



**AUSTRALIAN
ALPINE
VALLEYS**
AGRIBUSINESS
FORUM



Alpine Valleys

agribusiness forum

'Australian Alpine Valleys - Where the Best Grows to Perfection'

Issue 2# | February 2008



Welcome to the first edition of the AAVAF newsletter for 2008.

I am sure we are all very proud to say we are involved in agribusiness,

however we do have some major challenges ahead of us. How we manage and grow our enterprises into the future - whether we talk about global trends influencing export and domestic markets, land use, regional demographics, lifestyle choices or the weather *'the difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.'* (John Keynes)

We hope you enjoy reading about some of the projects the AAVAF is currently involved in with its members, industry groups and government bodies.

At the recent AAVAF AGM we celebrated 10 years of achievements, which was captured on a DVD. It tracked a decade of people, projects and achievements, and through this recollection, captured the numerous industry groups and agribusiness enterprises throughout North East Victoria that have been assisted by AAVAF in managing projects that grew their business.

On a sad note, it was with much regret the board accepted the resignation of Peter Long from the position of Vice-Chairperson at the AGM. We are, however, delighted that Peter has elected to remain a member of our board. Over the years, Peter has brought exceptional progressive and strategic skills to the board, and for this we give our sincere thanks.

The AAVAF Board and staff look forward to 2008. We welcome Dr Tim Clunes to the board as Vice-Chairperson. We also look forward to continuing to strive for the advancement of the economic, social and knowledge base of our members and the region.

If you have an idea on how we could advance agribusiness in our region, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Julie de Hennin, Chair AAVAF

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2007 Leaders in Agribusiness

Awarded at 10th Annual General Meeting

Eighty five members and guests of the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum gathered at the Amulet Winery near Beechworth on Wednesday October 10, 2007 to attend the 10th AAVAF AGM and congratulate three members who took out the coveted Agribusiness Leadership Awards for 2007.

Each of the winners were presented with a certificate, a short citation of their achievements and prize money of \$1,500 to support their further development through research and travel.

The AAVAF Leadership Award winners for 2007 selected from many nominees were :

JUNIOR LEADERSHIP AWARD

(sponsored by Department of Primary Industries)

Damien Cofield of Cofield Wines, Rutherglen

A member of the Young Bloods Wine Makers group, Damien has grown the family business and introduced a number of successful new initiatives despite the current prolonged difficult conditions.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP AWARD

(sponsored by The Bendigo Bank)

Rex Little, Yackandandah Jams

Rex stands by the "grown clean and green Alps growing environment" and produces in excess of 60,000 jams per year.

EXPORT AGRIBUSINESS AWARD

(sponsored by Regional Development Victoria)

Peter Nankervis of Corryong Essential Oils

Peter diversified his business a number of years ago into growing herbs and now supplies US export markets with peppermint oil which is used to manufacture toothpaste, mints and more.

During the course of the evening's formalities guests enjoyed a DVD produced by the AAVAF incorporating interviews from some of its founding members who spoke on how the Forum was established and its activities and successes over the ensuing 10 years of supporting agribusiness in North East Victoria.



Pictured are the AAVAF Leadership Award Winners for 2007 - from left to right:

Senior Leadership Award - Peter Nankervis of Corryong Essential Oils; Export Agribusiness Award - Rex Little, Yackandandah Jams; Junior Leadership Award - Damien Cofield of Cofield Wines, Rutherglen

Over 140 farmers from the King, Kiewa and Ovens Valleys joined local and state government representatives to discuss "the way forward after tobacco" at the Alpine Valley's Outlook Conference held at the Savoy Club in Myrtleford on Thursday November 29, 2007.



Soil test results from the 8 supporting sites have been received.

Tallangatta Valley, Cudgewa, Cobungra and Taminick sites will have lime and super applied by March where pastures are to be renovated with combinations of phalaris, fescues, lucerne and chicory.

Murmungee, Killawarra, Indigo and Benambra sites will focus on pasture improvement through grazing management. Fences will be erected to lower slopes in the next 2 months to assist this.

Draft management plans have been drawn up for each of the 8 sites, which will be finalised once pasture mixes and site mapping is confirmed and completed.

Jim Moll
NE EverGraze Supporting Sites
Agonomist

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ALPINE VALLEYS OUTLOOK Conference 07

Lucerne, Wagyu beef, dairy, walnuts and cherries were among a number of future land-use options presented to ex-tobacco farmers and other landholders at the Alpine Valleys Outlook Conference.



Opened by ABC Country Hour presenter, Libby Price, the conference organised by TAFCO in conjunction with AAVAF also presented berries, hydroponic tomatoes, fresh vegetables and grapes as future options for ex-tobacco growers given their relatively small acreages. Many farmers listened intently to presenter Paul McCardell of lucerne giant FodderKing as he explained the mechanics and profitability in growing lucerne.

"FodderKing lucerne does not necessarily need to be grown on the one property," Paul McCardell said. "We can accept lucerne grown in a 50km total radius. We certainly want to hear from landholders interested in finding out more. Lucerne costs around \$510/ha to grow but can reap as much as \$1000/ha in profit."

Other options presented at the conference were breeding cows to supply Wagyu beef for the proposed Security Foods abattoir complex or a dairy farm of 100 – 400 milking cows.

Guest presenter, Mike Stephens of MS&A Advisors to Australian Agriculture added his light comical prose to the day and held a workshop in the afternoon titled "View from the Verandah". All participants were invited to a free health check during the lunch break and were counselled as to what Centrelink assistance was available to farmers in Exceptional Circumstance (EC) areas, Irrigation Management Grants and more.

The conference was followed by a dinner hosted by the Myrtleford Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Guest speaker Mick Borzi – Mayor of the Mareeba Shire (ex-tobacco region in Far North Qld) presented the topic "How communities can turn times of economic downturn into opportunities". This session was facilitated by Doug Sharp, CEO Rural City of Wangaratta and Ian Nicolls, CEO Alpine Shire.

food & hotel
ASIA EXPO SINGAPORE
April 22 – 25 2008

Food and Hotel Asia is the largest food, beverage and hospitality event in the Asia Pacific region. Held every two years, FHA 2008 will showcase over 120 Australian companies with the Australian National Pavillion to be one of the largest national groups on show.

If you are interested in joining this out-bound trade mission to Singapore please call Lachlan Campbell on 5721 6088 with your expression of int

>>THE 2007 AUSTRALIAN ALPINE VALLEYS AGRIBUSINESS FORUM LEADERSHIP AWARDS

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A contingent of buyers from MQ Foods (pronounced Mac Foods) Tokyo, Japan will be embarking on a two day in-bound trade mission on February 10 . The buyers are here to meet North East Victorian producers of premium quality or unique gourmet products which will be destined for the tables of over 300 hotels and restaurants in Tokyo.

JAPANESE BUYERS *search for* North East Gourmet Produce

The meet and greet visit, arranged by the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum and funded by Regional Development Victoria, will see the buyers visit the production facilities of North East Venison (Boralma), Milawa Mustards (Milawa), EV Olives (Markwood), Gundowring Icecream (Gundowring), Milawa Cheese Company (Milawa), Rutherglen Lamb (Rutherglen) and the Australian Gourmet Chestnut (Eurobin).

Whilst on the 'farm gate' visit, buyers will meet producers, taste product and their view production facilities. Beechworth Honey, Simply Olives and Table Top Garden Figs will also have an opportunity to showcase their product along side the 'farm gate' producers at Quality Hotel Wangaratta Gateway during the visit.



Brian and Jane Casey of Australian Gourmet Chestnuts have been supplying chestnut product to MQ Foods for seven years working through MQ Food's Sydney-based buyer.

MQ Foods have indicated that they are currently looking for unique and/or premium quality gourmet products to compliment their current range.

"Japanese customers are very fussy and expect the highest standards of their suppliers, said Lachlan Campbell, Sustainability Manager for AAVAF. "Meeting customer specifications is of the utmost importance for any business thinking of entering the Japanese market, but if you can do this, they will be very loyal and supportive."

"The State Government is very keen to promote regional product to export markets, with the Japanese very much at the high end of the gourmet market, said Lachlan. "The Japanese have been attracted to North East Victoria through the promotion of our clean, green gourmet products."

Regional Development Victoria are subsidising the Japanese buyers airfares, accommodation and transfers and also a dinner to be held in the Australian Gourmet Chestnuts orchard to further showcase the gourmet products in contention.

NORTH EAST DROUGHT SERVICES Coordinator Appointed

Anne Shaw commenced her new appointment as Drought Services Coordinator for North East Victoria with the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum on Monday January 21.

The position has been created in response to a call by four local governments from the region who met at Beechworth with the Victorian Government Community Cabinet in November last year requesting greater drought coordination support for the area.

The six month role, funded by the Department of Primary Industries, will work with established local government drought committees and service providers in the North East to link eligible farmers and rural enterprises with a myriad of drought support services currently available.

Anne will work closely with the municipalities of Rural City of Wangaratta, Rural City of Wodonga and the Alpine, Indigo and Towong Shires to evaluate where their needs are most urgent, linking these communities with drought support and services through consultation, newsletters and events.

"There is still confusion within the rural community as to what drought support is available and the next six months will see Anne connecting those most in need with new and existing drought services and support, said Brian Thompson, Community Relationships Manager, Department of Primary Industries.

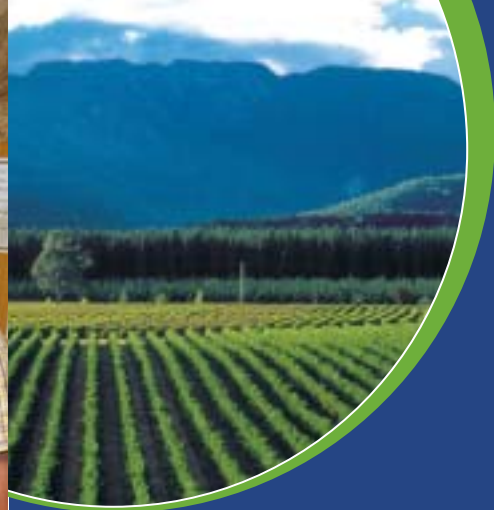


"I believe Anne is well placed to make a significant impact in this Drought Coordinator role, Brian said. "The extensive community networks

Anne has developed in her role as Executive Officer with the Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program has given her much insight as to how much needs to be done to support those still suffering through drought in our rural communities."

Anne Shaw - the Drought Services Coordinator for North East Victoria with the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum

Customer Loyalty Program



NORTH EAST VICTORIA

Wineries and Breweries *“Search for Loyalty”*

Eighteen North Eastern wineries and two craft breweries will soon be advancing to the next level of their Customer Loyalty Program training. Following on from last year's highly successful introductory Customer Loyalty Program training, supported by the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum, the wineries and craft breweries will soon be gathering again for the first of three workshops to be held in Wangaratta during 2008.

The Customer Loyalty Program, which is an Australian Government funded initiative under the Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business program, is designed to develop skills in marketing and IT which will enable businesses to further improve their wine and beer club programs.

The participating businesses are, Amulet, Anderson, Auldstone, Boggy Creek, Boyntons, Campbells, Chrismont, Cirko V, Dal Zotto, Delatite, Michelini, Morris, Paul Bettio, Pfeiffer, Pizzini, Rutherglen Estates, Sam Miranda, Stanton & Killeen, Bright Brewery and Bridge Road Brewers. Training provider, Kevin Bascomb, will visit each business four times throughout the year and will offer ongoing support via email and telephone.

“I believe the timing of the Customer Loyalty Program training is right for the region. The North East wineries in particular were hit hard last year, ravaged by bushfire, drought and frost,” said Kevin Bascomb of Quercus Marketing. *“These wineries and breweries are exposed to peaks and troughs just like any other agribusiness. This program, which runs for 12 months, will assist them in smoothing out these cycles.”*

“The rising Australian dollar has made export a challenge for many of the businesses”, explained Mr Bascomb. *“This training provides them with the skills to further develop consumer sales within Australia, potentially reducing dependency on volatile export markets. It's all about providing businesses with options on how they sell their product and ensuring they have a balanced approach to the various sales opportunities available domestically and internationally.”*

At the completion of the Customer Loyalty Program in December 2008, participants will have been trained in developing and maintaining fully integrated loyalty programs together with improved marketing and operational skills.

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BECOME A MEMBER- visit:
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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