

The Prawn Report



Monthly report of the Australian Prawn Farmers Association

September 2009

PO Box 12009 George St, Level 6, 183 North Quay, BRISBANE QLD 4003

Phone: 07 3837 4747 Fax: 07 3236 4100 www.apfa.org.au

APFA ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Australian Prawn Farmers Association (APFA) has last month announced its new Executive Committee, with the election of former President Nick Moore to the same role. Pacific Reef Farmer Alistair Dick was re-elected to the role of Vice President, and Monogold co-owner Catherine Chen was also re-elected to the role of Treasurer.

The elected Executive Committee for the coming 12 months now stands as the following:

President: Nick Moore – Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture

Vice President: Alistair Dick – Pacific Reef Fisheries

Treasurer: Catherine Chen – Monogold Pty Ltd

John Moloney – Coral Seas Farm

Ross Baillie – Australian Prawn Farm

Warren Lewis – Aquaculture Marine

Trevor Anderson – Seafarm Pty Ltd

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Helen Jenkins

2009 Ridley Aqua-feed, APFA & ABFA Conference

“Aquaculture into the future”

The prawn and barramundi conference held the last week of July 2009 at Jupiters Hotel & Casino, Townsville, was a huge success. A record number of attendees were on hand to hear the latest in technology, science, research, marketing and the economic outlook for aquaculture here in Australia.

Some 210 delegates attended the two day event which was officially opened by Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland the honourable Tim Mulherin.

Sponsors and exhibitors eagerly nominated for sponsorship for the premier aquaculture calendar event for the two sectors. Locally produced prawns and barramundi also featured prominently on Jupiters menus for the two days.

Thanks to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, for providing sponsorship under its Australia's Farming Future initiative, which enabled the APFA to invite some 34 students from around Australia, studying aquaculture to the conference. This enthusiastic group were given a rare chance to network with key industry leaders.

In his opening speech Minister Mulherin emphasised that

“the development of a sustainable aquaculture industry was a priority for Queensland,” and that “his government was working to remove road blocks to the profitable prawn and barramundi sectors to ensure this valuable industry continues to grow and profit.”

The impressive speaker list included an opening presentation from Dr Jacques Gabaudan, a feed nutritional expert from Thailand, followed by an Australian prawn farm outlook by General Manager of Pacific Reef Fisheries, Alistair Dick who emphasised the importance of continued research and adoption of findings. An important topic for all farmers presented by Steven Shotton from AQ1 “How the heck do I use less feed and make more money,” also provided an interesting insight for attendees.

All speakers emphasised the importance of marketing and research and the benefits to industry of early adoption of research findings. The prawn farming industry is currently experiencing unprecedented growth, reversing static production figures.

Unofficial production figures for 2008/09 show an annual increase in production of 33 per cent in volume and average yield and an increase of 34 per cent in the value of industry.

This upward trend looks set to continue, supported by efforts with research and marketing and a newly elected APFA Executive Committee. Nick Moore – General Manger of Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture and newly elected President of the APFA stated that he is looking to strengthen the position of Australia's prawn farmers and is pleased to have such a strong infrastructure supporting him as he takes on his role.

APFA continues to strengthen its position as a professional, forward thinking, research driven association – led by Helen Jenkins, excellent media representation and support of the Next Generation led by Jamie O'Brien, and further support for developing skills for the industry – led by the newly appointed Wil Conn Project Manger of a Skills Formation Strategy and an experienced R & D Committee who guide, monitor and allocate research projects.

The Association relies heavily on support from funding research agencies through the likes of the FRDC, Seafood CRC, DEEDI and CSIRO.

The newly elected Executive Committee predict that

Industry growth will continue and that the prawn farmers will capitalise on all the above available agencies and personnel who will work together with our farmers to take the industry to a new growth phase. The industry is uniting, buoyed on by the positive outlook from the successful conference and the positive gains in production.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

Jamie O'Brien

My sincere apologies for the delay in producing The Prawn Report; however I have only recently returned from holidays in the US.

The Australian Prawn Farmers (APFA) and Australian Barramundi Farmers Association (ABFA) Conference in July was an outstanding success. A sincere thanks to all our sponsors, members, DEEDI representatives and all those who attended for their support.

Also a sincere thanks go to Julie Lisle, Graham Dalton and Ken Chapman from the Australian Barramundi Farmers Association for their support and assistance.

Planning will now start for the 2010 Conference, which will be held in August 2010 on the Gold Coast. Your ideas and suggestions received in the Feedback forms will be taken into consideration.

BENCHMARKING

The APFA is still in the process of collecting data for the 08-09 year. Appointments will take place in the following areas

- Mackay - September 23
- Cairns - September 29-October 1
- Gold Coast - TBC

If you would like to know more information, please contact Project Development Officer Jamie O'Brien on 07 3837 4747 or jamie@gff.org.au.

NEW LOGO & WEBSITE

The APFA has embarked on a much needed mission of re-developing its logo and (two) websites, which will be merged into one. Both marketing tools will be given a fresh new look. During this time, the current www.apfa.com.au and www.australianprawns.com.au will be removed. More information will follow soon on its progress. WATCH THIS SPACE!

SKILLS FORMATION STRATEGY - AQUACULTURE (QLD)

Wil Con **(A Department of Education and Training initiative under the Queensland Skills Plan 2008)*

Welcome to the first Skills Formation Strategy (SFS) update. This will serve as a forum to inform you, the Industry, of the work the strategy is undertaking, the goals that the Queensland Industry has identified and the outcomes that have resulted from a unified Industry response.

Your support for the strategy and for the uptake of its outcomes by your Queensland members will provide for leverage to apply any outcomes at a national level for the benefit of all Industry members.

Introduction

The SFS is an opportunity for the Queensland Aquaculture Industry, through a collaborative approach, to;

1. Address workforce issues and skilling requirements.
2. Develop an Industry Network capable of increasing the capacity of all sectors of Industry to align workforce

development with its vision and business strategy.

3. Ensure training providers develop the capacity to deliver relevant (Industry identified) programmes.

4. Support development into the future through the progression of innovative, Industry owned, processes of engagement and stakeholder relationships.

CURRENT WORK

I am in the early stages of the project and as such, trying to touch base with as many industry members as I can. I myself have been employed within aquaculture for 13 years. I am a passionate supporter of our industry and believe that there can be benefits in Industry taking the lead in the formation of, or revitalising of existing relationships to benefit the individual grower and industry as a whole. If you have not heard from me, get in touch. I seek your considered opinion on issues important to you and your Industry. I encourage feedback (no matter how abrupt) and hopefully together we will gather support for the realisation of outcomes to industry identified concerns.

THE FIRST INDUSTRY IDENTIFIED SKILLING REQUIREMENT

The area of restricted electrical licensing (REL) has been highlighted as an early contender for a unified industry approach to attaining the required training and skilling outcomes for the Qld aquaculture industry. The Queensland Aquaculture Industry Federation and its upcoming AGM (Bribie Island September 9 2009) will serve as a forum to solicit industry input and potential strategies to attaining a relevant REL for Industry. I, along with Greg Crossan (DEEDI) will be presenting a discussion paper at the meeting. In short, there is an opportunity to approach the Queensland Electrical Safety Office for recognition of aquaculture as an industry that needs to perform some electrical work during its normal operating procedures. If the industry is recognised in this regard it opens the door for appropriately qualified persons to obtain an REL. Key points in attaining the licensing include;

1. *UNIFIED INDUSTRY RESPONSE.* A unified Industry position is critical. This will state Industry's need for inclusion in the REL programme and what it expects (i.e. what electrical work it wants to carry out) from employees who attain the licence. This needs to be articulated and presented to the electrical licensing regulatory body.

2. *LICENCE CONTENT* It is important that all are agreed on the content of the delivery programme. The more substantial the work to be carried out the more involved the training (cost, time etc) AND you can only conduct electrical work within the areas (competencies) that training was delivered in. Once an employee has commenced training a permit is issued to allow electrical work to be carried out (under periodic supervision). The following link contains hours of light reading! <http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/electricalsafety/publications/guide/resclicence/index.htm>.

3. *WAY FORWARD, TIMING & COSTS* A unified response and consensus on the licence content will enable Greg and I to provide realistic answers to costs and timings with respect to attaining an REL. It is important to note that if Queensland Aquaculture is successful in attaining a REL, it is up to individual operators / business' to acquire a REL. A successful outcome does not require Restricted Electrical Licensing to be adopted industry wide.

FUTURE STRATEGY WORK

Industry uptake and ownership of the strategy will dictate future outcomes. The strategy will focus on Industry identified needs. It is hoped that the restricted electrical licensing will have outcomes that show the merits of a unified collaborative Industry approach. A Steering Committee, comprising Industry members, will then be charged with identifying and prioritising future outcomes. I note the significant progress made at the Industrial Award Hearings, and the comments from Brian Jeffriess (NAC) with respect to the importance of co-operation between Industries and the contribution of Peak Bodies. I hope that these synergies can be adopted by the Queensland Aquaculture Industry through the life of this Skills Formation Strategy.

Next Newsletter

I will report on the SFS outcomes from the QAIF AGM and the next steps in attaining Restricted Electrical Licensing for the Queensland Aquaculture Industry. I will also respond to any questions received, regarding the strategy in general, and detail the next steps in the Skills Formation Strategy. Till next time, Co-operate, collaborate and innovate! For more information on the Skills Formation Strategy, contact Wil Conn on 0438 498 279 or email wil.conn@iinet.net.au.

GOVERNMENT NEWS

AGRIBUSINESS A POSITIVE INDUSTRY

The Queensland Government has recognised that agriculture is defying worldwide economic trends and outperforming all expectations by improving its total value and contribution to the Queensland economy. Premier Anna Bligh told Parliament recently that agriculture made a \$13 billion contribution in 2008/09, compared to \$12.4 billion in 2007/08, despite the devastating floods in north Queensland earlier this year and ongoing recovery from one of the longest dry periods in the state's history. APFA strongly believes that these signs should point all political leaders to the reality that investing in job creation and growth opportunities along with providing policy settings to promote private investment in the agricultural sector is a long term plan that provides secure dividends to the economy.

SUCCESSION PLANNING RECOGNISED FOR DROUGHT-AFFECTED FARMERS

The Rudd Government has acted to ensure farmers who want to pass their farms on to their children can still access Exceptional Circumstances drought income support. It follows concerns raised by some producers that the system prevented them from accessing drought income support if they passed their properties or other assets on to the next generation. Previously, the value of a farmer's land or assets were included in the eligibility test for drought support, even if the land or assets had been passed on up to five years ago. This was seen as a disincentive for farmers to plan for family succession in the business. Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke said the changes recognised that farm businesses were different to other workplaces. Farmland and essential farm assets which have been passed on as part of a succession plan are now exempt from the drought income support asset test. This exemption will apply where farmland and assets

are considered essential to the running of the enterprise, provided the farmer continues to farm and maintain a right or interest in the farmland. Producers are encouraged to discuss their individual circumstances with Centrelink by calling the Drought Assistance Hotline on 13 23 16.

WEATHER RECORDS BROKEN DURING AUGUST

The latest temperatures recorded by the Bureau of Meteorology show that August 2009 will go down in the record books as Australia's warmest August, while winter was only 0.01°C away from setting a record. Dr David Walland, of the Bureau of Meteorology National Climate Centre, said August was a most extraordinary month, with Australian mean temperatures 2.47°C above the long-term average, breaking the previous record by 0.98°C. August culminated in a record-breaking heat-wave during the second half of the month which saw maximum temperatures in excess of 37°C across Queensland and other parts of Australia, including a new state August records of 38.5°C at Bedourie on August 29. The outlook for the coming spring suggests that above average temperatures are likely across the whole of Australia. This is a result of recent warm conditions in the Indian Ocean as well as warming in the Pacific. For more information, download the seasonal outlook at http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/temps_ahead.shtml.

SEEKING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR AGRIFOOD DIRECTORS

AgriFood Skills Australia is inviting expressions of interest from experienced directors to join the Board to fill vacancies due to the completion of the terms of three directors, who are eligible for reappointment. The food lobby group is seeking to appoint directors who have had exposure to the agrifood industry at a senior level. The company's strategic focus is to further strengthen industry and enterprise engagement and leadership in developing solutions, skills and workforce shortages, particularly in regional Australia. Applications close on Friday September 18 2009. For more information contact Sally Wagnon on 02 6163 7240 or email sally.wagnon@agrifoodskills.net.au.

FREE LEGAL HELP WITH MINING ISSUES

Need help sorting out a dispute with a mining company or developer? If you're a farmer or rural landholder, Legal Aid Queensland's Farm & Rural Legal Service (Mining) can provide you with legal advice and minor legal assistance about issues connected with mining, mineral exploration, gas and oil exploration and production, gas and oil pipelines, fossicking and similar activities like quarrying and infrastructure development. You can get legal advice:

- by phone, fax, post or email
- by visiting your local Legal Aid office
- through videoconference or
- at your property.

To access this service you will need to complete a Legal Aid application form. There is no charge for this service, however, you might have to pay for certain services or products recommended to help with your legal problem, including land title and tenure searches, valuations and consultants fees. For more information, contact Legal Officer Glen Martin on 07 4687 2934 or email gmartin@legalaid.qld.gov.au.



Top left: APFA Executive Officer Helen Jenkins receives her gift of thanks. Top row: John Peters, Commonwealth Bank Senior Economist presents his speech. Top Right: More than 200 farmers and policy makers attended the two day Conference in Townsville. 2nd row: Minister for Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, Rural and Regional Queensland Tim Mulherin makes the opening speech. Middle: APFA Executive Officer Helen Jenkins presents CSIRO Scientist Greg Coman with his award. Middle right: CRC Managing Director Len Stephens speaks at the Annual Conference Dinner. 3rd Row left: Industry representatives attended the Conference. 3rd Row Middle: Wim Martens gives one of two presentations. Bottom left: Len Stephens, and Mr & Mrs Mitris at dinner. Bottom middle: Richard Smullen, from Ridley, and Matt West from Australian Prawn Farm enjoy a laugh. Bottom right: Skills Formation Strategy Officer Wil Conn makes his presentation.