

VOICES

newsletter from ALM Group



Number 21 October 2014

This edition of VOICES is all about creating a national voluntary system to verify environmental and animal welfare credentials.

The need for and the benefits of such a system are now widely recognised, but until we have a modest investment to support a national roll out of the verification system then innovative producers and marketers will continue to be disadvantaged.

It is the classic chicken-and-egg situation for the benefits rise and the costs per landholder fall as participation grows. Yet early adoption is stymied by the initial relatively high cost per landholder and the enhanced difficulty in getting market benefit until there is consistent supply of product from properties with certification.

Speaking of eggs

How often do we hear there is no market for products differentiated according to production circumstances?

I put this to the test in September by recording the prices of eggs in three supermarkets in southern Queensland. Across the three retail outlets there were 30 categories of eggs priced at between \$2.31 and \$10.75 a dozen. I think the data tell their own story.

[More](#)



Let your views be heard!

Please help ALMG by completing a short, eight-question [survey](#).

Your responses will help us formulate proposals for a national roll-out of a system that will support continuous improvement in farm productivity, the differentiation of food and fibre products and the building of capacity.

There's no time better than the present to do it - just eight questions. It only takes a few minutes. True.

CLM a registered certification trade mark

Our announcement that Certified Land Management (CLM) is now a registered certification trade mark created considerable interest at the 25th Anniversary Landcare Conference and subsequently. This tool could reinvigorate Landcare but only if it becomes available nationally.

There are many worthwhile programs that aim to improve the 'green' image on an industry wide basis. However, having CLM as a registered certification trade mark highlights that it is a system designed to deliver market and other benefits to participating producers and marketers. This of course provides strong incentive for genuine participation as well as contributing to improving the 'green' image on an industry wide basis.

Put more bluntly, CLM is designed to preferentially reward producers and others along product chains who are committed to continuous improvement in environmental and animal welfare management.



Structuring your farm for the future – Certified Land Management

In what hopefully is the forerunner of other contributions, Craig Oliver, President of the Victorian Panyyabyr Landcare Group explains why he and Woody (see photo) have adopted CLM.



“Change is slow, and higher standards are often about market access rather than higher prices, however, given that the ALMG certification is easy to do, low in cost and may even help identify improvements in your farming business there is little to lose by having a go!” [More](#)

Selling sustainability—what’s in it for Australian agriculture?

Three panelists, including ALM Group CEO, Tony Gleeson, addressed this topic at a Queensland Rural Press Club event on 14 October 2014.

There continues to be a strong focus on the alleged influence of environmental and other NGOs, which unfortunately takes attention away from actually doing something that will improve on-farm productivity and competitiveness in higher priced markets. In any event, the influence of NGOs will pale into insignificance once major retailers both domestically and internationally begin to insist on standards that simply impose additional costs on producers.

In his presentation Tony made a strong plea to extend our focus on improving competitiveness beyond an emphasis on cost reduction. We need also to include features such as our environmental and animal welfare credentials so as to increase competitiveness in higher priced markets. [More](#)

National Landcare Advisory Committee

Following our **Symposium** on Natural Resource and Animal Welfare Management – Agricultural Competitiveness, ALM Group representatives met with Federal Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Greg Hunt, and with staff of the Agriculture Minister, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce, to advocate for a national roll-out of a system to improve and verify environmental and animal welfare management. Mr Hunt indicated he would wish to have the advice of the then yet to be established National Landcare Advisory Committee.

We are preparing a submission which requests the Committee to advise the ministers for the environment and for agriculture that it supports the establishment of a national voluntary system for improving and verifying natural resource and animal welfare management and that a joint Ministerial Working Group be established to advise Ministers by 1 March 2015 on:

- the essential and desirable features of systems, and the rationale for supporting and facilitating their use
- the actions necessary to foster their use in Commonwealth and regional programs and by landholders
- the operations and funding of systems.

Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef

We are members of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) for three reasons.

First, given our agricultural export dependency we need to be connected globally. Second, because markets are increasingly consumer driven we need to be connected to community organisations and retailers. And third, being a member enables us to bring an Australian perspective to the thinking around verifying sustainability.

Most recently we have done that in a letter published in the October edition of the **GRSB newsletter** which the GRSB Executive Director Ruaraidh Petre has featured prominently.

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Contact: Tony Gleeson, CEO
Australian Land Management
Group.

P: 07 4666 4112

M: 0402 099 884