

## RAS Newsletter – President July 2017



### Conference

June saw an action packed conference wonderfully hosted by the Southern District and the Upper Clutha A&P Society. I would like to especially acknowledge our CEO, Debbie Cameron who has been working to develop the conference beyond just the AGM and its related meetings, to a value added conference experience. During my relatively short involvement I have seen the benefit of conference grow significantly, thanks to Debbie.

Unfortunately and because of meeting commitments, I was unable to hear a number of the speakers who were, by all accounts, inspirational to hear. I did get to

hear one of my favourites, Dr. Jaqueline Rowarth and will take away the advice, “We must consider what the problem is we are trying to answer. If we do not define the issues and perspectives correctly, the chances of finding a solution are slim. Facts, Evidence & Data.”

I also enjoyed hearing Peri Drysdale, a New Zealand entrepreneur producing ecologically sustainable clothing, tell her story at the Rural Ambassador dinner.

### Rural Ambassador

It was great to know that so many people wanted to attend the formal dinner that the venue had to be changed to accommodate them all.

Each of the Rural Ambassador finalists spoke well with some of their comments sticking in my mind, “Being involved in the RAS provides many opportunities to learn”; “Put your hand up and give everything a go and you will never know where you might end up”; I’ve met some amazing people showing”; and “I am going to feed people with purebred Jersey milk.”



To all those who attended conference, thank you for your part in making it a great opportunity to engage in open and constructive discussion about our future, gather ideas, make new connections and be inspired by great speakers.

### The Importance of A & P Shows

In my opening welcome at conference, I talked about increasing urbanisation, and how the role of the A & P show is more important than ever to showcase agricultural innovation, provide education, and bridge the gap between urban and rural.

I find it astounding that more children than ever in New Zealand do not know where milk comes from.

## Our Future – Youth



Our future does involve and rely on Youth. We need to consider what happens when we gather.

Do we provide a positive and supportive environment which encourages them to get involved? They have so many other options; we need to make sure being with us is a preferred option.

Unfortunately I am told stories of younger people's reactions to what happens in meetings, and when they try to participate with new ideas only to be told, "this is the way we have always done it, or are doing it!.

The reverse should be true with young people talking excitedly about the ideas and projects they are working on to help our shows be relevant to their generation.

## The Job of District Councils

The job of District Councils is an important one. Our constitution provides that they are primarily responsible for the operational effectiveness of the movement. At conference I was



heartened by the commitment of the District Chairpersons and representatives at the meeting with the Executive.

The Executive will be working closely with the Districts and looking to them to lead the efforts to facilitate discussion and debate on the future of the movement and engaging competitors.

### More Information Sooner

This season we will continue with our plan to get information out sooner to members and

competitors so they get more time to read, consider and contribute their thoughts. The Districts will help facilitate constructive discussion and as a result, in future, we will be able to make decisions which are better supported

## Remits

I still strongly believe in and support the postal voting system for remits. In the past remits were hashed over at conference by small groups of individuals armed with handfuls of voting proxies. Remits came out the other end looking nothing like the original proposal, voted in by a minority, and members having no idea how their votes were used.

However I have taken on board the concerns about everyone understanding the remit and also the principle being lost amongst disagreement over how we might implement that principle. The microchipping remit would be a good example.



Generally there was support for microchipping. However there was disagreement with the proposed implementation. I wonder whether we should be looking at a two stage approach. First we put the principle up as a discussion document. Districts take the lead in promoting the discussion which would include how it would work. All of that feedback would go to the appropriate committee for forming up as a remit to go forward a year later.

That might not be the right or only answer, but my point remains, we will be giving members and Districts plenty of time to do their jobs of facilitating discussion to a positive conclusion and creating our future.

### **Fund Raising**

One of the highlights of the recent past was finalising the sponsorship agreement with Harcourts. At conference, Tom Rutherford, the National Lifestyle & Rural Manager for Harcourts said it was a great honour to be involved with the RAS. We certainly have appreciated their support, especially with the Rural Ambassador competition. They have created excellent publicity throughout the country for the Rural Ambassador and the regional finals were hosted at Harcourts branches.

Not only will their support help meet the operating costs of the RAS, it also provides an excellent opportunity for member shows and breed societies to capitalise on that relationship through local sponsorship opportunities and individual members of shows and breed groups listing their property for sale with Harcourts. For more information contact the RAS Head Office.

### **On The Road Again**



As I write this newsletter, I have started my travels to make sure I am accessible to a wide range of the membership and our important stakeholders, especially our competitor customers.

I am already attending Judges seminars and competitor forums.

My show schedule is beginning to fill up with the Australasian finals for the Young Judges and Handlers at the Melbourne Royal in September, our own Royal in Hawkes Bay and Waikato in October, Canterbury Show and of course the oldest show in the country, the Bay of Islands 175<sup>th</sup> Show, both in November.

If your Show or Breed Society is having a special event, please let me know. If I can make it I will come.

It is probably as well to make it clear that other than RAS requirements for me to attend meetings, the choice to travel is mine and I pay my own way. A special thanks to those friends who provide accommodation making it easier for me to get around.

### **Flooding**

In closing, the Executive of the RAS extend their best wishes to those shows whose grounds have been affected and damaged by the recent winter floods. We hope you have not experienced too great a damage and that you are able to run your shows this season.