



Newsletter

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The battle for international beef markets

Mark Spurr is Managing Director of Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), the producer-owned provider of services to the livestock industry. Fresh from an international beef market tour he joins Farm Writers on Friday 28th October to tell us what he thinks the lifting of the ban on US and other BSE 'at risk' suppliers to Japanese and Korean beef markets will mean for Australian producers.

When Mark joined the MLA in November 2002, he shared MLA's mission to achieve world leadership for the \$15 billion Australian red meat and livestock industry through building demand, increasing market access and developing competitive advantage from paddock to plate.

Prior to joining MLA, Mark held executive positions in the food industry in Australia and South America. He held a number of senior roles with Goodman Fielder, including managing director of its global gelatin business and general manager of the NAFTA region, based in the USA. He is also a Director of AUS-MEAT Limited and MLA Donor Company Limited.

The Australian red meat industry has experienced some very turbulent times over the last few years, with BSE outbreaks in key markets, the worst drought in over 100 years and a rising Aussie dollar. These challenging times are set to continue with the US set to re-enter the key markets of Japan and Korea in the coming months and with the emerging global presence of Brazil, a beef producing giant.

Following recent trips to Japan, Korea and the Middle



Mark Spurr, Managing Director of Meat and Livestock Australia, will speak about Australia's role in the international beef trade markets of Japan, Korea and the Middle East.

East, Mr Spurr will be outlining the work Meat & Livestock Australia is carrying out in these and other key export markets that will help the Australian red meat industry remain competitive during the testing times ahead.

To book go to the website:
www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm

Register on-line for the seminar on Friday 28th October with Mark Spurr.

Venue: The MENZIES HOTEL, 14 Carrington Street, Sydney.

When: Friday 28th October 2005 at 12pm for 12:30pm

Cost: \$55 per head, or voucher, for members. **\$65 per head for all non-members.**

Register: BEFORE 5:00pm on Wednesday 26th October, on-line at <http://www.nswfarmwriters.org> or by emailing bookings@nswfarmwriters.org or by phone to Fiona Dewar, (02) 8203 3856.

Late cancellations: Phone Fiona Dewar (02 8203 3856) or Jamie Graham (0418 479 434)

Website sponsored by Telstra Country Wide NSW

Wild predictions from the Philosopher Kings

Contributed by Lucy Skuthorp of *The Land*

Governments, media and much of the Australian public have been too quick to accept the views of popular environmental scientists, such as Professor Tim Flannery, yet too slow to hold them accountable on theories which have often been wrong, according to environmental director of the Institute of Public Affairs, Jennifer Marohasy.

Addressing rural media and agribusiness leaders at last week's NSW Farm Writers Association luncheon in Sydney, Dr Marohasy, (who also writes a fortnightly column in *The Land*), said while she recognises a place for environmental legislation, government policies would be more useful to the environment when they were anchored in reality.

Her comments coincide with the release of Professor Flannery's latest book, *The Weather Makers*, and imminent release of Professor Ian Lowe's book, *A Big Fix: Radical Solutions for Australia's Environmental Crisis*, which both focus on global warming and the need for Australians to change their ways. Yet Dr Marohasy said scientists like Professor Flannery and Professor Lowe have been using their theories on issues such as salinity, global warming and water allocation to push environmental ideologies in Australia, but were actually demonstrating a poor understanding of the environment.

Dr Marohasy suggested that these scientists were setting themselves

up as our "philosopher kings" based on the ideas of Greek philosopher, Plato, in *The Republic*. "They make their judgements and views with limited understanding of economics, suggest a top-down approach and give scientists a central role by suggesting only scientists know how much of different resources can be exploited sustainably," Dr Marohasy said. "They take the approach that they don't like the way the world is and write stories with their ideas on fixing it which read like central planning in a communist State."

Dr Marohasy said our new "philosopher kings" propose that sustainability science ("imagining the worst and then working backwards") dictate everything from how many times we wash our hair a week to how much water irrigators are allocated.

She said recent scenario modelling by CSIRO of rainfall patterns in 2070 involved creating worst case scenarios and was almost the equivalent of playing computer games.

Dr Marohasy said in 2003, farmers were being expected to give up water on the basis of public policy pushed by professors "with their eyes closed to the evidence". "The professors wanted a quantity of 1500 gegalitres of water worth about \$1.8 billion from irrigators on the basis of their philosophising." She said these people, along with numerous State and Federal politicians of all



Dr Jennifer Morahasy, Director, Environmental Unit, Institute of Public Affairs.

political persuasions, as well as the CSIRO, deny being wrong on many of the environmental figures they quoted despite often being caught out, particularly on water quality and rising salt levels. She said agricultural organisations in particular should be asking how come public pronouncements underpinning important policy could be based on this misinformation.

"The National Farmers Federation and NSW Farmers Association have been too quick to do deals and have not looked deeply into them, instead taking the post-modernist approach that perhaps there are only alternate views and no objective truth." She said Australians should not jeopardise the quality of life currently enjoyed because people like professors Flannery and Lowe "enjoy dreaming and writing about the end of civilisation".

Thank you to our corporate members of the month, ANZ Bank and Hassall and Associates.

Coming Events

Thursday 17th November: A wine tasting evening hosted by Farm Writers' at the Country Embassy.

Listen to Mark Davidson of Tamburlaine Wines and wine expert Paul Foster talk about Tamburlaine's exotic wines and the future of the wine industry at large. Form your own opinions as you taste.

Wednesday 7th December: Join us for the ever-popular Christmas lunch hosted by the NSW Minister of Agriculture at Parliament House. As usual, we'll be holding a business card draw to share the Christmas cheer – all contributions welcomed. Watch this space or contact a member of the Committee.

☺ Know a speaker you'd like to hear at a Farm Writers' event? Email us at suggestions@nswfarmwriters.org