

NZ GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION

Fuelled by Science, Tempered by Experience

GRASSLAND NEWS

www.grassland.org.nz

October 2015

ISSN 1179-4216

CONFERENCE UPDATE

CONFERENCE MASTERTON 2015

Only a few weeks to go and there are already good numbers registered for this years conference. Get in early as the **Earlybird rates** close off this week on **Wed 30th September**.

There are also limited spaces for Conference Dinner (250) so it will be first in for those seats.

The online registration can be found here.

[Register here](#)

The conference programme is also available to be downloaded.

[Conference Programme](#)



Castlepoint Station

Field Tour Castlepoint on the Wairarapa Coast is well known for its lighthouse and annual races on the beach. However past President of NZGA Anders Crofoot and his farming partner Emily have organised a tour of Castlepoint Station for the Monday before the conference. This extra

treat is only available to those that register for the full conference, bus ride and lunch will be provided.

The bus will leave the Solway Conference venue at 9.30am on Monday 2.

Farmer day The Local organising committee put their heads together with Exec and programme co-ordinator and have allocated one day to a special farmer focus on **Wed 4th**. In addition to the afternoon field day the morning session will be presented as a workshop format based on applied research papers. So it will be science with a definite farmer focus for the region.

Farmers who cant find time to join us for 3 days may decide this is a great option. [For more information](#)

The Student travel awards are once again available to students registered at a university. This includes a free registration and some support for travel and accommodation. Applications need to be submitted to the Executive Officer eo@grassland.org.nz by the **6th October**.

[Student Travel Award](#)



EXECUTIVE OFFICE UPDATE

Many thanks to all the members who have paid their membership promptly. If you can't remember seeing an invoice search your inbox and spam folder using the email address below. Remember that those who register for conference without paying their membership will get a polite reminder to do so before conference. Glenis has changed her email address so it is easier to find - finance.nzga@gmail.com.

Reminder - NZGA members get a discount on the books we have available on the website and the most popular purchase is our new **R&P 8: Pasture & Forage Plants For New Zealand** - (<http://grassland.org.nz/books.php>). Members can purchase extra copies for \$40 incl P&P. Please let anyone who may be interested know they are available.



NZGA for over 80 years

SPONSORED BY AGRESEARCH

John Lancashire had a distinguished career as an ecologist and agronomist with DSIR Grasslands from 1965-1985. He was appointed Director in 1985 and oversaw work on grass, forage herbs, white clover breeding, basic plant science and sustainable farming systems.



In 1992 with the restructuring of government science, John was appointed General Manager of the Grasslands Division of the newly formed AgResearch, where he was one of the five general managers leading pastoral agricultural science in New Zealand.

In 1998 John left AgResearch to set up his own strategic science consultancy business. In this capacity he has since consulted for MoRST; FRST; CCMAU; MAF; The Royal Society (CORE selection panel); AgResearch Ltd; ESR Ltd; Cropmark Ltd and the NZ Plant Breeders Association Inc.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LANCASHIRE - DR JOHN HAY

I regard it as a privilege to be asked by the family to speak on behalf of all Lanc's science colleagues and friends. Especially the Ex-DSIR lunch club which meet twice a year and sorts out the wrongs of the world. John always had very forthright opinions on all topics, and a favourite phrase was "the buggers have got it wrong – again!"

John Lancashire made an exceptional contribution to New Zealand science, agriculture and the environment. He often took trenchant and courageous positions on protecting science and the environment, sometimes going contrary to prevailing opinion. He doggedly lobbied both government and industry on matters of strategic importance like biosecurity, environmental impacts and science investment priorities. He quickly picked up on the phrase "money down the dunny" for science investment he regarded as a waste of time. I had noticed that the amount of funding falling into this category had increased sharply over the last few years, and is very relevant given the chaos around AgResearch of which Lanc was very concerned.

The formation of AgResearch in 1992 left John with the somewhat startling prospect of having to work with his long-time rivals in what had been the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. And it is fair to say that John was certainly at the forefront of the constant battles between DSIR and MAFtech over the preceding years. After a period of hesitation, he graciously and then enthusiastically embraced the merging of the two organisations. This led to enhanced capability under his leadership that took in a large component of the country's soil fertility, pasture weed and pest management science, as well as the plant improvement and farm systems work of DSIR.

At the same time John was instrumental in moving away from solely government-funded plant breeding to forge close connections to the forage seed industry thereby commercialising Grassland's research via the Plant Variety Rights Act (1987). Initially, this was via the Cultivar Development and Management Unit which in turn became Grasslanz Technology Ltd. This link with the forage seed

industry was a crucial strategic move, and I can remember how excited we were when the first royalty check arrived in 1988 for \$5000 for the white clover cultivar – Tahora. The royalty earnings from this IP (including endophytes) is now \$6.7m pa. Throughout this period John fostered a highly effective and cohesive multi-disciplined group that to many, gave a sense of being part of an enthusiastic club of like-minded friends. The value of the ensuing research was, and still is, of great importance to this country's critical pastoral sector.

My son Simon was on the short list for a Rhodes Scholarship and was to go for an interview. To give him some experience I asked if Lanc could simulate the interview panel and carry out a mock interview. Simon says he will never forget his first question as he sat slightly nervously in Lanc's office. "What the hell would a good leftie like you be wanting to seek funding from an Imperialist bastard like Rhodes". My son replied "Good question – deserves further thought". Lanc immediately replied with a chuckle "Good answer".

John retired from AgResearch in 1998 but he continued to show huge dedication to agricultural science. He became a Life member of NZ Grassland Association and an Honorary Fellow of the NZ Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science. He was also elected as President of the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science, served as a Member of Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand and as the representative of the Constituent Organisations of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

During this post-retirement time he organised many highly effective conferences to highlight the need to properly support New Zealand agricultural and environmental science research and related to this he was selected to be a member of the Royal Society of New Zealand National Science Panel.

However increasingly, John involved himself in environmental conservation, he was a Trustee of Nga Manu Trust; a Trustee and Chair of the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park – for the last 10 years, a Trustee and Chair of the Guardians of Whareroa Farm 2009-2014 and a trustee of Nga Uruorara Trust.

Unsurprisingly, John was awarded the Queen's Service Medal in 2009 for his work in conservation. When all thought he had done enough he worked for the last 18 months to successfully put together a bid to enhance the biodiversity of the Kapiti Coast to MfE to the tune of \$300,000 over three years. This will bring together all the Trusts and groups in this area working on this issue, and will be a living tribute to John.

Throughout John was highly articulate, wrote many challenging articles and spoke on the radio with great clarity and often courage. He was indeed an outstanding leader who knew and cared for his staff; they in turn showed great unity of purpose and professionalism.

Similarly, he was very family-orientated. John had directness of expression, particularly on the phone, a mannerism that some people probably thought was gruff or even grumpy. While possibly misleading, to many it was most amusing. John was empathetic, particularly to those in difficulty; he was insightful, kind and courageous. He will be sorely missed.

It is well recognised that the world's youth are the future leaders of tomorrow, but as Todd Sampson; the keynote speaker of Youth-Ag Summit, CEO of Leo Burnett, host of 'Redesign My Brain', and Co-Founder of Earth Hour explained, "it is the world's youth that have the creativity needed to unlock the solutions of how to feed a hungry planet."

Creativity that can be learned and unlocked with practice and guidance, but is often lost by mature leaders through knowledge built through experience. Knowledge that often leads to experienced leaders using assumption-based thinking for problem solving, rather than creative-thinking.

Todd outlined that creativity is the answer to any problem, but creative leadership lies within the ability for a leader to fight off their fears, and hold onto a creative idea for just five minutes longer than others. However, to utilise and unlock the creativity of the world we must be support, guide, and enable the rural youth of today. Youth need help; they need the skills, knowledge and influence of the leaders of today, to enable, guide and empower their creativity, to ensure that the right messages are heard.

From 24-27 August in Canberra, Bayer and the Future Farmers Network took up this challenge, and created an event that supported, guided, mentored and enabled 100 young agricultural leaders, aged 18-25, from 33 nations. This event was called the 2015 Youth-Ag Summit.

The leaders of Bayer and the Future Farmers Network allowed the delegates to discuss the roles that science and modern agriculture play in feeding a hungry planet. These leaders then empowered and enabled the creativity of the delegates by gaining them an audience with the United Nations, where two delegates will present the findings of the wider Youth-Ag Summit delegation.

Included within the global delegation were seven young Kiwis, selected through an essay competition on 'How to solve global food insecurity'. James Robertson, Zach Mounsey, Rosario Monzales, Sarah Crofoot, Shaun Snoxell, Sarah Tait and Hamish Clarke were given the privilege of representing New Zealand at the global Youth-Ag Summit.

The Youth-Ag Summit was aimed at addressing what is arguably one of the biggest issues facing mankind; how to feed the world in 2050 and beyond? It is estimated that by 2050 there will be over 9 billion people in the world and to feed them we need to produce 70% more food globally.

Not only must we increase our global food supply to the masses, but we must do it from fewer resources. For



example, urban sprawl is taking away some of the most fertile soils in the world, while fossil fuels are a non-renewable and environmentally harmful resource that agriculture and therefore food production are currently heavily reliant on.

Therefore, the current global status-quo will not be good enough going forward. We already have around 800 million people suffering from malnutrition worldwide. As a global community we must continue to create and change by innovating, adopting and adapting. However, we cannot solve the looming global food crisis by simply producing more. It is an incredibly complex problem, requiring multi-faceted solutions.

Solutions to the looming global food crisis must address not only the lack of global food availability and affordability, but also the cultural, economic, environmental, and social challenges that limit food availability and affordability in both developed and developing nations worldwide. It is youth that can unlock many of the creative answers needed.

How do we learn and grow from this? Todd outlined that in the future world of big data analysis the only competitive advantage left will be innovation and creativity. Therefore, we must learn how to better support and enable youth, we must challenge ourselves:

1. How do we better empower the voices and creativity of our youth?
2. How do we better utilise the creativity of youth to solve our challenges?
3. Why do we not have a 'NZ Youth Primary Industries Summit'?

hamish.clarke@lincolnuni.ac.nz

[Twitter: @Griff_Clarke](#)

[For more on the Youth Ag Summit 2015](#)