



News in Brief

Subs and Emery Prices

Some good news resulting from the 'Global Financial Crisis' is that membership subscription fees have remained at the 2008 price of \$364 + GST. Emery Paper is still at 2007 price of \$4.00 per sheet + GST.

ShearHarvest 2010: Shearing Contracting & Wool-harvesting Conference

At last years ShearHarvest Conference it was agreed that the next Trans-Tasman shearing contractor conference would be held in New Zealand in May 2010. Preparations for this conference will soon get underway. Your job is to block out some time in your diary for May next year. Actual dates will be announced as soon as they have been confirmed by the NZSCA.

Graeme Charleson Obituary

The SCAA was saddened to learn of the passing of Graeme Charleson from Elaine in Victoria. Graeme was along time member of the Contracting community and will be missed by all. Our sympathies go out to his wife Lynne and their family.

SCAA 83rd Annual General Meeting - Saturday 23 May

The Shearing Contractors Association of Australia's will hold its 83rd AGM on Saturday 23 May 2009 at the Castlereagh Inn (169 Castlereagh St Sydney NSW (02) 9284 1000), starting at 9 am.

Agenda

Please see page over.

ANZ Shearing Safety Group Update.

Following the AGM, there will be a presentation regarding the health and safety initiatives that are being run as part of the Wool harvesting Safety Project and the recommendation of the ShearHarvest Conference.

Annual Committee Meeting

The SCAA Committee of Management will meet the evening prior to the AGM (Friday 22 May) at 5 pm on the ground floor of the Castlereagh Inn.

Annual Dinner

The annual SCAA dinner will follow the AGM and be held at venue in Sydney yet to be confirmed.

Election

The 2009 election process is underway. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) will call for nominations for the Committee of Management in the coming weeks. Those wishing to have an active role in the management of the Association should follow the procedure to nominate themselves. If the AEC receives more than 12 nominations, an election for the 12 committee positions will follow.

Constitutional changes

The SCAA is looking at making some basic changes to its constitution. The aim is to change the frequency of elections for the Committee of Management from annual elections to every 2 years. Any changes will have to be voted on by the Committee. Depending upon a decision by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) it is hoped that the vote can take place at the AGM on 23 May.

Notice of 83rd Annual General Meeting

Saturday 23 May 2009

Please be advised that the Shearing Contractors Association of Australia's 83rd AGM will be held on 23 May 2009 at the Castlereagh Inn (169 Castlereagh St Sydney NSW (02) 9284 1000), starting at 9 am.

Agenda

1. Welcome to Members - Chairman
2. Apologies
3. To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting 2008
4. Presidents report 2008
5. To receive the Treasures report and the audited Financial Report for the financial year 30 June 2008.
6. Secretary's report 2008:
7. Election
8. Subscription – setting of rate for 2009
9. Life Memberships
10. President's Honorarium – fix honorarium for 2009
11. Secretary's Remuneration – to fix the allowance for 2009
12. Industrial Report – Frank Sutherland
13. Shearer Training Update – Michael Schofield
14. SCAA SWTI: Table report by SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc
15. Meeting Agenda for 2009 – AGM (date & location) Regional Meetings or Conference
16. General Business:
 - Reappointment of Auditors
 - Prime Super – Rod Stewart
 - Other

Appendixes

- Financial statements for period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008
- Draft Financial statements for period 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2009

If you would like to add an agenda item to General Business, please contact Jason Letchford via secretary@scaa.org.au

Q Fever

Recently members have contacted the SCAA with regard to Q Fever. One member was concerned after hearing about compensation claims against employers from workers who contracted the disease while employed. The other member had a worker who had just been diagnosed with the disease. Questions were asked as to what is expected of a contractor in regard to the prevention through immunisation and what happens if a worker contracts the disease.

Below is some information with regard to its recent history, prevention and what happens if a worker is infected.

What is Q fever?

Q fever is a serious disease with approximately 600 cases notified each year in Australia. The acute illness may last 1-6 weeks and is flu-like with fever, chills, sweats, severe headache, muscle pain, cough, weakness and nausea. Though rare, complications may involve the liver, heart and bones. A small number of people may develop post Q fever fatigue syndrome which can last for a number of years.

Q fever is transmitted through infected animals' urine, milk, faeces and birth products. People become infected when they inhale contaminated droplets from these products, or by inhaling dust from contaminated materials.

Not all animals carry and transmit the disease to humans. The animals that are the main source of the disease are kangaroos, wallabies, cattle, sheep, dogs, cats and goats. Of these animals, cattle, sheep and goats are often the most significant source for human infection.

Q fever is primarily an occupational disease of workers from the meat and livestock industries. A new worker in the meat processing or livestock industry may particularly be at risk as they may not have had previous exposure to animals. Other populations at risk of infection include sheep, dairy and cattle livestock farmers, dairy workers, veterinarians, pelt and hide tanners, and shearers.

The National Q fever management program

This Program commenced in 2001 and ran in the states for varying periods but completed in 2007. The Program was a specialised screening and vaccination program that sought to reduce the burden of disease associated with Q fever. It was the first national Q fever vaccination program of its kind in the world. The Program tested workers (skin & blood) to assess previous exposure to Q fever and then vaccinated those without immunity one week later. The Program covered abattoir workers, shearers & shed staff, dairy and beef cattle farmers and their employees. The program was put under pressure in 2006 when supplies of the vaccine were limited by a production stoppage by the manufacturer (CSL). Since then the Federal Government intervened and the supply of the vaccine has been ensured.

The Program also developed the Australian Q fever register which provides general information about Q fever and stores information about the Q fever immune status of individuals.



Employers Responsibility

In 2007, a Geelong animal products processing company was fined after four workers became infected with Q fever because they had not been immunised against the debilitating condition. The company (Galpac Australia) was fined \$20,000 without conviction in the Geelong Magistrates Court after pleading guilty to two charges under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

This case highlights the fact that in the eyes of Workcover, there is a requirement for employers to ensure that workers are immunised. The SCAA is investigating ways of having the vaccine subsidised and will let you know the results as soon as available. That said, you need to be aware that these processes (obtaining money from Government departments) usually takes months. In the meantime you may want to contact the Q fever register on www.qfever.org or call 1300 733 837.

SUPER MYTHBUSTERS

Myth: I am over 55 and still working. I need to get my hands on some extra dollars but I can't access my Super.

Fact: If you are 55 and over you can supplement your income with a "transition to retirement" pension. If you are between 55 and 64 the minimum amount you can draw down is 4% of your account balance and the maximum is 10% of your account balance

Should you have any questions on Superannuation or related topics you can email them to rstewart@primesuper.com.au.

Disclaimer

This article provides general information only and may not be relied on as legal or financial advice.

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Mulesing Update

The Weekly Times newspaper reports "Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) has committed \$400,000 for the registration of the mulesing pain-relief treatment, Tri-Solfen. In a meeting with WoolProducers Australia last week, AWI chairman Wal Merriman said AWI would underwrite the research required for the registration of Bayer's Tri-Solfen and the pre-operative pain-relief chemical, Carprofen."

Currently Tri-Solfen, classed as a Schedule 4 animal health medicine, is available on a restricted permit and supplied only through veterinarians. Mr Merriman said if the product was reclassified as a Schedule 2 medicine it could be more widely available through rural merchandisers. There is however a concern that the decision to support the registration of pain relief drugs could send a bad signal to the overseas manufacturers and retailers that Australia was softening its commitment to end mulesing from end of 2010. Stay Tuned.



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Shearers Still Welcome In The UK!

The UK is currently suffering from a chronic shortage of shearers resulting in the national flock not getting shorn. The problem has arisen from the broad changes in the UK's immigration and working visa laws. Working visas for travelling shearers are currently not being issued and the usual contingent of Australian and Kiwi shearers are staying away. Below is an excerpt from an article issued by the National Association of Agricultural Contractors.

The National Association of Agricultural Contractors (NAAC) is in negotiations with UK Ministers to try and resolve the problems with entry clearance for shearers coming for the 2009 season. We would like to reassure shearers in Australia that everything possible is being done by the NAAC to try and make the process of entering the UK as easy as possible under the new immigration rules.

We have brought together industry and animal welfare organisations to support the need to fast-track shearers across the borders. We are extremely concerned that this team of highly skilled shearers are being prevented from entering the country due to paperwork issues. We are therefore working at the highest level to emphasise the need to bring in shearers with urgency.

This is potentially very serious for the UK sheep industry as we are at risk of millions of sheep not being shorn within the required timescales. We would therefore ask shearers to bear with us as we try and resolve the situation. We will put updates on our website as news changes and ask that shearers keep in touch. (www.naac.co.uk) Jill Hewitt, NAAC Chief Executive.

38 HOUR WEEK AWARD CHANGES

By now, all should be well aware of the 38 hour week has now come into effect (as at 28 March 2009) for all contractors who are not working as sole traders or partnerships outside of Victoria. Sole traders and Partnerships outside of Victoria will continue to operate on the Transitional Award, which is still a '40 hour week' Award. Currently the SCAA is investigating what "reasonable additional hours" means as stated in the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard. That is, the Standard states "an employee can't be called on to work more than 38 hours per week (which can be averaged over 12 months if agreed in writing) plus 'reasonable additional hours'. These are hours over the standard 38 hours for a full-time employee". As the 'average' shearing industry worker does not average more 38 hours per week, it is foreseeable that an agreement may be possible whereby workers may be able to work 40 hours per week within reason.

Please note that before we get carried away with the prospect of 'reasonable additional hours', the conditions of the Pre-Reform Award need to be adhered to in terms of 'hours of work', over-time and weekend work.

More Award Changes to Come

- **Modern Agricultural Award:** A copy of the "Modern Agricultural Award" will be posted to the SCAA website in the coming weeks. This Award will come into effect on 1 January 2010. It will contain provisions around the 38 hour week and a relative pay increase for workers based on the 5% loss of hours (earning potential) by the shorted working week.
- **October Pay Increase:** At this stage the current (38 hour week) PAYSACLE will be increased at the beginning of October as a result of the Australian Fair Pay Commission's (AFPC) increase to the minimum wage. At the same time, it is more than likely that the AWU will make an application to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) to vary the Transitional Award.
- **Other points to note:** The AWU may choose to make an application to vary the (40 hour) Transitional Award to a '38 hour week' Award. Currently, this (Transitional) Award expires on 27 March 2011. At this time, employers who are 'respondents' to this Award will have to transition to the "Modern Award" or to a State Award