

MFS Board Restructure

The current Board has always been an interim body designed to get MFS off the ground. A new board structure has been developed and will be voted on at a special meeting **on Monday the 27th July at Bombala RLPB Board Room 5.00pm**

The **aims** of the new MFS Board structure are...

- To provide representative, sound, progressive, and ethical direction;
- To encourage stability and sound leadership to staff and membership;
- To portray a professional and industry leading image.

Board Structure...

- **4** x Producer Member Elected Positions for a 3 year term – proposed and voted on by the membership by postal / electronic ballot.
- **1** x MS&A's Position for a 3 year term - proposed by MS&A and to be approved by the Board
- **2** x Invited Positions for up to 2 year terms - Appointed by the Board based on merit in areas most advantageous to MFS at the time

The Nomination and Voting System process...

- MFS will send out nomination forms to all members.
- MFS will advise all members of subsequent nominations and credentials.
- Hold postal / electronic ballot of all members
- At least 70% of members are required to vote
- The receipt and counting of the votes will be carried out by an independent body.

In Summary the Roles and Responsibilities of MFS Board Members will include;

- commitment for a three year term
- commitment to attend 5-6 board meetings over a 12 month period (majority teleconference)
- be prepared to actively engage in providing strategic direction and decision making for the organization
- accept the leading role in specific projects (with support from the project officer) which are

relevant to a certain individual's skills and expertise

- play a supporting role to MFS partners, sponsors and project officer
- provide leadership and lateral vision for MFS as a long term, viable & dynamic organisation

Whats been going on??

- ❖ MFS was extremely disappointed to hear our submission under the Government's "FarmReady" funding program for a **3 year "GrassGro" project** was unsuccessful (MFS applied for approx. **\$95,000** over the three years to extend the use of this program as a decision making tool). Southern Rivers CMA have however given MFS \$6000 to continue implementing the GrassGro project in the interim until further funding can be secured. This \$\$ will go towards ground-truthing the model on members' properties to ensure it is calibrated correctly to native pasture and Monaro soil types.
- ❖ MFS continues to try and find an avenue to access & collate historical trial data on the Monaro. Initial attempts to collate relevant trial data collected over the past ten years have proved unsuccessful. Recently MFS sat down with CSIRO and NSW DPI to try and find a way forward. It appears a solution may come in the form of a Sydney University PhD student who has been enlisted to drive local research projects based at Coolringdon. Once historical trial data is collated we can proceed with our RD&E business plan.
- ❖ Mike Stephens is currently looking at the feasibility of running a **Monaro Mums Project** which would investigate the following issues;
 1. Is the current model of running a Self Replacing Merino Flock (SRMF) the best model from a business point of view?
 2. Is the current use of the Merino ewe delivery to the flock's potential optimized from a financial perspective?

If it is worthwhile pursuing and funding can be committed from MLA, the Monaro Mums project will compare and measure the financial results over a four year period from a:

- Traditional SRMF
 - SRMF breeding First X Self Replacing
 - SRMF breeding Prime Lambs X Self Replacing
 - First Cross X Flock breeding Prime Lambs
- ❖ The “women in MFS” survey initiated a project submission under the “Sustainable Farming Families” program (joint Woolworths and Landcare initiative) to run a series of family communications & Human Resources workshop. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful with this application. Consequently MFS will now be following up on an **accountancy training session** up-skilling members on computer packages, spreadsheets and farm accounting which was also a need highlighted by the survey.
- ❖ MFS currently talking to Evergraze farm advisory services to see if MFS is eligible for funding to set up an Evergraze site in the district over three years. Potential issues to trial include use of perennials in the pasture system?

Upcoming Events

- **Suggestions for future roadside meetings;**
 - ☉ dam and irrigation system at Howard Charles
 - ☉ ram indexing at Brad Yelds
 - ☉ OTHER IDEAS?? Please contact Nancy S
- **AGM 27th August, speakers to include** David Thomason (MLA General Manager of Marketing) will discuss findings of the MLA market research into red meat.

Investment Allowance Increase

You will have noted that one of the few benefits agriculture received from the budget was an increase in the investment allowance from 30% to 50% for small businesses with a turnover of less than \$2 million (30% for a turnover of greater than \$2 million). The investment allowance benefits you by way of a business tax deduction. What does this mean in real terms for the average farmer? As an example if you were to purchase a new ute for \$50,000 you are able to claim 50% of this value as a deduction. The actual cash benefit is equal this figure multiplied by your marginal tax rate - $\$25,000 \times 30\% = \$7,500$. However it is not necessary to pay for the equipment immediately as long as a contract is in place before 31 Dec 2009.

The allowance is in addition other tax deductions applicable to the asset such as depreciation.

Despite the upside it is not an excuse to rush out and buy more toys. You still need to apply the usual economic rationale to the decision – i.e. what return will I get for each dollar I invest? No need for complicated analysis, just ask yourself is this the best use of the money at the present time and how will it benefit the bottom line. If you weren't planning on buying the bit of kit then it's unlikely that the investment allowance should change that. Where it may be useful is bringing forward purchase decisions or changing the choice from second hand to new equipment. Be aware of the financing method you select too. If you choose to lease then it likely the lease company will get the allowance, not you.



Recent events....**MFS Visit to Monbeef Abattoir**

Monbeef abattoir recently hosted an interactive and very informative beef cattle discussion with twenty members of Monaro Farming Systems in Cooma on Wednesday the 29th April.

The morning included a tour of the plant including inspections of the cattle handling facilities, kill floor, boning room and rendering plant. The CEO of Monbeef Craig Chilcott and livestock manager, Tony Dorahy, gave an overview of Monbeef's operations including their direct sell service and market initiatives.

Following this, Greg Meaker, Livestock Officer with DPI Goulburn, gave an interactive presentation on topics such as heifer management (maximizing calving rates and nutritional requirements), use of HGP's (hormonal growth promotants) and a direct, economic comparison of the various selling options available to beef producers (direct sell vs paddock sales vs over the hook vs saleyard) **if anyone wants the selling comparison cost calculator spreadsheet, please contact Nancy**

Monbeef operations are based on a kill facility of approx. 240 animals per shift (currently operating one shift a day) which comprises of approximately 20% bulls and 80% cows. Monbeef markets are aimed at manufactured products and based around sourcing leaner cattle with a fat score of 2. Monbeef sell from a grid system with weight range breaks starting from 100-280kg plus for cows and

150 to 400kg plus for bulls. The grid system is now available to registered clients from their website. All product is scanned and assessed for fat content which is driven by overseas market criteria which core test all product for fat % and penalize accordingly.

Due to the current volatility of the market and economic slow down, Monbeef currently work on a one week supply basis which reduces their exposure to risk and market collapses. Because Monbeef are a smaller based operation, they are able to offer

increased flexibility in responding and servicing their clients, enabling them to tailor product to suit the specifications of each market. Monbeef is constantly researching new market opportunities and have a buyer representative (based in Sydney) which services their client base in Taiwan, Japan and the America's.

One of their strategies to remain competitive in the current economic climate is to strengthen client relationships by encouraging producer visits to the plant and by promoting the direct sell service offered to producers.



Roadside meeting "Kydra"
Applications of ProGibb (gibberellic acid) & nitrogen to improved pasture....**1st Trial**

- applied to a sown rye grass, clover & chickory pasture (approx 22 months ago)
- applied 20gms gibberellic acid (GA) / ha + 20kg nitrogen/ha
- cut trials showed a 56% increase in growth in 2 ½ weeks which equates to approx. 5c / kg/ dm produced
- Bulk difference was in water content with a much higher water content in the treated pasture
- BUT no dilution in protein or ME (metabolisable energy)

-Charlie has sent samples away for feed quality analysis tests (measuring ME, Protein, by-pass prot etc) which will be included in the full report

2nd trial

-applied to triticale pasture (showed greatest response), also very good response found with wheat

Notes

- Gibberellic acid (GA) is a naturally occurring, organic, plant hormone / plant growth regulator which stimulates growth of the plant by encouraging cell expansion which results in leaf & stem elongation
- costs approx \$10/ha at rate of 10gms/ha – recc rate is 20gms/ha ie \$20/ha but same effect can be achieved with 10gms/ha
- Fills in the winter gap feed supply when this hormone is not being produced naturally by the plant
- Persists for approx 4 weeks, peak growth expected @ 3 weeks
- VERY GOOD for utilising any available moisture over winter period when typically very little pasture growth occurs on the Monaro
- phalaris and barley grass found to be extremely responsive

****full report will be emailed to members when final feed quality analysis results are received....***



Carbon Day Out in Nimmitabel



Over 180 people, including local mayors, member for the Monaro, school students, land holders, scientists, NSW DPI and CMA staff, gathered in Nimmitabel last Monday to hear Australia's most prominent and controversial speakers on climate change, the proposed emissions trading scheme (ETS) and the truth behind soil carbon accounting.

The event proved to be a resounding success with very positive feedback received from most participants. Some participants were critical of the lack of a climate scientist to challenge and present the opposing view to Prof Plimer regarding climate change and its causes highlighting the fact that more balance was perhaps needed on this topic.

General feedback from participants included comments such as "government legislation will have more impact than climate change" and that proposed policies for the agricultural industry are "misguided and driven by politics rather than evidence based science" and "heavily constrained by international agreements".

Following the success of Mondays event, MFS will continue to pursue up-to-date information regarding this issue to keep members and the wider Monaro community well informed.

***Special thank you to Monbeef for helping to sponsor the "Carbon Day Out" in Nimmitabel and for continued sponsorship support from the National Australia Bank.**