

Newsletter of the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society Inc.

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President's Column

Chris O'Donnell

The 52nd Annual Conference of the Society was successfully held in Canberra in February. Congratulations and thanks go to Herb Plunkett and his Local Organising Committee (LOC) for putting together such an excellent program of professional and social activities. Members of the LOC included Andrew Hodges, Thilak Mallawaarachchi, Jeff Bennet, Mary Lack, Tom Nordblom, Ejaz Qureshi, Stuart Whitten and David Vanzetti.

Through their efforts, we enjoyed pre-conference workshops on experimental economics and climate change; plenary and invited speaker sessions on topics including R&D policy, farm economics, water, and emissions trading; an outstanding contributed papers program; and excellent food and conversation at the conference dinner and the National Film and Sound Archive. It was especially pleasing to see a high level of professional engagement between researchers and policy-makers in agencies such as ABARE and the USDA. Such contact between Australian economists and international agencies helps stimulate the local profession and can lead to important professional development opportunities for younger members of the Society.

It was clear from this year's conference that AARES continues to enjoy strong relationships with a long list of government and private institutions, many of whom provided the conference LOC with financial support – this year's conference was generously sponsored by ABARE, RIRDC, ACIAR, the USDA, the CSIRO, the Centre for Independent Economics, the Productivity Commission, Land and Water Australia, the NSW and Victorian Departments of Primary Industries, the GRDC, the Murray Darling Basin Commission, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

One of two events should be marked in your 2008 diaries. First, our sister organisation, the New Zealand Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (NZARES), will hold its annual conference in Nelson from 28-29 August – details can be obtained from Dan Marsh (dmarsh@mngt.waikato.ac.nz). Second, and perhaps a little unfortunately, the Asian Society of Agricultural Economists (ASAE) will hold its conference in Manilla at the same time – details can be accessed from <http://www.searca.org/web/>. Please consider heading north or east at the end of August and, in so doing, help our Society build stronger relationships with agricultural and natural resource economists in the Asia-Pacific region.

The membership of AARES Federal Council has changed slightly since the last edition of News and Views. Welcome to Ross Kingwell, who joins the Council as President-Elect. Ross faces the difficult but rewarding challenge of putting together the invited speakers program for the 53rd Annual Conference to be held next February in Cairns. Retiring from Council is John Mullen (now immediate-past President). John's accumulated corporate memory, wisdom and good humour will be greatly missed on Council.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to do something I neglected to do formally at the last Annual General Meeting of the Society, and thank Allan Rae for his outstanding work as President during 2007. Among many things, Allan quietly and very successfully oversaw the appointment of new AJARE editors (Tom Kompas, Quentin Grafton and Jeff Bennett), the appointment of a new Manager of Promotion and Development (Tracy Henderson), and the renegotiation of the Blackwell contract.

I hope that in 2008 we can continue to build on all the good work undertaken by Federal Council and the branches in 2007. Any suggestions or feedback on how the Society can improve its service to members is, of course, most welcome.

Obituary – Lindsay Cozens

Formerly, Principal Agricultural Economist
Department of Agriculture, Victoria

Lindsay Cozens died on 26 February 2008 aged 83 years after some years of indifferent health. After war service as a pilot seconded to the RAF, he graduated as Bachelor of Agricultural Science in 1949. He returned to England to undertake a Diploma of Agricultural Economics at Oxford under Professor Colin Clark, picking up some of the questioning, analytical and sceptical approach of this influential economist. In 1958 he returned to Melbourne joining the then Department of Agriculture as an economist in the Farm Survey Research Branch.

The heady days of high prices in the early fifties were behind agriculture, and the long grind of the cost-price squeeze was established. A new agenda of efficient farm business management and the adjustment of inefficient businesses out of agriculture was facing production orientated industries and governments. Farm surveys provided a factual basis for policy advice to government, and unfamiliar new economically based management criteria, such as stocking rates in dairy production or feed/egg ratios in poultry production, were introduced. Lindsay Cozens was appointed to run the (now) Economics Branch in 1971 with a swelling tide of young economists and remained until his retirement in 1985.

This was an era when professional competence was emphasised in management and managers were freer to develop people capable of achieving outcomes. Lindsay was focused on personal development but he could be a challenging boss in reviewing work programs and discussing issues, demanding a rigorous approach and fostering post-graduate training; whilst together with his colleague Harry White developing in people an appreciation of the sometimes treacherous interactions of industry, economics and politics. This was a school for talent that produced some well known names in Australian agricultural and political life. His better known professional work related to surveys of cost structures in the pig and poultry industries, and to costs and margins in the meat industry.

Lindsay was well regarded by his own executive management for his questioning talent that refused to let power of personality get away with a dubious argument or assumption. He was often more capable of finding the right question than of finding his own answer, and this accounted for a certain youthfulness of outlook that he never lost. A conspicuous exception to this was his concerns over social justice issues, notably Aboriginal issues, where he was a passionate advocate and donor. He was an indefatigable traveller in private life, and did things like supporting a Sherpa family long after one such visit. In later life he was far more interested in current affairs than his ailing health. The significant number of former economic

and Departmental colleagues that attended his funeral service was a fitting tribute to the esteem in which he was held.

John Naughtin
DPI, Victoria

AARES 2009 National Conference

The conference venue is the Cairns international hotel <http://www.cairnsinternational.com.au/> and the chair of the local organising committee is John Rolfe. J.Rolfe@cqu.edu.au

More details on the AARES web site soon and in the next edition of News and Views.

Contributed Papers from AARES 2008 National Conference

AARES 2008 contributed papers are available at the AgEcon Search website at <http://agecon.lib.umn.edu/index.html>

Heading West Award – The Australia-New Zealand Exchange Program

Applications are now invited for the Heading West award. The New Zealand branch of AARES (NZARES) will provide a grant of NZ\$1500 to assist the winner to travel to Australia to attend the 2009 AARES annual conference in Cairns. The registration fee for the winner of this award will be waived.

Selection process

The selection committee comprises the President of AARES and President of the New Zealand branch of AARES.

Applications must be submitted to aares@anu.edu.au by September 30 2008.

Applications are to include a short proposal addressing the applicant's claims against the selection criteria along with a copy of their CV which includes a record of their publications.

Selection criteria

First, consideration shall be given to professionals early in their career and/or those for whom funding to attend the Conference would be difficult to obtain from other sources.

Award recipients must present a paper at the Conference representing original work that has not been published in its current form.

Preference will be given to papers that are on issues of relevance to both countries, and to those involving cross-jurisdictional comparisons, however, all papers will be considered. Co-authored papers are acceptable.

Applicants should identify how the award would facilitate interaction and cooperation with professionals in both countries.

Applicants must be members of AARES. The Heading West award will be given to members normally resident in New Zealand.

The award exists to:

- Facilitate contact and discussion among those studying the problems or extending knowledge of agricultural and resource economics in Australia and New Zealand.
- Stimulate comparative analysis and discussion of policies and programmes affecting primary industries, resources and the environment in both countries.
- Encourage co-operation with scientific and other organisations and institutions engaged in similar or related activities in Australia and New Zealand.

The Heading East award for attendance of one Australian-based AARES member at the NZARES conference in New Zealand will be advertised in the next issue of News and Views.

Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies

The *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* would like to draw your attention to a special issue focusing on rice policy in Indonesia. It could hardly be more timely. Rice policy is in a state of considerable uncertainty because of the previous government's decision to ban rice imports, with the apparent intention of helping the poor.

A large proportion of the poor are consumers rather than producers of rice, however, and so lose rather than gain from the higher prices resulting from import restrictions. These restrictions have therefore become controversial, although they have yet to be abandoned. One reason for this is that Indonesia was self-sufficient in rice in the 1980s, albeit only temporarily; many still regard self-sufficiency as inherently desirable, and see rice imports as conflicting with this objective.

Visit <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/spissue/cbie-si.asp> for details.

AAWE Wine Economics Blog

The American Association of Wine Economists AAWE (www.wine-economics.org) just started a "Wine Economics Blog." About twice a week, various authors will post articles related to wine and economics. Check it out and comment. The blog can be found at <http://www.wine-economics.org/blog> and at <http://www.wine-econ.org/>

Also, the *Journal of Wine Economics* can be found at <http://www.wine-economics.org/journal/>, and the Second Annual Meeting of AAWE will be held on August 14-16, in Portland, Oregon.

Nominations for President-Elect and Distinguished Fellowships

The Nominations Committee calls for nominations for President-Elect and Distinguished Fellowships for the year 2009. Nominations should be submitted to Professor Allan Rae by Friday, 1 August, 2008 (Fax 64-6-350 5660; email: a.n.rae@massey.ac.nz).

Nominations for President-Elect should be dated and signed by the nominator, a seconder, and the candidate.

Distinguished Fellowships are awarded to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to agricultural and resource economics and/ or the activities of AARES. Past winners of this prestigious award are shown on the AARES web page at: http://www.aares.info/award_winners. Nominations should include a brief biography, and an explanation of why the proposed candidate merits the award.

Employment

The Department of Economics and Finance, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, is seeking candidates for a tenured position of Associate Prof/ Full Professor in Agricultural Economics

Appointment Date: October 2008 or as negotiated.

Detailed information can be obtained from Prof. Anton D Meister, at:
a.meister@massey.ac.nz

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Deadline and advertising

The deadline for receipt of any items for inclusion in the next edition of AARES News & Views is 21 July 2008. Please send items to Richard.Reeve@doir.wa.gov.au

Advertisements in AARES News and Views are welcomed. The mailing list for News & Views exceeds 700. Advertising cost is \$55 (including GST).
