

# **APPENDIX 1**

## **RAS & DISTRICT**

### **REPORTS**

## **ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY (RAS) REPORT.**

This year has been like no other with COVID-19 having a huge impact on our ability to meet, hold our events and carry out our normal day-to-day activities. This will be obvious through the various reports tabled.

### **Business Review**

After consultation with District representatives, SGL Funding was contracted to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the RAS business. The need for this review was first established at a series of meetings with a Show Manager from each District. Several initiatives were identified but it became clear the organisation was under-resourced and underfunded. The decline of A&P showing in some areas is of concern and it was the view of the current Executive a comprehensive review was required by an independent party to ensure the sustainability and viability of the A&P Showing Sector.

SGL has outlined 3 stages for the review. Stage 1 has been completed and a report, of some 180 pages, has been provided to the Executive. This report outlined several recommendations, and this included establishing working groups to look at the following – Strategy, People, Digital Optimisation, Rural Community Hubs and Event Optimisation/Funding & Business Models for A&P's. The Strategy Group will lead matters and is already underway. The following independent people have agreed to assist with the Strategy Group – Stephen Woodhead from Milton, Murray Jagger from Whangarei and Hon Kate Wilkinson from North Canterbury. All three people have experience in governance and strategy, and they will join Executive members – Brent Snelllex, Malcolm McKerrow and Rachel Walker to form the Strategy Working Group.

Other Working Groups are being established as well as groups to look at the review of the RAS rules. Operational committees will be set up to manage Royal Shows & Events, Young Judge's Competition and Rural Ambassador and volunteers for them will be called for.

An example of how this could work as follows. Review of equestrian rules – this will have a mix of judges, breed representation, competitors and equestrian show convenors with input from measuring and clean sport as required. Terms of reference will be established for the group and then expressions of interest will be called for, and people appointed.

RAS President, Brent Snelllex will be attending the South Island AGMs and RAS Executive Member, Malcolm McKerrow will be attending the North Island meetings to answer any questions the members may have.

An update on progress is also proposed for conference.

### **Equestrian**

**Measuring** - The position of National Measuring convenor became vacant throughout the year, due to John Fleet standing down. John had been the measuring convenor for several years at that point and had done a great job of conducting seminars throughout the county and being available to take calls on measuring rules and other matters that arose throughout the year. A note of appreciation was sent to John.

As it was not possible for the usual face-to-face meetings to be held around the country, it was time for some innovative thinking. A series of zoom calls were scheduled over different days and times allowing some flexibility for those wanting or needing to attend to ensure their measuring status remained active. The feedback received on these calls was positive in the main.

Quality of paperwork and the paperwork being sent in a timely fashion remains a problem. Due to research done in the previous measuring season, a pre-registration measuring option was implemented for this season. To keep it simple it was limited to those who had a horse or pony that was being measured for the first time – they could fill in most of the information prior to the measure, a partially completed height certificate was taken to the measuring

stand and all the stands were required to do was complete the markings or register brands/microchip and measure the animal. The objective in mind was to try and save time at the measuring stand but perhaps more importantly give the best opportunity of obtaining good quality information around the owner and the horse or pony. So often at the measuring stand when it is busy, it is easy to miss essential items of information. Two hundred and forty-seven (247) pre-registrations were registered and apart from one or two matters, the process went extremely smoothly. There was some concern around the classification – it was the view of some stands they needed to help owners classify their animal, despite this not being their responsibility, the onus belongs to the owner. However, of the 247 pre-registrations completed, a classification change was only requested twice so that equates to less than 1% .

Thank you to all measuring personnel for their work and commitment.

**Judging** - Alan Windle stood down from the position of Judging Convenor a few months ago. The District Judge convenors agreed to manage the judging situation as and when required until a new Convenor was elected. A note of appreciation was sent to Alan for his work in the role.

The bi-annual tutor judge's seminar was scheduled for this year, only to be postponed due to COVID, rebooked, and then cancelled due to COVID.

Judging seminars were finally held around the country when a relief from COVID meant the sessions could be progressed.

Despite the COVID impact several new judges have come on within some Districts and there have been several upgrades throughout the country. Thanks to the District Convenors and their tutor judges for all the work undertaken throughout the year.

Finally, a thank you to all judges who give up their time to support the sport they love. Equestrian sections could not progress without you.

**Clean Sport** - Due to the unknown financial impact COVID would have, the decision was made to hold all clean sport testing for the first part of the showing season and then reassess after that. At the Executive meeting in December, it was agreed that some testing would get underway in the latter part of the season however, testing had no sooner started when COVID re-emerged. Two tests were completed this show season in the North Island. The result was negative.

**General (equestrian)** - RAS Head Office took the opportunity to do an audit on the accuracy of height certificates and how that married up with what was on the database, when receipting entries for Horse of the Year (HOY). All competitors were asked to send in both sides of their height certificate when they entered HOY. While we have no figures that show how many A&P equestrian competitors go to HOY, the following figures show a concerning pattern in some areas – 26% of height certificates did not have wins recorded correctly, 7% had not completed change of ownership, 5% had not completed change of classification yet had continued competing throughout the season with no check on their height certificate at show level. If they were checked, it was ignored.

### **Royal Shows & Events**

The current Royal A&P Show, Hawkes Bay A&P Society, have advised they are not in the position to complete their three-year hosting term, and unfortunately due to COVID, they were unable to run a full show last year. A full review of Royal Shows & Events will be undertaken by a Working Group however in the meantime to ensure competitors still have the ability to compete for the prestigious Supreme Champion Medal, the following Royal Events have been approved and other applications are being considered.

- Central Otago A&P – Home Industries
- Hawarden A&P – Sheep

### **RAS Young Judges & Paraders Competition**

Unfortunately, our finalists have been unable to compete for the last two years, due to the COVID environment. While New Zealand was due to host the Trans-Tasman competition in 2020 this had to be cancelled. Brisbane is the host for 2021 however the RAS of New Zealand has made the difficult decision not to send a team this year. Australia had requested a decision by the beginning of April and with the lingering uncertainty around COVID with outbreaks, vaccines and establishing a bubble with Australia and any quarantining issues resulting from that, made the decision inevitable. However, it is hoped we will be back competing in 2022.

To this end finals were recently held at the Oxford A&P Show and the winners are as follows

- Dairy Cattle Judging – Holly Powell, Western District
- Dairy Cattle Paraders – Kimberley Simmons, Southern District
- Beef Cattle Judging – Lisa Bonenkamp, Southern District
- Beef Cattle Paraders – Cara Doggett, Western District
- Merino Fleece Judging – Sophie Ridd, Western District
- Sheep Judging - Caitlin Rhodes, Central District

Congratulations to all involved and thanks to Oxford A&P Association for hosting the competition.

### **RAS Rural Ambassador**

Once again our finalist was unable to compete in either 2020 or 2021 however, in anticipation of more positive times, the competition to seek a finalist for 2022 is underway. Currently the Districts are conducting interviews and the finalists will come through to RAS Conference.

### **RAS Conference**

Conference is scheduled for 19/20 June in Wellington at the James Cook Hotel. All conference information – programme, registration form, delegate form and online accommodation booking service can be found at the following link - <https://www.ras.org.nz/about-ras/ras-conference/>

### **General**

Our thoughts go out to those committees and volunteers that have had to cancel their shows. Half a dozen shows got caught at the beginning of the COVID outbreak (March 2020) and due to the re-occurring outbreaks some shows had to make the heart-breaking decision to not run a show due to the uncertainty and potential financial implications. The most recent outbreak in February 2021 caused the cancellation of several more shows at the last minute when all of the hard work had been done. While times remain uncertain, there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccination programme being rolled out and the tentative first steps in creating a travel bubble with Australia.

Remember to spread the word about the Show Connect electronic newsletter. If people wish to subscribe, please contact Debbie Cameron, [debbie@ras.org.nz](mailto:debbie@ras.org.nz)

## **NORTHERN DISTRICT CHAIR & EQUESTRIAN CHAIR'S REPORT.**

In February 2020, the Northern District Council experienced difficulties resulting in some temporary changes. Those changes were the appointment of Stephanie Gowing as District Manager, and a new Chairperson who soon after resigned. Later I was co-opted onto the Council and elected as their Chairperson. Both appointments were interim until May 2020, when a new Chairperson would be elected, and a District Manager appointed.

But then COVID-19 struck. What was to be an assignment for a couple of months suddenly stretch out to over another year as all RAS AGMs were cancelled and all current appointments were extended to the 2021 AGM.

As I have noted before, I was not directly involved in the Council as the difficulties evolved and therefore, it is not appropriate to offer commentary, other than to note a number of elected Councillors did not continue with their appointment, subsequently resigning. Much of those matters and subsequent actions were traversed in the Interim Chairperson's Notes each month.

We reviewed events and thought about how we repair the damage, and work in the future, emphasising the Council needed to work as a team and therefore internal communication should be positive and constructive.

It was also clear the role and expectations of Councillors was not well understood. Subsequently we introduced a number of changes in the hope of avoiding events of the past. In particular the Council:

- Developed a resource booklet for prospective Councillors, to provide some basic information on the tasks of the Council.
- Revamped meeting agenda to help Councillors better prepare for and productively participate in the meeting.
- Introduced a meeting evaluation against 7 factors to help improve meeting performance.
- Attempted to establish a register of Owner Member official spokespersons.
- Introduced monthly notes.
- Completed examples of what the RAS Values in action, both positive and negative, look like to help understand both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour & process.
- Offered an opportunity for those who may be interested in standing for Council to check it out by coming to meetings to have a trial run.

Unfortunately, a number of projects were a casualty of the 'road bump' with only one of significance being completed, the Youth Achiever Awards. Others have continued such as finalising the Home Industries Judging, Stewards and Competitors resource; Equestrian Judges Training and Upgrading; Equestrian Judges Newsletter and closed face book page; Rural Ambassador; District Tickets.

The following projects, A New Life After Young Farmers; Young Judges & Paraders; Owner / Member Youth Forum; Equestrian Shows Points Prize; District Supreme Photograph; and Shared Equipment, have not proceeded.

The Council considered a different model of operating, namely,

1. Be restricted to the minimum of 6 elected, the Chairperson being elected from amongst those Councillors. Co-opted members such as Equestrian Convenor(s) and Rural Ambassador would be in addition to the elected members.
2. Use the group of Owner / Member & Affiliate organisation representatives as a consulting group and to brief them and give them the opportunity to make sure the Council is aware of their views.

3. Include others who have specific strong skills and interests, with projects.

Council decided to put the case to the Owner/Members for their opinion before making any decision. Of the 5 Owner / Member responses, one skipped that question, 2 supported the proposition and 2 were opposed (12% of the Owner / Members). All up, of 19 responses, the majority of which were not Owner / Members , 58% thought it was a good idea with 42% saying 'No'.

Council also asked Owner / Members, "*Should the Council be able to use an independent meeting facilitator?*" Of the 19 responses, 68% said 'Yes' and 31% said 'No". Perhaps that is something the new Council might consider.

Stephanie Gowing was happy to be the Interim District Manager until the 2020 AGM and continued for a short time after providing support. However, she did not wish to continue for another year. I was immensely grateful for her support, advice, and practical assistance. The Council advertised for anyone interested in taking on the role but there have been no responses.

Congratulations to Cara Doggett as our Rural Ambassador. She has been a committed showie from an early age and has represented NZ well in Australia. We welcome her to the Council and look forward to her participation. We also wish her well in the finals of Rural Ambassador at conference in June.

**In conclusion:**

Thank you to the members of the District Council who have remained during the turmoil. I have been particularly grateful for your commitment and support and I wish you all the best, especially those of you who will remain.

I hope you get to see your ambitious programme of projects through, however that will of course require considerable support from the Owner / Members for whom you volunteer your time, interest, expertise and experience.

I appreciated the invitation to help and regret I could not have achieved more.

**Geoff Smith**  
**Interim Chairperson**

## **MID-NORTHERN DISTRICT CHAIR'S REPORT**

It is with pleasure that I present the 2019/20 & 2020/21 Chairman's Annual Report for the Mid-Northern District of the Royal Agricultural Society of New Zealand.

In the 2019/20 season, Doug Lineham and I attended most shows as well as most AGMs. Due to the presence of M.Bovis, some shows ran only limited dairy & beef competitions whilst others prepared and hosted on-farm competitions. This was done with great success considering the circumstances. An example of this was the Young Handler Competition held on-farm and coordinated by Waikato Purebred Jersey Club. This preliminary work allowed many competitors to show off their skills at the Morrinsville A&P Show.

Alpacas and dairy goats were present at three of our shows - these entries do seem to be increasing each year.

Equestrian classes were held at all shows. Mid-Northern District hosted a trial Equestrian Accumulator Program in the 2019/2020 season which proved successful for those shows that participated. However, due to the uncertainty of Covid-19 the following season this was not continued, but we hope that in future years it will be reintroduced.

The 2020/21 show season came with a new set of challenges, again in the form of Covid-19. Some shows operated, some did not. Some had "exhibitor only" days or were cancelled. I tried to attend as many events as possible and was very pleased to see the effort show committees made to run events for competitors, despite uncertainty that their show would actually take place. Some associations made the choice not to run this year due to the regulations regarding Covid-19; through our own experience at Morrinsville we understand how difficult the past 12 months has been on show committees. We hope that you all get the opportunity to offer full show programs next season.

Mid-Northern hosted an Equestrian Judges' Workshop and Seminar on the weekend of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July last year which was well attended. We thank Mr Alan Windle for presenting at this event and Waikato A+P for the use of their facilities.

Our financial position is not very strong and had it not been that the honorariums were donated back (\$1750.00), our balance sheet would be in a more precarious position that it is. With just 25% of show affiliation fees now coming back to the district, (and in future being paid at the end of each showing season) our finances will remain under severe pressure. This situation must be addressed if we are to progress the organisation and our business. This season concerns have been raised that information originating from the RAS about the postponed Young Handlers & Judges competition did not reach everyone who was eligible. Mid-Northern District Council seeks the cooperation of all councillors and Show Associations to ensure every eligible person is made aware of the competitions as they arise. Our district must be represented at every opportunity. From the midst of these young people will come the leaders of tomorrow.

Our current District Manager / Secretary is retiring from the position, effective from this AGM. Doug, we thank you for the time and effort that you have dedicated to this role, it has been really appreciated.

To council members who are retiring and not seeking re-election - we thank you also for your time and support.

Communication at all levels is crucial to our business and in closing I acknowledge all councillors, show associations, their committees, and hard-working members. Thank you for your good work and best wishes for the 2021-2022 showing season.

**Bruce McRobbie**

## **MID NORTHERN DISTRICT EQUESTRIAN CHAIR'S REPORT**

With our Mid-Northern Show Season at an end, this is certainly a time of reflection. First and foremost a big thank you to you all, the support you have given your committees, shows, and each other has been admirable.

Our rural community and those competitors who although they don't reside rurally have animals grazing in a rural situation, are very resilient, capable, and competent with a major dash of responsibility.

Having the decision taken away from them with regards to their animals competing is an unusual situation to say the least.

Some will have felt quite at sea, others would have felt a little anxious with a fear of the unknown. Our shows overnight can be encumbered with a political cancellation. There is no show, just like that; a horrible gaunt feeling experienced by competitors, exhibitors, administrators, and the public at large.

Covid-19 loves parties. It is a party animal and associations delivering a show at level 2, unless the show committee is able to have isolated areas with restricted numbers, is providing a vessel for coronavirus to travel at speed and in relative comfort. Covid-19 is a tricky beast and ever mutating. We have all watched as Covid-19 has become Covid-20, now Covid-21, and it is a reasonable expectation that we will have to live with it into the future. However, compared to the rest of the world we as New Zealanders have continued to show a cautious and sensible approach, thus we may count ourselves fortunate indeed.

With 4 of the 13 associations within our Mid-Northern District cancelling their shows we respect their decision to do so, and we are thrilled that the remaining 9 were able to deliver an event, albeit somewhat different to their normal pattern of delivery. Some shows welcomed more than their usual entry numbers which is always great.

Our Accumulator competition which was very well received was put on hold due to the uncertainly covid 19 brings, and the unknown number of shows who could have had to cancel.

Shows are struggling and will continue to struggle , why do we do it, because we have the focus and dedication , to unite town and country.

At the end of show day, we are weary but it's one hell of a good feeling to look around at the ground and think We did it, what can we have next year that would be a bit different.

Encouraging the young is always a challenge which is seen across all disciplines. Perhaps by having our meetings at different times ( Weekend ) not everyone can get time off work or perhaps they are self-employed , something surely we should consider.

You may feel you are contributing to the good of the community, but your boss can't see why he should pay for it and really neither should you.

Our judges' candidates and those judges wishing to upgrade will be advised of the new date in the near future.

We have decided to hold a workshop at the Cambridge RDA and are in the process of confirming a date.

With the workshop inside we are no longer weather reliant and look forward to having a great day.

Throughout the season we have had our ups and downs and as we all know pleasing everybody is impossible, we ask if you have a query come and talk it over .

We learn from each other and we never stop learning.

At present the Rural Ambassador search is on , finding candidates with the social skills and attributes willing to enter is always a challenge, our young are always so very busy and involved in their everyday life.

Our young are talented and far-seeing people with a focus that not everyone has , we need them more than they need us.

Looking forward to the 2021 to 2022 season with our usual focus , which in this case brings with it more than a little caution, we must move forwards positively.

With some shows cancelling this year, although not done without long and in-depth consideration , our communities must be able to attend without any danger of contracting our enemy covid 19.

We care for our communities , our shows and our future .

**Louellen Davies**

## **EASTERN DISTRICT CHAIR & EQUESTRIAN CHAIR'S REPORT**

Well, what a year 2020 turned out to be for everyone, and the A&P movement certainly did not go unaffected by COVID.

Thank you to all the Eastern District movements who managed to run under the trying times and uncertainty of COVID.

Unfortunately, the show piece of the Royal Agricultural Society calendar, the Royal Show, which was to be held at Hawkes Bay once again, had to be dropped, due to the uncertain times of COVID. Hawkes Bay managed to run a revised schedule of classes, which was a great success, even with the dropping of the Showing section of the Equestrian and running just the ESNZ Show Jumping sections which featured the World Cup. Along with some of the Livestock showing sections also not taking place. The side show entertainment was held outside the grounds, in a fenced off area, with the carnival running for 4 days, with night shows as well, proved to be very successful, and this was very well patronized drawing in big crowds.

In conjunction with the Royal Show, Hawkes Bay was also hosting the Australasian Junior Judging Grand Finals. This was the winners of all the six Australian States and the New Zealand, winners of Dairy Stock Judging, Beef Stock Judging, Sheep Stock Judging, Fleece, and Handlers. Unfortunately, Australia, decided to pull the pin on the event with the uncertainty again of COVID. This was really disappointing as a lot of planning had gone into to event, and we only get to host this event every seven years.

Pukahu Show was cancelled due to the COVID restrictions place on them, which was really frustrating as this is the first Show of the new season.

Poverty Bay ran to their full schedule and once again had a wonderful show, this is a great show to set the ball rolling for the season with the cancellation of Pukahu.

Wairarapa A&P Show, ran on just an Equestrian schedule, this year. Thank you to Catherine Lord who was the Eastern Manager, however Catherine decided to resign from her position and continue to work for the A&P, running the Wairarapa equestrian section.

Central Hawkes Bay ran their full schedule of events without any COVID restrictions taking effect on their show.

NZ National Horse and Pony Show, ran at the Hawkes Bay Showgrounds in January, with the uncertain times of COVID, they did decide to push on with the show, and had record numbers of entries, and having brought in a In Hand Day, and Working Hunter, pushing the Show out to four days, was a huge effort by the committee.

Dannevirke Show ran a full schedule, with really good numbers in the Beef / Dairy sections, and the Shearing was really strong, the equestrian was well supported once again, and the Sunday Showing section was again well supported which was very pleasing.

Masterton A&P Show changed format this year with the actual A&P side (Agricultural and Pastoral) being dropped, the Equestrian Showing section retaining the Masterton Show weekend, now running under the name Masterton Show Champs. A new committee came together to run this section. The Show Jumping has moved to another weekend. Masterton dropped the livestock side. This would have been a decision not made lightly by the committee.

Viv Aplin and I once again ran a fundraiser "Equestrian Market Day" for Eastern District at the Hawkes Bay A&P Show grounds last August. We raised around \$880 for the Eastern account. Thank you to Sally at Hawkes Bay for the use of the Exhibition Hall, as a donation to our fundraiser. This year we are booking in for the 1<sup>st</sup> August which is a Sunday. So, RAS Gazette 2021 – Appendix 1

mark this on your calendar as a must do for the beginning of the season to get any bits which you or your children may need. There are new and second-hand riding gear being sold, and also all sorts of other goodies, horse and non-horse. Stall holders travel from as far away as Auckland, and Wellington.

Along with this fundraiser I have also asked each Eastern Association for a donation to help keep Eastern on the right side of the balance. This year I asked for \$50.00 plus GST, which was back on the previous year where I asked for \$200.00 plus GST. I just felt with the uncertainty of COVID this was fair. But none the less very gratefully received, so thank you. I had said that the donated money would go towards a Stewards Training day which was in the pipeline, but once again our mate COVID took its toll on this day.

Eastern Districts Junior Stock Judging Convenor Position has been taken over by Hamish Grant. This position had been filled by Sue Crawshaw for over 10 years, where Sue had taken teams to compete at events around New Zealand and in Australia. I would like to thank Sue for all her time and enthusiasm and her passion to this role as Junior Stock Judging Convenor.

Eastern is sending a team of four to the Junior Stock Judging and Junior Stock Handlers Finals in April this year. The Finals to be held at the Oxford A&P Show at Easter weekend. Eastern will make a contribution to the team for some of their travel costs. Our team is Lauren Knauf (Wairoa/Gisborne), Niamh Barnett (Dannevirke), Lucy Collin (Tiraumea), Jessica Guy (Manawatu).

We are approaching conference time again, which this year will be held in Wellington, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June, with the AGM Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June, 10.50 am.

The Rural Ambassador nominations are now open, registrations close 31st March. If you feel you have a young person in your area who is worthy of representing Eastern, the nomination forms are available from the head office, CEO. [debbie@ras.org.nz](mailto:debbie@ras.org.nz)

There are several positions which have become vacant at National level,

\*National Measuring Convenor,

\*National Judge's Convenor,

\*Equestrian Breed Chairperson,

Job descriptions are available at the following link <https://www.ras.org.nz/about-ras/nz-ras-job-descriptions/>, nominations close for these positions 15 March 2021 if you feel you have the skill set to offer to these positions.

We have Emma Pollitt, from Gisborne, standing for Rural Ambassador. Emma is a Stud Stock Agent for PGG Wrightsons, and she also runs her own Shropshire Sheep Stud. We look forward to and would welcome any other nominations.

Eastern Districts lost our Equestrian Judges Convenor, with the resignation of Christine Rowe. I would like to thank Christine for her years of work which she contributed to Eastern. We will need to fill the vacant position if you would be interested. The Western Judges Convenor Megan Hawkins stepped into the Eastern role as well as covering her Western position. I wish to thank Megan for her support shown to Eastern. I am sure Megan would be more than happy to explain what is involved in the role.

Eastern and Western, ran a very successful, education wise, and numbers wise, Judge's seminar at the Dannevirke Showgrounds. Everyone took part in robust conversations, and an entertaining quiz team event, which was organised by Janice Macdonald. We had 44 people register, thank you to those who were able to support this day.

New judges, anyone who would be interested in becoming a Judge or upgrading we will be running more Judge's seminar's later in the year. This will be advertised on the Eastern Facebook page.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Alan Windle the outgoing Equestrian Breed Chairperson. Your time was invaluable in this role and I enjoyed working with you.

I would like to welcome Tina Sergeant, into the role of Eastern Manager(secretary) with the resignation of Catherine Lord, Tina brings a young boost of energy to Eastern, and you may have already noticed all her work on our new and updated Eastern Facebook Page.

Thank you to the Eastern team who manage the Eastern Measuring stands and give up your time to measure all the intending animals for the up-and-coming season.

Thank you to our Vice President, Emma Pollitt, wish you all the best with the Rural Ambassador finals.

I hope this finds you all well, and if you would be interested in a zoom meeting before the AGM, (date still to be finalised), I am more than happy to organise this to discuss anything from this report, just email me, and I will get Debbie to sort the zoom meeting.

**Wendy Collin**

## **WESTERN DISTRICT CHAIR & EQUESTRIAN CHAIR'S REPORT**

It is my pleasure to present the 2019-2021 Chairpersons Report for Western Districts. What a roller coaster the last year has been.

The WDC has been fortunate that all Shows have been able to operate – some at a lesser degree during the COVID pandemic.

Stratford held a very successful Royal Event in the dairy cattle, beef cattle and pig sections. The RAS NZ Champion Cow was also awarded at this Show. Although the weather was inclement on the Sunday they drew a huge crowd on the Saturday. Stratford is also in the process of extending their grounds to involve more community groups and sports so the grounds will become a community hub. Horowhenua held a Royal Event in the Sheep and Home Industries sections. The sheep exhibitors presented a trophy to Gilbert Timms for 60 years involvement in the sheep section. A fitting tribute to Gilbert who has been a stalwart of the A & P movement. The Home Industries attracted over 900 entries and is a growing section for this Show. The rest of the WDC Shows all had successful events.

It was pleasing to have three WDC Young Handlers competing at National level in judging and handling at the Oxford Show. Holly, Cara and Sophie all gained excellent results and have all qualified in a class to compete in Australia in 2022 – Covid permitting. Well done ladies you did Western Districts proud.

Although meetings have been fewer due to Covid, we have found that moving them around the District has been more beneficial.

Thanks to Alan Windle who retired from the WDC Tutor Judges position. Alan has served the WDC well in this capacity over a number of years and was awarded an RAS Medal of Excellence at our recent meeting. Thanks to Megan Hawkins who has taken up this position.

We held a successful Administrators Workshop at Hawera in September 2019 and are planning another one at Feilding in mid June. This is a chance for Show Managers and Presidents to exchange ideas and is beneficial to all Associations.

Thanks to Mary Davis for her efforts as Secretary and to all Councillors and delegates for their support over the past two years.

**Trevor Latimer**

## **CENTRAL DISTRICT CHAIR'S REPORT**

It is with pleasure that I present the 2019/2020/2021 Chairman's Report for the Central District Council of the Royal Agricultural Society of New Zealand. At this point I would like to acknowledge and remember those members of our district that have passed away over the last two years. The contribution they have made to our district and the A&P Associations is much appreciated and our condolences to their families.

What a very strange two years, I came to this position two years ago while travelling around the UK never thinking that what eventuated could even happen. The spring showing season of 2019 started and finished without incident and then things started to go a little off the rails. The first half of the 2020 autumn shows went ahead and then things came to a grinding halt. I remember the emails coming through with the common theme of "cancelled". Though half of the 2020 autumn shows were cancelled the other half were held prior to "lock down". The 2020 spring shows were similarly affected with Ellesmere, Northern, Ashburton, Marlborough and South Westland all cancelled and Canterbury and Motueka going ahead in a limited format. As I write this this season's autumn shows look as though they will all go ahead but recent outbreaks in Auckland means that nothing is guaranteed in this "COVID" world. Congratulations to those shows that have been able to be held over the last two years, you were the lucky ones and to those whose shows were cancelled I hope that this year will make up for that disruption and the financial ramifications have not caused too many headaches.

While on the subject of cancellations the following joined the list: the 2020 ewe hogget competition, the 2020 and 2021 Golden Fleece competition, the 2020 RAS conference and the 2020 Central Districts AGM.

However, there is some positive things that have happened over the two years. I am thrilled to report that Central District Rural Ambassador finalist Marie Timperley took out the National final in New Plymouth in 2019, against the 5 other strong District finalists. Marie had a 20-minute interview with a panel of 3 Judges, then had her presentation speech in front of 80+ RAS members at the evening dinner. Congratulations to Marie, and we look forward to supporting her at the Australasian final where she will compete against Australia's 6 state finalists. Again – thank you to Harcourts for your support with our District Rural Ambassador over the last few years.

In May 2019 the RAS Golden Fleece awards were held at the showgrounds in Rangiora, two Central District competitors deserve our congratulations. Glenmore Station run by Will Murray, and wife Emily won the Supreme Champion fine wool fleece. They are the fourth generation of Murrays to run the station, and includes about 7000 merino sheep, some cattle and some deer. The Black & Coloured Supreme Champion Fleece was won by Leo and Karen Ponsonby who also own Green Acres Fibre Processing at Rolleston.

There was also good news from the Stratford Show which ran a Royal Event for the Dairy section and The Royal Event Supreme All Breeds New Zealand Champion cow was won by 6- year-old Ayrshire Pukekaraka Elle Delilah owned by the Gilbert Family from Mid-Canterbury. The family received the K. Hinton Memorial Trophy and \$2500. Congratulations to Peter and family.

The Tri-Nations Competition that was to be held in Australia this year will now not be held due to travel constraints – hopefully it will now be held in Canberra in 2021 but that may well change. NZ is to host the competition in 2022.

Thank you to Sandra Pilcher our Judges Convenor and her team of Tutor Judges for the work they have done over the last two years. It has been a frustrating time, but I can see a lot has been done. I am sure Sandra's report to the Equestrian meeting will cover all that has been achieved by her and her team.

Thank you to my councillors and the work that you have all done in challenging times. I know there are challenges in some areas but I'm sure collectively we can overcome them.

Over the last two years we have farewelled two councillors – Nick Gilbert and Phillippa Sommerville. Thank you both very much for your contribution and we look forward to having you both back when you feel the time is right. We have also welcomed to new members to Council – Paula Mcilraith from Leeston and Penni Loffhagen from Hawarden. Paula joined Council in August 2019 and Penni in November 2020.

A huge thank you to Philip Worthington my vice-chair who has had to stand in for me on numerous occasions, your assistance and wise council has been very much appreciated.

Council would cease to function if it were not for Christine Roberts our District Manager. Thank you Christine for your sterling work over the last two years you have been a pleasure to work alongside. Your advice and knowledge have made my job very much easier because of that.

In conclusion let's hope that normality will return and that last year's problems with COVID will be a distant memory. I think there are challenges ahead but with the vaccination program under way the 2021/22 showing season hopefully will cause no further disruptions.

**Sam Rutherford**

## CENTRAL DISTRICT EQUESTRIAN CHAIR'S REPORT

What an interesting time we have had in the past 2 years due to Covid. Time spent in lockdown and the majority of our Autumn shows cancelled. With the uncertainty caused by Covid, a number of our Spring shows were also put in the position of deciding whether to take the risk or to cancel.

Our Central Districts and the Royal Agricultural Society Annual General Meetings were also put on hold for 2020.

It appears that some of the Central District shows have showed initiative in diversity, Cheviot held an Equestrian event that was a HOY Qualifier, this was an excellent opportunity for competitors to compete and try to qualify. The event was well organised and well patronised.

NZ Agricultural show adapted their equestrian events to enable competition on the usual show week, this show was not to open to the public due to Covid restrictions.

Ellesmere show was to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> and after much planning over a long period of time the very difficult decision to cancel the show was made by the Committee.

I think that Covid may be with us for some time and so it is important that we can adapt to suite the current situation – this is now the “new normal”.

It is not just Covid that is impacting our member shows, Westland A&P (Hokitika) are fighting to keep their grounds, currently the show is held at the Racecourse. However due to the Massara Report and the ensuing closure/amalgamation of clubs, the Hokitika track will no longer be used and Hokitika will now race at Omoto.

It has been identified that rule EEFSL 7.ix, J25 and ER8 Definition of terms a) and e) are causing a number of issues for Judges and Shows, these ambiguous rules need to be addressed and the RAS CEO has assured me that this has been noted and will be addressed. We have a very small pool of Judges and without clarity as to the intent of the Rule and without clarity regarding the Definition of “employed” and “party to a contractual and/or verbal agreement” it can and has caused issues.

What does constitute a business in the context of this Rule?????

There also appears to be some confusion around Rule J11, and about transport to a show or an event.

The Rule actually states “A Judge at a show/event shall not transport horses or competitors to the show/event in the Section that they are appointed to Judge. It appears that people are not reading this Rule in full and only taking in the first portion.

To be honest who in their right mind would even do that – it would be on Facebook before you had even finished parking!

Judges appear to be the target of the moment and these Rules or the interpretation of them by Judges, Exhibitors and Officials contribute to the integrity of Judges being questioned. Some Judges have decided that for the sake of self-preservation that they will not place themselves out in the ring anymore and that a bottle of wine or fuel vouchers and in one case in particular, nothing, is really not worth the angst.

I have noted conversations around the ring that in 1 or 2 Equestrian Sections in our District that there does seem to be animosity between competitors, not just competitiveness, it appears contestants are working in liaison, just waiting for an opportunity to place a protest regarding another competitor or a Judge, at one show a Judge removed themselves from the ring as they were aware of these behaviours and did not want to be party to any protest.

There has also been concern that people are misusing their Height Certificates and actually using them for a horse that has not actually been measured. This concern has not come to the RAS as a formal complaint, unless a concern is put in writing to us it is just hearsay and

nothing that we can act upon. Maybe we are nearing the time that our Height Certificates do have a photo of the animal that the document pertains to, this would help stewards who probably only check height certificates once a year.

We as judges and officials do need to remember that we have the card system and we need to use it, the best way to stop these behaviours are to make an example of these people. Also remember that there is a process for complaints, on the day is preferable, however is not the only option.

Hopefully we will have an awesome 2021/2022 show season, with great camaraderie, great sportsmanship, stunning stock and us all playing our part in growing the A&P Movement.

Enjoy winter, rest up and get ready for the next show season.

**Diane Chesmar**

## **SOUTHERN DISTRICT CHAIR'S REPORT**

I have pleasure in presenting this report for the Southern District of the Royal Agricultural Society for the 2020/21 Show season.

COVID has been the major issue facing the whole of New Zealand this year. While we in the South have been somewhat insulated as we are mostly an agricultural based region, we have been able to “keep calm and carry on farming”. A&Ps have had to hope for the best and plan for the worst. This was one of the reasons Southern Districts RAS paid the RAS levy due for all Southern Shows. We wanted to show our support for people that have supported us.

While they started off cautiously, all A&Ps in the Southern District were having very successful shows. Many had increased entries, with dairy sections returning to some shows, equestrian entries up at most shows and higher gate takings being reported. We were thinking there may be an upside to this COVID but, near the end of February, Maniototo A&P was forced to cancel their show with very little notice as the country underwent a change of alert level. Southland A&P were also forced to follow suit. We were all so disappointed for these shows and their volunteers. When I talked to Janine Smith, the secretary for Maniototo, she said the support they had received from the community had been fantastic and she felt their show would not suffer unduly because of the cancellation. I feel this continued support of our local communities for our A&P shows is something we should be proud of in the South.

The Southern District RAS was very busy this season, with many Councillors involved in running competitions to encourage participation at shows and in agriculture in general. They will all present their own reports, but I would like to thank Rob Hall our Treasurer, and Youth section Convenor. He held the Judging Competition at his place, organised the A&P Accumulator Competition for Beef and Dairy, as well as the Rural Ambassador Competition. Thank you to Merv Livingstone who got the Dairy Heifer Competition up and running again, we were the only district in New Zealand to hold this, so well done.

Ian Tippett, our Equestrian Chair, keeps the Equestrian Section in order, keeping up with the rules and regulations, and always able to answer any queries.

Kristine Russell, our Equestrian Tutor Judges Convenor, has been busy holding seminars and exams. The equestrian section benefits greatly by having new judges coming through as without a judge we can't have a competition.

Thank you to all my other Councillors who I liken to COVID “essential workers” – necessary to get the job done.

I would like to extend my thanks to Ruth Stiven who was our Area Manager for many years. Ruth stepped up to help when no-one else would. She has been a delight to work with and I am pleased that she is staying on as a Councillor (golf permitting). Thank you also to Maria Barta for bridging the gap between Ruth and our new Area Manager Kirsten Kean. I hope Kirsten will enjoy her new role.

An opportunity COVID presented us with was the RAS Judging and Handling finals being held at Oxford Show. I travelled up to be with our representatives and it was probably the highlight of my year. I was so impressed and proud of our team. Many of their parents were

also able to be there so we had a good representation from the south and came away with two winners who Rob will announce. Thank you to all the competitors, their support teams, the Oxford Show and the RAS for organising this event.

At our Council meetings we often come with a sense of frustration at the lack of forward movement by the RAS. We seem to be stuck in a pattern of venting those frustrations but not putting forward any answers to the problems we see. These answers need to come from us, from the grass roots, but they need to be acted on by the RAS Executive. If someone asked me why am I involved with the RAS my response would be – to help A&P Shows, to help the competitors at these shows, to encourage breeders of livestock and promote agriculture in all forms. That is what I can give to the RAS, but what I get out of it, is being part of the RAS community and I stress the word “community”. I have met people from all over New Zealand, from all walks of life, made many friendships and gained so much knowledge. As Councillors I feel we are the voice of this RAS community. I just hope this voice is heard. I hope the report from Steve Bramley helps to bring the RAS together to move forward in a positive way, not just with words but with actions.

**Jackie Kelly**

## **SOUTHERN DISTRICT EQUESTRIAN CHAIR'S REPORT**

The equestrian sections at our southern shows are still being reasonably well supported. We have in our district a lot of very supportive and willing volunteers who help make this happen. Our Tutor Judges group is doing a fantastic job in helping to train judges, up-skilling our newer judges, and helping shows find and co-ordinate judges. We thank the group very much for the time and effort it puts into our organisation.

This report covers two seasons and how difficult it has been. In this last season of 2020-21 nobody knew what the future would hold, to the point where some shows had to cancel, and this put a lot of strain on committees and their finances. We hope we will all continue to work together and support them.

We have had problems in the classing sections, with some competitors trying to use either one rider and two ponies, or two riders and one pony over different sections. We want to encourage as many entries as possible, but not to the extent where people are holding up the program as this can have a ripple effect across the rest of the show. We did take action to rectify this at the end of the 2019-20 season and have since had very few problems.

During the “ins and outs” of COVID, Bert Bell passed away. Bert was Chairman of this committee and a Councillor at Southern District for a number of years. He spent a lifetime involved with horse events over many codes — rodeo, harness, showing classes, and stud breeding to name a few. He was a very valued member of many organisations and takes with him a great store of knowledge. Our thoughts are with his family.

Finally, may all our exhibitors and A&P societies have a successful future in these uncertain times.

**Ian Tippett**