



**2006
Conference**

**25th – 29th
April
2006**

**Charles Sturt
University**

Wagga Wagga

1

“FROM THE DESK”

^ In 2003 the NSW government focussed on the banning of tree clearing to protect about 20000 hectares of native vegetation.

^ While almost 3 million hectares of forest and native vegetation were incinerated in bushfires.

1. EDITORIAL:

.....*JANS THOUGHTS*

2. SECRETARY:

.....*ALLANS OUTLOOK*

3. PRESIDENT:

.....*TONYS POINT of VIEW*

Section 1 sponsored by:





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As we continue to watch the skies in the southern part of the state and will the rains to come, it is reassuring that our income is not dependant on the seasonal conditions. My thoughts go to the rural community that I, like you, depend on for resources as we continue to teach practical agriculture.

In the rural areas, the students also look tired from feeding stock for yet another winter. They all seem to be helping to burden the load of their families. Is it a good idea to broach the subject of “How to deal with depression in a farming family” to assist these kids in coping? What about “drought feeding”, I’m sure many teachers have covered this one in their classes in drought affected areas.

I urge all members of BAAT to encourage non member ag teachers to take a look at the current issue of BAAT magazine and see what you get for your membership. As always, we welcome items from members that they would like to see in the BAAT magazine. Schools that would like to see themselves promoted in “What’s happen’ in my paddock” please contact us.

My sincere thanks go to Tony Butler for the amazing job he does collecting and presenting the information in the BAAT magazine. He is really much more than just a President.

And lastly, where was Jan? (*Page 10.2: June 05 BAAT*), as usual, getting the other 8 students into the ring. Canberra Show, a great place to enter students and steers, shame about the prices returned on the sale.

Lets hope some more promotion comes forward from the organisers, to get more buyers with more notice to purchase steers on behalf of butcheries in their areas

Here is hoping that the season improves for all the state.

Finally introducing our Primary Industries NSW Teachers Federation representative on the Board of Studies is **Michele Ridell:**

Michele is the contact person for issues related to the course.

Michele Ridell contact address:

NSW Teachers Federation Representative
VET Primary Industries
Board of Studies Syllabus Committee,
C/- The General Secretary,
NSW Teachers Federation
Locked Bag 3010.
Darlinghurst NSW 1300.



SECRETARY.....

ALLANS

OUTLOOK



WWHS Herb garden, shade houses & hot houses

It has been just over 12 months since Tony came back from the last conference in Armidale as the new President of the AAT. Shortly afterwards, Tony and the new executive from the Riverina were planning for the next conference at the Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga and chasing up material for the first BAAT.

While we have had a few teething problems having to change the original date of the conference to April '06, one of the executives major concerns has been the low numbers of financial members of the association. To that end, we have sent a second circular in April with an up-date of happenings with the AAT including a Membership Muster. We have been also encouraging members who picked up mistakes to their membership status in the June 2004 BAAT, to contact the new executive so we can update the AAT membership data-base. So far a few members have done that including 2 from the new executive.

You may have noticed on that last circular that mention was made of the NSWAAAT membership of the Kondinin group. A number of schools are members but the subscription is on the high side for most schools. We approached Kondinin at the beginning of the year looking at ways we could get a better deal for our members for the purchase of their publications. The result was that as NSWAAAT is now a member. Members of NSWAAAT can now purchase publications with the members discount. See the article on page 6.14 to 6.19 of this edition; if you are interested in taking advantage of this offer.

The Association (Tony in particular) has been busy trying to secure sponsorship for the next conference. You will notice the logos on the back and sponsors articles in each edition of BAAT. Some businesses/groups that have been approached for a token sponsorship for the conference have suggested supporting Agriculture teachers in other ways.

One such business has been Waratah. They are keen to sponsor the costs of running a trip through their Newcastle plant and a day with fencing legend Neville Prince. We may be able to secure Neville for a session at the conference.

Waratah have even suggested producing some type of teaching aid on disc for us as resource for primary industries.

If there is anyone out there interested in the Newcastle Waratah experience then you can let me know at Wagga Wagga High School on 02 6925 3611 the cut off for this will be 1st August if your interested. So get on the phone; it should be very worthwhile.

Finally the call goes out to one and all to support your association by encouraging others to join and by sending in any teaching resources, AG/PI teacher get-to-gethers features or ideas for the next BAAT. Supporting photos are welcome.



Presidents....

Point of View

Tractor Training:

A number of people were trained in the tractor instructor course during the Ag. conference at Armidale in 2004. Since then a call to DET regarding finances for further tractor training courses around the state has resulted in a response that we need to pressure our principals and superintendents at regional level. At a principals conference in the south of the state in September this very issue regarding teachers not adequately trained was raised. An extract from that letter to principals from the Association reads:

“There are a number of DET Agriculture teachers in the Riverina region who do not possess formal qualifications as tractor instructors or require updating. These Agriculture teachers need to deliver adequate training to their students in Agriculture classes knowing that their tractor instructor certification and training in this area meet current qualifications and OH&S requirements.

In May this year the NSW Agriculture Teachers Association conducted their biennial conference at Armidale. At this conference there were a number of Agriculture teachers that participated in a tractor training course to satisfy current qualifications to train students in the safe operations of tractors.

The Department of Education & Training provided finances to support this training. The Agriculture Teachers Association wish to request a similar tractor training course be available to teachers in various regions and across the state. These courses be organised & conducted in the foreseeable future.

Ongoing courses will be required for agriculture teachers and people who enter the Agriculture teaching profession. These issues of safety and training in schools need to be addressed by DET to maintain currency of its employees in the delivery of the Agriculture by the Department of Education and Training to maintain currency of its employees in the delivery of the Agriculture syllabus throughout NSW.”

With OH&S a major issue in all areas of our lives as well as schools we need to ensure DET is covering all of its employees; including farm assistants and agriculture teachers delivering tractor training whether it’s to their junior or senior students.

The stance of the Association was to ensure that all agriculture teachers and farm assistants were suitably trained with the provisions for ongoing training to cater for new teachers entering the profession or other circumstances that may arise within schools. I can inform members that the Association is working with DET & TAFE on a suitable tractor training course for teachers & farm assistants with various degrees of tractor experience that may be ongoing. These discussions are in the early stage & hopefully, all going well, will unfold in the foreseeable future.

Felicitations:

On behalf of the Association I would like to extend our congratulations to the following Agriculture Award recipients; Tony Barnett; J.A. Sutherland Award; Pat McCann; Professional Teachers Council Award. These people are well deserving of these accolades and this vindicates the hard working people we have in the Agriculture teaching profession throughout this state.

To the student recipients of the top 2004 HSC awards in Agriculture, the Research Project & Primary Industries; we extend our congratulations but more importantly to the dedicated teachers of these students and other dedicated Aggies who put the long hours in each year to ensure their students are well prepared for the HSC; well done.

Citations for Tony, Pat and the HSC students can be found in section 3 of this edition.

Farm Assistants:

Since entering the teaching profession back in 1980, I found it strange, but in hindsight necessary; that DET used a formula to justify how many hours a farm assistant was employed. The hours in your school are based on the number of students and type of school. Considering that we all have had both Farm Assistants that we would like to see move on & others that we would endeavor to keep for the benefit of a well functioned school agriculture farm, I thought that it was appropriate to investigate the issue.

Our school has just gone through the process again where a 'good' farm assistant has moved on because of the hours not being adequate enough to maintain his financial affairs. We have all heard this. Given the increased time restraints and work loads now placed on the FA in schools; there is a need to justify an investigation into this formula & perhaps open up a discussion on this issue.

However the result of all this, was that it was raised at a principal's conference in the south & the Riverina secondary principals agreed unanimously that the issue needs consideration at the Departmental level. To date there has been agreement from principals that there is an issue regarding Farm Assistants and investigation needs to occur. The suggestion is that we canvass our own principals and pressure them to continue to bring this to the discussion table and maintain it on the agenda.

The diversity of agriculture farms in schools compared to 20 years ago has certainly changed. Schools now have PI to deliver & maintain the associated projects; along with the appropriate records for supplies/ animal activities/ chemicals and machinery to name a few. All this creates a platform for investigation into Farm Assistant hours.

We should be aware that only as recently as last year, the Farm Assistant award has now been investigated by the bench of the Arbitration Commission and this basically means there is to be no change to their conditions or pay increments. However there is no longer a junior award. This award is investigated every three years by the Arbitration Commission. It appears that we may have missed the boat on this issue as the next consultation period will be in 2007.

The new Farm Assistant award has been included in this BAAT; section 6; for you to become familiar with & any enquiries to Graham Devlin Director of Industrial Relations at DET.

National Agenda:

Discussions recently, at the national agriculture level, have centered on the issue of falling number of students undertaking senior Agriculture in secondary schools across Australia. This result has a flow on effect for students entering agriculture science courses at the tertiary level. In some cases universities have reacted by closing courses or restricting numbers.

Further to this fewer numbers of students are entering the profession as agriculture teachers which cause problems at school level to have someone trained to deliver the agriculture curriculum. So what is being done to address this issue? A national survey is to be conducted to find out what agriculture teachers feel about this issue & what possible solutions can be used to lobby education ministers & industry bodies across the country to provide a mechanism to curtail the declining numbers of students entering this profession. Hence tertiary institutions need to address this very issue particularly those that have facilities & resources based in regional Australia & have had made a long lasting contribution to the profession over many years.

Universities as we know have had for some time the HSC requirements of Mathematics & Chemistry as prerequisite for entering the Agriculture science course. On investigation the universities feel that the rigor of agriculture courses requires the mathematics and science base for consolidation of unit studied throughout the course. We also are aware that students studying Agriculture at the HSC level is not necessary to enter the Ag Sc course at university.

The HSC Agriculture course provides plenty of rigor to students and we know that students studying agriculture science at university in their first year find it a great advantage to have studied Agriculture in year 12. Perhaps the universities need to rethink this issue for students studying Agriculture Science.

Chemicals in Schools:

As discussed at some length in the Summer BAAT 2004; the teaching of AQF3 “Chemical Application” to our students in schools is prohibited by the Department of Education. However a number of people across the state have been re-trained as ChemCert instructors/ assessors while using the Farm Care Training RTO for credentialed purposes.

These people are instructing/ assessing at AQF3 level of qualification to students “where it is deemed necessary”.

However we are able to instruct and assess our students at AQF2: “Chemical Safety” in schools. By the end of 2005 many of us, which hold the SMARTtrain instructor/assessor qualifications at the AQF4 level, will have our credentials expire. DET will not fund our retraining. If we are to maintain SMARTtrain qualifications we need to fund the training ourselves.

In the light of this, I have received a comprehensive package of resources on a CD, from the DPI at Yanco. These resources are still a valuable tool in delivering upto date information in teaching chemicals to students covering such topics as:

- i. Safe Use of Chemicals
- ii. OH&S Program.
- iii Spray Nozzle Kit

Below is a letter outlining these resources and a contact person for purchasing these packages.

In Section 8 (pgs 24 & 25) of this BAAT; you will find an order form for the resources and a list of the package details.



NSW
DEPARTMENT OF
**PRIMARY
INDUSTRIES**

Now incorporating NSW Agriculture
ABN 51 734 124 190-004

20.05.2005
Mr Tony Butler
C/- Tumut High School
PO Box 70
Bogong Place Tumut NSW 2720

Dear Tony,

Chemical Training Resources for Secondary Schools

As you are aware the SMARTtrain program is responsible for the development and production of a range of high-quality publications and training resources for pesticide and OHS training. I am pleased to announce that the SMARTtrain Chemical Accreditation Program has recently completed work on a range of new training resources which you and your colleagues may be interested in. The new resources include the:

- Schools Chemical Training Resources CD Rom
- Calibration video
- Spray Nozzle Kit
- Chemical Safety learning and assessment training package (AQF2)

The SMARTtrain publications and resources have been designed to provide assistance to the teacher/trainer in the delivery of competency based chemical and OHS training. I have included a CD Rom with electronic files detailing the comprehensive suite of SMARTtrain resources presently available. In addition I have included a price list for the suite of SMARTtrain resources.

SMARTtrain Publications CD Rom viewing instructions:

1. To open the first page of the site, double-click on the index.html file on the CD Rom.
2. Ensure that the page is opened to full screen size.
3. Browse the site by scrolling and using the hyperlinks in the site.

I hope you find this information useful. If you believe this information would benefit Secondary Schools teachers in NSW please contact me regarding options to distribute the information. If you have any questions regarding this letter, the resource price list or the CD Rom please contact me. Thank you.

Regards,

Nathan Cutter

SMARTtrain Coordinator

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