Welcome Back to The 2016 School Year …
I certainly hope each of you found some time to relax and recharge your batteries during the summer break. A small group of Tassie Ag Educators chose to dedicate some of this break time to Ag Ed by attending the NAAE National Conference in Western Australia. A snapshot of their experience is included in this issue.

A big congratulations to Tassie’s very own John Lehman on being elected NAAE Vice-President. Alysia Keupert from WA was elected President. I’m sure both John and Alysia will be keen to ‘re-ignite’ the Tasmanian chapter of the NAAE!

There is much to be positive and excited about in the world of Agricultural Education in Tassie (and nationally) at the moment, and I look forward to sharing developments with you throughout the year. I also very much look forward to sharing all your innovative initiatives that drive the fantastic range of Ag Ed activity in schools around Tasmania.

Andrew Harris

Lilydale Students Move to Plan Bee!
Mrs Laura Wordsworth from Lilydale Landcare came to talk to Ag students about bees. We have been researching and observing bees and noticed that there weren’t many around. We were extremely interested in the talk Mrs Wordsworth gave. What an amazing creature! Lilydale Landcare have a Plan Bee, to help bees worldwide. The bees are in trouble and here in Australia we are able to produce healthy bees. Bees are essential for crops and without them there would be very little food. We help at school by planting flowering plants and learning about bees.

- written By Lilydale District High Grade 5/6 students
Scottsdale School Farm Is Growing!

The media release below was distributed late last year and is an exciting announcement and opportunity for Agricultural Education at Scottsdale High School.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is a big supporter of school farms and is pleased to support further growth, expansion and enterprise at the Scottsdale High School farm site.

Over recent months the Treasurer Peter Gutwein, Minister for Health Michael Ferguson and Minister for Education and Training Jeremy Rockliff have been working to deliver new land to the school.

“It was evident that a parcel of land on the Scottsdale rural hospital site wasn't being used by the hospital, and could actually benefit students at the adjacent school farm,” Mr Ferguson said.

“Since, we have been working together across portfolios to ensure this land could be put to better use and benefit more Tasmanians.”

The Treasurer Peter Gutwein said this was a good outcome. “The Farm Board has limited funds available for things such as acquiring land,” he said. “It was obvious that by taking a common-sense approach and transferring the land from Health to Education this would be a win-win.”

The Education Minister Jeremy Rockliff said this would create great opportunities for the local community.

“School farms help to bridge the gap between rural and urban Tasmania by providing a valuable hands-on learning experience,” he said.

“This additional land will allow students at Scottsdale High School to expand their farming enterprises and in-turn their knowledge.”

Scottsdale High School Principal Natalie Odgers welcomed the announcement. “This is a great outcome for the school and in particular for our farm, which is highly valued,” she said.

“This will help us grow the various school farm programs we run that engage many of our students

Update From PIEFA

The Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia is the national peak body for education on food and fibre. Early last year, Kelly Spence commenced work as the education officer with PIEFA. One of her roles is to promote the 17 resources (17 written units and accompanying videos) released in May last year. If you haven’t seen them check them out here: www.piefa.edu.au/units. An excellent way to embed Ag Ed into your school curriculum.

Recently Kelly has been in WA filming for the new resources to be released this year on water technology and production, increasing crop yields and a fantastic resource on probability for year 10 maths students.

Getting the latest information is easy. Sign up to receive the PIEFA monthly email (www.piefa.edu.au). If you would like more information, email PIEFA ceo@piefa.edu.au.
You may also like to LIKE us on Facebook (PIEFAus).
In January three Tasmanians - John Lehman, Liam Fox and myself - travelled to Western Australia to attend the biannual National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) conference. This conference brings together teachers of agriculture and those involved in agricultural education nationwide with an emphasis on networking, sharing and exploring agriculture. The conference was interrupted by the fires south of Perth and organisers transferred the initial location from Harvey Agricultural College to Muresk, which did affect some of the planned program.

Attendees met up on Sunday morning to visit either a mushroom or salad farm before travelling to Muresk. Day two keynote address by Hon Terry Redman MLA looked at the range of opportunities in Australian agriculture before Geoff Moyle described Agricultural Education in WA and the amazing college network (year 10, 11 & 12) on commercial properties. Gary Cass intertwined science and wine to demonstrate creative thinking in agriculture. Afternoon workshops covered bees, grain, noodles and GMOs.

On Day Three the conference moved to Denmark Agricultural College in the south of the state. Morning tea was at Narrogin Agricultural College with a tour of facilities. With four other colleges these properties are run as commercial farms with profits pooled and redistributed to the colleges and other schools running agricultural programs. This allows strong agricultural education and preparation of students for a variety of careers.

We were extremely fortunate to visit Katie Joy’s Free Range Eggs production facility which houses 6000 chooks and is run by the very dynamic Kate Mason at Kojonup. Kate was Kondinin Egg Farmer of the Year 2015. On the same property, Kate’s husband, Rhyce, runs biodynamic steam rolled oats and seed cleaning operation.

Wednesday saw John Stanley speak about stories and experiences in Food Tourism and a brain ambulance session titled “Keeping sane in the work place”. Afternoon sessions were selected from a variety of speakers covering the Technologies in the Australian Curriculum, Beef eating quality, Future farming 2050, Biosecurity, Barbervax for sheep worm control, origin of significant agricultural plants and engineering solutions for profitable agriculture. Afternoon workshops were followed by a farm tour or drinks at Ocean beach.

Day five was the biannual meeting of the NAAE which saw the election of new office bearers. John Lehman was voted Vice President. Congratulations John. Speakers who run alternative enterprises followed and we learnt about honey, deer, yabbies and alpaca businesses. The afternoon saw a choice of adventures: either visiting Albany’s Anzac centre or heading in the opposite direction to the Valley of the Giants and Greens pool, prior to the conference dinner.

Friday saw the parting of the ways with many people returning to Perth via the buses or flying out of Albany.

The conference highlight was meeting Ag teachers and people involved with agricultural education from around Australia. Many industries were represented and teachers ranged from newbies to those who have been there forever. There was amazing collegiality and it was fantastic to hear what others are doing in the classroom and on their farms which vary extremely in size and enterprises. The passion for Agricultural Education seeped through all aspects.

Tasmania has been invited to hold the next biannual conference in January 2018. Participants are very keen to visit Tasmania and explore the experiences we have to offer. To do this we need to form a committee to run the conference and are looking at re-establishing the Tasmanian Association of Agricultural Education. Anyone interested in coming on board please contact John Lehman (john.lehman@education.tas.gov.au).
OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP FARM BIOSECURITY ACTIVITIES

The Livestock Biosecurity Network (LBN) is an industry funded organisation that can assist agriculture teachers improve students’ awareness and understanding of farm biosecurity. Farm biosecurity is a set of measures designed to protect a property from the entry and spread of pests, diseases and weeds. Farm biosecurity is the responsibility of every person visiting or working on a farm.

LBN has been assisting schools carry out biosecurity activities, including students developing biosecurity plans for school farms, across Queensland and Western Australia, and is looking to assist similarly across Tasmania.

Dr Jess Coad is Tasmania’s regional manager for LBN. Jess is a past Yolla District High School student and was a member of their cattle handling team. She is keen to learn from you what you think could be developed into lesson plans for students.

The farm biosecurity planner is a good resource that covers the various aspects of farm biosecurity (http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Farm-Biosecurity-Action-Planner.pdf). Jess invites you to take a look at the planner and contact her if you are interested in assisting her develop lesson plans for agriculture teachers across Tasmania. Plans could be as basic as students understanding why it’s important to shut gates, through to students developing a biosecurity plan for their school farm. Once lesson plans are developed, LBN can offer packages of materials, for example, farm gate biosecurity signs, worm egg count kits, and ‘is it fit to load’ booklets, to aid teachers.

In the next Tas Ag Ed Network newsletter Jess will provide a brief overview of an exercise she uses to demonstrate how pests or diseases can be spread without any visible signs when a sheep strays or is placed into a flock.

Jess can be contacted on 0488 400 209 or jrcoad@lbn.org.au. You can find out more about LBN at www.lbn.org.au.

Newsletter Item Guidelines

- 60-80 words for the body of the newsletter - blurb (plus a photo – optional)
- Links to further information can be made available, so send supporting documents.
- Deadline for entries will be the Monday of weeks 4 and 9 each term.
- The distribution list will include members of the Ag Ed network plus key supporters, sponsors and any others interested as we grow.

You are most welcome to help grow the list by suggesting or forwarding to new recipients

Remember to visit www.casas.tas.edu.au to become familiar with our emerging Fronter room