

# CULTIVATE WA

THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

AUGUST 2016 | VOLUME 8

## World Championships

WOODCHOPPER SHARPENING HIS SKILLS

## Career Harvest

WA AGRICULTURE SET TO REAP BENEFITS OF YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS



ROYAL  
AGRICULTURAL  
SOCIETY  
of WA



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August 2016 | Volume 8

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the winter edition of Cultivate. In this issue we highlight some of our Hall of Fame inductees and other talented people contributing to the agricultural world. We also have the latest news regarding the scholarships recently presented and the continued success of our FarmEd School Incursions. There is a preview of what's new at the 2016 IGA Perth Royal Show - including a Rio Tinto Zone showcasing impressive mining machiney - and an insight into the events that go on here year round.



**Dr Rob Wilson, President**  
The Royal Agricultural Society of WA

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# Hall of Fame

The leading lights of WA agriculture gathered for the unveiling of the portrait of the latest inductee, landcare champion Michael Lloyd

A gathering of agricultural luminaries at Claremont Showground provided a glimpse of the powerhouse of talent responsible for defining modern agriculture in WA.

Agricultural Hall of Fame members Dr John Gladstones AM, Noel Fitzpatrick AM, Kevin Hogan OAM, Peter Falconer OAM, Jano Foulkes-Taylor OAM, Rex Edmondson AO, John Bennison OBE, Lou Giglia AM, Em Prof David Lindsay AO and Dawson Bradford were attending the unveiling of a portrait by artist John Carroll of 2015 inductee Michael Lloyd.

Royal Agricultural Society of WA (RASWA) President Dr Rob Wilson said that the group's expertise had extended to most facets of the industry including dairy, sheep, viticulture, research and development, horticulture, farm management, conservation and land management and community engagement.

"Reading the biographies of the inductees I realise that education had been integral to all their careers; for some the major driving force of their work," he said.

Dr Wilson said that education was the key to attracting talent to agriculture and providing the opportunities to nurture leaders of the future.

Since RASWA established the Hall of Fame in 1999 to acknowledge the pioneers and leaders of the State's second biggest industry, 60 people have been inducted.

The Agricultural Hall of Fame is proudly supported by Wesfarmers. Biographies of all inductees can be found at [www.raswa.org.au/agricultural-hall-of-fame/1999.aspx](http://www.raswa.org.au/agricultural-hall-of-fame/1999.aspx).



**Above:** L - R Back Row - Michael Lloyd, Peter Falconer, Kevin Hogan, David Lindsay, Jano Foulkes-Taylor, Rex Edmondson, Dawson Bradford, L - R Front Row - Lou Giglia, John Bennison, Governor Kerry Sanderson, Noel Fitzpatrick, John Gladstones

## Who's who

Dr John Gladstones is celebrated the world over for identifying the potential of the Margaret River region for premium wine production.

As Director General of the Department of Agriculture, 2006 inductee Noel Fitzpatrick steered WA to success as a major wheat producer.

Peter Falconer played a major part in the professional development of farm-management consulting which today is used by 40% of Western Australian farmers who produce more than 60% of the State's agricultural produce.

Kevin Hogan was the founding Chairman of the Mt Marshall Community Support Group that gave confidence and support to many farmers struggling to remain solvent in the face of crippling interest bills in the 1980s.

Jano Foulkes-Taylor has been recognised for her role in conservation, commitment to diversifying enterprises in the rangelands and to education, communication and social changes that have allowed young people to acquire

the skills to live and work successfully in the region.

In an effort to redress the rampant problems of salinity, erosion and degradation of soil, Rex Edmondson was the face and a major driving force behind the development of Landcare.

As CEO of Wesfarmers, John Bennison was instrumental in transforming WA's largest rural company by expanding its commercial horizons successfully into meat processing, production of fertiliser, distribution of gas and general retailing which increased the profits for its co-operative shareholders.

The dairy industry in Western Australia benefited in the period from 1970 to 2000 from the imposing influence of Lou Giglia. He founded the Ponderosa herd of Holstein Friesian cattle in 1962 and over the next 40 years his animals dominated in production figures and in show rings in Western Australia.

David Lindsay's research into understanding and combating practical

problems associated with poor fertility and survival in the State's sheep flock took on worldwide significance and became the focus of scores of overseas researchers and students in the field of reproductive physiology.

Dawson Bradford stands out among the most progressive and successful farmers and agricultural administrators in Western Australia. His prime lamb enterprises demonstrate he is a true pioneer in a rapidly evolving industry. Not only are his sheep among the highest performing and best quality in the country, but he is one of only a few agriculturalists Australia-wide who have contributed positively along the whole supply chain for this industry.

Landcare champion Michael Lloyd's farm was one of thousands affected by salinity, probably the most important physical threat to the State's agriculture in the 20th century. He set about understanding the problem and testing solutions through revegetation on a large scale on his own property.



# Weddings, Parties, Anything

The Centenary Pavilion channelled elegance and style when it was transformed into a romantic wedding venue, just one of the many recent events at Claremont Showground



**Top Left:** The RAC Perth Caravan & Camping Show

**Top Right:** Romance unveiled in the Centenary Pavilion



**Left:** The Celebration of Women Long Table Lunch

There was something old, something new, something borrowed and even something blue as Claremont Showground hosted its first ever wedding party. The Centenary Pavilion was transformed into a romantic idyll with glorious floral displays shimmering with colour and form while styling from butcherbakerstylist oozed modern elegance.

According to RASWA's CEO Peter Cooper, while the Centenary Pavilion is one of the oldest at the site it is new to the wedding industry.

"We were all very excited by the prospect of a wedding at the Showground and the building which has captured so much of WA's history was transformed into a very exciting and magical space.

"This is definitely a growth area for Claremont Showground," he said.

RASWA was again proud to support the Celebration of Women Long Table Lunch in 2016 which raised more than \$250,000 to provide services for those living with breast cancer.

The event was established by Faith

Nichols of Comestibles in 2004 to commemorate the life of Pippin Bath, a prominent member of the Perth catering industry who lost her battle with breast cancer at just 37.

A theme of Roaring Twenties and Great Gatsby set the scene for an afternoon of celebration for six hundred guests. A five course degustation menu was delivered by top WA chefs including Chris Taylor from Frasers, Peter Hadju from Balthazar, Evan Hayter from Arimia, Luke Foyle from Bivouac, Chase Weber from The Standard, Patrick O'Brien from West Coast Institute and Morgan Keyte from Mosmans Restaurant. The Australia Youth Culinary Team, who competed and came third in Singapore to qualify for the Olympics, worked with Patrick O'Brien to create platters of mini desserts for the guests.

More than 44,000 people enjoyed five days of all things caravanning and camping at Claremont Showground at the annual RAC Perth Caravan & Camping Show presented by the Caravan Industry Association Western Australia.

The event hosted more than 270 exhibitors and showcased 400 caravans, 130 camper trailers and thousands of products and accessories.

New features for the 2016 show included a large catering precinct, with a great choice of food and beverage vans and lots of seating under the large shady trees. The tourism precinct was a great hit with visitors, with 40 destinations in WA and Australia providing consumers with helpful information on the best location to spend their next holiday. Families enjoyed free entry for children under 16 and a large fun zone with plenty of free activities.

Over the past year RASWA has attracted more than 100 events, from small meetings through to major music festivals including 18 animal events, three festivals, 25 public events, 14 art auctions, a Bazaar magazine photo shoot and a bike and scooter show.

Mr Cooper said that a number of new events had been hosted at the venue including New Events Clevertronics, One Fine Day Bridal Fair, Pet Expo, Perth Travel Expo and Origin NYE.



# Pulses under the spotlight

**Pulses are an ancient crop and the United Nations has decreed this should be their international year in the sun**



**F**or many, pulses are probably most readily recognised as baked beans – navy beans bathed in tomato sauce and sealed in a can.

Navy (or haricot) beans are grown in Australia, on the east coast, but their production is tiny in the national and international big picture for pulses.

The big names in the business are chickpea, lentil, field pea and lupin and the big customers in a \$1 billion-a-year export trade for Australia's pulses are India and countries in the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

WA dominates world production of lupins, a relative newcomer to broadacre cropping following the State's leading role in its full domestication and acceptance into farming systems in the 1960s. Most of the harvest goes into animal feed locally and overseas but lupins have a few hard-won places on the plate, alongside other long-established pulses.

The WA Grains Industry Strategy 2025+, compiled last year, sets out actions to open more high value markets for lupins through further definition of health benefits in everyday diets, generation of more internal "pull" from food markets such as China, India, Indonesia, the Gulf states, the United States and Europe, and support for work on the use of protein meal in aquaculture.

From a WA farmer perspective, pulses offer alternative markets and a way to help beat crop diseases through rotation with wheat, barley and oilseeds. They also add soil nitrogen, an essential nutrient for plant growth.

Australia's farmers harvest about two million tonnes of pulses each year, compared with well in excess of 20 million tonnes of wheat, about eight million tonnes of barley and three million tonnes of canola.

The Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre puts the pulses production split at 20-35 per cent for chickpea, 10-15 per cent field pea (with WA having a modest share), 30-40 per

cent lupin (with the lion's share from WA), 10-15 per cent lentil, 10-25 per cent faba and broad bean and less than five per cent mung bean.

Pulses – a word from the Latin puls, for thick gruel, porridge or mush – are dried seeds and part of the very broad legume family.

They were a protein-rich food source for centuries before the first can of baked beans made its way to the grocery store shelf. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) points to archaeological remains found in Turkey that show chickpeas and lentils were farmed as early as 7000-8000 BC.

Today, pulses are widely consumed overseas, including as main ingredients in dishes such as falafel, dhal and hummus. They are also included in soups, curries and casseroles and used in flours and snack foods.

A resolution of the UN General Assembly 2½ years ago set the scene for the 2016 International Year of Pulses (IYP), to heighten public awareness of their nutritional benefits as part of sustainable food production and contribution to global food security and nutrition.

FAO identifies pulses as important for the food security for millions of people, particularly in Latin America, Africa and Asia, where they form part of traditional diets and are often grown on small farms. In many places they are a cheaper source of protein than animal-based products.

In Australia, where consumption is low, particularly compared with the likes of India, IYP organisers' aims for 2016 include encouraging and building awareness of both growing and eating pulses. They hope it will provide a fresh stimulus for pulses, just as a similar UN initiative in 2013 did for quinoa.

According to the 2011-12 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey, only 4.5 per cent of Australians regularly eat legumes such as lentils, chickpeas and beans. A 2014 survey commissioned by the Grains and

Legumes Nutrition Council (GLNC) showed they were probably simply overlooked, with almost two in every three respondents saying they did not think about regularly including them in meals.

GLNC, an independent authority on the nutrition and health benefits of grains and legumes, recommends Australians eat legumes at least two to three times a week for health benefits from their low level of saturated fat, low glycaemic index (GI) and high resistant starch content.

GLNC managing director Georgie Aley, who chairs the Australian committee for IYP activities and is also a non-executive director of industry-representative organisation Pulse Australia, believes the special UN year is the ideal opportunity to focus attention on supply chains and consumer interest.

"It's the chance for us to roll our sleeves up, to really drive an agenda and to make the most out of the opportunity that's sitting in front of us," Ms Aley said.

SA chef Simon Bryant, who is recognised nationally from his time alongside Maggie Beer in ABC TV's *The Cook and the Chef* series, is the IYP Australian advocate and will champion a food he has long supported.

He led judging of the national competition for the IYP Australian Signature Dish which was won by Alison Victor, of Margaret River. Her winning dish was quinoa, black lentil and roasted barley salad with chickpeas, cauliflower, brussel sprouts and pomegranate in apple cider vinegar.

**Dr John Gladstones, who became one of the world's leading authorities on the lupin as a crop plant and is generally recognised as the father of the Australian lupin industry, is a member of RASWA's Hall of Fame.**





# Scholarships help to lead the way

Two students will find university life financially easier following the news they have each won a prestigious scholarship awarded by the Bendat Family Foundation, the Royal Agricultural Society and law firm Kott Gunning

Sam Beech has won the prestigious \$12,000 Agricultural Youth Scholarship awarded by the Bendat Family Foundation and RASWA.

This 19-year-old former Great Southern Grammar School student was announced the winner of the award at Claremont Showground.

An aspiring leader, Sam grew up on his family's South Western farm taking full advantage of life on the land.

"I have had a culturally rich upbringing having been brought up on a farm near Frankland River," said Sam.

"From an early age I have been working on the farm driving machinery

and handling livestock and I can't see myself leaving the industry. The first reason being my love of the land and the wide open space. The connection with nature you have in the industry is something that I value very highly."

Sam's passion for agriculture stems from his recognition that it is one of the "most honourable and oldest professions".

"It is relied on to provide the food and fibre for the world and I find that quite humbling," he said.

"I also think that it is a very exciting time in agriculture. The last ten years has seen incredible advancements in not only technology but the demand for

Australian commodities.

"Jobs in agriculture are becoming professions where a university degree is going to give me the best introduction and start to the industry. I am studying commerce, majoring in economics. The way the industry is going with markets and global trading my thought is that economics will provide me with an understanding of not only how the economy works but also how different economies interact.

"I intend to spend time abroad during my degree and in the future I also intend to travel, maybe spending time in Chicago at the CME Group or another similar

**"Agriculture is one of the world's most important economies and everyone in the industry, no matter what sector, has a contributing role to play in order to ensure overall success, sustainability and advancement."**



company. Through this I hope to be able to help our own farmers to understand and take advantage of the markets and opportunities that are available."

Sam's involvement with farming has seen him work for a number of rural businesses, as well as the family farm, helping out with livestock, fencing, operating and maintaining machinery.

**The award and payment of the Scholarship, to be provided for three years, is dependant on the successful enrolment in a Bachelor level course at an Australian university in an agricultural related discipline.**

## Right decision

Lois Kowald already had a background in agriculture having grown up on a sheep, cattle and cropping farm in Katanning before taking a "leap of faith" to attend the Denmark-based WA College of Agriculture.

"At that time I was not sure if I wanted to pursue a career within the industry," said Lois, who eventually decided it was "one of the best decisions I have ever made."

That choice has, in a way, led to Lois carrying off the 2016 Kott Gunning Scholarship. Having partnered with RASWA a couple of years ago, this leading West Australian law firm established a bursary for young West Australians studying at university for a future career in the agricultural industry.

Lois, 19, who is currently studying agribusiness at Curtin University, believes "agriculture is one of the world's most important economies and everyone in the industry, no matter what sector, has a contributing role to play in order to ensure overall success, sustainability and advancement."

This young woman's enthusiasm for her industry has given her the drive to succeed in all areas of her life – from a number of college and university accomplishments, to her proficiency as a pianist and sportswoman. She holds an accreditation in netball umpiring and national netball coaching.

With her focus firmly on research within agriculture, Lois said:

"My future ambitions include returning to the country where I can be involved in research incorporated directly with the farming community.

I believe the connecting bodies from research to farm practice will continue to help develop small and large scale operations in order to increase business potential and agricultural sustainability. The best improvement will come from looking at a business as a whole and not focusing on any one part.

"Working in an industry that you are passionate about gives you drive to achieve great things and make a difference, no matter the scale."

Dr Rob Wilson, President of RASWA, said as a result of the support of Kott Gunning RASWA was able to provide the tertiary scholarship as part of its Rural Leaders program, which also offers scholarships to high school students at WA's agricultural colleges and recognises regional leaders through the Rural Ambassador and Rural Community Achiever Awards.

Dr Wilson said that education was a core and important objective of RASWA and scholarships provided the WA agricultural industry the means to ultimately benefit from the education, skills and passion that Lois and Sam's generation bring to the industry.





# #Getyourbakeon

Always a mouth-watering event, the Perth Royal Bread and Pastry Show is set to get a new rise. A stirring of newly added classes, with a sprinkling of international flavours, is bound to turn up the heat for contenders seeking to weigh-in with their baking skills!



In an effort to 'raise the bar' when it comes to attracting the best of creative talent, the Perth Royal Bread and Pastry Show has introduced a number of new classes.

The French influence will have a presence in the Artisan bread section, with the addition of Brioche and Baguette classes. Lovers of the handmade loaf varieties will be thankful there is a knead under this heading for the sweet, plain and flavoured varieties. We'll toast to that! Still in keeping with the French, the savoury bakers now have the option to present the time-honoured, perennial favourite - Quiche Lorraine.

Entries in the sweet section will feature fruit tarts as well as croissants, vanilla slices, Danish pastries and pain au chocolat - all of which are made from the classic French leavened puff pastry technique that gives these products their unique flaky characteristic.

There is a call in the biscuit section for the universal taste of Scottish shortbread and biscotti. Moving on, judges can expect to taste test slices including caramel and muesli as well as brownies.

For those with a sweet tooth cakes will feature a decorated sponge cake, Christmas cake, fruit muffins, friand and cupcakes. Roll out the tooth fairy...

The catering for apprentice classes now includes three additions - of which two - melting moments and Anzacs - take the biscuit. Chocolate eclairs fall under the pastry heading.

For the bakers who get a kick out of the AFL - the game is on to find the winning pie fit for footy lovers. Claiming this goal will entitle the winner free entry into the national 'Official Great Aussie Footy Pie Competition' to be held in Melbourne in September.

This fun-filled element of the Show demands creative ingenuity - as long as entrants stick to the rules!

The pie must resemble the traditional footy, be oval in shape and fit into the palm of one hand.

Passing the pie from hand to mouth will require skill to pass the footy test.

The filling, which is to be quality minced beef with a crust depicting chosen team colours, has to be firm and stable when hot. Why? To allow the entire

contents of the pie to be eaten while watching the game without being shirt-fronted! In other words: no dribbling.

Note: there will be a celebrity umpire (judge) on the sidelines with keen eyes watching the process!

Now we move on to everyone's favourite party fodder - the classic sausage roll.

Nova 93.7FM breakfast team - Nathan, Nat and Shaun (the latter a former football player) will be judging the nibbles everyone loves.

The bubbly breakfast show trio love sinking their teeth into these pastries and will be including a massive promotional push for their involvement with the Bread and Pastry Competition.

The Perth Royal Bread and Pastry Show is one of the Premium Produce competitions established by the Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia as a benchmark of quality and innovation. It is WA's premier industry competition and can advance commercial success and brand awareness.



# Bird's eye view

**Terry Banfield admits he has a long-suffering wife... three days after their marriage he flew the coop and cut short their honeymoon to enable him to get his birds preened and ready for the Perth Royal Show**

“My wife Marain wasn’t impressed and today is still suffering with my hobby,” chuckled this congenial man who, 48 years on, is happily married with two children and four grandchildren.

“Pigeons have been in the family since my grandfather came to WA here from Sussex in England in 1900,” he revealed.

“I have been coming to the Show since 1954 when I was 11-years-old, helping my grandfather and father with their show pigeons and poultry, as well as the cocker spaniels we bred.

“At one stage we had more than 500 pigeons and were the biggest exhibitors in WA, going to most agricultural shows including Kelmscott and Cannington.”

Large numbers of birds wasn’t unusual in those days, according to Mr Banfield.

“I can remember as a kid people who lived in Claremont, Dalkeith and City Beach had a lot of poultry. You could do that then with the bigger blocks of land. People are living on 450sqm of land

now so cannot really keep anything, and the hobby seems to be dying out.

“I can recall when 1,300 poultry and 700 pigeons would be exhibited at the Show but those days are long gone. Nowadays entries are more like 400 pigeons and 800 for poultry.”

It’s a trend that saddens Mr Banfield.

“It seems to be getting harder and harder to promote pigeons and poultry and the breeds these days,” he lamented.

Even his family has no inclination to carry on the tradition.

“My children grew up learning all there is to know about these pigeons but they are not interested in taking up the hobby.

“One of my sons told me ‘Dad, you have had your turn,’ and I am afraid that is the view of most young people today.”

Mr Banfield, a retired butcher, is actively involved with RASWA as a committee member, as a chief steward for the pigeon and poultry exhibits, and as a judge in the eastern states.

“I am trying to keep alive the interest in these types of hobbies, that are now dying out which is why I am persistent with the Royal,” said Mr Banfield.

“It is fascinating to see young people come into that poultry pavilion, which is one of the most popular livestock sections at the Show, and become dumbfounded when they see the different varieties of fowl on display.”

Mr Banfield has built up an indomitable line of English Carrier pigeons known as the king of pigeons, and has had many wins.

“Throughout the years we have won countless ribbons and have won Champion and Best Bird in Show several times at the Royal,” he recalled.

According to Mr Banfield, there needs to be a better understanding of pigeons.

“These pigeons are majestic in stance and style,” he said, rejecting the opinion that pigeons are like ‘flying rats’.

“These show birds, which live for about 12 years, are powerful and would

fly all day if they were not trained.

“They are bred specifically for showing and kept in special aviaries and are not a nuisance.”

At his High Wycombe property, Mr Banfield is known as the ‘Dr Harry’ of birds.

“I am the one everyone comes to if they have a sick bird or chook.

“These pigeons are very quarrelsome and they fight a lot. They will grab one another and pick at the skin around the eyes. You have to watch for that. It is important the wattle, which is like a rooster’s comb, is kept clean, too. The wattle grows bigger with age and eventually grows to the size of a walnut, but it takes three to four years.”

There is a lot of work involved in being the custodian of 100 pigeons, but Mr Banfield wouldn’t have it any other way.

“Basically, it is a case of keeping them clean, fed and watered.

“From August to December is the breeding season. They are separated

and put into breeding sections.

“I use really top quality birds for home breeding. Pigeons only lay two eggs and have pigeon milk to feed their young, just like a budgie and canary. It takes 18 days for eggs to hatch, and another 18 to 20 days to become virtually fledged and ready to leave the nest.”

Determining which birds to hand-pick for the Show is left until a week before the event.

“All the birds that will be entered have to be dusted for mites with spray or powder. On saying that, a well kept flock shouldn’t have any mites.

“Then their feet, feathers and face have to be washed and dried prior to being placed on display.

“For the Royal, exhibitors bring the birds in a day before the Show. They are judged on the Saturday morning and go home the following Sunday morning.

Some big breeders feel this is a bit of a deterrent as it is a long while for the birds to be at the Show, but I have never



lost a bird in all my years of showing.”

For Mr Banfield, his hobby is not all about the accolades of the Show business.

“The thing is, what most people don’t realise in life is, if you have a job and are working hard you need a hobby. It lets off the pressure cooker. It doesn’t matter what it is a man does for a living; a man must have an interest in a hobby.

“For me it is the art of trying to produce that special bird - that special pigeon - that is the challenge. My hobby has been a great relief to me. Being in the meat business as a butcher and manager of a company it has been a great relief to come home and let the stress out.

“From what I gather, I think, Australia-wide, we are probably one of the most unique families with four generations being involved in the same hobby.”





# Farming – it's all Show

Students at Bentley Primary School were given a taste of life on the farm when the musical production 'The Country Life' claimed centre stage recently



The play 'Country Life', being rolled out to 50 schools this year, promotes agriculture and the careers within this sector as part of the RASWA FarmED School Incursion program.

With ages ranging from three to 11 years, 150 youngsters at Bentley Primary School were captivated by the fun, interactive and educational mixture of songs, dance and puppetry of the play, which follows the adventures of a city girl named Janet who drives to a country town in search of an award-winning cake recipe.

When the local baker sends her off to a nearby farm to find the recipe's 'secret ingredients', Janet's perception of farmers, food and the country life are challenged and transformed.

"Every child, and their parents, absolutely loved the performance. We gave top marks for everything," said Deputy Principal Jacqui Gannon. "It

was fabulous."

Free to primary schools, the RASWA FarmED program is curriculum based with resource kits developed for both pre and post school visit activities. It was introduced in response to national research that alarmingly showed children had little idea as to where the food their families buy at the supermarkets actually comes from. Dr Rob Wilson, RASWA President, said education about agriculture is the organisation's number one priority.

"FarmED is a program that grew out of the educational activities at the IGA Perth Royal Show and provides school children the opportunity to find out about agriculture throughout the year," he said.

"It also gives them some understanding and appreciation of the role of agriculture in the nation's economy and future."

The FarmED program has so far reached 80,000 children in hundreds of schools State-wide.

**"Every child, and their parents, absolutely loved the performance. We gave top marks for everything. It was fabulous."**





# The Cutting Edge

Woodchopping champion Brent Rees reveals what it takes to excel in his chosen sport

**T**op Gun Brent Rees is well known in his street. Indeed, neighbours tend to “come around” and stand watching over the fence as this 32-year-old practices his swing with one of the numerous axes he uses for competitions.

Ranked one of the top 38 axe-men in the world, and a member of the Australian team for the past six years, Mr Rees has clinched more titles than most, not least WA Champion “10 years in a row” and more recently topping it off with the Australian Champion of Champions, as well as a world title.

No stranger to travelling the globe to compete, Mr Rees is now busy sharpening his skills for his home ground. This year Perth will host the World Championships in 325mm Underhand as well as the 300mm Standing Block during the Royal Show.

It is here this skilled contestant will define his fierce determination to retain ownership of his titles against stiff opposition.

“My long-term goals are to stay on top and stay competitive. I will be putting everything into making sure I am in the best shape to win,” stated the axe man, who has been a chopper since the age of 15 years.

“It’s in my blood. My grandfather used to chop, my father Steve and older brother, also called Steve, still compete at shows, including the Royal Show. Dad was a WA Champion for a number of years.”

But when it comes to winning the prize trophies, Mr Rees has relegated them all to the back benches.

Staying at the top of your game is no mean feat.

Mr Rees said woodchopping is a “full-on sport”, demanding the same discipline as other sports.

“I have to put in as much time and preparation as other sportspeople. It is just like AFL players – I have to be 100 per cent athlete. That takes in diet, exercise, mental strength as well as physical strength.

“Technique is massive – it is all about technique – so it is necessary to be big and strong, physically. Timing and coordination are important factors, too. Using the axe is likened to a good golf swing. You have to be very accurate, and have the ability to think quickly.”

Combining work as a casual diesel mechanic at a gold mine doing 12-hour shifts and exercise takes a toll on the fittest of bodies.

“Chopping is hard on your body,” admitted this super-fit sportsman. “I go to the gym four days a week and do an hour every day of cardio – explosive workouts to suit the sport – chopping is explosive so that includes running, sprints...”

“It is a hard sport on the lower back. I have been struggling the last few years with lower back pain but I do a lot of Pilates, and specific strengthening work to help with that.

“Because the sport is so hard on the body you cannot train full-on all year round so in the lead-up to the IGA Perth Royal Show I will chop logs every second day three months prior to the event, still maintaining my gym work, cardio and doing Pilates.

“I pre-plan my diet and especially around competition time I try to eat five to six times a day to keep my strength up – keeping the carbs really high and a good level of protein.”

As with all athletes, being involved with sport at a high level takes money, time and effort.

Mr Rees spends around \$25,000 a year travelling the competitive circuit.



“The financial rewards aren’t that great and I have no sponsorship deals, but I love the sport,” he said. “If I look at my bank account I should probably stop now!”

Despite admitting to “being in a tough stage in my sport with nowhere financially to go”, one of Australia’s most decorated woodchoppers said; “I love the competition. I just love it.

“I get along with all competitors and, having met so many people from around the world, I know I could go anywhere in the world and always have a bed. Financially, I may not get so much out of the sport but I have lasting friendships and gained so much life experience that money can’t buy.”

The only gripe this sportsman has involves the lack of media coverage for all woodchopping competitions, wherever they may be held.

“I would like to see woodchopping in the same league and media spotlight as other sports,” said Mr Rees. “The sport will always be around – it will stay forever. I would just love to see it being recognised a lot more.”

In the meantime, this dedicated sportsman is intending to continue to claim titles until: “one day I guess I will want to have a family and retire.”



# Serving up the importance of farming



## City dwellers were given a taste of the country life when the fourth annual Farmer on Your Plate event was showcased in Forrest Chase, Perth recently

Organised by Farming Champions – an enterprise dedicated to bringing agricultural issues to the attention of everyday West Australians, the event was supported by RASWA, Rabobank and WA accounting firm RSM Australia.

Celebrating the high quality of WA produce and connecting consumers to the farmers who produce the ‘food on your plates’ the event attracted thousands throughout the day who eagerly sampled the beef, pork, fish and yabbies’ cooked by some of the State’s leading chefs and took great interest in the stories relayed by farmers during the day.

Officially opened by Cr Jim Adamos of Perth City Council, Farmer on Your Plate had a number of guest speakers including Chair of CBH, Mr Wally Newman, who spoke of his knowledge

and passion for the WA grain industry and the farmers of WA.

A variety of free attractions, including a performance by the Royal Australian Navy’s Admirals Own Big Band and singers Nick and Lucy Kelly, supported by musician extraordinaire Gavin Arnold, kept everyone entertained.

There was also a number of interactive agricultural education exhibits, including the RASWA life-size model of a Brahman bull, farm produce giveaways and producers’ stalls, as well as a variety of farm animals.

“The event celebrates and showcases family farming, agri-tourism and rural communities, connecting consumers to farmers who produce the food on our plates and fosters connections between the city and the country,” said Farming Champions chair Mary Nenke – a Kukerin-based farmer,

former Rural Woman of the Year winner and RASWA Councillor.

Dr Rob Wilson, President of RASWA, said initiatives such as Farmer on Your Plate are important for the community.

“Analysis several years ago by the National Farmers’ Federation showed that when value-adding processes beyond the farm gate and the broader field of economic activity associated with production are accounted for, agriculture contributes a sizeable 12 per cent to the nation’s gross domestic products,” he said.

“On this basis it is easy to see, as the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation noted in its new Rural Industry Futures publication, that agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, underpinning many other industries and providing a significant portion of export earnings.”

# What’s new at the Show?

In a push to further entice entrants to our immensely popular competitions, this year we have introduced a number of additional classes

Always a hit when it comes to the Cookery Competition, budding bakers have again been invited to test their wares against WA’s best makers of jams, chutneys, cakes, scones, puddings and chocolates.

New classes this year include a shearer’s morning tea comprising pumpkin fruit cake, muffins and savoury scones.

A new schools section invites students to showcase their afternoon tea slice and biscuit making skills.

The decorated cake section has a special category celebrating sheep.

With 280 classes in the Creative Craft Competition, ranging from blacksmithing to calligraphy, stuffed toys to crochet and book binding entrants are spoilt for choice in the number of categories to choose from.

Organisers are hoping for a record number of entries in the cuddle toy suitable for children at Perth Children’s Hospital category.

The new Men’s Shed category will give members a chance to showcase their skills in woodwork and metalwork.

## Taste WA

The bar is raising – each year there is fierce competition to claim the crème de la crème of honours – the Premium Produce Awards. And the hungry amongst you will be in for a treat. A selection of the state’s top chefs, headed by chef and WA Food Ambassador Don Hancey, will be demonstrating their culinary skills and just to whet the appetite further – there will be a menu of tantalising dishes made from the produce, served up for a small fee. Entertainment and liquid refreshment will complete Taste WA.

## The pulse of the Show

RASWA will showcase the WA pulse industry through interactive learning



exhibits particularly designed for children, as part of the International Year of Pulses. Chickpea brownies and a cake made from pulses will be on the competition menu.

## Incredible machinery

The Rio Tinto Zone is a must see and one that you won’t forget in a hurry!

Resources giant Rio Tinto will be hosting an exhibit of epic proportions in celebration of 50 years of operation within WA. The display of mining equipment featuring a dump truck and front end loader of the size and scale rarely encountered by the general public will impress showgoers as to the extraordinary horsepower required by the resources industry.

## Let us entertain you

Entertainment, as you would expect, is an eclectic mix of fun, show stopping, and amazing.

Victoria’s Sam Xerub is a mastermind when it comes to inventions. His foray into feature films including Mad Max

means there is no-holds barred when it comes to full throttle, high octane, adrenaline pumping action.

Claiming 100 creations to his name, Sam has included for this year’s Main Arena performances his latest addition of mechanical ingenuity – the Monster Ball.

Having taken three years to build from a design created by his 12-year-old son Jarryd, the Monster Ball, measuring 4m in diameter, has been constructed from steel and motorised!

“Every single piece has been made by me,” said this inventive showman. “It has a 5.7 Chevy V8 engine from a Commodore which travels at a speed of 80 kms. I sit in the cabin above the engine of which that is a feat in itself – the engine runs upside down and the transmission works upside down.”

The simple reason being: “When I accelerate the Ball back flips and when I hit the brakes, it will roll and front flip.”

Of course – and we would expect nothing less from Sam Xerub than putting our hearts in our mouths while watching his jaw-dropping driving skills!





# Smooth operator

**With a focus on unique flavours, Kalgoorlie chocolatier Cathy Yuryevich was named Best Small Other Dairy Product Maker at the 2015 Perth Royal Dairy Show and is determined to defend her title this year**

Claiming four golds at her first Show, having trumped some of WA's top chocolatiers, has not only inspired Ms Yuryevich's artistic skills, it has set them on fire. This year she is striving to walk away with similar honours for a second time.

Her native lemon myrtle and pistachio in dark chocolate, mixed gift boxed chocolates, native Davidson's plum and spiced honey in milk chocolate and native Davidson's plum in milk chocolate bar all took out the top prize.

With a background as a food microbiologist, the mum-of-two established her business Cocoa Desert Chocolates four years ago with the aim of making a unique product.

By creating a distinct Goldfields flavour using bush foods, gold and even stout from a local brewery, Ms Yuryevich stamped her product with the region's identity.

"I wanted to make something that was unique to the area so when people were in the region they could buy something that was locally made and

relevant to their visit here," she said.

"I decided to look at which bush foods would lend themselves to chocolate."

A great deal of experimentation goes into the creation of her chocolate flavours, which Ms Yuryevich said are the "flagship" of the business.

"I source the chocolate from Belgium and, with the flavours, tend to produce only small pilot batches to avoid wasting too many ingredients," she reveals.

"I use 18 flavours which are seasonal, so invariably I take some out and replace with other flavours to ensure there is

always plenty of variety," she said.

Turning out 200 chocolates a day is no mean feat.

"Flavours I source include lemon myrtle, which tastes like lemongrass; sandalwood nuts, wattleseed, which has a native coffee flavour, and quandong, which tastes like peach.

"The quandong is harvested from a couple of stations in the region. When I have used what I need, I give back the seeds so the local landcare group can cultivate them.

"I also include macadamias, pistachios, native lime, lilly pilly, Davidson's plum and even gold.

"One chocolate particularly relevant to the region is my lemon myrtle and pistachio in dark chocolate and decorated with 23 carat gold.

"When visitors come to the Goldfields they like to buy something locally made and this chocolate reflects our local industry."

However, there was one specific bush food Ms Yuryevich was keen to add which didn't make the grade.

"I wanted to use the Karlkurla, or silky pears as they are also known, which are native to the region but they tasted like peas rather than sweet fruit."

Another chocolate she has made in the past used stout as an ingredient.

"The local brewery makes stout so the idea was to use local products and to get this stout mixed with ganache so the flavours of the stout would come through. I can't tell you how many trial runs I made to perfect the final product."

Her work paid off, with the chocolate high on the list of popular Valentine's Day gifts that particular year.

Working with couverture chocolate is time consuming and demands attention to detail.

"I do all the tempering by hand – I have no tempering machines," Ms Yuryevich said. "During the summer months temperatures have to be closely monitored and controlled to ensure the chocolate is the best it can be."

Winning the Perth Royal Dairy Show awards gave her business a huge boost.

"It's all well and good to say you make nice chocolate, but there's no proof unless you win awards," Ms Yuryevich added.



Behind every successful business lies challenges, and Ms Yuryevich has had her fair share.

"In the early days I was trying to build the business and having to work, look after the family and learn more about chocolate. I would have to do all this around cleaning and stacking shelves at a local supermarket.

"It was really nice to get the assurance that you are on the right track and the product is up to standard. The awards have given me increased sales and more credibility with financial institutions, suppliers and local business."

The boost in business has led to Ms Yuryevich looking at moving the production process from her home to larger premises in the locality in order to keep up with demand.

"I have been in talks with the council for a move to commercial premises so I can set up a full scale facility," she revealed.

With the majority of the orders

received for Cocoa Desert Chocolates being local, Ms Yuryevich fields requests for conferences, weddings, and gift boxes, as well as sales to restaurants, shops and fly-in fly-out workers.

"I regularly meet the FIFO personnel at the airport to hand over their orders for boxes of chocolates and would really like to be able to move into other areas and States," said Ms Yuryevich.

"However, the cost of transporting the chocolates while keeping them at an even temperature is, at the moment, prohibitive.

"As I grow, who knows what options will become available. There are still a lot of business opportunities for me in Kalgoorlie. With any new premises I would like to have the facilities to be able to hold team building workshops, children's parties, hen nights and even a place for tourists to visit – have coffee and chocolate. I think that would be an awesome addition to the town."





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