

A Report on the
AMIC 2009 MEAT INDUSTRY CONFERENCE
Held on 24-25 September 2009, Sheraton Mirage Resort, Gold Coast

Despite the more austere economic climate, the AMIC 2009 Meat Industry Conference was a great success and was well supported by Government and industry. All feedback received to-date remains very positive. Some of the major details were:-

◆ **OFFICIAL GUESTS**

- **Senator Glenn Sterle**, Labour WA, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport, attended the **Welcome Event** on the Thursday evening and officially opened the Conference on Friday morning. His keen interest in and passion for the transport, agriculture and rural industries was clear, given his background with the long distance transport industry in Western Australia. He has had direct involvement in issues such as the return to full cost-recovery of AQIS Certification Charges, lamb definition issues, the meat marketing review, etc. We thank Senator Sterle for his presence.
- **Queensland Minister for Primary Industries Fisheries & Rural & Regional Qld, Tim Mulherin MP** – The Minister was guest speaker at the **Conference Lunch** and spoke of the Qld Government's initiatives in a number of areas in support of Qld agriculture and in recognition of the beef industry's contribution to the state GNP. Minister Mulherin is a great supporter of the Qld beef industry and we thank him for his presence.

◆ **MEDIA**

The ABC Country Hour went live from the Conference on Friday 25 September. Interviews were done with Steve Kay (Editor, US Cattle Buyers Weekly), Richard Brown (Gira Consulting), Rod Fraser (National Australia Bank), Stephen Martyn (Australian Meat Industry Council) and Michelle Edge (Victorian Department of Agriculture). Rural Press were also present.

◆ **CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP**

24 sponsors supported the AMIC Conference with Maersk Australia, Hamburg Süd, the Australian Meat Processor Corporation, Rabobank and National Australia Bank our 5 premier sponsors. Other sponsors included:- AMCOR, ANZ, Grand West, Visy Packaging, Food Packaging Equipment (FPE), Lumley Insurance, Marfret Compagnie Maritime, Port of Brisbane, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, Cryovac Sealed Air Corporation, DAFF, Wiley, AWX Agribusiness, SignalDemand, Sydney Ports, Sheraton Mirage Resort, Gold Coast, Wirra Wirra and Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

◆ **TRADE EXHIBITION**

The Trade Exhibition was fully booked with all 23 booths taken up. Unofficial winner of the best at show was the Cedar Creek display with rotating plastic carcasses, demonstrating the operation of a number of their digital recording systems. A visiting Japanese tourist coming out of the elevator nearby mistook these as an actual slaughter chain in operation and started yelling at the top of her voice. It needed AMIC Conference staff to convince her that the carcasses were only plastic!

◆ **REGISTERED CONFEREES**

We registered 290 Conferees for the Conference, slightly down on last year but very representative of the whole industry. A copy of the official attendance list is on the website. Around 5% registered on the first day of the Conference and therefore missed the printed list.

◆ **INDUSTRY AWARDS**

- **Maersk Distinguished Australian of the Year** Award – David Larkin (Atron Enterprises);
- **Maersk/MLA Future Industry Leaders** Award – Tim Davis (Swift International);
- **Cryovac Young Achievers** Award – Beau Taylor (Cargill);
- **AMPC Innovation** Awards – Teys Brothers (Gold); Peel Valley Exporters (Silver); Northern Co-operative Meat Co (Bronze)
- **Golf Tournament** - The National Australia Bank sponsored Golf Tournament was won by Richard Rains (Sanger Australia); Rick Landis (Keystone Foods); Conrad Strahorn (Dunnett & Johnson) and David Brett (NAB).
- **Fishing Tournament** sponsored by Wiley – The biggest fish was won by Jack Didyk (Australian Meat & By Products).
- **Industry Recognition Awards** – Two Industry Recognition Awards were presented during the Conference Gala Dinner.
 - **Dick Adams** – Sealed Air Cryovac – Dick Adams retired last year after almost 40 years in the meat business with a very early involvement in the vacuum packaged chilled business to Japan. Dick has been a great supporter of the industry, of AMIC and the Conference and received this special award in recognition of his great service to the industry and the AMIC Conference.
 - **Ross Keane**, Director and Livestock Manager – Swift Australia – Ross recently retired after 20 years with Swift Australia. Ross was an active member of AMEFC, AMC Ltd and AMIC's Livestock Committee. Geoff Teys, Chairman

of AMIC's Livestock Committee was called to the stage to present to Ross the special award in recognition of his contribution to industry on a range of livestock and animal transport issues.

◆ **PRESENTATIONS**

- **Richard Brown** (Principal, Gira Research & Consultancy, Paris France). The Keynote Speaker was sponsored by Rabobank. Richard spoke on measuring the impact of recent changes and crises on world meat markets into the next decade. The detail Richard had at his disposal would have taken twice as long as the 40 minutes allocated. He provided supply and demand forecasts of beef and sheepmeat and some coverage of the short-term demand downturn and the longer term issues and outlook. He particularly looked at the EU and Russia. While time on the day was his enemy, the demand for a copy of his presentation has been substantial.
- **Steve Kay** (Editor, US Cattle Buyers Weekly) spoke on "Meat Industry Under Siege", looking particularly at the significant changes in the US processing industry over the last 12 months and in particular the expansion of emerging global processing giants out of South America and their impact on the US industry. Steve's presentation was particularly well received and again the demand for copies has been significant.
- **Mohammad Koochmaraie** (CEO, Meat Division, IEH Laboratories USA) is a world-renowned meat scientist and his presentation on the control of *E. coli* O157:H7 in the American system was excellent. His command on this issue is unchallenged.
- **Rob Delane** (Deputy Secretary, DAFF) – the issue of a return to full cost-recovery for AQIS Export Certification Charges led to the establishment of a Ministerial Taskforce between AQIS and AMIC and agreement to a meat inspection reform agenda. That reform agenda along with the funding for it was disallowed in the Federal Senate in early September. Rob spoke on the Beale Review in total, proposed changes to biosecurity arrangements and to the need to continue to push for the meat industry reform agenda in Australia.
- **Mick Keogh** (CEO, Australian Farm Institute) – the session on Emissions Trading & Climate Change was one of the best of the Conference. What is a complex and difficult subject was well presented by **Brian Sterland** (Deputy Secretary, Department of Climate Change) and Mick Keogh. For anyone with an interest in emissions trading and climate change and its impact on the red meat processing sector, the papers from this session will be of interest.

David Palmer (Managing Director, MLA) spoke on current MLA activities and priorities in the beef and sheepmeat industry. He was questioned on the issue of live exports from three separate processors over what they believe is an unfair playing field.

Rod Fraser (Head of Agribusiness, Treasury Management, Wholesale Banking at National Australia Bank) spoke on currency fluctuations and the difficulty in trying to forecast movements in the Australian dollar.

Clinton Alcock (Managing Director, Grand West) spoke on life without risk and the meat industry and on the issue of insurance cover. The session was sponsored by Grand West

Prof John Thompson (Professor of Meat Science, University of New England) spoke on the Beef CRC and in particular recent research on the beef genome. John has recently announced his retirement and a motion of applause to commend him for his commitment to the innovations in meat science and R&D over the last 40 years received unanimous support.

Michelle Edge (Manager, Food Safety & Security, Animal Welfare Biosecurity Victoria, DPI) helped launch AMIC's new animal welfare standard, reflecting AMIC's proactive stance on animal welfare. The new standard carried with it endorsements from major animal welfare organisations in Australia and from Dr Temple Grandin in the US, a recognised world expert who developed the current programs used by major end-users such as McDonald's and Burger King.

◆ **CONFERENCE PAPERS** – The main Conference papers are available on our website. Copies of other papers are available on request.

◆ **PHOTOS** – A selection of professional photography of all events are available on the website. For others contact the Executive.

◆ **SUMMARY** – Thank you to everyone who attended and to our sponsors, exhibitors and speakers. A special thanks also to Gary Burrige, Terry Nolan, David Larkin, Simon Quilty, Tom Maguire and Kevin Collison who gave of their time to chair various sessions.

Last but not least thanks to the members of the AMIC Processor Team for their support and effort and Lehman & Associates, our Conference co-ordinators who as always did a great job.

We hope this was a quality presentation that reflected the professionalism of the organisation and the industry. That was our objective. Any queries contact the Executive.

*Steve Martyn
National Director - Processing
Australian Meat Industry Council
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