

OLD AGGIES

President: Frank Doughty, (02) 9481 8787, fdoughty@tpg.com.au
 Secretary: Graham Linnegar, (02) 9527 1830, helgra@linnegarplumbing.com.au
 Treasurer/Membership: Colin Short, (02) 9876 1018, cbshort@bigpond.com

Alstonville luncheon – Monday 14 September 2020 at Federal Hotel, Alstonville commencing at 11.30am to eat at 12.30pm – contact Geoff Jacobs 0412 107 727 or gajacobs@bigpond.com

Armidale/Tamworth luncheon – Wednesday March 2021, Bendemeer Hotel – contact Dr Barbara Vanselow 0434 344 992 or bvanselo@gmail.com

Gosford luncheon – Thursday 5 November 2020 – Central Coast Leagues Club – contact Geoff Warr (02) 4342 3226 or 0411 128 936 or warries@optusnet.com.au

Laurieton luncheon – February 2021, Laurieton United Services' Club, contact Ray Buxton (02) 6559 7001 or rbu87351@bigpond.com

Orange luncheon – Wednesday 7 October 2020, Best Western Ambassador Motel, 11.30am for 12.30pm – contact Len Banks (02) 6361 7677 or banks@lmbanks.com.au

Sydney luncheon – Tuesday 8 December 2020, City of Sydney RSL Club, 11.30 am – contact Col Short (02) 9876 1018 or cbshort@bigpond.com

Wagga Wagga luncheon – Thursday May 2021 – contact James Hamilton 0447 225 875 or jnch1950_1@bigpond.com

Subscriptions \$10 per annum due

Subs can be paid by direct deposit into the Commonwealth Bank BSB 06-2263, Account No 00903542, Account Name Agricultural Retired Officers Association (please add your surname) or by cheque to Colin Short, 27 Chesterfield Road, Epping NSW 2121.

From the President's Desk (In Isolation)

Due to the COVID-19 situation the AGM scheduled for 10 March 2020 was cancelled and with agreement from the committee we will continue into 2021 with the current executive. The financial report for the year ended December 2019 was prepared by the Treasurer, Colin Short and provided to the Honorary Auditor (Laurie Lucas-Smith). The auditor reported "that in his opinion the financial accounts presented by the Treasurer provided a true and fair record of the financial activities of the Association during the year ended 31 December 2019." He also acknowledged the valuable and extensive work continually carried out by the Treasurer, Colin Short, in maintaining the Association's financial records. The 2021 AGM is scheduled for Monday 9th March.

Many changes have occurred since closure of face-to-face meetings, most of all we were missing our families and friends at our usual events. The world changed for most of us and in particular for people living alone and for our senior generation. It is amazing to learn we all have so much in common such as reading, watching movies, clearing out cupboards, culling clothes, gardening and walking around the neighbourhood. I am in full admiration of all frontline workers especially the health workers – our dedicated doctors, nurses and paramedics.

As I write the number of new cases of coronavirus being detected has now stayed low enough for health officials to feel confident that Australia is 'flattening the curve' – which means slowing the spread of the virus to a level that keeps us much safer and protects our health system from becoming overloaded. In response to the lower number of cases some states and territories are beginning to relax some of the restrictions that have been in place. However this does not mean we can now relax, we still have a way to go, coronavirus is still a danger to our health, especially the health of older Australians and those who are living with health problems. Please make sure that you keep up to date with the latest information/advice about restrictions which are in place in your state or territory. Keep in touch with each other, stay safe and healthy – *Frank Doughty, President*

New Department – ANOTHER name change!

The NSW Government has today announced the creation of a new Department, the Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW). You may have seen the details of the composition of the new Department. In short, DPI, is a central part of the new Department, and no longer sits within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) cluster.

The announcement today brings about no changes to DPI, our mission of creating stronger primary industries, our structures or our line reporting.

What does change, is that we are now a significant part of a new Department that has been given the imprimatur to be absolutely focused on making regional NSW a great place to live and work. That means in addition to our current work program, designed to make stronger primary industries, we will also be able to provide input into all other Government department initiatives and programs to ensure they are leveraged to get the best outcomes for regional NSW.

We will continue to work alongside our current colleagues from within Regions, Industry, Agriculture and Resources (RIAR), including our partners in LLS. The process of determining the best allocation of resources from within the Corporate Services, Legal and Governance, and People, Performance and Culture groups of DPIE is currently being worked through and in the meantime we will continue to utilise these teams for provision of our shared services.

We know how hard our communities have been hit, with the combined impacts of the worst drought in 100 years, the worst bushfire season in memory and now the worst pandemic in 100 years. We know how important our role is, in helping the individual families, businesses and industries that make up these communities, recover from these disastrous events.

We all have a role to play in supporting the recovery of the communities and industries we care for. Today's announcement of a new Department of Regional NSW, provides us with a stronger platform to take what we know and maximise its impact – *Scott Hansen, Director General, NSW Department of Primary Industries*

Deaths – Dr Allan Smith – a great administrator

By Dr Ted Wolfe, who reflects on his association with Dr Allan Smith

I arrived as a research agronomist at the Agricultural Research Institute, the ARI, in Wagga in 1971. At that time, the ARI was responsible for agricultural research in the mixed farming zones of southern NSW, but although it had excellent laboratories and technical staff it had no land of its own, no Manager, and no farm staff and resources were unequally shared with the Wagga Agricultural College time. In 1973, the role of Wagga ARI was extended to oversight the research stations at Temora and Cowra, along with research units at Canberra and Berry.

In 1973 Allan Smith came back to the ARI in 1973 from his PhD studies in Perth.

On his return Allan took on the bulk of the administrative duties undertaken by Albert Pugsley, including the regional components. It was just as well since increased complexity was to follow with the greater autonomy of the Wagga Agricultural College as a College of Advanced Education and then, in 1976, came its amalgamation with Wagga Teachers College to create the Riverina College of Advanced Education under the control of Dr Cliff Blake. These events brought on a lengthy struggle between the research and educational sectors to partition the staff, land, resources, utilities and activities of the co-located institutions.

Allan Smith proved to be the master in managing the situation, applying logic, principle and steadfastness to the processes of setting regional priorities and managing the separation. Any doubts about his abilities were soon quelled by his obvious success in negotiating good deals for agricultural research.

Allan's reputation grew – as a problem solver, a fair ally and a formidable adversary. He became a valued member of the Wheat Industry Research Committee, which provided additional funds for wheat and crop research and agronomy in NSW. In addition, Allan rejuvenated the Southern Cereal Improvement Conference, which each year was put on for the benefit of District Agronomists and other agricultural service professionals. This conference became an annual highlight, showcasing research in plant breeding, in a wide array of crops in addition to cereals. District Agronomists soon found out that their requests were heard and acted upon. Allan was sought out as a member of the federally-funded Barley Research Council, where his skills and professionalism were evident to agriculturalists across Australia, not just in NSW. Allan's knowledge, experience, wisdom and reputation grew, both in depth and breadth.

In 1981, after another restructure with a focus on regionalisation driven by a new Director General (George Knowles) and a committed new Minister of Agriculture (Jack Hallam), both of whom had a strong focus on the advisory, service and regulatory activities of the Department, Allan took up duties at Gunnedah as the Regional Director of Agriculture for the grandly-titled New England, Hunter and Metropolitan Region. Allan achieved not only a smooth transition to the new system in his own region but also a positive influence in ironing out the problems and wrinkles of the regional system throughout the Department. Under his leadership the research, extension, regulatory, administrative, educational and fishery arms of the Department

of Agriculture in his region improved enormously, harmoniously and enduringly. Furthermore, the liaison fostered with the local agricultural communities, including the LGPA groups that regularly met with the regional administration, was first class.

In 1986, Allan was lured away from NSW to the exciting post of Director of Agriculture for Tasmania, a position he held until his retirement from agriculture in 1993. Once again, he won over his new colleagues with a mixture of fairness, firmness, principle, dedication and delegation. Allan had a good sense of humour, which he revealed to those whom he trusted. He was generous with his time towards agricultural researchers and former colleagues who visited Hobart from time to time.

In short, Allan Smith was the very model of a wonderful and influential public servant, as well as a devoted family man and friend, and a great community advocate. I am sure that all of us here today collectively appreciate his many capabilities and his contributions. Vale Allan Smith.

Tribute by James Hamilton

Dr Allan Neal Smith passed away on Tuesday 31st December at the age of 91. Allan was married to Maureen for 63 years and they had 5 children and now they have 10 grand children and 3 great grand children.

Allan joined Wagga Agricultural Research Institute on 1st September 1961 as a senior research officer in soil chemistry. Following Dr Albert Pugsley retirement in March 1975, Allan was appointed as the Director of the Wagga Agricultural Research Institute. During the 1975/76 era Allan and Bernie Scott (1st Manager of the Institute) were instrumental in the split of resources between the newly formed RCAE (on 1st January 1976) and the department. Allan and the late Robin Scott (2nd Manager who commenced 20th Feb 1978) worked as a great team and they had high respect for each other. In 1981, the department restructured with a focus on regionalisation and Allan was appointed on the 21st March as Regional Director of Agriculture for the New England, Hunter and Metropolitan and he was based in Gunnedah. Allan was then appointed as State Director of Agriculture for Tasmania. Allan retired in Tasmania in 1993. After a few years into retirement, Allan and Maureen moved to Cootamundra to be closer to family. Allan was a pioneer in many areas of Research, management and administration.

Deaths – Frank Field

From Ray Buxton, Laurieton

Frank Field passed away yesterday at the Port Macquarie General Hospital. He had his 92nd birthday 28th February. He had his stroke 14 years ago and it left him with little use of left arm and leg and has been in a rest home for the last 6 years because it became too much of a task to attend to his requirements at home. A bout of pneumonia plus a falling off of his general health seems to have been the reason for his passing.

Martin Bellert remembers The impact that Frank had on his appointment as the first Safety Officer for the Department.

To the 'Tickies' [Board of Tick Control employees] Frank was a guy who found 'them'. Employees working alone in remote locations. He listened to them and went about improving their work places and conditions. I heard old Tickies using endearing statements about Frank's kindness and listening ear.

We were all floundering with this new Safety Policy in the Department and the role played by Frank in getting us up to speed. He was a brilliant instructor in small groups.

It was a difficult assignment in an organisation like NSW Agriculture with so many diverse activities – to name a few – livestock, laboratories, workshops, large numbers of motor vehicles, farming operations, and use of pesticides. He was able to challenge the traditions gently and direct operators to different methods. He left a legacy, being that changed attitudes of staff and supervisors on Safety in the workplace.

Deaths – Gerard Gaynor

From James Hamilton, Wagga Wagga

Hi Former Aggies, In case you are not aware, it is with a sad heart to advise that Gerard Gaynor passed away on 8 January 2020 at the age of 56.

Gags commenced working at the Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute (WWAI) as a farm assistant on 14 May 1990. Gags joined the wheat breeding team with Peter Martin as the lead Senior Research Officer. Gags left the WWAI on 30 March 2002 where he engaged in his own business of a courier service, followed by a retail business and followed by working in the mines.

Our condolences and sympathy are expressed to Gerard's widow Janice and his children Lauren, Sean, Brooke and Katelyn and their partners and children at this time of grief.

Deaths – Dr Peter John Healy 23 March 1940–25 November 2019

Peter John Healy was born in Cowra on 23 March 1940 and spent his early childhood at Mandurama and was educated at Christian Brothers at St Gregory's College, Campbelltown.

He was diagnosed with Coeliac disease at a young age. Nonetheless, Peter excelled at sport. He also excelled academically and graduated from High School as dux of his year.

Peter followed in his brother Brian's footsteps, pursuing a career in veterinary science. He received a scholarship from the Department of Agriculture to attend Sydney University, where he graduated with a BVSc Class II honours in 1963. He was then awarded a PhD in 1967 on the pathological and biochemical consequences of macrozamia poisoning. He was a leader in his field of biochemistry before pioneering molecular techniques in the late 1980's during research at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. He implemented PCR based tests for detection of heterozygotes of genetic defects, underpinning the basis of routine procedures adopted by all disciplines at EMAI today. His efforts have been acknowledged with a Churchill Fellowship in 1972, the Public Service Medal in 1992, and a 40 year meritorious service award for outstanding achievement in agriculture in 1999.

Peter married Julie Dennis who worked with him at Glenfield and EMAI in 1987, where their shared respect and devotion to each other resulted in very fulfilling and productive lives both professionally and personally for 32 years.

Apart from his professional work, Peter's interests included bushwalking, skiing and horse riding. He enjoyed woodworking, creating most of the furniture in their home using milled timber from their farm, and was committed to their Angus cattle stud at Braidwood. Land management was one of his passions, and he was an early innovator when it came to the implementation of renewable energy. He set up a network of solar, hydro and wind power generation on the farm many years before it became a fashionable alternative to the grid.

Peter was by nature a quiet and gentle man with a cheeky sense of humour. He was also a deeply principled man of integrity.

Peter left this world surrounded by a lot of love, and with every reason to be proud of the heritage of life and goodness he left behind. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him, but trust that his spirit is free and at peace.

Peter is survived by his wife Julie and two children, Jacqui and Gregory – *Julie Healy*



John Bowler was transferred to Glenfield in 1982 where he worked with Peter on some of the inherited diseases.

From a few Hereford cows, and three genetically deficient bulls, which Peters' quirky sense of humour had named Gough, Bob and Malcolm from memory, we were able to expand the herd of genetic cripples. Peter, Julie and Peter Windsor all worked to develop and refine tests for Mannisidosis, Pompe's Disease, Cardiomyopathy, Maple Syrup Urine Disease, Citrullinaemia to name some. The herd did end up a Heinz collection of various breeds. Peter's scientific protocols, attention to detail, his total commitment to animal welfare really made a very valuable contribution to the cattle industry and the various breeds. Shared 24 hour vigils of calving cows I remember well as Peter was sorting out the symptoms of what the commercial industry was experiencing and the details of what and why was actually was occurring. Peter was able to effectively communicate with the stud cattle industry with his results and was able to generate considerable respect and rapport with some very sceptical players in the traditional stud industry of 30 years ago.

This work with his herd of genetic cripples generated wide international interest but also had an impact on human health. Co-operative programs were established with a range of both international and Australian scientists, universities and health departments. There was wide appreciation of the value of these animals as we could do a lot more experimentally with animals than the human species.

Deaths – Barry Wallbank



Laurieton luncheon



Partly obscured Maria Mooney, Geoff Buggie, Chris Dadd, Beverley and Terry Bright, Steve McCoy, Greta Gowland



Bob and Nancy Trounce, Ronda and Anthony Williams, Geoff Jacob

Armidale/Tamworth luncheon

With the COVID19 lockdown looming, we had reduced numbers for our luncheon on 18 March, again at the Bendemeer Hotel. I received many email greetings and understandably with such uncertainty about the pandemic, many felt safer to socially isolate at home.

Since our gathering in March 2019, two members who attended then have since passed away: Bob Gulliford and my husband, Alan Jackson. It was great to see Bob's son David Gulliford, who attended this year with his mother, Pat. My youngest son, David Jackson, came with me. Russ Godden's son (also David!!) could not attend this year, so Russ's daughter, Judy Howard brought Russ to the luncheon. As such, our gathering this year was a real family affair! Russ told me his 100th Birthday is on 6 September this year. What a great milestone.

As usual we all enjoyed the great service and food at the Bendemeer Pub. Coronavirus was a major topic of conversation but we were able to catch up on news and socialising as a group which has since been impossible. We eagerly look forward to the reunion of 2021!



Warren McDonald, John Kneipp, Gus Shaw, Anne Kneipp



Gus Shaw, David Jackson and Barbara Vanselow

Armida/Tamworth luncheon continued



Margaret Southwell, David and Pat Gulliford



Judy Howard, Russ Godden (partly obscured), Lila McDonald, John and Jan Hosking



Russ Godden

History of Graham Park

By David Heptonstall

The late Eddie Graham was the NSW Minister for Agriculture for a record 13 years with his name still standing at the 'gates' of the former Graham Park Artificial Stock Breeding Centre at Berry.

Formation of the Centre played an important role in the NSW dairy industry from its establishment in 1958 up to its closure in 1991.

The actual first commercial AB operation in NSW commenced in 1950 on a section of the former Berry Training Farm following an agreement between the 'Berry Better Farming League' and the Department under the direction of Eddie Graham. The first manager of this Centre was the late Department Veterinarian, Dick Hewetson. Other veterinarians involved in these early years were Dr Peter Mylrea who finished his career as Chief Division of Animal Health, and John Duffy who later worked at Hawkesbury Agricultural College and Veterinary Research Station Glenfield.

Following establishment of the NSW Milk Board, Graham Park was established and officially opened on 10 February 1958 in Berry where Eddie Graham's name still stands. The first Director was the late Bernie Doyle.

In 1978 the operation and management at Graham Park was transferred to the Department of Agriculture as an integrated part of the State's Dairy Herd Improvement Program.

For commercial and political reasons the management of the Centre was transferred to the NSW Dairy Farmers' Association in 1988 and subsequently closed three years later.

I well remember Director General, Kevin Sheridan's delight when I handed him a cheque for \$410,000 as the Department's share of the Centre to the local Council.

Updated Mailing List

As you all would appreciate, the cost of postage has increased dramatically. In an effort to keep our costs down we ask that anyone who would prefer to receive the newsletters via email to advise the editor John Bowler at jkpbowler@bigpond.com Please advise the Secretary/Treasurer of changes to contact details.

Mr/Mrs/Dr Christian Name Surname

Address

..... Postcode

Phone Number Mobile

Do you wish to receive the Newsletter by email? Please tick

Email address



The iconic entrance to Graham Park, near Berry.
Photo courtesy of South Coast Register news.

100 years of service to NSW dairy industry

An article prepared by David Heptonstall* for Summer 2012 Dairy News

There is over a 100 year history of significant contributions by the Department of Primary Industries and its predecessors, to the dairy industry in NSW. These include:

- Management and operation of a herd recording scheme for 84 years between 1912 and 1996.
- Contributions as a significant 'player' in the development of all breeds of dairy cattle – especially Holsteins and Jersey – through importing improved cattle from overseas countries and locating these at Experiment Farms and/or Agricultural Colleges and then from 1955 at Artificial Breeding Centres.
- Management of dairy farms at the former Wollongbar, Grafton, Glen Innes and Bathurst Experiment Farms, and Wagga Wagga, Hawkesbury and Tocal Agricultural Colleges.
- Establishment and cooperative management of Dairy Demonstration Farms at Bega and Kyogle.
- Training of dairy factory specialists at the former Hawkesbury Agricultural College 'Dairy Factory' and the conduct of research programs related to 'dairy products' at the Hawkesbury Dairy Research Centre.
- Collaborative development of the Graham Park Artificial Breeding Centre at Berry with the (former) Milk Board from 1956 and total management of the Centre during the decade of the 1980's.
- Operation of an advisory service for dairy farmers initially in milk quality control; and from 1960 by the Specialist Advisory Officers in total farm management.
- Development of a Dairy Industry Liaison Committee (DILC) in 1988 consisting of all

relevant industry partners to identify and prioritise areas of research and advisory programs for dairy farmers.

- Introduction of 'program management' in 1992 in which all areas of dairy farm services including veterinary, research, education and advisory, were administered by the Dairy Program.
- Development of the 'sub-tropical dairy program' in 1989, in cooperation with the Queensland dairy industry, which prioritised farmer needs based on similar environments. This concept was followed in other dairy districts throughout Australia as the basis for funding by the Dairy Australia and the development of regional development programs as they exist today.
- Introduction of the Dairy Farmer Apprenticeship Scheme in 1981 – the first rural apprenticeship in Australia that continues today at Tocal.
- Tailoring of projects to support the NSW industry following deregulation in 2000 and the resultant significant decrease in number of dairy farms. The projects followed in order Dairy CHECK and then Dairy Pathways One and Two. The successes of the Dairy Pathways project is best summarised by the video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOGBBDCjxAA&lr=1

* In recognition for his service with the NSW Public Service for the development of the dairy industry through educational research, advisory and management programs Dave was in 1997 awarded the Public Service Medal.

International jetsetters

Retired staff Dr Alan Smith and Wendy Morrison recently returned from the far north of Arctic Russia arriving home just before the COVID-19 lockdown.

The ABC News gave a great commentary on what was a fantastic trip and is available at www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-22/covid-19-nsw-couples-adventure-in-russian-arctic/12068596



Letters to the Editor

Thanks for the newsletter.

The piece in November 2019 contributed by Ray Buxton brought back many memories for me, I was a rookie agronomist at Tamworth in the 1960's. Agricultural field research was moving from the era of using farmers gear, to having our own self contained set of field plot equipment, and we could then carry out field work independent of the farmer.

However in those times, all mechanical innovations that were being contemplated had to be approved by the Ag. engineering branch plant inspectors. The three I recall were Jack Atkinson (the even tempered one), Rod Malcolm (boisterous) and Ted Craze (real gentleman). The Head of Department was Ian Drever who seemed ensconced to be in Head office in Farrer Place.

At regular intervals, one of the three would arrive at the research centre, don the obligatory grey dust coat, and proceed to inspect the field gear, and discuss new ideas with various research workers. The plans and schemes of all would be discussed and dissected, eventually reaching a compromise on the purchase or fabrication of new field equipment. We all knew that our plans would go nowhere unless they had the imprimatur of the plant inspector, who continued to play a role in tendering and purchase arrangements. Maybe we need more of this with recent NSW Government decisions. Regards, *Jeff Esdaile*

Jeff's letter was really appreciated and we would welcome further letters and contributions – Editor.

COVID-19

The impact and isolation have changed our lives perhaps forever.

Community organisations such as Rotary, Quota, Probus, even Old Aggies will have to adapt to survive and support their members – even our individual pursuits such as going to the gym, the movies, art galleries and theatres.

With our working life in the Department of Agriculture/Primary Industries many of us would have experienced the impositions of biosecurity and quarantine on the livestock and plant industries and the financial and emotional impact on producers and our staff. So in some ways we had a better knowledge and understanding of what was and is, limiting our lifestyle.

Talking to some existing staff in the old Department there has been a significant change in extension

activities and contact with producers with no group activities and reverting to one on one consultations. Almost back to the future but with the new technologies available such as Facebook, SnapChat and Zoom there will greater availability and potential to reach more of our client base. The other significant consideration will be the current move towards 'Hot Desking' with serious implications to OH&S and the provision of a safe working environment for staff.

When I think back to the Equine Influenza, it probably gave us an indication of some of the issues confronting us today:

- The global trade
- The rapid transport around the world and mobility of the populations
- The insidious and seemingly random infections
- The ignorance of the wider population
- The cavalier attitude of some
- The conflicting information promoted through the media
- The emotional impact on lockdowns.

Obviously, this virus in the human population is much more severe with the powerful financial impact currently in second place to the human health issues, particularly affecting the elderly. However as we proceed through the control programs the emphasis is changing to the financial and social impacts as well as the anti restriction choruses from civil libertarians and free traders.

It is interesting to note that going for our daily walk, we have seen a big change over the last month, from meeting the occasional retiree on their daily constitutional to meeting young couples and families in increasing numbers.

We don't know what the future holds or whether things will return to normal, but there appears to be some positives as families become more involved, neighbours and whole streets meeting and passing with a cheery wave or hello. So much as the digital age is keeping us informed there appears to be a return to some traditional values.

Share a thought for those who are isolated in retirement villages or nursing homes with very limited contact with family and friends. Make the phone calls, even write a letter or send a card. Trust that, if everyone does the right thing, we can shake hands with our friends, hug our grandchildren, stop and share a meal or coffee with friends.

– John Bowler, Editor