

NZGA PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015/2016

DAVID STEVENS

Delivered at the AGM at the Timaru Conference, November 2016

The year has been an eventful one with a successful conference in Masterton hosted by John Dalziel and his team. Being able to capture Professor Colin Holmes on video, now available to all, was an absolute highlight.

Unfortunately, Colin lost his battle with cancer and passed away earlier this year. Trevor Ellett, a Life Member and industry champion, also passed away this year. A moments silence was called for to honour their memory.

The Hill Country Symposium (HCS), led by Graham Kerr and organised on the ground in Rotorua by Martin Hawke, was highly successful gaining good review and comments. The Symposium was held in conjunction with our New Zealand Grassland Trust and the NZ Society of Animal Production.

Over the two meetings there was an official total of 641 attendees (311 to conference and 330 to HCS), accompanied by huge support from our team of sponsors. Many thanks to our sponsors and all those involved.

The Hill Country Symposium was specifically designed to investigate the issues and opportunities facing hill country farmers. This approach was extremely successful and has generated much interest and on-going activity. We have been privileged to hear Professor Frank Scrimgeour's summary of the science presented at the Symposium, and a position document has been prepared to help guide future directions and thinking in hill country. This position paper, developed principally by Frank Scrimgeour and Gavin Sheath from information gathered at the Symposium, will be presented to interested and influential groups around the country over the next few months. You will note in the financial statement reference to the current surplus from the Symposium, which will be used to deliver messages to industry.

The Executive have been active in reviewing the operations and procedures of the Association. Several outcomes from this are being implemented. In the first instance, we have reviewed the role of the Executive Office. This has provided us with the opportunities to both understand the size of the services provided, review the interaction between the Office and the Executive Committee, and to have the contract for services sized and a market value applied. This process has been on-going for 2 years. My thanks to Marie Casey, our current contract holder for initiating this review, and for her patience as we worked through it, and to Graham

Kerr, Derrick Moot and David Chapman for finalising the work and getting a new contract in place. This has led to the realisation that the job done by the Executive Office has a much higher value than we had placed on it, both monetarily and through the growth of the Association's revenue and constituency. You will see the greater value and a renewed presentation of the Executive Office services payment in Note 8 on page 13 of the financial report.

The Executive have also reviewed the procedures of the Association. We have worked through the development of specific roles for members of the Executive to hold responsibility for our main activities. This is to enable a more precise delivery of the governance roles that are required for the Association. Three on-going roles have been determined:

- Editorial liaison – Derrick Moot
- Sponsorship liaison – Warren King
- Communication liaison – Aaron Meikle

With a fourth role, Occasional Symposium liaison, to be appointed as required.

These are in addition to our Audit Committee chaired by Laurie Copland, and to the role of liaison with other Organisations (including International) that has been assigned to the Vice President.

Two major changes have occurred with our finances this year. The first is that we were able to apply to the Royal Society and gain tax exempt status on the basis that we are delivering science and technology messages to our industry, providing a saving of \$2000 to \$3000/annum. The other is the reporting detail that is now required for our not-for-profit status. You can see this in the Financial Statement that Laurie Copland will take us through. This will be a live document representing our 2-5 year plan, and activities will be updated annually. We are working through documentation of our processes to finalise a document of protocols and procedures.

During this review we have picked up a few changes that need to be addressed. We have identified these in the accompanying documentation and notice to change the Association Rules.

I have also met with two delegations from China, one in December and another in January. Their Grassland Association is a sub-branch of the China Animal Agriculture Association, and was added as an entity in 2010. It has a major focus on harvested feeds and so delegates were extremely interested in our grazing systems.

The focus for the coming year is to finalise the documentation process, investigate our next symposium, and to revisit our strategic direction. We will also be supporting the efforts to roll out the Hill Country Symposium messages, and reviewing our website. Any comments or input would be welcomed.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who given their time and effort over the past year to make all of our activities outstanding. Marie Casey, as Executive Officer, for making sure that everything was done on time and on budget, as well as keeping us the Executive

on task; Laurie Copland for guiding the financials of the Association, along with the Audit committee members; Graham Kerr, my Vice President, who has done the work that I couldn't be involved with, and guided the delivery of the Hill Country Symposium; Warren King, Derrick Moot, Dave Chapman and Aaron Meikle for providing feedback, guidance and leadership for the Association in our endeavours to provide a professional service for our members; and Glenis Thomas, who sits in the background providing all of our accounting support in a world of ever-changing rules and regulations.

NEW ZEALAND GRASSLAND TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

JOHN CARADUS
Chairman, NZGT

The New Zealand Grassland Trust was established in 1964 to commemorate people who have made significant contributions to grassland farming in New Zealand. The objectives of the Trust are to encourage, promote and foster the advancement of grassland farming. This is achieved through the granting of study scholarships and the recognition of excellence by way of farming and industry awards.

Levy student scholarships

The Levy Scholarships are awarded annually to one student from each of Massey and Lincoln Universities. They are for students embarking on the second year of a Bachelor of Agriculture degree, or a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in agriculture. Each scholarship is for \$3000 over one year. The successful Massey University student was **Chloe Belfield** and the successful Lincoln University student was **Nicholas Simpson**.

Farmer awards

Each year the Trust makes up to two awards for excellence in grassland farming within the designated NZGA Conference region. The main criteria of selection include good farming practices and performance; uptake of new grassland innovations; sustainable resource management; and contributions to the community. This year, the two awards at the Timaru Conference went to **Alvin and Judith Reid** and **Warren and Andrea Leslie** for their excellence and leadership in grassland farming in South Canterbury.

Alvin and Judith Reid started dairying as sharemilkers on the Taieri Plains near Mosgiel in the late 1970s. Three years later they bought their first farm, a 54 ha block at Winchester, South Canterbury. From that home farm, which has grown to 250 ha, they have built a business including four farms of their own and three run in partnerships with over 4000 cows milked. Throughout Alvin has been involved in a number of dairy industry organisations, including directorships with Fonterra predecessor Alpine Dairy Products, DairyNZ predecessor Dexcel, and LIC, of which he is still a director. He was instrumental in formation of the South Island Dairy Development Centre and through that the Lincoln University Dairy Farm. As such he has been a leading player in the growth of dairying in the South Island. On their own farms they are strong believers in applying science and technology to drive productivity and tackle challenges such as the environmental issues frequently



Chloe Belfield being presented her certificate for the Levy scholarship at Massey University.

blamed on the dairy sector. Through sharemilking positions and other methods they've also encouraged and mentored many young farmers over the years.

Warren and Andrea Leslie run a 600 ha rolling-to-steep sheep and beef farm near Cave, South Canterbury. Over the years they've been at the forefront of livestock trends, with Highlander composites now being replaced by Headwaters, a Murray Grey beef herd producing bulls for the dairy industry and prime beef, and grazing dairy heifers. Pastures are modern high performing ryegrasses with AR1 endophyte and the latest clovers, plus a little plantain. Grazing maize provides a buffer of late summer/early autumn feed for cattle in case of drought while rape is used for lamb finishing. Warren has helped set the agenda for the region's various monitor farm programmes through a seat on the organising committee and since 2013 has had his own farm in the spotlight as a Beef + Lamb New Zealand Demonstration Farm for the region. Off-farm Warren's on the board of Timaru Boys' High School, and was a founder of the Meat Industry Action Group which sought to stimulate change for the better of the sheep and beef sector in the mid-2000s. Andrea is also on a school board, chairing the board of trustees for prestigious local girls' high school Craighead, and was Primary Portfolio manager at Aoraki Polytechnic before its merger with Canterbury Polytechnic.

Grassland regional award

This award recognises exceptional service to grassland farming in the region where the NZGA Conference is