s leadership of the State funded “Precision Agriculture Project”.

He went on to say:

“The Board supports our involvement with this project because ultimately it will help shed light on the practical use and place of data in our modern agricultural enterprises. The management team along with planning their field work and the next EXPO are hoping to engage the wider agriculture community with some or all of the following issues:

- *Who “owns” the data collected and how can we secure privacy?*
- *Can we develop an understanding that two or more people can “utilise the same data” without diminishing it?*
- *How “old” will data have to become before there is a low probability of gaining actionable insights to assist decision making?*
- *Where will we find or train the “third party providers” needed to analyse data for producers because data has no value until someone turns it into information or knowledge?*

- *Will “automated system controls” allow more time for discussions between agronomists and producers that will, in turn, lead to better management decisions.*
- *What will the “internet of agricultural things” look like and who will manage it? As a practical example of this issue our project team has to produce an on-line “Precision Agriculture Shopfront” as one of the outcomes listed in our funding Grant Deed. We note that there are now more “connected devices” in the world than there are people!*
- *Can we help to convince the federal government that phone and internet connectivity in rural Australia is a major “bottleneck” to growth?*
- *Can we shift the farming paradigm to a point where soil is recognised as the “engine room of agriculture” and that we need to manage farming from the “soil up” rather than “inputs down”?*

We look forward to making a useful contribution to answering these and the many related questions. We trust that the “connectedness” of the entire Tasmanian agricultural industry, through the agency of the relevant representative groups, our research bodies and government will allow us to take a leading position nationally in this space.”



Chairman, Jim Wilson, delivers his Annual Report.



Deputy Premier; the Hon Jeremy Rockliff, delivers the Annual Address to Members.

Board Membership Update

Board Membership: As ratified by members at AGM - 5/11/2015

Vegetable Processing	Gregory Bullock	Term concludes Oct 2016
Plantation Forestry	Jim Wilson Chairman	Term concludes Oct 2016
Other Crop Processing	Rohan Kile	Term concludes Oct 2016
Agri-Business Marketing	Anthony Houston	Term concludes Oct 2017
Fresh Vegetables	Mark Kable	Term concludes Oct 2016
Other (Rural Banking)	Greg Bott	Term concludes Oct 2017
Discretionary (Regulatory Affairs)	Allan Barr	Term concludes Oct 2017
Vegetable Processing	Peter Hardman	Term concludes Oct 2017
Agribusiness Services	Graeme Palmer	Term concludes Oct 2017
Dairy Processing	Richard Fisher	Term concludes Oct 2016
Primary Production	Rosie Mackinnon Keith Rice	Term concludes Oct 2017 Term concludes Oct 2016
Honorary Member (non-voting)		Subject to Board appointment

The Minister of the day is invited to send a representative to all Board Meetings as a non-voting "Observer". The current representative is Mr Ashley Bastock.



Caring for Country-Innovation Grants – Project Update:

A wide range of crops have been planted over our sub-soil improvements with our collaborating farmers and we look forward to commencing the task of yield monitoring and soil sampling commencing next week. All work has been GPS located and recorded combined with random placement to ensure we minimise any geographically specific influences from within the paddocks.

A crucial part of the trial work is the follow up monitoring in the second year of planting over our soil “amendments”. The longer term benefits of sub-soiling will hopefully more than justify the process.

We are excited to report that we will be involved with Tim Reid’s new Cherry Project at Jericho. At this stage we will be using the sub-soiler to provide a manure amendment in the greenhouse soils before construction commences. Tim’s Project Manager, Andrew Hall is very interested in the capacity of our machine to greatly assist the growth of the new orchard. The machine should be on-site next week and commencing work immediately. It has just come out of the DOBMAC workshop where we have had a few design improvements made as a result of our experience in using it. Most noteworthy is the installation of a vibrating screen to encourage a more even feed onto the conveyor rubber.

We look forward to reporting on this project as it unfolds over the next few months.

For further information, including requests for involvement in transition planning to CTF, please contact the Executive Officer.

Precision Agriculture EXPO, 21 April, 2016 - Deloraine

Yes, it's on again! Following this year's successful EXPO the committee have committed to a follow up event based on a similar format that drew high levels of participation from a very wide cross section of the agricultural community.

While a highlight of this year's event was undoubtedly the live demonstrations in Keith and Brady Davis' paddock adjacent to the complex it is our intention next year to focus these demonstrations on irrigation and fertiliser spraying. Spectator viewing will be enhanced through provision of a covered area complete with portable PA facilities to better facilitate the demonstrations and interaction with spectators.

TAPG Annual Awards for Excellence in Agriculture

For the third successive year these awards have again been presented as part of the AGM Program.



Recipients are shown here with Chairman Jim Wilson, second from left:

Mrs Solveig King accepted a "Lifetime Achievement Award" on behalf of her late husband Stephen for his pioneering leadership in the development of the oil poppy industry in Tasmania.

Mr Rick Rockliff accepted a "Lifetime Achievement Award" in recognition of his exemplary contribution to the growth of the Tasmanian Poppy Industry together with his service to the agricultural industry and the wider community

Mr Frank Mulcahy accepted a "Scientific Achievement Award" in recognition of research accomplishment and leadership within the Tasmanian and National potato industry.

Website Update

Under the leadership of Director Rosie Mackinnon our website is undergoing a major revamp. Amongst a raft of changes provision for housing the research findings from our Project work will become available to the wider industry. The Precision Agriculture "Shopfront" will begin its life in this space.

It is anticipated that the re-launch will occur towards the end of January.

Further updates on this development will be provided as they become available.

On behalf of the Board may I take this opportunity to wish our members the very best for the festive season.

For Comments or other feedback on this Newsletter please contact the Executive Officer:

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