



AUSTRALIAN
ALPINE
VALLEYS
AGRIBUSINESS
FORUM



Alpine Valleys

agribusiness forum

Issue 1# | September 2007



FROM THE CHAIR

I am delighted to welcome you to the first of our new look quarterly newsletters.

Profiles of domestic and export projects highlight the breadth of the agribusiness activity in our region. Partnerships the Alp Valleys have developed with Regional Development Victoria, AusTrade, Department of Primary Industries and North East Catchment Management Authority have greatly assisted in making these projects a reality.

The presentation of the 2007 Agribusiness Leadership Awards will again be a feature of our Annual General Meeting to be held in Beechworth on Wednesday October 10. In previous years, our guest speakers have been entertaining and of great interest. I'm certain this year's guest speaker, Mike Stephens will be no exception. I encourage you all to attend this special evening.

The Board and I hope you enjoy this newsletter and welcome your feedback and stories for future newsletters.

Julie de Hennin
Chair

Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness
Forum Inc.

Planning for Tree Change Forum Beechworth October 22 -23 2007

The Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum in conjunction with North East Catchment Management Authority and La Trobe University will be holding a two day forum centred on the emerging issue of 'Tree Change' in the North East.

The Forum, to be opened by Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, Jenny Mikakos MP, will attract a wide cross-section of participants representing industry and sectors such as local planning and development, tourism, food and wine purveyors, local and state government agencies and departments, heritage managers and property developers.

The Alp Valleys steering committee chaired by Greg Hayes includes Ray Park from the Rural City of Wangaratta, John Joyce from Regional Development Victoria, Brian Thompson from the Department of Primary Industries, Jeff Taylor from the North East Catchment Management Authority, Trevor Budge from La Trobe University and Fiona McKenzie from the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Key note speakers will present case studies and planning models successfully used in other regions impacted by the permanent and semi-permanent tree and sea change populations. An open forum discussion will take place with a panel of leaders representing the North East focussing on the issues and challenges facing the region as the number of 'tree changers' moving to the North East increases.

Fiona McKenzie, Demographic Researcher with the Department of Sustainability and Environment will present new 'tree and sea change' tracking methodology which has recently revealed that over 50% of Mansfield's population do not permanently reside in the area. She will also present information on what impact this transient population is expected have on the region during times of bushfire and drought in the future.

Alp Valleys Board Member Greg Hayes said, "The North East has great amenity. The region's natural beauty is the reason why people want to move here, to enjoy a change in lifestyle. However, what is essential for the region is that we take learning's from other areas experiencing 'tree and sea change' to shape our future."

Greg believes "A careful and united plan can ensure that we don't lose the region's natural beauty, traditional farming opportunities and attractions to subdivisions. This is why we have drawn together expert speakers and a panel of local leaders representing economic development, planning, agribusiness and industry to discuss models and opportunities, working forward towards an action plan for the North East at the end of the two day forum."

According to forum panel expert, Trevor Budge of La Trobe University, "The North East is one of the most significant identified 'tree change' areas in Australia which needs careful management and planning for an increasing population. The majority of the 'tree changers' moving to the area will be middle aged or older, which in itself brings large implications. It is essential that the leaders who attend the Forum produce some solid actions for the North East on which to build in the future."

To register or to find out more about the North East Planning and Managing Tree Change Forum call Lachlan Campbell of the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum on 0357216088 or 0419243225 or go to www.alpvalleys.com.au

According to Mr Rick Cavedon of The Game Meat Company, "Breaking into overseas export markets is a long term proposition. With the Australian dollar currently performing strongly, our export markets are under pressure, so we won't be able to gauge the success of this venture for at least twelve months."

north east export success in hong kong

Following on from last year's successful Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum "Alp Valleys to Asia" Singapore export campaign four local producers, The Game Meat Company, Jim Jams, Kooka Brothas Cakes and Gapstead Wines recently embarked on an outbound trade mission to Hong Kong to explore the rapidly expanding and lucrative Asian market at the international HOFEX food and wine expo.

The producers, supported and partially funded by Regional Development Victoria, showcased a wide range of products at the trade show which attracted more than 25,000 guests from the Asian food, wine and hotel sectors.

As part of the trade mission, the Alp Valleys contingent also welcomed a food and wine buyer from the large Hong Kong restaurant chain Zest Apple and Pear Group to the North East in April. The visit, funded by Regional Development Victoria and arranged by Vicki Chick of Internat, saw local businesses showcase their produce during meet and greet sessions with the buyer with a view to participating in a two month restaurant promotion featuring selected North East food and wine on the menu.

According to Mr Rick Cavedon of The Game Meat Company, "Breaking into overseas export markets is a long term proposition. Over the past few years we've explored and secured various export markets and participated in large expo's such as HOFEX. With the Australian dollar currently performing strongly, our export markets are under pressure, so we won't be able to gauge the success of this venture for at least twelve months."

"Hong Kong and the Asian market generally are expanding at an amazing rate, said Mr Cavedon. When large casino and hotel developments currently under construction are completed, some of their occupancy would roughly total the population of Wangaratta. This is a demand we could find difficult to fulfill."

"All the businesses who participated on the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum stand at HOFEX enjoyed strong interest for their products and are already working on establishing solid leads. I'd recommend to anyone wanting to expand their export markets to contact the Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum to find out more."

More information HOFEX and other export initiatives can be found on the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum website at www.alpvalleys.com.au



>>THE 2007 AUSTRALIAN ALPINE VALLEYS AGRIBUSINESS FORUM LEADERSHIP AWARDS

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The Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum has been successful in winning an EverGraze (more livestock from perennials) project. The project has appointed an Agronomist, Mr Jim Moll who will manage the implementation of the project, which aims to advance farm productivity and deliver regional catchment strategies through focussing on pasture improvement using native and improved pastures.

2007 AGM & Leadership Awards Dinner

Amulet Winery, Beechworth-Wangaratta Road,
Beechworth.

Wednesday October 10, 2007 – 6pm.

AGM commences at 6pm with dinner - Leadership Awards and guest speaker, Mike Stephens to follow.

The Alp Valleys Agribusiness Forum will be recognising and rewarding excellence in Agribusiness for a third successive year through its annual Leadership Awards to be held at the AGM dinner gathering on October 10.

Nominations for the three categories of agribusiness will primarily be sought from the region's local government Economic Development Officers, with nominations closing on Friday September 14.

The judging panel, compiling of the 10 Board members will be scoring nominations from agribusiness organisations operating in the food, fibre and agribusiness industries who have demonstrated excellence in :

- Community Contribution
- Environmental Sensitivity
- Entrepreneurship
- Sustainability
- Marketing
- Innovation

THE THREE AWARD CATEGORIES ARE :

Senior Agribusiness Leader (over 40)

sponsored by Bendigo Bank

Junior Agribusiness Leader (under 40)

sponsored by Department of Primary Industries

Agribusiness Exporter

sponsored by Regional Development Victoria

Each category winner will receive an award and prize money to ideally fund the further development of their business through training and research tours.

“As a Board, we are totally committed to fostering a dynamic and innovative agribusiness sector here in North East Victoria, said Julie De Hennin, Chairperson Alp Valleys Board. We have had a great response to the Awards over the two previous years and I’m certain this year will be no exception. If you’re interested in nominating your business for the Awards, I urge you to contact your local Economic Development Officer to discuss your nomination.”

Mike Stephens, high profile guest speaker will be presenting at the Awards dinner, tying in with the Planning for Tree Change Forum to be held over two successive days at La Trobe University in Beechworth. Mike specialises in project management, community and workshop facilitation and people management with a core focus on making people work more effectively together in a farming and rural environment. His key on-farm activities involve succession planning and the review and management of farm labour. In 1993 Mike was awarded a Churchill Fellowship and has studied Farm Business Management in the UK, New Zealand and France.

Book your seat for the Amulet Winery AGM and Leadership Awards Dinner with Rod Grant, Alp Valleys Executive Officer before Wednesday October 3 on

t: (03) 5721 7594 or

e: admin@alpvalleys.com.au

Dinner cost : \$45.00 (inc. GST) with drinks at bar prices. Bookings essential.

EverGraze Project to commence in the region

Six sites located at Benambra, Upper Murray, Tallangatta Valley, Kiewa Valley, Ovens Valley and King Valley will be established in conjunction with landholders. The Agronomist will manage the establishment of the trials and work with the community in promoting the trials that complement the national EverGraze, Proof (Research) Sites.

Landholders will manage each site using the EverGraze management support as a basis for initial structure and design of the trial site to ensure the trial sites comply to best practice. The sites will each have fencing, initial pasture work and water made available.



Landholders will undertake stocking and ongoing management of the site and livestock. Monitoring impacts on pastures, animals and environmental indicators will be undertaken by landholders in conjunction with local Department of Primary Industries extension staff.

Through the EverGraze Supporting Sites, landholders across the NECMA region will be able to directly incorporate sustainable productive agricultural management practices into their farm management.

feasibility **study**

IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ALPINE SHIRE COUNCIL



North East Wine Zone Cluster

Bottling, Warehousing and Distribution Feasibility Study

The outcomes of a significant North East Wine Cluster bottling, warehousing and distribution feasibility study commissioned by the Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum and the Rural City of Wangaratta was presented to number of local medium to large wine industry stakeholders in Wangaratta on Wednesday September 5.

The feasibility study, a result of discussions that have continued since the earliest days of the Alp Valleys, surveyed 90 wineries from the Beechworth, Glenrowan, Rutherglen and Alpine and King Valley regions to determine acceptance and demand for the establishment of a new centralised bottling, warehousing and distribution facility designed to address the current and future needs of the North East Victorian Wine Zone (NEWZ).

2006, widely recognised as one of the worst vintage seasons on record produced less than 50% of the normal average seasonal output.

In the study, consultants Dennis E Toohy & Associates identified significant challenges, other than drought and fire, facing the NEWZ in the future as local and export demand increases and supply channels change to meet the needs of a global market.

Outcomes from the study concluded that the technical, financial and market feasibility of creating a new centralised bottling, warehousing and distribution facility in the North East was sound and that a joint regional approach would potentially bring savings of up to \$2M through the collaborative agreement. Based on this conclusion, Peter Long, Chair of the Alp Valleys Steering Committee and members at the meeting reached a general consensus to proceed to the next stage of the project.

In Stage II it is proposed that Expressions of Interest will be sought by leading wine industry logistics organisations in South Eastern Australia interested in undertaking the construction and operation of the facility. Once evaluated, two will be short-listed to prepare a proposal detailing the implementation of the facility.

Early in 2008 it is proposed that the Alp Valleys Steering Committee and the six interested wine industry businesses will again meet to evaluate the opportunities presented in the proposals and decide on the next course of action.

**FOR INFORMATION AND
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BECOME A MEMBER- visit:
www.alpvalleys.com.au

VISION

The North East of Victoria is widely recognised for its attractiveness to agribusiness, and there is growth in the economic value and sustainability of agribusinesses.

The contributing role of the Agribusiness Forum to making this vision a reality is widely recognised.

MISSION

The role of the Forum is to:

- foster and stimulate the development of viable and sustainable agribusiness in the North East
- create the right climate in which agribusiness can successfully operate.

www.alpvalleys.com.au