

ROYAL A&P SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S NOTES



December 2017

Welcome to this issue of my notes. Thanks to all those who have hosted me at shows. I enjoy attending and especially mixing with committees, volunteers and competitors to get their insight on how things are.

It is always a pleasure to chat to people about their animals and enjoy their passion.

An historical perspective from a famous speech

Back in 1859 Abraham Lincoln gave a speech at the Wisconsin Fair. One year later he would be elected President of the United States and 2 years later he signed the bill establishing the US Department of Agriculture.

In this famous speech he noted that Agricultural Fairs were becoming an institution of the country. *"...they bring us together, and thereby makes us better acquainted, and better friends than we would otherwise be."* Lincoln saw the chief use of agricultural fairs as a great aid in improving the great calling of agriculture, *"...to make mutual exchange of agricultural discovery, information and knowledge, so that...all may know everything, which may have been known to but one...at the beginning, to bring together especially all which is supposed to be not generally known, because of recent discovery, or invention."*

Lincoln saw no other human occupation open so wide a field for, *"the profitable and agreeable combination of labour with cultivated thought, as agriculture...how vast, and how varied a field as agriculture for discovery."*

He saw agriculture as an opportunity for 'cultivated thought', saying, *"Every blade of grass is a study; and to produce two, where there was but one, is both a profit and a pleasure."*

It is the excitement and potential of that purpose that I enjoy in my job as I travel around shows.

Who Owns the Royal A & P Society?

One of the things that has perturbed me in my year or so as the president is the increasing use of the statement, 'The RAS', as if the RAS was some third party which was determining what should happen to the organisation and imposing those 'things' on the owners of the organisation.

I suspect the reference is to the RAS Executive.

The significant decisions are made by the owners – the member organisations. And the Executive is charged with finding ways to make those decisions work.

One of the most common momentum killers is the propensity to wait for someone else to act, take initiative, assume blame, or take charge. No one is coming, let alone bringing a silver bullet with them. Fault is backward-looking, and responsibility is forward-looking.

The responsibility is ours collectively, we, not just the Executive, have the obligation to take action and deliver results.

We need to spend more time choosing to change with the times, taking advantage of new opportunities and to grow our movement. Or we can continue to fight changes, refuse to adapt, and likely watch the showing movement perish.

In a world where problems and survival are getting more complex, determined and innovative problem solving will flow from those who live as if help is not coming. All of us taking responsibility can make the organisation stronger and more action oriented.



As comfortable as the past or the status quo may be, we need to work to change the status quo for the better. Given the options Change or Die...I'll choose Life! How about you?

The Executive will be working with the District Councils and the wider membership to take us forward.

Pause – Reflect – Plan

All good organisations regularly reflect on what is and isn't working and then make plans to prepare for the future and meet the changing needs of their community.



In today's evolving event marketplace, the risk of doing nothing is greater than the risks involved in failing, experimenting, learning, and innovating which guarantee long term success, even if it means you have to encounter some speedbumps along the way.

For those of you who are keen to contribute to planning the future of your RAS, good news.

Our constitution is quite clear, "...each District Council shall be responsible for promoting the Objects of the Society within the area covered by that District Council."

I believe the best way to start is for Districts and the wider membership to have a major role in charting our future. The Executive is keen to see a strategic plan developed to provide some clear and unifying direction for the future.

The Executive will initiate the process by collecting together our various thinking towards such a plan. We will contribute up to 4 suggested key Strategic Goals which we will share with the Districts and invite you all to think about where you would hope to see your RAS movement in 5 years.

We will ask the Districts to communicate with their members and come back with 4 organisational goals plus 2 District goals. The 4 organisational goals from each District will be collated into a list and re-circulated to the Districts to consider which of those should be the top 4 for the organisation. The Executive will then work with the Districts to support their achievement.

Convenor Roles & Breed Chairs

Your new constitution provides for the election of a National Measuring, Forbidden Substance and Judge's Convenor along with the necessary Breed Chairs, for a term of three years, which is also a new approach.

We are working with the Districts to ensure this works well and provides every opportunity to engage as many as possible in this process.

The Oldest Show

I had the great privilege to attend and open the oldest show in the country. The Bay of Islands Show was 175 years old this season. To mark the occasion they had Royal Event status for the Dairy and Equestrian sections. The Ayrshire Society also held their North Island Championship at the show.



Despite an ominous forecast, the weather was great, especially on Saturday which saw a huge number of people turn out for what can only be described as a hugely successful and quintessential rural A&P Show.

Their Northern District allocated their five medals of excellence to the show. They were used to honour 5 people. They were Ken Cook; Lance Mountain; Diane Neumann; Selwyn Driver; and Tony Munford, who were presented after the official opening. I had the privilege of reading their citations and awarding them their medals.

The next generation of Judges

I have been impressed with the number of young Associate cattle Judges. For example at the Canterbury Show I think every Dairy & Beef Judge had a young Associate with them. It is an excellent initiative which is supported by the breed societies. It is a truly positive way to encourage the next generation in their involvement in our showing movement.

The Executive will be working through their colleague with the Equestrian Portfolio, the District Judge Convenors and their District Councils to encourage new equestrian judges.

Auckland A&P Show

And speaking of long established shows, next year the Auckland A&P Show will be celebrating its 175th Show at Easter.

Discussion Paper / Remit

You may recall last year there being a real concern about the lack of time available for a thorough discussion of remits by RAS member organisations and affected competitors.

The Executive put forward a proposal for discussion at competitor forums with a survey for anyone to complete. The survey was open for just over 3 months.

The proposal suggested that remits promoting new initiatives should be developed out of discussion papers.

The subsequent forums were attended by 210 people who generally supported the proposal. There were 75 responses to the survey of which 71% were competitors; 18% A&P Representatives; 7% Breed Societies. 90% of those responding agreed with the proposal. Since then we have had three further responses from members supporting the proposal.

Our constitution has not changed regarding remits. *"Any Ordinary Member may submit remits for changes or additions to any competition or exhibit rules or regulations to the Society; however it is encouraged for this to be tabled at a District Meeting for approval first."*

For this season we ask that any member which wants to submit a remit that is a major change from what is the current ruling, you instead send a discussion paper which has been signed off by your District Council. We will put up a template to guide you on the information required and ensure consistency with all submissions.

It is not our intention that every remit is treated this way, only those that have a significant impact and or are likely to become a contentious issue.

Fund Raising

Earlier this year the Executive announced **Harcourts Group Limited** (Harcourts) had become a strategic partner.

This partnership has evolved over time with careful consideration on both sides as to how the partnership can benefit both entities and their membership/franchise bases.

As the Strategic Partner, Harcourts offered \$500 from the sale of a property listed through them. This amount would be forwarded to RAS Head Office, on the completion of the sale, with \$400 of it being contributed to the seller's nominated Society/Association. The \$500 is NOT deducted from the sale price.



Congratulations to Marlborough A&P Association who have had two successful referrals and are \$800 better off, and Malvern A&P Association who has one referral in the pipeline. The potential for member organisations is significant and we urge you to promote and capitalise on this scheme.

Wellington Conference

The RAS Conference has evolved over the few years I have been involved from just dealing with the formalities of the AGM and related committees. Members have made suggestions about speakers and educative sessions and the CEO has had the job of developing the model to meet the expectations.

Every second conference is hosted by a District, where they have formed teams to develop their own distinctive flavour while working with the CEO to ensure members expectations are met and the formal business is also completed.

The Wellington bi annual conference is left to the CEO to organise and it is difficult with just Debbie and Christine to manage that and maintain business as usual. If you can help create the 'experience' please give Debbie a call or drop her an email.

Ideas & Advice

Did you know that the NFP Sector in NZ is one of the most competitive in the world? Whilst NZ has just a fifth of Australia's population, it has over double the amount of NFP's per head of population.

We are a variety of organisations which range from professional administration and event management to a group of volunteers who gather to organise and run the show then disperse.

Regardless of size or staffing, getting good ideas and advice is always welcome. Whilst there are services in NZ, looking to larger populations often means a wider pool of ideas and education opportunities.



For example PRO bono Australia. Whilst established to support the Social Services sector they provide resources, webinars and newsletters about fundraising, managing volunteers and event management among a variety of topics.

<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/who-we-are/> .

Another is Small Charities UK <http://www.smallcharities.org.uk/> and FINZ is the professional body that represents fundraising in New Zealand <https://www.finz.org.nz/about-us/>

Have a look here also www.australiancharityguide.com they are about to run an interesting seminar in several locations in NZ.

Exult is a leading training provider in the community sector in New Zealand. They specialise in the business end of running a not for profit. Their website, <http://www.exult.co.nz/> has a lot of information and resource.

Youth Council

We are indebted to that team under the leadership of Tabitha Hazlett from Southland District and encourage all Districts to promote, support and nurture their youth representatives.

The Executive look to them to provide us advice on engaging the next generation, and this is something we would like to focus on with the Districts.

Seeing them develop is also great. For example, Tabitha represented NZ this year in the Australasian Rural Ambassador competition. Tryphena Carter has co-managed the RAS Equestrian Youth Team for the last two years, as well as being the RAS Rural Ambassador in Tasmania in 2016. Rowan Sandford has been running the RAS Young Judge and Handler competition at the Royal for the last couple of years. Ben Burgess has become the youngest A&P President in the country.



In an initiative to engage with a wider group of the next generation a panel of younger people actively involved in the showing movement has been established. Periodically they will be asked for their opinion and or ideas.

They will be able to contribute in confidence with the results being aggregated to give us 'the youth opinion'. It is also hoped this base will lead to youth becoming more involved as they feel more comfortable within the Showing Movement, and they will play a larger role in the Youth Council. It will operate like a consumer panel so there is no risk to them expressing their views, but having their opinion considered.

A way members and groups could think about engaging younger people would be to make space for a younger person to be involved, but stand with them to guide and support.

UK v NZ Youth Equestrian Challenge



The team, Denby-Rose Tait, Kate Fleming, Grace Thomson, Rebecca Aplin, are wearing their ribbons having made a clean sweep of the first event, judging. A great start to the competition but it tightened up really quickly to be a closely contested competition every inch of the way.

The RAS Equestrian Youth Squad were joint winners of the 2017 Riders Challenge with the team from the United Kingdom.

Thank you Kevin Cholmondeley Smith for your donation of the Trophy for this event and also to the Canterbury A & P which ran this event on behalf of the RAS.

Melissa Jebson and Tryphena Carter were the NZ Team Managers and Nicky Hutchinson was the event organiser for the Canterbury Show. Thank you to them and those who loaned mounts to and billeted the English team.

Young Judges & Handlers

Pictured is Craig Robertson who won the Australasian Young Judges title for Dairy Breed Judging, at the Melbourne Royal recently.

We believe the Young Judges & Paraders competition is a great way to encourage youngsters to be actively involved in the movement. That competition is about finding the best. The Australian competitors go through a variety of shows before they get anywhere near the State Finals.

We need to look at improving how we find the best to compete in Australia for that Australasian title



To an extent, our competition has been diluted by other similar opportunities offered by breed societies and A&P Shows. To continue the current competition we will need sponsorship, and support from the Districts.

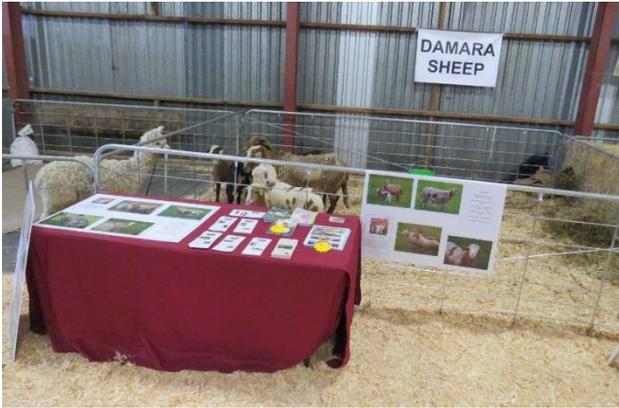
Charities Commission

If your organisation is a registered charity and you do not get their newsletter, I urge you to do so. The latest edition is here <http://createsend.com/t/j-DEF10E2529E763E32540EF23F30FEDED>

In the last year they have deregistered 1,146 charities. Although there are simpler reporting standards for Tier 4 Charities, only 56% have attempted to use those standards in their reporting. They noted many charities made no attempt to use the new categories for grouping together financial transactions such as income and expenses, and they expressed concern about the lack of Financial Literacy of smaller charities.

Rare Breeds Conservation Society

This enthusiastic group, a member of the RAS, was established in 1988 to conserve, record and promote rare livestock breeds with the aim of maintaining genetic diversity within livestock species, and is focused on ensuring rare breed groups do not become extinct. John Earney is their president.



It is also an opportunity to encourage small block holders / life stylers to get involved and perhaps show.

I got the idea from the UK where they had sections at shows for Traditional Breeds where hobbyists could do their part, without having to have a large farm, for preserving breeds and providing another interest at shows.

Heather O'Neill provided a display of her rare Damara Sheep at the 125th Waikato Show.

Have a look at their website <https://www.rarebreeds.co.nz/index.html> and swing them an email rarebreeds@paradise.net.nz to see how they can work with you to develop that aspect of your show.

Website and database

After feedback at forums, we are beginning the job of defining what information and data members and competitors would hope to readily access via the RAS website. We will be asking a range of stakeholders, especially those who have roles in the organisation, for their views.

We will also launch a quick and easy survey available to competitors and members asking for their opinions. We will map all the expectations to outline what the site might offer then look to similar sites to see if we could work with their existing structure.

A small project team will help us map the design to a full project proposal. If you have skill and expertise in this area, and would be prepared to volunteer time and expertise, email Debbie Cameron, RAS CEO with your contact details, and a brief of your expertise.

My Address to Open the Royal Show hosted by Hawkes Bay A&P

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for the opportunity to attend and speak at the opening of The Royal A & P Show here in Hastings. Over the last years the Hawkes Bay A & P have done a magnificent job of rebuilding the Royal and for that the RAS is most grateful.

Congratulations on a successful Wine Awards last night and the Primary Sector Awards Launch today, both great examples of integrating other events into the overall show of Agricultural innovation and excellence in New Zealand.

Our next challenge is to keep the A&P Show relevant and serving its purpose as a national movement, showcasing agriculture at the growing divide where urban meets rural.

Our population has changed from largely rural to 86% urbanised, where more children than ever do not know where milk comes from and do not know that carrots grow underground.

We are more city based than ever. New Zealanders are losing touch with where their food comes from, and that is showing in the negative and adverse public perceptions.

With a rapidly expanding world population tipped to rise a staggering 24% from 7.5 billion today to about 9.8 billion by 2050, the world's farmers will need to produce at least 60% more food than they currently do, if all the mouths are to be fed adequately.

According to the World Bank, if you invest in agriculture, you are two to three times more likely to have a positive impact on poverty reduction, livelihoods, and food security, than in any other sectors.

Agriculture will continue to be our major consistent economic influence.



Our next challenge is to persuade the whole agricultural sector, across all interests, to see and support the A&P Show as an important platform which provides a shop window for Agriculture. It should be a significant event which provides that agricultural focus but in an interesting and entertaining way.

I am grateful and appreciative of all those, both volunteers and paid staff who work so hard, as they have done here in Hawkes Bay, to ensure this important tradition; that this venue for agricultural awareness, excellence and education, continues.

All of those involved in this A&P show, have an important contribution to make to the increasingly important role A&P Shows will play in educating and showcasing our country's agricultural and economic future.

Also, I repeat President Simon Collin's request that you join the Hawkes Bay A & P as they walk the path of building further recognition awards to celebrate the diversity of the of the Primary Industries in this region.

Merry Christmas



In closing, I would like to thank all of you who have committed to the showing movement in some way. It is a credit and testimony to those who, over the last 175 years, have ensured this venerable institution continues to operate.

Shows and the breed societies are relevant and important as much today as when started.

Thank you very much and I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and a great New Year.

Geoff Smith

President

Royal Agricultural Society NZ (RAS)

