

FFSR News

Executive Director's report



Dr Ron Prestidge, Spring Street

What a big month this has been with the annual Divisional conference and awards in Creswick. I congratulate the organising committee for our conference, particularly Phil Haines (Chairman) and Lili Robinson. It was pleasing to see new people on this years' organising committee as it does provide an opportunity to grow leadership and teamwork skills. The conference is the start of our planning for new project development. Thank you to all staff who contributed to the running of the conference, and to all those who attended, making the event such a success for the Division.

Congratulations to all winners of the FFSR Awards. The calibre of the nominations was high and it was pleasing to receive a large number of nominations. The winners are listed in the article opposite, and all winners and nominees will be acknowledged on the FFSR intranet site, along with some photos of the event.

I recently accompanied Russell Sully to California to the Fresh Produce Merchant Association Summit. (See travel article on page 2). Keynote presenters included Condaleza Rice and David Plouffe, President Obama's campaign manager. A key point for me from the Summit is how rapidly digital technology has been changing and exploding. We need to consider how FFSR can make better use of this technology to communicate our science to farmers, consultants and agribusiness.

DPI's premier recognition program, the Primary Elements Awards are now open. The awards recognise outstanding work of individuals or teams in the areas of: collaboration and internal partnerships; customer service; innovation; leadership; sustainability; Safe-T-Care; young achiever and living the values. This is a great opportunity to showcase the successes of your project and team. I certainly support all FFSR staff interested in submitting an entry to these awards. Further detail is available on Primarysource.

The DPI Executive Conferences are currently being held at regional centres across the state. I strongly encourage you to attend one of these Conferences and take your opportunity to input into the strategic direction of DPI.

FFSR Staff Awards 2009

Anthea Malliaros, Spring Street



More than 200 staff attended the first FFSR awards ceremony held at our annual divisional conference - a ceremony that recognises exceptional achievement and contribution.

Awards were presented across 7 categories - contribution to science, innovation, leadership, young achiever, customer service and outstanding scientific paper.

Congratulations to the Vital Vegetables and INFFER teams, joint winners of the 'FFSR Science Award', for outstanding achievement in "scientific research and innovation which enhances the profitability and sustainable economic growth of Victoria's primary industries".

'Outstanding Scientific Paper' was awarded to Jean Philippe Aurambout and best 'First Scientific Paper' went to Clare Leddin, both first authors of papers in high impact journals.

Rob Clark won the 'Innovation Award' while Wayne Brown was recognised for his leadership qualities with the 'Leadership Award'.

Benny Selle was the winner of the 'Young Achiever award' for his achievements in publishing and commitment to maintaining national and international collaborations.

For 'Excellence in Customer Service', the joint winners were Robyn Funston and Sandra Greenaway who provide outstanding service to our customers.

We congratulate all the winners of the 2009 FFSR Staff awards on their wonderful achievements.



Photos: (above) Dr Graham Mitchell, Dr Sandra Greenaway and Dr Ron Prestidge at the awards. Anna Roberts (top) accepting the award on behalf of the INFFER team.

If there's fire there's smoke!

David Marland - Ararat

When we think of the consequences of climate change, we usually imagine warmer temperatures, less rainfall and water availability, more variable seasons and frequent severe weather events. Seldom top of mind is directly associating climate change with the predicted increase in the frequency of bushfires and an emphasis on fuel reduction burns. We are familiar with the destructive effects of the fires themselves but we do not always think of the damage caused by the smoke alone.

Smoke from bushfires impacts on the grape and wine industry due to smoke taint effects on the wine. Smoke affected grapes tend not to be harvested and the fruit represents a loss to growers and winemakers. In 2006-07 alone an estimated \$20 million worth of wine grapes (or about \$70 million worth of wine) was lost in the north east of Victoria from smoke taint.

Dr Mark Downey and his team at Irymple are using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) to look at the mode of entry of smoke components into vines and their translocation into wine grapes. Ultimately this project will inform land managers responsible for controlled burning about the optimal time of year for burning to minimise the impact on wine production. It will also provide possible mitigation strategies for farmers to minimise uptake of smoke compounds from wildfires and controlled burning.

The work is a collaboration between DPI FFSR and E&J Gallo Winery California, the University of Adelaide and the Australian Wine Research Institute. *Photo courtesy of the King Valley Vignerons - Stephen Lowe.*

Travel report - Vital Vegetables go global!

Building on the successful launch of the Vital Vegetables brand, Russell Sully recently travelled to the USA to discuss emerging industry trends and to identify potential collaborators in the USA in the globalisation of the Vital Vegetables range.

The objective of the trip was to meet key people in the USA vegetable industry, and to gain insight into emerging trends and market segmentation. This showcased the unique approach of Vital Vegetables of differentiating vegetable products based upon their enhanced functional attributes and health benefits.

Expressions of interest by organisations interested in becoming a marketing partner for Vital Vegetables in the USA are expected to be registered soon, as the first step in the globalisation of Vital Vegetables.

FFSR Conference 2009

The 2009 FFSR Conference held in Creswick on 13 & 14 October was an outstanding success. Over 200 staff attended the event, with feedback indicating that staff both benefited from the experience and enjoyed the unique opportunity to leave the laboratory, office or field and network with their peers and colleagues.

Highlight sessions for staff included the FFSR awards, the 4 science presentations from Dr Richard Eckard 'Climate Change', Dr Rod Jones 'Vital Vegetables', Dr Bill Wales 'Dairy Initiative' and Dr Jean-Philippe Aurambout 'Visualising farming systems in landscapes' and the poster session with DPI's Chief Scientist Dr Graham Mitchell. Bill Wales showed how the use of props can add significantly to the impact of communicating science. The ensuing question and answer sessions provided all present with a comprehensive understanding of the content delivered.



Above: Robyn Williams AM and Dr Graham Mitchell discuss the posters at the conference.

The poster session, with Dr Graham Mitchell as raconteur, was delivered through closed circuit video to the conference room to ensure that all participants received access to 'What makes an excellent poster'.

Following the awards ceremony in the evening, we were entertained with music provided by Richard MacEwan and his band. Thank you to all staff who attended for helping to create a successful FFSR conference. Further conference information and the presentations can be found on the FFSR Intranet.

