NTCA invited to Arnhem Land talks with Prime Minister

NT Cattlemen’s Association executive members and producers flew to Arnhem Land in September to talk cattle industry matters face-to-face with visiting Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

The NTCA was specially invited to meet with the Prime Minister in Yirrkala, where he was based for four days as a guest of local traditional owner Galarrwuy Yunupingu and the local Gumatj people.

The NTCA party included CEO Tracey Hayes, Vice-President Chris Muldoon, board member and buffalo harvester Markus Rathsmann, and Top End cattle producers Margie Daiyi and Colin and Calvin Deveraux who own and operate Twin Hill Station in the Finniss River district.

“It was a rare and valuable opportunity, preceded by a very worthwhile half hour meeting with the Assistant Minister for Health, Senator Fiona Nash,” Tracey Hayes says.

“We were able to speak directly with the Prime Minister for almost an hour, and raised many issues of importance to our members – and Mr Abbott also took the opportunity to ask a lot of questions about what’s happening in the cattle industry, so it was very much a two-way conversation.”

“The Prime Minister was keen to hear about how the live export sector was going and how producers were faring since the ban and since the trade reopened.

“He was also interested to hear about market value prices for pastoral properties, and other important issues like land tenure reform and northern development.

PICTURED:
(Top) Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Senator Fiona Nash and Tracey Hayes.
(Middle) Margie Daiyi and Calvin and Colin Deveraux.
(Bottom) Tracey Hayes discusses land tenure issues with the Prime Minister.
Recent staff changes

The NTCA’s Mick Armstrong who was Senior Industry Field Officer with the Real Jobs program finished up in early August. “Mick started with the NTCA in February 2009 and has made a valuable contribution towards both Real Jobs and the Indonesian Student program,” CEO Tracey Hayes says. “On behalf of members, I thank Mick sincerely for his five years of service and wish him well in his future endeavors.”

The NTCA has appointed Tara Fulwood and Jason Craigie to drive Real Jobs and Pastoral Futures from Katherine. Tara and Jason have both worked with the NTCA in roles focussed on training and mentoring Indigenous students seeking pastoral jobs. Real Jobs and Pastoral Futures are successful NTCA initiatives that involve staff engaging with and exposing young people to potential pastoral career pathway.

To contact Tara, Phone: 0438 876 273 or Email: northern.pastoral@ntca.org.au

Introducing Tom Ryan: new Executive Officer

New NTCA Executive Officer Tom Ryan has come to the association with a wealth of experience across diverse areas of the cattle industry in Queensland, NSW and the Territory. “Growing up on a cattle property at Wandoan in Queensland guaranteed that I’d always want to pursue a career in the cattle industry,” says Tom, who completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, majoring in Plant & Soil Science, at the University of Queensland. At the same time, he took up a Cadetship with Twynam Pastoral Company in NSW and stayed there for more than six years.

In 2008 and 2009, he shared his time between travelling extensively overseas and working on the family property. In 2009, he joined AACo’s Livestock Team at its Brisbane headquarters and, 18 months later, was transferred to the company’s Tipperary Station as Livestock Coordinator. In 2012, Tom became AACo’s Project Lead for its Darwin and Victoria River stations in the roll-out of the StockIT program which uses EIDs to individually identify and record every animal in the AACo herd. With that project successfully implemented, Tom became Technical Advisor for AACo’s Northern Region, which encompassed all the company’s WA, NT and Queensland Gulf stations. “Having been introduced to the NT Cattlemen’s Association and meeting many of its members during my time with AACo (itself an NTCA member), I jumped at the opportunity to join the association as Executive Officer, and to work alongside CEO Tracey Hayes,” Tom says. “I look forward to working hard for members in promoting the Territory cattle industry.”

PORT RECORD

Darwin hit a record with 415,427 head of cattle (worth $305 million) exported through its port in 2013-14. Recent MLA statistics show Darwin was Australia’s busiest live cattle export port for the financial year followed by Townsville which sent out 203,824 head, and Fremantle which exported 140,932 head.

NEW TRADE AGREEMENT opens way for NT live shipments to Cambodia

The signing of a new trade agreement on animal health certification requirements in August has opened the door for Australia to export feeder and slaughter cattle to a potentially lucrative market in Cambodia.

Northern Territory Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister Willem Westra van Holthe joined the live export sector in welcoming this latest development and praised the Australian Government’s commitment to helping reach the agreement. “This is great news for Northern Territory cattle producers and all those involved in the live export trade,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“The Northern Territory Livestock Exporters Association and LiveCorp have been instrumental in opening up the Cambodian market and Federal Minister for Agriculture Barnaby Joyce has been working tirelessly to get new markets for primary producers.”

In the wake of the development, the Minister said he planned to travel to Cambodia soon to cement the Territory’s relations with that country and to investigate potential expansion of the market.

He said the new trade to Cambodia would not start overnight but it was hoped it would get underway soon. Reporting on the agreement, the Cambodian Times said 30 percent of the Australian imported cattle would supply local markets where fresh beef was in short supply, and the rest would go to China, Vietnam and South Korea.
NTCA executive flies in for top level Canberra talks

The NTCA executive flew into Canberra in force in August to lobby key government, opposition and other federal parliamentarians and senior advisors on a raft of major industry issues.

Association President David Warriner, Vice-President Chris Muldoon, Barkly Branch Chair Jane Armstrong (Beetaloo Stn), CEO Tracey Hayes, Executive Officer Tom Ryan and Consolidated Pastoral Company’s Jack Lake made up the team that met a total of 18 high ranked ministers, ministerial advisors and shadow ministers during the trip. The mission was geared to increase awareness and understanding of the wider national issues impacting on the northern cattle industry – and the NTCA has reported some good follow-up results from the trip.

The comprehensive list of topics covered included the future of the beef industry and live exports, northern development, the Australia-China relationship, roads and other infrastructure needs, land tenure reform, native title, rural debt, the Carbon Tax, water, communications and industry levies.

Animal welfare grant for NTCA colt-training educational tools

The NTCA has received $45,000 through the NT Government’s annual Animal Welfare Fund Grants program. The allocation will pay for the production of an educational DVD and flip-charts on ‘selecting and training a colt’ for the association’s Indigenous Pastoral Program.

The government’s Animal Welfare Fund supports non-profit organisations that want to undertake animal welfare projects with capacity to improve animal well-being, raise community awareness of responsibilities in regard to animal welfare or help progress good animal management practice. Grants totalling about $200,000 a year (max $50,000 per organisation) are allocated.

“We must not become complacent when it comes to the welfare of our animals,” Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister Willem Westra van Holthe said when presenting the cheque in Alice Springs recently.

“There’ve been instances of animal cruelty in our past and we must do our best to make sure they don’t happen in the future.”

NTCA ‘Wishlist’ for infrastructure, comms & energy

During the Canberra talks, the NTCA presented a wishlist, reflecting feedback from members across the Territory. Included was:

- An infrastructure master plan
- All weather access to beef roads
- Public investment in energy distribution. Establish gas and energy allocation from new energy developments at competitive rates for domestic use to ensure future energy security
- Establish a rail link from Mt Isa to Tennant Creek to maximise transport and freight efficiencies for raw materials and value added products
- Infrastructure installation at Port Augusta truck interchange to address animal welfare and driver safety concerns
- Complete the full NBN service for remote and regional users – high speed and competitive with rates equivalent to urban users. Improved eligibility criteria to allow access to subsidies by all remote cattle stations, including corporate entities
- Renewable energy incentives – 50% business rebate for off grid power generation systems including provision of stock water.
Continued from front page

NTCA CEO Tracey Hayes says one of the key issues the association wanted to discuss in detail with the Prime Minister on behalf of members was infrastructure - and the group got a good hearing. We also had the chance to outline the NTCA’s Real Jobs and Pastoral Futures programs and the Indonesian student initiative, and discuss national industry structures around bodies such as MLA, CCA and others.

Ms Hayes says the Prime Minister was very receptive and engaged and clearly had a good understanding about what was going on in the industry.

“Ms Hayes says the Prime Minister was very receptive and engaged and clearly had a good understanding about what was going on in the industry.

“To my knowledge, we were the only industry group specially invited to meet with the Prime Minister during his Yirrkala stay-over. This rare window of opportunity for the association clashed with son Sam’s 12th birthday. “It’s always a juggle but family birthdays are top priority,” Tracey says. “An invitation from the Prime Minister is also very important and we had to combine the two - so Sam and his brother Harry came to Arnhem Land as well and the Army put on fresh scones which we enjoyed sharing with the Prime Minister.”

... and classic working mum moment!

On top of a particularly hectic week of meetings across the country and offshore, NTCA chief executive and mother-of-four Tracey Hayes faced a dilemma when the invitation came for executive and member representatives to meet Prime Minister Tony Abbott during his Yirrkala stay-over. This rare window of opportunity for the association clashed with son Sam’s 12th birthday.

Northern Territory producers are now able to access the second round of assistance through the Australian Government’s Farm Finance: Concessional Loans Scheme.

Eligible producers in the pastoral, agricultural, livestock, horticultural, aquacultural or apicultural (bee keeping) industries can submit their applications for the 2014-15 program between 1 July 2014 and 30 April 2015.

Loans are for less than 50% of eligible commercial debt and this year the minimum loan amount has been reduced from $250,000 to $100,000 to enable those smaller enterprises access the scheme. The maximum loan amount remains at $1 million.

The scheme has again allocated a total of $15 million for Territory producers and businesses in this second round.

The first round of the scheme attracted 16 applications and as a result, loans totalling $7 million were approved.

The Farm Finance Scheme in the Northern Territory will continue to be delivered by QRAA in Brisbane with all application forms available from DPIF.

QRAA is a specialist administrator of government financial assistance programs to the rural sector.

FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT regarding scheme guidelines please contact the department’s Farm Finance Promotions Officer, David Collinson on Telephone: 89364089.

FURTHER INFORMATION including scheme guidelines and application forms are available from the DPIF website: www.nt.gov.au/primary industry or by contacting: industryprograms@nt.gov.au
The history of horse-racing was promoted at its rousing best when the NTCA took up an invitation to stage a colourful spectacle as a prelude to the running of this year’s Darwin Cup. “Darwin Turf Club invited us to come up with a special event with riders on horseback and a great video telecast to promote the earliest days of horse-racing in the cattle industry,” CEO Tracey Hayes says. “They were after a display immediately prior to the running of the cup. A lot of preparations went into bringing the whole thing together and it was a huge hit with racegoers. It involved 12 stock horses and their mounts riding down the straight, all dressed in NTCA shirts and carrying NTCA flags. At the front of the parade were two VIPs, Black Caviar’s trainer Peter Moodie carrying the Melbourne Cup and a young female jockey, Clerk of the Course, and Sky Sports commentator, safely delivering the Darwin Cup ready for presentation at the end of the upcoming race.

In a poignant touch, the parade included a riderless horse bearing the colours worn by Darwin jockey Simone Montgomery who was killed in a fall during a previous Darwin Cup.

“In a poignant touch, the parade included a riderless horse bearing the colours worn by Darwin jockey Simone Montgomery who was killed in a fall during a previous Darwin Cup.

As the procession worked its way down the straight, a dramatic video, depicting the links between early Australian stockmen who raced around bush paddocks, and today’s sophisticated thoroughbred horse-racing industry, was beamed across the course to 25,000 Darwin Cup guests and also telecast by Sky Sports Channel to an estimated 20 million viewers around the world. “It was a really good day and a very proud moment for the NTCA and its members,” Tracey says. “It went across exceptionally well with the racegoers at the track.”

NTCA Pastoral Futures gathers momentum

The NTCA has now signed up the NT Department of Education as a partner in its Pastoral Futures program. The program is aimed at exposing high school students to career opportunities within the pastoral sector and has had some success with pilot courses involving a number of students who want to participate.

“This exciting concept gives the students who are studying VET subjects the opportunity to undertake training and learn about the pastoral industry from NTCA staff,” CEO Tracey Hayes says. “They are put through basic training that teaches them aspects like safe motor bike and horse-riding skills, stock handling and animal welfare requirements, and OH&S. If they are still interested in a career in the pastoral sector once finished their studies, there’s a pathway into our Real Jobs program.

“Pastoral Futures is about engaging young kids before they have a chance to get involved in activities that might derail them. It’s especially attractive for Indigenous students who have such strong historical connections with the pastoral industry – and it’s not just about being a ringer. There are many options for other excellent jobs associated with the cattle industry.

“We are really excited about this program and it’s still early days yet but the results and high level of interest are encouraging.”

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT:
Tara Fulwood - Pastoral Futures coordinator, Phone: 0438876273

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Recent amendments to the Pastoral Land Act have broadened opportunities and streamlined the administrative process for Northern Territory pastoralists wanting to diversify from cattle production and generate alternate income streams on their properties.

Previously, parts of Northern Territory pastoral properties could be used for non-pastoral use activities but permits could only be approved for up to five years and had to be renewed annually. As well, the permits could not be transferred to a new owner if the pastoral lease was sold.

James Pratt from the Department of Land Resource Management has attended recent NTCA branch meetings to outline what the legislative amendments mean – and station owners are already starting to reap the benefits by launching new tourism and agricultural ventures across the regions.

The Pastoral Land Board remains the consent authority for non-pastoral use permits under the Pastoral Land Act. The department has issued the following details:

- Station lessees can apply for permits to use parts of their lease for non-pastoral uses such as agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, tourism and forestry.
- The amendments give pastoralists an opportunity to take advantage of different markets.
- Non-pastoral use permits can now be approved for 30 years, and can be renewed by applying to the Pastoral Land Board two years prior to its expiry.
- An application fee and annual charges will apply and a working group, which includes industry representation, has been established to examine the fee structure for non-pastoral use permits.
- The non-pastoral use permit is now registered to the lease and not issued to the lessee, providing longer term security for investment. The permit being registered to the lease has the likelihood of also increasing the value of a pastoral lease if the lease is going to be sold.
- The changes give pastoralists greater certainty and confidence to explore and invest in longer term non-pastoral opportunities.
- The primary operation of a pastoral lease must be for pastoral purposes, but pastoralists can operate other business enterprises like mango crops or tourism and camping operations side by side, providing two revenue streams.
- Already local pastoralists are diversifying with these types of business enterprises being developed on pastoral leases in the Darwin, Sturt Plateau and Gulf pastoral districts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ...
about obtaining non-pastoral use permits, contact the PASTORAL LAND BOARD Ph: (08) 8999 4667 or Email: pastorallandboard@nt.gov.au

www.becrociwise.nt.gov.au

Local fisho Kane Dysart with NRL Parramatta Eels players Will Hopoate & Corey Norman fishing in Buffalo Creek, August 2014.
Lakefield Station’s ongoing landcare efforts rewarded with national accolade

The Northern Territory’s Lakefield Station has won the Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award for 2014. An enduring commitment to sound conservation practices and best practice primary production, by the station owners Garry and Michelle Riggs and family, captured the attention of the judges. Lakefield won the Innovation in Sustainable Practices award for its ‘outstanding achievements demonstrating a strong example of how investing in conservation and animal welfare also improves productivity outcomes’.

The citation presented at the gala awards ceremony in Melbourne in September read: “By producing food in a best practice fashion, Lakefield Station is ensuring it will remain a resilient primary producer, able to deal with climatic and market variations and remains a productive enterprise; the family cattle station also has approximately 1200 ha under conservation.”

Lakefield encompasses 58,500 ha south west of Katherine on the Sturt Plateau has had a strong focus on landcare and conservation since 2000 and was a leader in signing up for two TCAs (Territory Conservation Agreements) which now protect 1050 ha of critical wetland habitat – by fencing to manage grazing and protecting and managing the waterholes and surrounding habitat for native species. Commenting on the TNRM website about his family’s conservation objectives, Garry Riggs says: “We have a few wetlands on the station that we wanted to manage for good environmental outcomes. So far, joining the program has been very good for our business outcomes. It means we can protect our water holes, manage our land better through grazing management and look after these habitats. We have opened up a habitat that will be there for a long time to come”.

The station uses a rotational grazing system to manage its 7500 head of cattle and maintain a buffer of feed.

Coniston’s Max Lines farewelled

The Northern Territory cattle industry has lost another of its long-standing identities. The NTCA has paid tribute to veteran Central Australian cattleman Max Lines who passed away recently in Alice Springs.

“On behalf of our members throughout the Territory, we extend our sincere sympathy to the Lines family of Coniston Station on the recent loss of Max,” CEO Tracey Hayes said.

“Max was widely known and a well-regarded member of the Northern Territory pastoral community. Amongst other things he will be fondly remembered for his endearing personality, great wit and great sense of humor.”

Max, wife Jacquie and their children displayed a true pioneering spirit when they bought remote Coniston on the edge of the Tanami Desert in 1976 and began tackling the enormous task of bringing the historic, run-down property back into full cattle production. Along with his enduring love of Coniston and his cattle work there, Max took great pride in his productive fruit and vegetable garden near the station homestead.

Max descended from pioneering white settlers who owned Aileron Station and other properties in the Aileron district north of Alice Springs. He was born in 1938, when making history was not unusual in outback central Australia. He was the first white baby delivered in Alice Springs Hospital and attended Anzac High School two years before the school was officially opened.

On the path to a national award: Landcare Australia’s Dr Shane Norrish (left) presents Gary and Michelle Riggs with last year’s Territory Landcare award that saw Lakefield vy for the national honour.
**Exotic Neem now a weed**

The highly invasive exotic species, Neem (Azadirachta indica), is now officially a Class B and Class C weed in the Territory. Neem is believed to have been introduced into Darwin in the 1940s, more widely planted as a street tree in the 1960s and is now a common garden plant in Darwin, Katherine and Top End rural areas.

Declaring the Neem’s weed status recently, Primary Industry Minister Willem Westra van Holthe said the species’ rapid spread demonstrated its capacity to compete with native plant species in intact environments. “Deep tap roots and extensive lateral roots enable Neem trees to flourish in areas affected by seasonal drought and their large size and preference for wet areas means that control can be difficult,” he said.

A Land Resource Management Department weed risk assessment completed in 2011 showed Neem to present a high weed risk to the Territory. Neem has become well established in the Katherine region, with dense infestations occurring in the Katherine, Wickham, McArthur and Roper River systems.

The new weed status for Neem will address the spread and growth of neem (Class B) and prevent further introduction to the Territory (Class C). It also means it is illegal to buy, sell or transport Neem plants or seeds and offenders will be prosecuted under the Weeds Management Act. The Department of Land Resource Management will soon be rolling out an awareness campaign to teach people about Neem. “This is much more than an attempt to wipe out a pesky weed, this is about ensuring the biodiversity of our unique environment.”

**First NT Field Day**

Katherine hosted the Northern Territory’s first commercially run field day, the Fairfax Rural Media NT Field Day, in September and it was a success. The NT Government was a proud sponsor of this event, and as Minister for Primary Industry I welcomed the opportunity for the department to showcase our head Territory centre for cattle and irrigated crop research, the Katherine Research Station.

The government recognises that food production is critical to our economic future, and we are working hard to further develop our pastoral, agricultural and horticultural industries. We are clearly focused on addressing industry priorities and removing roadblocks to industry expansion.

Since coming to office we have worked hard to reduce red tape, increase exports to our Asian neighbours, enable greater flexibility for land use on pastoral leases and we are researching additional available land for use in primary production. This financial year, the Territory’s primary industry and fisheries sectors are expected to contribute more than $589 million to our economy.

All signs indicate that these sectors will grow, and forecasts indicate a total contribution of $610 million next financial year, predominantly due to predicted increases in the pastoral sector.

**North Australian Development**

The Northern Territory and Australian Governments are also working closely to develop northern Australia through new infrastructure and new economic activity, and particularly through the sectors covered by the portfolios for which I have responsibility.

A key aspect of north Australian growth is increasing agricultural development, with opportunities emerging for investment in the agribusiness sector.

Currently, the Department of Land Resource Management is actively looking to identify and map soils across the Northern Territory that can be used for more intensive agriculture and horticulture.

These projects aim to provide the required land and water information for pastoralists and other landholders to further develop agricultural and horticultural enterprises.

The department has also started an investigative bore drilling program to identify new agricultural precincts in areas around Ali Curung, between Mataranka and Larrimah and around Ngukurr.

As I’ve said previously, the Territory Government values our food production industries, in particular our pastoral industry, and we are committed to ensuring its growth and success.

Increased live cattle exports, in conjunction with the changes to the NT Pastoral Land Act that now allow diversification of pastoral land use, is expected to also encourage more mixed farming, especially broad acre cropping, over the next few years.

One of the most exciting non-pastoral use projects underway is the cultivation of poppies on Tipperary Station for the pharmaceutical industry.

Other non-pastoral use applications currently being assessed are for tourism, horticultural, forestry and broad scale agricultural activities.

This is indeed an exciting time to be working on the land and involved with the primary industry sectors.

**RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year**

I’d also like to congratulate Dr Amelia Rentz, the Northern Territory’s RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year for 2014. Dr Rentz represented the Northern Territory in Canberra at the national awards and we’re proud of her achievements. She is a veterinarian from Darwin mostly servicing the Top End’s horse and cattle industry.

Regards

Willem Westra van Holthe
New online system ready soon to streamline wild dog control processes

The Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (DPIF) is currently working on a new online system that will streamline administrative and other necessary procedures for Northern Territory station managers desperate to control wild dogs that are attacking their cattle herds. DPIF hopes the new system will be operating by the end of this year. It will cover applications and authorisations with concurrent acceptance of similar information to that provided the previous year, including property baiting maps. The department’s Stuart Smith advises that property baiting maps should need to be provided only where there is a change to the placement or method of placement to the one previously supplied. He also says that Regional Wild Dog Management Groups are currently ‘in a state of flux’ and are evolving with new groups being formed and properties forming different groupings. “When stabilised, we would look at the possibility of authorising for more than one year, and it will be discussed at meetings at the end of October,” he says.

Further changes cover replacement of ‘fee for service’ activities currently supplied by the Parks and Wildlife Commission, with services by licenced technicians. “Recently the Chemical Services Branch (CSB) provided a special bait injection authorisation to two Vertebrate Pest Management Technicians who have since been licenced by the Department of Health to inject and lay baits for ‘fee and reward’,“ Stuart Smith says.

He says a system is also now in place to approve shire council dog control measures on some areas of land. “This covers the Exceptional Circumstances approval system which, under strict guidelines, may authorise Shire Council(s) to use 1080 for wild dog control on small areas of non-pastoral or grazing lands. It also covers the potential for chemicals other than 1080 to be used for wild dog control under certain circumstances.

2014 TNRM Conference

REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN for the 2014 Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) Conference at the Darwin Convention Centre from 18 to 20 November.

The free event will include presentations, workshops and training opportunities and supports NT natural resource managers to meet with peers, share information, and build their knowledge and skills.

More than 250 Territory-wide delegates are expected to attend the three-day event, which will cover themes including:

- Addressing threats: fire, feral animals and weed management
- Managing significant environmental assets/places: biodiversity and conservation management
- Sustainable industry: sustainable pastoral and farming initiatives, carbon farming and Indigenous enterprises
- Sharing our stories: natural resource management success stories, stories of on-ground action.

The program will include an evening welcome function, presentation and discussion sessions, networking opportunities, workshops, a field trip, the TNRM annual general meeting, and a gala dinner culminating in the presentation of annual NT NRM awards to recognise and celebrate the remarkable work undertaken by individuals and groups to protect the Territory’s special places and to manage its land, water, soils, plants and animals.

TO REGISTER - or to nominate someone for an award:
Visit: www.territorynrm.org.au Phone: TNRM on (08) 8999 3783
Email: events@territorynrm.org.au

First workshop seeks input on strategic plan

Katherine has hosted the first of 12 Red Meat Advisory Council Ltd (RMAC)-coordinated regional supply chain workshops that will help guide development of the new Meat Industry Strategic Plan (MISP).

Territory cattle producers and exporters participated in the 17 September workshop, held at Katherine Research Station in conjunction with the NT Field Days program. Their feedback will define the red meat and livestock industry’s strategic direction between 2015 and 2020.

RMAC, as the peak national industry representative body, is overseeing development of the plan, which will frame the overarching future direction of the production, processing and live export sectors of Australia’s beef, sheep meat and goat meat industries.

RMAC Chairman Ross Keane has described the 12 scheduled workshops as an important process in ensuring regional priorities and issues are captured in identifying the industry’s greatest challenges and opportunities to 2020, and beyond.

“The supply chain workshops represent ‘new ground’ as far as MISP development is concerned; we haven’t participated in grassroots consultation such as this in previous years,” he said.

“We’re a $16 billion industry and we need to ensure that the very people who stand to benefit the most from the successes we can achieve through MISP will have a direct line of input to its development.
Information Sheet: Options for farmers with assets but little or no income

Compiled by the Department of Agriculture. Current as at 1 July 2014

Assets Hardship

Do you have a farm? Is it producing very little, or no income? Have you avoided applying for a social security payment because you think you will not get it?

You may not be aware that under the social security rules a person can apply to be paid under the Assets Hardship provisions. These provisions cover situations where a person has substantial assets but cannot generate income from those assets.

The provisions can also give concessional treatment to farm assets for pensioners who have lived on the farm for a considerable time or rely on the farm for their livelihood.

Rules for Assets Hardship

Social security law has different assets hardship criteria for allowances and for pensions. This factsheet provides general information about the provisions.

Who is eligible for a hardship payment?

Under allowance and pension provisions, a person may be eligible for payment under the Asset Hardship provisions if they meet all of the following:

1. an allowance is not payable because of the allowance assets test, or a pension is not payable or is reduced because of the pension assets test; and
2. they own an asset which they cannot sell or, for pensioners, they could not reasonably be expected to sell; and
3. they cannot borrow against the asset or, for pensioners, they could not reasonably be expected to borrow against the asset; and
4. for allowances, the asset is on the market to be sold at a realistic price; and
5. for allowances, they are unable to qualify for any other Australian Government assistance; and
6. they are in severe financial hardship because of the assets test; and
7. they would otherwise qualify for payment under the relevant payment eligibility criteria; and
8. gifting provisions do not apply or can be disregarded.

Treatment of farm assets for pensions

Under hardship provisions, pensioners (people claiming Age Pension, Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment) can have farm assets disregarded from the asset tests if:

1. there is a temporary but substantial reduction in income from the farm business due to factors outside the their control; or
2. they have been a farmer for at least 20 years and currently working the farm, and cannot sell some of the land without affecting the viability of the farm and/or significantly affecting their income from the farm; or
3. a family member is working the farm to capacity and has been working the farm for at least 10 years (a slightly less if the family member has worked the property continuously since leaving school), and the farm is the main source of the family member’s livelihood; or
4. the asset is land and they have lived on the land for at least 20 years and the property cannot be subdivided to allow them to retain the portion their home is on.

Farmer-specific income support

1. Interim Farm Household Allowance

The Interim Farm Household Allowance includes the Assets Hardship provisions for social security allowances.

2. Farm Household Allowance

The Farm Household Allowance commenced on 1 July 2014 and includes the Assets Hardship provisions for social security allowances.

For more information:

Do not self-assess. You may be missing out on assistance.


You can also call the Farmer Assistance Hotline at the Department of Human Services on 132 316 from 8am to 8pm MON to FRI, or 132 300 for older Australians, from 8am to 5pm MON to FRI.
Are your plunge cattle dips doing their job?

Dips using higher than the necessary chemical concentration:
- a) are uneconomical because they waste expensive chemical
- b) can cause death, particularly in young calves and weak animals
- c) can deposit residues of the chemical in the meat which could jeopardise our markets, particularly the export market.

Dips using lower than the necessary concentration of the chemical:
- a) do not kill many ticks
- b) can cause expensive delays in trucking cattle because of the presence of ticks
- c) incorrect dip strength can also cause resistance in ticks to the chemical.

Determining the volume of a plunge dip
The first step in good management is to know the volume of liquid in your dip and there are three methods to determine this:
- a) Use a flow meter to measure the amount of water going into the dip. This is the best method and eliminates any guesswork.
- b) Fill the dip from a tank of known capacity.
- c) Use the formula: Volume = Average length x average width x depth

Other important points to remember
- Much time and effort can be saved by accurately marking the various volume levels on the dip wall, or on a measuring stick, such as at 5000 L, 6000 L, 7000 L and so on until the maximum level is reached.
- Once the volume of the water in the dip has been calculated, the amount of chemical to be added should be accurately calculated according to the manufacturer’s directions.
- DO NOT add a ‘bit for luck’, as this will increase the concentration of chemical in your dip.
- After the plunge dip has been used and the level of the mix in it drops, it becomes necessary to top it up with water and chemical.
- The topping up rate varies with various chemicals and is always given by the manufacturer.
- If you are dipping a large number of cattle, top up the dip with water and chemical after every 400-500 animals have passed through in order to maintain maximum efficiency in your dip.
- Before dipping, run at least 30 head of stirrer cattle through the dip to distribute the chemical evenly throughout the dip. These cattle should be returned to the main mob and dipped again.
- On completion of dipping, note and record the level of liquid in the dip. Then at the next dipping, again note the level before commencing dipping. Calculate the difference in volume between the two levels. Variation in the levels between two dipping periods is mainly caused by evaporation during hot weather, or wet season rain that causes the liquid level to rise. The differences need to be compensated for.
- A roof over the dip will prevent rain water from entering the dip and will also reduce evaporation.
- It is sound policy to keep a dip book listing all information related to the use of the dip.
- The results of an analysis of the contents of a cattle dip sample are only as good as the sample. If the sample is not collected correctly, it is a waste of time and effort to analyse it.
- If you are sure your dip is being maintained at the correct strength and you are still experiencing poor tick control, ask your stock inspector how to collect and handle a sample of ticks for testing for resistance.

FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE DETAILS - Check the full Agnote at: http://www.nt.gov.au/d/Content/File/p/Anim_Man/739.pdf
CLIMATE WATCH

With the NT Climate Services Centre

When will the wet season begin?
From a climatological perspective, 1 October marks the beginning of the wet season in northern Australia. Having a set start date every year allows us to make accurate comparisons from year to year. However, just because the start of the wet is here, it does not mean Mother Nature will turn on the rain. When are the first rains going to fall and what does the wet season ahead look like?

Median northern rainfall data for an accumulation of 50 mm since 1 Sept

The Build-up
Current climate conditions, including a recent El Niño-like pattern in the Pacific, suggest that the early wet season is likely to see average to below-average rainfall across Australia's Top End and Cape York, or a potential delay in the early wet season rains. Furthermore, the Bureau of Meteorology's climate model also indicates a dry start to the season is likely. (You can find several new forecast tools at www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks).

In an average wet season the first accumulated 50 mm of rain falls over the western Top End in the latter part of October. The map below shows the median date by which the first 50 mm accumulates across northern Australia. It is likely the rainfall will accumulate later than normal this year.

The Monsoon
The monsoon is a defining feature of the north Australian wet season. The winds shift, the clouds thicken and cover the whole sky and tropical lows can dump hundreds of millimetres in a day. In general, the northern Australian monsoon sets in during the last week of December at Darwin. The earliest onset on record was late November, while the latest onset was in early February. Typically, but not always, the monsoon onset occurs later than normal during El Niño years—this may be the case this year. After the monsoon starts, El Niño has little impact on rainfall across the tropics. While it is still pretty far away, most indicators suggest the second half of the wet season will see average rainfall conditions.

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