

WA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE – NARROGIN

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING HELD ON 8TH NOVEMBER 2022

PRESENT: Doug Giles (Chairperson), Graeme Dent, Harley Bairstow, Pierre Maartens, Sarah Hyde, Clare Roser (Principal), Stephen Madson (Farm Manager), Tony Ward (Assistant Farm Manager), Teresa Rafferty.

- 1. WELCOME and APOLOGIES** - Doug Giles welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Veronika Crouch and Helen Wyatt.

- 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS – Nil**

- 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 25/07/2022**

Minutes were accepted as an accurate record of proceedings – Moved by Sarah Hyde and Seconded Harley Bairstow.

(1) **Bio Waste Plant** – Further information is that it is planned for opposite the Hay Plant. Tony advised that it was still in the concept stage but appears to be going ahead.

- 4. CORRESPONDENCE –**

Inwards: Geoff Perkins email of resignation.

Outwards: Clare Roser letter to Hon Sue Ellery advising of Geoff Perkins' resignation and Clare Roser letter to Geoff Perkins thanking him for his services over 26 years.

Outwards: Emails to Agricultural Advisory Members with Agenda for 8th November meeting, Invitations to the 2022 Graduation Awards sent 25/08/2022, and a further invitation copy attached to the agenda. Copy of the minutes of the 25/07/2022.

- 5. ASSISTANT FARM MANAGER'S REPORT – Tony Ward**

HAY

- The aim was to establish 40 hectares x 5 sections with rates determined by the students for the Certificate III program. Selections were made and some work done to clean the area.
- Past meetings had made the decision for the traditional tillage method: a challenge was put forward and a further trial was done, and the silage return was very good.
- The outstanding difference between the two methods: S1 had fertilizer etc, against the traditional tilled area with no chemical, no weed burden and was found to be excellent – very clean hay. S1 had a similar return but the quality was down.
- The total season has seen some breakdowns – untried rake failed and was out of action and had to use the stubble rake – not the best machine to use – the rake pulled the rocks left behind. Noted that more intense paddock clearing required.
- Rain of 32 mm fell on the cut hay.
- About 12000 rolls of hay were cut and 150 bales, 3000 small hay squares.
- The following season will probably show up further results in regard to chemical vs traditional tillage.

- Differences were educational and hence productive.
- Much discussion on examples from students' trial situations.

6. FARM MANAGER'S REPORT - Stephen Madson (Tabled)

- Commercial Sheep: Fly prevention backlining decision was a good move.
- Lamb Shearing will be done in April 2023 – 10-11 months old.
- Stud Sheep: Colin Batt and the Suffolk Stud are going well - \$2,200 for one of our Rams at RAS.
- Colin Batt's efforts above and beyond, were recognised in a special presentation on Graduation Day.
- A letter of commendation from Agricultural Advisory Council.
- Cattle: 28 November-Preg testing is planned – weaners asap for income.
- Poultry: egg sales are going very well. Incubation has produced some excellent results. Breeds are Highline, White Sussex and Austral Corp – Commercially, a brown egg is required.
- Horticulture: Vegetable production is going very well.
- Mechanic – Work being done by the contractor is going well, however he is not available to us as an instant fix.
- Fencing: Golf Club line is underway.
- Cropping: Oats are dirty with rye grass, Canola is terrific.
- Cropping Plan 2023 was screened.
Wade Longmuir is helping with Agronomy.
Lupins are proposed – better varieties available no. Nth 3,4 and 7.
Canola recommended to be new types Dumen/Trophy.
Barley trials will be done for new varieties.
- Chemical Shed: Construction is complete, plumbing to be done.
- Immersion Day – Directors' Day – Farm and trades interest by visitors. Meetings that followed were more productive with the visitors having a better knowledge of the college.
- Staffing: 4 Technical Officers and 1 Voc Trainer. Interviews followed by breach period of 7 days and then can offer to those recommended.
- Rainfall 40 mls in October and 30 mls was on one day.
- Year 12's graduated with additional certificates: 8 students completing Certificate III and 14 Advanced Wool Handling.
- Email received from a Danish student to look around the college.
- There is no formal process for locking in grain forward selling.

7. ENTERPRISE REPORTS

Sheep Advisory Position: 1st: Graeme Dent to contact Ashley Lock, 2nd Richard House. Others put forward were Dennis Haddrick and Luke Ledwith. Is a senior person more suitable? Allan Hobley may also be an interested person.

DG noticed in the sheep production, that maiden births were lower than usual 83%, maybe young rams with young ewes.

Beef: Doug Giles

- Cows are in good form and he did see one senior bull had arthritis in it's back. Maybe the bull is too big, bulls are too closely related and recommended a new bull.
- The feed lot has a been a good call, steers through the butcher shop a good weight is 440 to 480 kg. Weights would be interesting, Best sell: 360-400 kg , 550 kgs opt steer. Calving may be too late in the season to have students on hand.

Farm Planning – Pierre Maartens (Report on Screen).

- 2021 season figures – sheep, cattle and cropping.
- Wool 10,000 kilos of wool (33kg w x winter growth).
- Pierre described the college results in conclusion with local best practice.
- Most areas were compatible with costs and margins.
- Feeding cattle was seen as a very high rate- 3 tonne/cattle/calf ratio/year.

Cropping – Harley Bairstow

- Spray topping has been done – probably more is required.
- Quality of pastures is very good.
- Cropping: Canola, most is outstanding. Only one paddock is not.
- Oats in North Block has mixtures in them – wild oats is very bad.
- Long process to get rid of wild oats.
- Many crops this year have wild oats issues.
- All Canola has been dessicated as advised.
- No major issues around cropping – just get the header equipment ready.
- Rye Grass Toxicity – Be on the lookout, Spray topping will provide an important role in the prevention.

STEM and training – Not attributed to Sarah at this time.

8. TRUST REQUEST SUBMISSIONS

2 X Medium Tractors \$115,000 each.

1 x New Mixall – Graeme Dent asked would this be a disc mill?

Purchases are much in the advanced situation as supply is hard to secure at present.

10. Crop Progress discussed previously.

11. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- New Business Plan – Total College. Board Members and Agricultural Advisory invited to contribute in 2023.
- Public School Review, 15th March 2023. There will be a review and then other sessions. Area of Community Partnerships will have an input with School Board and Agricultural Advisory.
2023 Students: 138 students in residence (full), and we have 20 day students as well.
Some students have not notified of their return in 2023 so as yet we cannot offer a position to any more students as beds are being held.

Future enrolments; 2024 - 33 year 10 (45 limit), 2025 - 6 year 11, 2026 - 12 year 10 applications.

Expansion of our dormitories considered? in town residence at the Town Residential college? would raise many issues with different costs, duty of care, transport etc.

- Community Christmas Luncheon – Wednesday 14th December. Invitations will be sent.
- Clean Energy Solar Plant – first visit tomorrow for planning.
- Curriculum WACOA – Narrogin, Drought Innovation Challenge.
- Annual Trust Funding – Sally Panizza – Checklist for guidelines and submissions.
- Leap Courses to get Agriculture related staff members to teach. Leanne Sjollema will assist with the course for those teachers with Murdoch.
- Year 11 visited universities and Linley Valley and a large feedlot.
- Year 12 Piggery Visit – Graeme Dent offered his business to view.

12. GENERAL BUSINESS

GD Pig Purchase? Yes, purchasing in early January.

- Black and White – Lynton Batt – Try again if we would like them.
- Graeme offered to supply white pigs if needed.

DG Royal Agricultural Society – A steer camp for schools

- This will be similar to the sheep-wether camps, pen of 3 steers, train, handle and only for schools in the sections. Book into an abattoir ahead for the steers. This was seen as an opportunity to support students in gaining experience in the industry. One or two days would be fine, perhaps Friday, Judge Saturday, finish Sunday then out. We would need to access expert advice, and input.
- Clare and Steve will talk about this and then have a Webex meeting.
- DG suggested we start now to find out what is ok for us and other colleges.
- DG offered to help on a daily basis.

Thank you for attending.

Meeting Closed 12.25 p.m.