
NHIA News

Herd Improvement Newsletter

Vol. 2 Issue 2 July 2007

NHIA presents to industry leaders and political bodies in Canberra

In May 2007, NHIA attended a dairy leadership event in Canberra and was given the opportunity to present issues facing the herd improvement industry directly to industry leaders, government officials and politicians.

Over the past 6 months, Chris Braniff, General Manager of NHIA, has engaged with other leaders in the agricultural industries in a program to present the issues that face our industry. This program culminated in a series of workshops, social events and presentations in Canberra, which was well attended by dairy leaders and government officials.

Chris's presentation was the last session in a hectic two day schedule and was warmly received by the audience. The main issue presented was the need for greater support for herd recording businesses and data management endeavours. In addition, there was a case for general support for the herd improvement industry which provides so much in the way of productivity gains to beef and dairy farmers.

The organisers have informed Chris that, "The feedback from the industry, political and government representatives attending the session was overwhelmingly positive".

As a result of the person contacts and the presentation, Chris was personally invited back to meet with senior DAFF staff as well as policy advisors in Mr McGauran's office at parliament house. These meetings took place in June when Chris was given a generous amount of time to outline issues facing our industry to the highest levels of policy makers.

A publication of
the
National
Herd
Improvement
Association
of Australia
Inc

**The man
who can
drive
himself
further
once the
effort gets
painful is
the man
who will
win.**

NHIA recognised as the Peak Body for the Cattle AI Industry

In May and June of 2007, NHIA has received a number of invitations to participate in policy debate and industry development in the artificial breeding industry.

During 2006 and into 2007, much activity at NHIA has been devoted to developing respect and rapport with other political and peak bodies. In addition, work done with other agri leaders and government officials in Canberra paved the way for NHIA's position as the voice of the artificial breeding industry to be recognized.

These activities have born fruit when recent requests were made of the Association:

- NHIA has been asked to represent the beef and dairy semen and embryo industries in a senior policy workshop in August. This workshop will include bodies from beef and dairy production, domestic and export trade and cattle breed societies. IN addition, NHIA has been invited to present to the workshop on matters pertaining to the trade in genetic material.
- NHIA has been invited to work with a number of other cattle industry bodies to develop a national standard for semen collection and processing. This is with a view to providing industry based accreditation for semen collection facilities. This call has been particularly strong in states where semen production has been de-regulated. Earlier in 2007, NHIA presented a proposal to the office of Mr McGauran, Federal Minister for

Continued page 2

Peak Body Recognised

From page 1

Agriculture, to provide a small amount of funding to support this project.

- NHIA has been asked to represent the artificial breeding industry in a focus group session funded by MLA. The topic is beef genetics extension and the team want to investigate how the AI industry can be engaged to help promote genetic progression in Australian beef herds.

Participation by NHIA at these events does not prevent any of the members from being actively involved. In fact, many members will also be attending the focus group session funded by MLA and the Association's input will add to their views.

During the Strategic Review conducted by the NHIA board in 2004-5, one of the goals set by the board was to have NHIA recognised by other peak bodies as the Association to consult with in matters relating to the activities of the membership. This is broadly held as the defining criteria to be called a peak body.

Participation at these policy meetings and seminars is done solely for the purpose of improving the voice of NHIA members on issues that relate to our industry. That said, it is vital that members continue to provide advice and feedback to NHIA to ensure your voice is heard and conveyed in a meaningful and relevant manner.

NHIA encourages member input and is happy to distribute the briefing material for any of these events to members so that you can provide the Association with much appreciate inputs. Requests can be forwarded to chris@nhia.org.au or call Chris on 0438 347 451.

Multiple Indexes

There has been a great deal of discussion in the HI industry recently with respect to the APR index and potential alternative selection indexes being developed by Holstein Australia, Semex and others.

NHIA believes farmers should decide their selection preferences in consultation with their semen resellers and wholesale sales representatives. After all, these staff are trained professionals who have the long term interests of the farmer's genetic gain at heart.

The decision to use an index over using the individual ABVs is really a question of "What am I breeding for." In the beef industry, they have numerous \$Index Values with five major ones routinely quoted. Even within a single breed, the Angus, the breed society quotes four of these and provides advice on which one should be used depending on what the farmer is trying to achieve.

Examples include:

- **Domestic Supermarket Index:** Suitable for a self replacing commercial herd in temperate Australia targeting grass-finished production for domestic supermarkets
- **CAAB Index:** For self replacing herds in temperate Australia targeting steers for the Certified Australian Angus Beef program
- **Japanese B3 Index:** For self replacing commercial herds in temperate Australia targeting the production of steers for the long-fed export markets that value marbling
- **Northern Terminal Index:** For commercial crossbred herd in Northern Australia using Angus sires to produce progeny for the Japanese B2 market.

Reference: http://www.angusaustralia.com.au/BP_Understanding_Index.htm

About NHIA . . .

Interested in any of the material covered?

Call Chris Braniff, General Manager

National Herd Improvement

Association of Australia Inc

on 03 9329 1688

fax 03 9328 3092

write to us at:

3/21 Vale Street

North Melbourne, 3051

email: nhia@nhia.org.au

Upcoming Events

- **AI Tech Accreditation, Sunbury, 6th July 2007**
- **NHIA Member Forum, 7th August 2007**
- **NHIA AGM, 7th August 2007**
- **AI Tech Accreditation, Sunbury, 13th August 2007**

Semen Quality Workshop

There are many well documented reasons for poor semen quality and poor conception rates. At NHIA we have focus on semen storage and handling as well as clean and efficient AI technique.

Other factors that affect semen quality include sample collection and processing techniques as well as factors associated with the bull. Some bull produce better quality of semen than others.

The two factors that are used to determine semen quality are motility and morphology. Motility relates to the "swimming" activity of the sperm, what percentage are motile, do they progress in a straight line or go round in circles, etc. Morphology of sperm relates to the shape of the sperm as viewed under a microscope. Whilst there are many abnormal shapes and some of the abnormalities can be very subtle, the results are reported as percentage normal.

The Australian Association of Cattle Vets has recently released a list of Accredited Morphologists. Please see the list below. These people participate in a proficiency program where slides of semen are sent from a central location and interpreted by the accredited morphologists. Results are collated and compared across the group. The people listed below also provide a morphology services for a fee.

Individuals within the herd improvement industry with an interest in semen morphology are encouraged to participate in the proficiency program. In addition, the group will conduct a morphology workshop on August 13 at the University of Queensland. For more information, contact Viv Perry or NHIA.

Rental Car Changes

Its that time of year again and the Europcar rentals are flying out the door.

This year, Europcar have a new fleet of Ford Falcon utes as well as a quantity of Toyota Hilux utes for rent.

The daily rental fee from Europcar includes all maintenance & servicing, tyres and government fees that are applied to car rentals.



In addition, the daily hire also includes comprehensive car insurance with a low excess on accidents for added peace of mind. This year, the minimum driver age has been lowered from 25 to 21 years of age and this will help many centres with younger seasonal AI techs.

Unfortunately, there is still no cover for drivers under the age of 21 so be aware that these drivers are not covered by the Europcar insurance.

A number of members have expressed concern over the open nature of the tray on the ute. After consultation with members, NHIA has designed an AI specific "tool chest" that is dust proof, water proof and allows for ease of access under a sun shade. The internal layout is designed for AI techs and will help keep equipment clean and present a professional image.

If you are interested in the AI tool chest, contact NHIA for further details.

Viv Perry and Deb Hasted	Pastoral Veterinary Centre PO Box 168 Goondiwindi, Qld 4390	Ph: 07 4671 1799 Fx: 07 4671 2781 Em: v.perry@uq.edu.au d.hasted@uq.edu.au
Hennie Strydom	c/- Clavin, Rogers and Associates PO Box 67 (13 Western Rd) Cohuna Vic 3568	Phone 07 54562666 Mobile 0428 393 355 Email: h.strydom@bigpond.com
Helen Johnston	Longreach Veterinary Clinic 107 Magpie Lane Longreach, Qld 4730	Ph: 07 4658 3838 or 0746580313 Fx: 07 4658 0738 Mobile 0428589185 Em: longvets@tpg.com.au
Barrett Hasell	Rockhampton Veterinary Clinic 384 Dean St Rockhampton North Qld 4701	Phone 07 49284266 Mobile 0427710232 hasellbm@bigpond.net.au
Peter McAuliffe	Livestock Breeding Services 83 Campbell St Toowoomba, Qld 4350	Ph: 07 4638 3101; Mobile: 04 1819 0953 Fx: 07 4638 0145 or 0746388186 Em: petermcauliffe@bigpond.com

Survey Results

In the last edition of NHIA news, we presented a brief snippet of some of the results from the member survey conducted earlier this year. Below is more detail on the two main questions of, “How well is NHIA going?” and “What should we focus on going forward?”. We were pleased with the 24 responses and a number of members commented that the survey was well laid out and simple, so was easy to complete. N/A in the first table meant that members don't use that service or hadn't experienced it.

A significant number of respondents specifically mentioned their growing beef semen business and the need for NHIA to continue to develop beef related services and information. We expect to have plenty to add to this topic after the beef genetics focus group in Albury in July.

In July, NHIA will conduct a short online survey to gauge the demand for seasonal staff amongst members.

How satisfied have you been with your NHIA subscription and NHIA activities in 2006-2007?						
answer options	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A
Membership at NHIA	4	10	6	4	0	0
NHIA LN2 Deal	6	6	2	1	1	8
NHIA Fuel Deal	4	6	3	1	1	9
NHIA Industry Represent-	3	9	8	1	0	3
Generic promotion mate-	4	11	3	2	1	3
NHIA Newsletter	8	12	2	1	0	1

The following services and activities are either currently offered or being planned by NHIA. Please indicate how important you feel these activities are.					
answer options	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Response Count
Working with multiple people to define the direct benefits to herd recording	12	7	1	3	23
Using the outcomes of the work above to promote herd recording and to get more investment in the HR industry	11	7	3	2	23
Writing the Dairyfarmer magazine	4	11	4	3	22
Writing the Newsletters	6	12	3	2	23
Providing wall charts, calenders, docket books, etc	6	6	7	3	22
Validating once a day herd testing	5	4	11	3	23
Developing pregnancy tests from	5	6	10	2	23
Organising an AB conference at	3	4	8	7	22
Organising a Herd Recording conference, possibly during International Dairy Week	4	4	8	7	23
Attending various field days	1	5	10	7	23
The NHIA Member Forums	5	10	6	2	23
A dinner at the NHIA AGM	3	4	7	9	23
Entertaining during the NHIA AGM Dinner	1	3	3	15	22