25TH COMMONWEALTH
AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE
ZAMBIA, SEPTEMBER 2012

“FEEDING PEOPLE”

KINDLY HOSTED BY THE AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL SOCIETY OF ZAMBIA

CONFERENCE REPORT

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The Chairman and Trustees of the RASC would like to acknowledge the help and support of the following, in making the Zambia Conference the great success that it was.

Dr. Elizabeth Nkumbula and the organising committee of the ACSZ.
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Matthew Butler, Royal Bath and West of England Society.
Daphne Lindsay of Zamag Tours and Safaris and all her staff and assistants.
Stephen Brown and Fiona Darwin at The Royal Highland Society.
Adele Thomson at The Royal Highland Society.
Why Zambia?

Next Generation delegates of the RASC included Anna Nawa of the Agricultural and Commercial Society of Zambia (ACSZ), an extension worker in the Mwembeshi district of Zambia. She joined the 2004 conference in Albury, Australia, and became embedded within the group, led by John Bennet. It was her suggestion that the NG group should visit Zambia, on one of their understanding and assistance missions, which they duly did in 2007. On their return they pronounced Zambia to be a fascinating country of agricultural opportunity, and suggested that the RASC conference could consider going in future. This was debated at the 2008 New Zealand conference, and the ACSZ was formally adopted as the 2012 host Society during the Edinburgh conference in 2010, when Society officials, led by Dr Elizabeth Nkumbula, made a presentation to delegates.

Zambia is classed as a developing nation and had not been considered as a host country previously. The RASC soon understood that culturally, and agriculturally it is a country with much to offer, with a healthy tourism industry and many sights and activities for delegates to enjoy.

How was the project managed?

In all, I visited Zambia three summers in a row, twice on behalf of RASC – although my first ‘holiday’ out there was very much focused on looking at opportunities for the conference and associated tours. We rapidly concluded that including safaris on the tours would make it exclusive for many, and in view of the range on offer it would be difficult to pitch at the right level financially to suit all. The tours were held prior to the conference leaving delegates to choose their own wildlife viewing activities after the formal programme. During this first visit I also met many of the key contacts who helped to make our time in Zambia so special.

My subsequent two visits were spent searching for suitable places to visit on the tours. This was quite a difficult task, as the remit was to make sure that an appropriate range of small scale, emerging commercial and large scale farms were included on the programme. It is all too easy to ignore the spectrum and just look at all the massive agricultural showcases, so we were privileged to meet so many small scalers, and commercial farmers who had grown their businesses from scratch. Opportunities for large scale agribusiness are obvious with fertile soils and abundant water.

Much of my spare time was engaged in creating the schedule of speakers – and again I had plenty of help. The ACSZ took a keen interest in the ‘Zambian Agriculture’ day, and RASC Trustees all had excellent contacts to be able to pull together a very interesting programme for the three days, on Zambian Agriculture, World Agriculture and Show Society business. Flanked by special seminar days for Chief Executives, and the Next Generation, the conference had variety and interest for all.

I was grateful for the time I had to get to know the ACSZ. Elizabeth Nkumbula, Bill Saunders, Joe Mwale, Cosmas Michello, Murray Anderson, Paul Mumbuluma and Edna Mulumo. They and their colleagues all deserve our very grateful thanks for their input and commitment, not least persuading their Government to support the conference as strongly as they did.

We enjoyed greater sponsorship support than ever, as companies and individuals recognised the value and the reach of our conference. It is hoped that any surplus will enable the RASC to leave some legacy funding in Zambia, a long-held ambition for our biennial conferences. This, coupled with their experience in Zambia will, I hope encourage our new portfolio of sponsors to continue their association with the RASC.

Grateful thanks to John Bennett for his daily summing up of the Conference papers and to everyone who has contributed to this report. All delegates received a memory stick with most speaker presentations during the Conference.

Jane Guise

Conference Secretary, Zambia, 2012
The Pre Conference Tour Report has been contributed by Next Generation delegates who were sponsored to attend the Pre Conference Tours and Conference.

**Pre-Conference Tour A**

**Day 1: Saturday September 15th - Anna Playfair-Hannay & Charles Orpwood, Scotland.**

Delegates from all corners of the Commonwealth arrived in Lusaka for the 25th Commonwealth Agricultural Conference 2012 on Africa's role in world food production. We had a warm welcome at our first farm visit, Stanbic 2012 Bull and Game Sale where several key note speakers opened the sale. We were informed about the position of Zambian farming. All keynote speakers reiterated the need for increased food production, especially the beef sector increasing from three million to nine million head of cattle across Zambia. With this increase they are conscious about monitoring the cattle quality as they are worried people may import poor stock, affecting the national herd. To maintain the National herd they are strongly encouraging all farmers to register with the national herd book. Another interesting point the Zambian Agricultural Minister stated is the importance of stock traceability due to high rates of stock theft. The problem occurs because there is a lack of traceability at the consumer end of the supply chain; therefore increased checks are going to be out in at butchers and abattoirs. The main breeds of cattle included Boran, Santa Gertrudis, Brahman and native African cattle which consisted of forty bulls and two heifers with a top price of fifty-two million KW, or roughly AUD$10,000. The average bull sold for thirty-two million KW (AUD$6,000).

A game sale followed which was a treat for international guests watching. The sale was conducted on a big plasma screen and some of the lots did not include the capture fee. This included Zebras, Kudu, Impala and other native game species. Following the sale we were treated to a fantastic lunch kindly provided by Stanbic Bank and great hospitality by our hosts. A cocktail reception concluded the day at the Chisamba Safari Lodge kindly given by the RASC.

**Day 2: Sunday September 16th - Ruth Redfern, Australia**

A visit to Southern Africa’s largest publicly listed company greeted delegates On 46,000ha split across four farms, agricultural company Zambeef employs 4,000 people to grow beef, dairy, pork, broiler chickens and eggs; grow cereal crops and stockfeed; operate a feedlot, a mill, a bakery and eight abattoirs; and produce by-products like leather from the company’s own tannery.

A vertically integrated success story, in just 16 years Zambeef has grown to become Zambia’s leading provider of food, supplying major supermarket chain Shoprite (via the company’s own distribution network), operating 86 retail outlets across the country’s villages and controlling a large proportion of the domestic food market. Zambia, like many developing countries across the world, is seeing a rise in its middle class and, as the population becomes more affluent, a greater demand for affordable protein. The average consumption of chicken in Zambia has doubled, for instance, to 3.5kg per person.

Following a tour of Zambeef’s impressive feedlot and dairy operations, the delegates travelled to the home of Dave Gordon, the first Vice President of the Zambian National Farmers’ Union. During a lunch of local beef and game and then a tour of his wheat, barley, mungbeans, tobacco, cattle and game farm, Dave outlined the current challenges facing Zambian farmers - from high interest rates to stock theft and the damage caused by game to the cereal crops (international delegates were surprised to learn that monkeys have a fondness for wheat!) - and the opportunities - high commodity prices, productivity and efficiency gains, access to water and the availability of arable land.

**Day 3: Monday September 17th - Chris Stockwell, Scotland.**

This was another excellent day which took us to Zambezi Ranching and Cropping Ltd (ZRC) in the morning and then onto the Chaminuka Game Reserve Lodge for a game drive in the afternoon.

At ZRC we were met by the Managing Director Graham Rae who gave us an overview of the company, one of the largest privately owned mixed farming operations in the region at 31,000 ha. We started by watching some of the farms 12,000 indigenous African breed of cattle being put through the weekly dip for controlling ticks - a major problem in Zambia for livestock farmers. Later we were met by the tobacco manager who gave us a fascinating background of tobacco production and the industry. We were particularly surprised by how labour intensive the
crop is, requiring 590 labour days per hectare to grow. From the tobacco crop we went to a wheat crop being harvested by two new Cat Challenger Combines, the first Challenger combines brought into Zambia.

The afternoon took us for a BBQ lunch at the Chaminuka Game Reserve Lodge where we sampled their own very tasty game meat. After lunch came probably one of the highlights of the tour to date, a game drive around the lodge. This amazing experience allowed us to view lions, an elephant and baby, giraffes, zebra, Sable, hartebeest and secretary bird amongst others.

**Day 4: Tuesday September 18th - Manda Foo, Singapore**

This began with a visit to Kalimba crocodile farm, the first place in the world to introduce crocodiles into the mix of integrated aquaculture. Mr. and Mrs. Bill Thomas, the farm’s owners, breed Nile crocodiles for their skins, which are carefully cultivated and corrected for export to Singapore. Each skin fetches around US$500. Kalimba farm supplements its main business by rearing pigs and tilapia, producing a small amount of leather goods and maintaining a tourist reptile park, where our group got very close to black mambas and tortoises.

Ellensdale Farm, our afternoon stop, was just round the corner. The owner, Nick Dean, recounted the farm’s beginnings in 1911 with 1000 head of cattle, and its turning point in 1993 with the collapse of Zambia’s command economy. As one of the only farms left open, Ellensdale had little choice but to fill the gaping hole in food production, and quickly. The farm’s first step towards increased productivity was to replace 75 percent of its 280 workers with pivots. More recently, soil mapping and chemical grudging charts are helping Nick understand his land and crops even better, and wheat yields went up from 8.6 tonnes a hectare in 2007 to 9.7 last year, almost 40 per cent higher than the national average of 7 tonnes a hectare. Being talked through the science of precision farming was fascinating. We also passed the village square, playground and health clinic, where the last baby boy was born on 3 August 2012.

That commercial farming can continue to improve with new technology is a greatly encouraging observation at Ellensdale today, but it was Nick’s final comment that left the deepest imprint on me. With a tinge if sentimentality, he lamented the lost days when many hands in the farm were seen through education, employment, retirement and old ages. With the replacement of humans with much more productive machines, which is necessary, the act of growing food is becoming increasingly faceless. You can’t help but wonder how this affects our relationship with food, if it changes it from one of sustenance and nourishment to one of indifference and waste. I venture to say it does, sadly.

**Pre-Conference Tour B**

**Day 5: Wednesday September 19th - Zara Morrison, Northern Ireland.**

Agricultural and Commercial Society of Zambia (ACSZ) Showgrounds

Vice President of the ASCZ, Murray Anderson, showed us around their Showgrounds. The Showgrounds are located in the central business area of Lusaka and cover a total area of one hundred and six hectares, fifteen of which are untouched. The 86th Annual show was held in August this year, and attracted more than one thousand exhibitors, eighty-seven being international. Attendance increased by 40% mainly due to a growing middle class one back of strong economic growth.

The show runs for five days and always finishes on the "Farmers Day" holiday. The Showgrounds are also the home to an equestrian centre and the arenas are used many times during the week for sporting events including rugby and polo. To create income land is leased on a fifty year contract to developers who have created Banks, Hotels, Shopping Centres and other business units. The cattle facilities are also leased out to assist with the movement of cattle throughout Africa.

Jimmy Munjanja Farm

Jimmy Munjanja produces tomatoes to a local fresh market, he also grows onions, maize and cabbages as rotation crops. Jimmy began as a small scale farmer with a quarter of a hectare and over the years has increased to sixteen hectares. With the use of the current seven bore holes, strip irrigation is utilized and working closely with the seed and chemical suppliers ensures disease resistance and high yields are achieved. Fertilizer and chemicals are used depending on the individual crop performance.

Jimmy faces many decisions in choosing the correct variety. He must weigh up the financial benefits of a high yield, high maintenance crop against a low yield, low maintenance, and high turnover crop. These decisions are not easily
made with the continuous fluctuations in market prices and the difficulty in getting loans from the banks.

Rosedale Dairy Farm.
Rosedale is owned by Professor Ben Mweene. They currently hand milks forty-eight cows, mainly Holstein with a few Jerseys. All milk produced is sold to the fresh local market; being close to Lusaka is seen as one of the main advantages as well as the water supply. Milking is twice daily by six milkers; it takes two hours in the morning and an hour and a half in the afternoon. Cows know their own names when called into milking, this take approximately two weeks to train. The cows are fed a mixture of maize and high protein grass which is grown on the farm. The resulting twenty-one litres per cow is well above average for small scale farms.

Day 6: Thursday September 20th - Kevin Stewart, Scotland
The first visit of the day was to Kafue Fisheries farm which was an incredibly integrated business involved in fish, pig, cattle, and game farming, with each enterprise reliant on the others in some form. The fish farm which sold all produce into the local Lusaka market, produced around 900 tonnes per year from 126 ponds, utilising the pigs manure to ‘fertilise’ the ponds to create algal blooms which the fish feed upon. The simple but effective system housed the pigs on the banks of the ponds. In total the farm ran 250 sows which had been built up using high quality genetics imported from Northern Ireland. The group were highly impressed with the cleanliness and quality of the operation, in particular the pigs. This appeared to be down to the business installing the common belief throughout its workforce of animal health and welfare, spelt out from the writing on the walls which read ‘Treat each sow as an individual!’

Following Kafue fisheries the group were taken to the Millers farm which was a mixed farming operation over 2000 hectares in size. In 2014 the farm will celebrate its 100th year which is an indication of the progressive nature and strength of their business. They are currently producing 50,000 cabbages a week for the Zambian market, run 400 head of cattle as well as cereal cropping. To the delight of the group, we were then taken to an elephant orphanage which the Millers have been involved with in recent years. It was great to see the happiness and healthiness of 4 young elephants, however, on a personal level it was a stark reminder of the widespread impact and issue of poaching in Zambia, and more widely Africa.

Day 7: Friday September 21st - Courtney Wood, South Africa
The day began with a short bus trip to Anna's Village and we gathered to sing the Zambian national anthem. We were then greeted by Anna, who is the face of inspiration to myself, young and upcoming farmers and people from her village, Joe who is the President of ACSZ and Murray, who is the Vice-president of ACSZ. We were then entertained by the prisons band, Amaobe culture group, and school groups. The cultural differences and unique atmosphere was embraced by the visitors and in a few cases the delegates even joined in the celebrations.
We were then invited to have a look around the stands and also view the different crops grown in the village. Delegates were selected to judge the stands on presentation and also judge the land farmers on performance. The village mainly grows crops such as maize, onion and cabbage and raise animals such as cattle and broilers but have more traditional animals such as goats.
The Next Generation, led by Leona, started putting up posters of their profiles and the NG’s were proud to participate in JR’s Inside Out Project, representing:
'A showcase of the future faces of Agriculture. We are globally connected and passionate about creating a sustainable agricultural industry. We are CHANGEMAKERS through Innovation and Education.'

Day 8: Saturday 22 September - Grace Smith, UK
First stop of the day was at Mubuyu Farms Limited which is owned and operated by the Lublinkhof family. Jesper Lublinkhof gave a brief history and overview of the farm to all delegates along with the local tribal chief who had joined the group. Mubuyu Farm is a large, dynamic operation which consists of 1300 hectares of land farmed intensively. Coffee, wheat and soya beans are grown on a large scale and are milled on-farm in a modern milling
facility owned by an associate company, Nyati Milling. A community school and clinic for the large workforce (111 permanent & 566 casual workers) are also located on the farm. Milling - The mill was started in 1992 after the farm was unable to sell its wheat for a period of 2 years and has expanded ever since with a current capacity of 100 metric tonnes of flour per day. Flour is principally sold as a pre-mix (flour + salt + fat + sugar). Coffee - In 1999 Mubuyu Farms diversified into specialised large-scale coffee production and currently grows 270 hectares of the Arabica variety, which is marketed as Munali Coffee. The plants are under drip irrigation where water & fertiliser can be pulsed three times daily. The production cycle commences with coffee cherry picking and continues with pulping, washing, fermentation, drying, cleaning, storing, and roasting packaging of the coffee bean. In addition to coffee, soya beans (600ha) and wheat are grown (400ha) alongside flower seed production for the European market. Dams - A special feature of this farm was the dam, built by Willem Lublinkhof in 1984. The main dam has a capacity of 17 million cubic metres although Mubuyu consists of 14 linked dams. This was the first farm which had highlighted a concern over water resources.

After thanking the Lublinkhof family, delegates moved on to Kushiya Farm an integrated dairy, beef, game and cropping operation in Mazabuka. The tour focused mainly on the dairy and sugar enterprises. Mrs Robinson currently milks a herd of 400 Canadian Holstein Freisians, which undergo planned matings using Semex technology and is recognised as one of the top Zambian herds. The dairying is an intensive system with cows currently averaging 29 - 31 litres/day. Technology is key with electronic identification tags used for shedding and activity meters used for heat detection. One problem in the dairy system is heat stress in the cows; this is being addressed by selecting for smaller cows and the possible installation of misting units and fans. The Robinsons are also growers of 443ha of sugar cane under 9 centre pivots for Zambian Sugar Company. Currently, production is around 170 tonnes/ha and the sugar cane plants can be utilised for up to 16 years in highly fertile areas and 8 years in marginal areas. Approximately 300 head of game are killed every year for the meat market, in addition to revenue brought in from photography and hunting safari game drives. 13 species of game are present on the farm. The farm is serviced by a permanent labour force of 120, with 50 seasonal workers employed during the sugar harvest.

Day 9: Sunday 23 September - Prue Capp, Australia
The visit to Vwapa's farm at Kyauni demonstrated the opportunity for successful farming in Zambia on a small commercial scale. However it did not begin this way, with Vwapa the youngest of 10 children, inheriting the run down farm at the age of 16 when his father passed suddenly.
The 1500 ha farm consists of 300 dairy cattle and approx 600 beef cattle, with 10 workers manually milking 80 cows twice daily gaining yields of 1500 litres per day. The cows are all artificially inseminated by Vwapa himself, with 70% - 80% of cows taking the first time. Various diseases and ticks subject to the Kyauni area require local vets to vaccinate and drench the cattle accordingly as well as the farm dipping their cattle weekly.
Maize is produced on the farm as silage for the dairy cattle and Rhodes grass baled for cattle allowing the farm to be self sustainable. Profits from the milk are reinvested to ensure the future and longevity of the farm. Currently, Vwapa rents 5 houses in town and leases 7 trucks for a variety of purposes.
Vwapa is not only an entrepreneur but a role model for farmers in Zambia and around the world. His ability to gain high yields off minimal input and initial capital through knowledge, determination and passion for agriculture is certainly a quality to aspire to.

PRE CONFERENCE TOURS SUMMARY

The Pre-Conference tours provided all the delegates with a rare insight into Zambia's agricultural industry. Currently ranked third in the world for fastest population growth, it is vital that Zambia is able to continue growing and distributing food for their nation in a sustainable manner. From small scale and commercial farming to large commercial and agro-complex, delegates were able to communicate with farmers working within the industry about their particular farming methods as well as some of the challenges they face.
Next Generation Forum Report

The RASC Next Generation is a group of young delegates selected to attend the RASC Biennial Commonwealth Agricultural Conference. During the Conference the RASC co-ordinates a separate Next Generation Forum where future leaders of Commonwealth Agricultural Societies meet together, learn and discuss related issues. The youth selected to be a part of the RASC Next Generation Forum are chosen by RASC Member Societies as those showing the greatest potential to contribute to the long term face of agriculture in their regions, countries and around the Commonwealth. The RASC sees it is vital for tomorrow’s agricultural leaders to have networking opportunity with their counterparts from other Commonwealth countries, forming long lasting contacts and friendships. The knowledge and ideas amongst the Next Generation group is put to good use discussing matters and making recommendations to the RASC and its member societies on a range of issues.

The Next Generation (NG) team has organized this year’s Forum Theme as: Authentic Perspectives of Tomorrow ‘Our Shared Passions and Goals as the Next Generation Agricultural Leaders around the World’. We were proud to have had 68 NG delegates (34 females and 34 males), representing 15 Commonwealth countries in attendance at the NG Forum in Livingstone, Zambia.

Morning highlights from the NG Forum included:
- Welcome & Background to RASC presented by RASC Honorary Secretary Michael Lambert
- NG Strategic Plan Overview
- NG Delegate Presentations – Forum Discussion about the Challenges and Successes with Youth Groups
- Inspiring presentation by Mildred Kasonde on Young Leaders in Zambia
- NG Report on 3rd NG Understanding & Assistance Mission to Singapore/India given by Breyton Milford (South Africa) & Mcloud Kayira (Malawi)

A working lunch then took place where the Next Generation Delegates watched Hans Rosling’s TED Talk on Global Population Growth. Each group then discussed the topic of global food production & distribution needs for the future and about the roles in which the Next Generation will have. As a result each group mentioned the importance of education. To minimize waste, to continue reinvesting in research and development along side with building proper infrastructure was also highly talked about. The group continued to discuss how listening to consumer demands is important and that there is a social as well as professional side to agriculture that we must represent as young leaders.

A refreshing start to the afternoon included a presentation on social media given by Will Prichard followed by a discussion on the importance of raising awareness using current media streams.

The CEO’s of Member Show Societies then joined the NG’s for a session themed ‘Change is Necessary’ Three questions were asked and in mixed groups discussions took place and the following key points were raised:

- How has the role of Agricultural Societies changed and what opportunities are there for the future?
  Show societies originally began as exhibits for farmers and today the show focuses more on education and entertainment. Transition from traditional to commercial agriculture has taken place and shows are becoming age inclusive. However some shows have had a fear of change.

- What role will the Next Generation play? Show societies have perceived the Next Generation to be considered as the middle ground between those they are trying to educate in the agricultural community. The shows recognize that they need to be innovative and need to instil ‘new blood’ on their boards and committees.

- What can we do today to enable the Next Generation to be the change needed? Everyone agreed that a joint effort is needed from both parties to reach tangible results in moving forward. The CEO’s have confidence in the Next Generation to change perceptions and can demonstrate the way of the future. It is important that together we promote the traditions of the show and to also promote what the show society stands for and help the society in achieving their goals.
Next Generation Conference Summary Report
By Leona Dargis

Next Generation delegate conference highlights include:
Joining together as a 70 strong NG group on the first night for Dinner in the Bush.
Attending the Conference and learning more about Farming in Zambia, World Agriculture Day, and Show Society Day
Sunset cruise on the Zambezi River in the presence of HRH Princess Royal
Dancing after Dinner at the Boma
Collaboration between Zambian young farmers and the Agricultural and Commercial Society of Zambia (ACSZ) to start a Next Generation Group
Many more individual lessons learned and global networks created...

NG conference presentation highlights:
Welcome and Introductions to NG Presenters:
Leona Dargis – Honorary NG Facilitator – Northlands, Canada
Matambula Mwale – Zambian NG Leader 2012, Zambia
Breyton Milford – Agri-Expo, South Africa
Chelsea Wan – Kranji Countryside Association, Singapore
Will Hyde – Royal Bath & West of England Society, UK
Mcloud Kayira – Marshal Papworth Scholar, Malawi
Will Prichard – NG Mission Delegate, Wales UK
Toni Jericho – Agricultural Societies Council of NSW, Australia

Review of Next Generation History (since Calgary 2006)
RASC NG Understanding & Assistance Mission to Singapore & India 2011 Report
NG Forum Highlights
Message from Matambula Mwale, Zambian NG Leader
Featured InsideOut Project Zambia 2012 Video (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vILEtkfm9IQ)
Presented HRH Princess Royal with a signed copy of the 3rd NG Mission Book
NG Mission Book Links

In conclusion to both the Pre-Conference Tours, the Next Generation Forum and the Conference, I can honestly say that they have provided a ‘once in a lifetime’ learning opportunity and has created an impact on Zambian agriculture. The NG delegates have no doubt developed new friendships across the Commonwealth. The group projects have strengthened their skills and the group discussions have grown their perspectives. We are looking forward to our next journeys to take place within the RASC NG Network where the planning for the 4th Understanding & Assistance Mission has already begun and for the next NG Forum during the 26th Commonwealth Agricultural Conference planned to take place in Brisbane, Australia 2014.
The CEO seminar at the Zambian conference focused on a number of key areas. The overarching theme however was the sustainability of Agricultural Shows with an intent to highlight what various societies are doing to ensure that they are sustainable and remain relevant into the future.

Session 1 – The long-term sustainability of agricultural shows
The first part of the day’s workshop was an interactive session facilitated by Kate Meyrick and Russell Dart from the Hornery Institute, as well as Charlie Smith from Populous.

The session, which ran for nearly 3 hours, focused on the long-term sustainability of agricultural shows. During this session CEOs were divided into various groups and were asked to develop their “ideal” show. The ideal show was to highlight what the respective groups thought were the essential elements that had to exist to have a successful agricultural show. The groups then presented their version of the ideal agricultural show back to the seminar. The presenters had to sell their idea and explain why they had developed the show as they had.

An observation of the session was that there was a great deal of variation in views throughout the Commonwealth on what are the essential elements of an agricultural show. These included education, entertainment, animals, food, rides, unique retail experiences, as well as promotion and showcasing agricultural development.

Whilst there is no single, universal answer to what can make our agricultural shows sustainable into the future, it is certain that this type of strategic thinking is going to be necessary to ensure that we do survive.

Session 2 - Core Objective v’s Enabling Activities
The 2nd session was a presentation by Stephen Hutt, the Chief Executive of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. He focused on core objectives of the Agricultural Society versus enabling activities of the Society. The essence of this session focused on the necessity of agricultural societies to perform activities that aren’t necessarily directly related to their charter but are essential to the financial sustainability of the society.

Stephen defined a “sustainable” organisation as one that meets the needs of today, without adversely impacting on the needs of tomorrow. He went on to describe that to be sustainable it was also important to understand why the organisation exists. Stephen highlighted that in the case of the Royal Highland Show, their core objective is to support Scottish Agriculture and deliver the aspirations of their stakeholders. The Society is enabled in this task by their exhibition business and various business enterprises. He highlighted that the reason that it is important to clearly define these two aspects of operations is that they require different approaches, different skills sets and different business models. He also explained some essential elements within the organisation to achieve this balance. In particular, empowering and incentivising the CEO and senior managers to deliver, and ensuring staff are engaged with this idea of creating a sustainable business.

Session 3 - The IOWA State fair strategy for a sustainable future
This session was a presentation by Gary Slater, the Chief Executive of the Iowa State Fair. Again the theme of this was around sustainability of the Iowa State Fair and in particular Gary outlined their strategy for a sustainable future. What was interesting about this presentation was the comparison between American fairs and Commonwealth agricultural shows. There were a lot of similarities between the American fairs and Commonwealth agricultural shows and the challenges relating to sustainability and financial viability were also common to all organisations.

Gary gave some very specific examples of what they are doing within their fair to remain relevant to their audience. For example, they have introduced new competitions that are not strictly traditional but resonate with the current day audience. Gary also spoke about the trends in the American fairs and in particular that attendances at their fairs in a lot of instances are actually growing as opposed to the general trend amongst the Commonwealth shows of declining attendances.
dances. My observation from this forum was that it was very evident that the Iowa State fair is not limiting itself via tradition and is looking to its current market of fair goers for ideas on what they should be doing at their fair. I believe this is a very important lesson for all of us, that is, we need to be listening to our respective audiences to ensure that what we are doing is relevant, which in turn helps our financial viability and therefore sustainability.

Joint CEO and NG session - Change is Necessary - How has the role of Agricultural Societies changed and what opportunities are there for Agricultural Societies in the future?
The joint CEO and NG session was designed to try and focus the NG’s on examining and discussing the relevance of Agricultural Societies into the future. There were some interesting presentations from various NG’s however it was my observation that more can be done in future conferences to shape the direction of this joint session.

Brendan Christou
Chief Executive

Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland
Seminar co-ordinator
Conference Papers—Summary by John Bennett

Day 1 - Tuesday 25th September 2012
AGRICULTURE IN ZAMBIA

Paper 1 The State of Zambian Agriculture - Jervis Zimba, Zambian National Farmers Union (ZNFU)

Jervis started by noting the huge imbalance between supply and demand for food globally and said that many are looking to Africa for solutions to this problem.

An insight to how these solutions might be found; he stated that Zambia holds 40% of the region’s water but noted that water rights is somewhat of a grey area. He spoke of the geographic advantages of Zambia being linked to 8 other countries and mentioned the same point made by Dr Scott in acknowledging the benefits seen in Zambia through their acceptance of foreigners and foreign investment.

Jervis gave an outline of the ups and downs of Zambian agriculture over the past 20 years culminating in the current situation that it is now a nett surplus producer of Maize, one of the few countries with a surplus this year. Zambia is the only country in Africa that is self reliant in wheat, he said. Jervis acknowledged the presence in the room of the two largest wheat producers in the country and he said Zambians were rightly very proud of them.

Poultry has become a 42% contributor to livestock GDP, a figure bolstered by the increasing purchasing power of Zambian households or a growing middle class. Jervis noted that the dairy industry in Zambia is growing steadily, though still threatened by heavily subsidised imports. Cotton in Zambia has been threatened by a drop in global prices, a challenge faced in many parts of the world.

The key challenges of Zambian Agriculture as he sees them:
- Poor infrastructure and in particular road networks
- Lack of grain storage facilities
- Limited availability to agricultural finance
- Rising cost of agricultural labour
- Poor agricultural extension services

Positive growth in Zambian Agriculture is possible if:
- Cost of production remains competitive
- Extension services are increased
- Finance becomes more readily available
- Irrigation avails land for year round farming
- Infrastructure improvement is prioritized towards agriculture
- Government Intervention in Marketing

Jervis concluded by using the very effective ZNFU slogan - “No Farmer No Food No Future!”

Paper 2 - Small Scale Scene Setter - Anna Nawa

Anna was introduced as a front line field officer and Extension Worker, though she is well known to many at the conference as a role model RASC NG Alumnus.

Anna started by noting that between 11 and 16% of Zambian GDP is resultant of the toils of small scale farmers and that the sector employs the largest part of the Zambian population. Small-scale farms are those that are operated by the family, where the farm is their main supply of income.
Anna credited the government for their support of small-scale farmers through extension officers but echoed the point made by the previous speaker that more can be done.

She explained the importance of livestock to the small-scale farmer such as Oxen, Goats and Poultry and spoke of the diverse ways they interact with the family unit, the farming enterprise and the way of life of the people. Anna noted that success for small scale farmers will be underpinned by Methods, Inputs, Infrastructure and Ready Markets.

She highlighted the difficulties for the Next Generation of farmers to gain access to land and said that if they could, she has no doubt Zambia could be a food basket for the world. Anna said that seeing farmers develop their farms from a subsistence to a commercial basis is a big issue with limitations on development being the labour intensive nature of some of their methods, the small size of some of their landholdings and their lack of access to storage facilities leaving them at the mercy of the market entirely.

In summary, Anna spoke of the importance of Agricultural Shows for the development of farmers through encouragement of excellence through competition as well as the forum shows provide in knowledge transfer and skills development. The Conference pre tour visit to a small show staged in Anna’s community was an excellent portrayal of this.

**Paper 3 - Case Study – From Humble Beginnings - Jimmy Munjanja**

Jimmy gave a most inspiring account of the rewards that are possible through a dedication to farming in Zambia.

Jimmy said he was inspired by his father who farmed 36 acres and said his secret to success is “Hard Work, Attention to Detail and Strict Financial Discipline”. Jimmy said in farming “every coin counts”. Jimmy explained how he was exposed to commercial farming while on a study tour of the UK through a young farmers club and this had helped him a lot. After Jimmy commenced working hard back at home in Zambia he found that opportunities were afforded to him by others noticing his hard work and offering to invest in him. This resulted in him being able to buy his own 50 acre portion of land where he started everything from scratch. He learned to make do with what he had and said that inventiveness, perseverance and persistence were the key characteristics of a good farmer.

Jimmy is now a very successful farmer with enviable turnover and productivity who is a wonderful role model to the next generation.

**Paper 4 - Support for Small Scale Farming - Coillard Hamusimbi, ZNFU**

Colliard started by explaining that the ZNFU have 400 000 individual and emergent small scale farmer members and 43 commercial company members. Today he thinks it is no longer about “the big eating the small” when it comes to farming - it is “the fast and efficient eating the slow and inefficient”, the future will depend on a good balance between small and large scale farms.

There are 1.2 million small scale farming households in Zambia farming on 1 – 5 hectares with about 700 000 of these needing assistance to move to the upper segment who can be defined as “Emerging Farmers”. Those farms needing assistance are currently low input and low output operations who use only family labour to produce low yields. They have limited access to credit and are very reliant on rainfall. Colliard said that for these people “farming can’t continue to be a casino”

Colliard predicted that livestock kept by small scale farmers had the capacity to increase from 3 million to 10 million head. For such growth to be possible the following factors must be addressed:

- Farmers must consider themselves a business
- There must be better training of extension officers with perhaps a public/private driven extension system
Land title issues need to be resolved
Productivity needs to be increased through inputs and mechanization, irrigation and improved livestock genetics (although he cautioned that this doesn’t necessarily mean that small scale farmers all need tractors)
A good agricultural policy environment that is predictable would be of huge benefit.

Colliard concluded by saying that he feels strongly that there needs to be a mindset change amongst NGOs and that they must stop promoting hand outs which result in fading pride of the people.

**Paper 5 - Commercial Cropping in Zambia - Costain Chilala**

Zambia has about 1000 commercial farms and 50 Farming corporates. Costain gave a brief account of the development of commercial crops in Zambia beginning with predominantly maize and tobacco at independence to maize, cotton, wheat, tobacco, soyabeans and sugarcane today with the beginnings of an oil palm industry as well. Zambia is a surplus producer of maize and wheat with a sharp increase in soyabean and sugarcane production as well.

We heard of a growing domestic market through a stable democracy and investment climate. “Potential”, perhaps the word most oft used at the conference in relation to Zambian agriculture.

**Paper 6 - Commercial Farming in Zambia - Peter Macsporran**

Peter spoke first of many differing statistics which can be used when it comes to Zambian Agriculture but all telling the same story. He spoke of the vast areas of Zambia that are suitable for agriculture and the wonderful natural resources available to the country. Peter noted that the vast majority of Commercial Farmers in Zambia are now indigenous farmers. He gave a concise version of how Zambian agriculture has arrived at where it is today and spoke of some of the challenges and successes along the way – always important to recognize the successes and failures of the past in looking ahead. Peter said that Africa, as an importer, must first look to feeding itself before looking further afield to export those things it does not use.

He added that while as a whole Zambian Agriculture may be lagging behind other countries, best practice and state of the art farming does exist in the country with no doubt some of the best farmers in the world operating here. He noted that the benefits of large commercial farmers to a country like Zambia are many and real, particularly in encouraging small scale emerging farmers.

**Paper 7 - Management of Agro Complexes in Zambia - Francis Grogan, Zambeef**

Francis started with the words “this conference in Zambia is long overdue”. He spoke of a booming economy with confidence towards investment and presented an agricultural resume that would be the envy of many. 58% of the land in the country has a medium to high potential for agriculture but only 10% of it is currently used as such. The path ahead will need to be taken hand in hand with sustainability.

Francis gave an outline of Zambeef, a most impressive company that has thrived and successfully expanded both in Zambia as well as other African countries.
Session 1 - THE GLOBAL PICTURE

Paper 8 - The Challenges We Face – Professor Jeff Waage OBE

Professor Waage started by speaking of the millennium development goals and raised the important concern of the lack of acknowledgement of agriculture amongst them. Prof Waage said “Growth in Agriculture is more effective than growth in any other sector in alleviating poverty”.

Prof Waage then spoke of the difference between hunger and under nutrition and the effects this has on child mortality rates. “The link between agriculture and health does not even exist today”, Prof Waage said. He stated that 70% of infectious diseases have come through livestock and it is these sorts of negative figures that the public most readily associate with agriculture. He stated that while on a global scale the world is food secure, food distribution and access is the challenge. We will need a 70% increase in food production by 2050, BUT even if we achieve that, we will still have the challenge of global food distribution.

Prof Waage then spoke of some of the challenges we will face in meeting the world’s food needs in the coming decades. Changing diets was raised as a challenge, noting that people will eat more meat as their household incomes improve. Bio Fuel production will continue to divert agriculture away from food production also. Prof Waage asked if further land cannot be diverted to agriculture on a massive scale, then is increased productivity the answer? He showed a slide detailing yield increases in India, which highlighted a limitation as yields seem to have plateaued there.

Prof Waage also highlighted the challenges of Climate Change as a limitation to productivity through increased temperature, decreased precipitation and more floods and droughts. He spoke of some of the contributing factors of a global food price spike including increased demand, land now used for biofuels, droughts, cost of energy and fertilizer and trade restrictions. Action has to occur on all fronts”, he said. “Agriculture is Global”. “Research has shown that smallholder agriculture can be efficient”.

In conclusion Prof Waage said the way ahead will be forged with Resilient Products, Resilient Markets and Resilient People, with a focus on the empowerment of women and youth. We all have a role to play and African Agriculture is important to us all, he said.

Paper 9 – We’re All in This Together – The Lord Jones of Birmingham

Lord Jones described himself as an “Apolitical Change Maker”, he said “I’m going to be me, an effective change maker but not part of the collective”.

Lord Jones stated emphatically “We live in a very important time”. He spoke of the three pillars of Globalisation; the greatest migration of goods and services, the greatest movement of capital and the greatest migration of people the world has ever seen. “We all have a role to play, but how are we coping?” he asked. “That is us - We the Arrogant, We the Lucky”, he said.

Of 1.3billion people in China, 800 million live on under US$2 per day. “Human rights are what they are, on the ground, where you are”. We should use China’s dependence on us to ensure we all engage in discussions on how best we program the future together.

Lord Jones cautioned those of us from the west that we must prepare for “company on the top table”. “What happens when America doesn’t need the oil but China does?” he asked. “We all need a globally engaged America – don’t let them take their bat and ball and go home”
What about Europe today? – There has never been 70 years without war on the continent and today every girl born has a one in three chance of being alive at 100 with the same chances for boys being one in four. Lord Jones said “What we need is healthy, educated people, and a stable economic environment with no surprises”, “Business is the greatest exploiter”, he said “But it can also be the greatest benefactor”, he added. The key is education and operating on a “gender blind basis”. “No man has the right to more than a 50% say in the globe” he said.

**Paper 10 – Showcasing Farming: Development of Small Scale Agriculture in Mozambique – Euan Kay**

Euan Kay started by outlining the recent history of agriculture in Mozambique, emphasising what hadn’t worked in the past, again reminding us of the importance of looking to our history to determine the path ahead. Mozambique is the fastest growing economy in the world, he said.

“It is about stimulating local producers and providing a constant market for the people as a stimulus”, Euan said. Setting up of buying points in rural areas for the people to market their grain has been a key factor in their advancement. “If this is the model for the future and as small scalers become emergent, then this is how they will operate” he said. The movement from subsistence to business farming is possible.

Euan said it is about encouraging local farmers on the ground, who know how to manage the land and the people. It is not about grabbing large tracts of land, it is better to transport the products from where there is availability of land and farmers to work it. Euan said we must deliver on Africa’s potential to be the new green continent and this will happen if there is no government intervention in a free market.

**Paper 10 Cont’d – Showcasing Farming: Development of Small Scale Agriculture in Sierra Leone – Adrian Simpson**

Adrian started by highlighting the 100 year old trading partnership between the UK and Sierra Leone.

He spoke of a people “recovering from NGO dependency” – the same issue raised more than once the previous day. The value of internationally monitored elections was raised and credited with assisting the development of the country. “A small country can have swift change”, Adrian said. Although, there were challenges with two or more generations alive with no education. This will take a while to fix.

Historically there had been challenges in that small scale farmers had been exploited by buyers. Adrian’s company had begun by offering to help with some labour and offered cash and a fair price for products. The company set up local buying points and of course today even remote farmers have mobile phones from which to access global prices to keep buyers honest. The company has also set up a farmers support network.

**Paper 11 – Africa’s role in world food production. The Hon Deputy Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Ms Thokozani Khupe**

Ms Thokozani started by warmly thanking the RASC for putting on the conference.

“It is high time we moved away from managing poverty” she said “Instead we need to develop sustainable programs that will create a path out of poverty”

Ms Thokozani then read the speech prepared by The Hon Morgan Tsvangarai, Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in whose absence she presented making the following points:

The expected world population of 7.5 billion by 2020 with 85% of this increase expected to be in cities of the developing world. “Africa can not afford to take a back seat in this” she said.

A focus on increased productivity of small scale farmers should be given prominence.
Where once Zimbabwe was a bread basket, they have become a “basket case” over the past 10 years – a scenario they are seeking to reverse. The enormous potential of Zimbabwean agriculture, much like Zambia she also noted the challenges of security of tenure on agricultural land that had been raised by the Zambian Deputy President.

She urged her fellow African leaders not to shy away from biotechnology as a means to sustainably increasing productivity and she said international trade regimes must also be carefully considered.

She lamented that current projections indicate there will be little improvement in food security by 2020 and beyond – globally 135 million children will still be malnourished by 2020, a very small improvement since 1995 but dishearteningly there is expected to be an increase in these statistics for sub Saharan Africa.

She noted the detrimental effects of food aid handouts and suggested that assistance must move to real empowerment through addressing productivity. The role of the private sector will become increasingly important in relation to food security.

Finally, using the pre prepared words of The Hon Morgan Tsvangirai, Ms Thokozani urged the international community to support the democratization process that is slowly gaining momentum in Africa. “The world must stand with the people of Africa as they choose their leaders” she said.

Session 2 - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Paper 12 – Commercial Opportunities of Feeding the World
John Giles, Promar

John started by reminding us what many farmers mistakenly believe:

“We’re the best”
“Our competition are all subsidized”
“We don’t get paid enough”
“It’s not our fault”
“We have a unique micro climate”
“Last Year was just a bad year”
“The answer is to produce more”
“People will always want our products”

Per capita, incomes are increasing across the globe, and with this comes great opportunity for agriculture. The incorrect idea that Africa can’t produce more food has oft been quoted, John told us. Political stability is vital, John said, echoing the words of Ms Thokozani. “We need all 4 engines running to create food security”.

“Stability in pricing is paramount”.

He worries that some people are still in denial about climate change and this will be an obstruction to progress. John also mentioned the great problem of global food waste – 40% of what we produce is wasted.

We need to work closely with retailers; they can be the door to success. “Get involved with chains” was John’s suggestion.

John talked about effective world organisations such as Greenpeace, Oxfam and WWF. These people do what they do well - even though we mightn’t always agree with them. Should we be fighting with them or engaging with them? John suggests engaging with them will be far more effective. Corporate Social Responsibility – a key opportunity for advancement of agriculture if we choose to become engaged.
“Agriculture is all about demand not supply. The world should separate into more logical trading Zones”, John said and he showed us an interesting slide of where trading would ideally take place to gain best logistical advantage. Perhaps we should return to small scale permaculture rather than “big is best”.

John finished with the heartening words – “this is a good time to be a farmer”.

**Paper 13 – Opportunities Provided by Science – Graham Buchanan, Genus**

“Seizing the opportunity – Genomics. The introduction of genomics is the greatest innovation since the first straw of frozen semen” Graham said. “Genetics is the greatest determining factor of profitability for livestock. Today is the age of genome sequencing” he said.

The benefits of the “Genomic Revolution in Dairy Cattle” were explained to us showing astounding advances in herd performance and productivity.

Graham asked “Given world food needs and global agribusiness, will societal resistance to GM be sustainable or relevant? Will a non-GMO stance become a rich country niche?” There have been more than 10 years of GMO crops without any safety issues, we were told.

Graham finished with the words “If you are not breeding for profit, we wish you good luck with your expensive hobby!”

**Paper 14 – The role of Heritage Genetics – Dr Pharaoh Sianangama**

Dr Sianangama discussed heritage breeds of cattle, goats and chickens and how they had been selected in Africa for their ability to thrive despite disease, heat, humidity and poor nutrition. The same can be said for heritage breeds of plants used in agriculture. “You always need a historian to remind you of where you have come from” he said.

The use of traditional or heritage breeds (those that retain their historic characteristics) provides a substantial proportion of livelihood in Africa. They provide food, labour, clothing, manure, and entertainment. Dr Sianangama said “Genetic resources are an ancient and indispensible natural resource”. Even modern breeds such as Holstein and Angus have taken many years of tedious work to develop to where they are now, he said. Dr Sianangama underlined the importance played by breed associations in the keeping of herd books – a vital historic genetic record.

Dr Sianangama spoke of the dangers of crossing traditional breeds with foreign breeds and the loss of historical genetics, which have greater disease resistance and are more resilient to the environment they have lived in, they are are self reliant and unselective grazers. Dr Sianangama said we have to preserve this “Genetic Insurance” Farmers are also often ill prepared for the management of imported breeds compared to the traditional breeds they are used to. 70 % of traditional livestock breeds are in developing countries, breeds like Maasai sheep and Angoni cattle. There is a great threat of extinction of some traditional breeds through poor breeding practices, use of foreign breeds and the slaughter of traditional livestock. “The worldwide rate of loss of heritage genetics is about one breed per month” we were told. Dr Sianangama said there is a serious concern for the survival of traditional breeds in the US.

“There is a lack of animal breeders to plan and execute breeding programs for these animals, people who know how to shuffle the genes”.

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Paper 15 – Livestock Farming and Climate Change – Professor Duncan Mitchell

“Brace yourselves for bad news” we were told, “It is too late to stop it”. Prof Mitchell said livestock themselves contribute a surprisingly small amount to greenhouse emissions; it is everything that goes along with them that creates the issue. Feedlots are more sustainable than pastoral grazing when it comes to greenhouse emissions, however as climate change manifests hotter conditions in feedlots will make them far less productive.

In terms of livestock production the real issue is “global drying”, he said. Less water available for agriculture will be a big problem. “We don’t really know how our animals will adapt”, Prof Mitchell said, but there are several possibilities; Perhaps black sheep will be on the way out. There will be challenges ahead of selecting for both heat tolerance and productivity in genetics or we could be farming only select species of artiodactyls, or perhaps working all night and sleeping all day. Goats or even camels may be the predominant livestock of the future.

Paper 16 – Disease Control towards better food supply – Dr Gideon Bruckner

“Safe food begins with healthy animals”. “It is not just a matter of finding something wrong and treating it, we must look deeper into the problem”. We were told that the re emergence of diseases is an issue we are all facing.

Dr Bruckner lamented at the lack of funding for veterinary science particularly in Africa. Dr Bruckner also noted the mistakes made by donor agencies – “Subsistence Farming straight to tractors and export is not the way to go”.

Dr Bruckner highlighted the challenges we face in allaying consumer concerns about safe food. He painted a very clear picture of the many and varied challenges faced in animal health management and the particular challenges faced by agriculture.

So nice to hear the final words of this presenter “YES, it is possible!”

DAY THREE
Thursday 27th September 2012
SHOW SOCIETY DAY

Session 1 – SHOW SOCIETIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Paper 17 - The Culture of Agricultural Societies, Prof. Marion Demossier

Prof Demossier had titled her paper “An outsider’s view of Agricultural Societies”. “You are entertaining the public and showcasing what the society is about” she told us. However, there is a lack of externally published literature on this subject. “You do enormous work and not a lot of people outside know about it” she said. “More work can be done more visibly so people know more about you exactly as you are” - Something that is up to us to rectify!

“It is about the relationship between Agricultural Societies and Shows” Prof Demossier said. “Shows are developing throughout the world with more people in attendance. “If agriculture is what is driving the increase, then it’s importance must be recognized”. Prof Demossier gave us a quote that she felt nicely depicts farming; “Farming is a business locked into the global contexts of government and commerce as well as par contre, a precious and embodied local way of life constantly challenged to adapt to the wider world”
We are about “mediating rural and urban worlds”, we were told, whether that be performing, informing or educating. “The information you have is enormously valuable to humanity” Do we realise this ourselves? “You are a mixture of business, competition, spectacle and consumption. Globalisation has caused people to want to engage at the local level” They want a greater sense of community and to recognize our local heritage.

“Urban middle class consumers have no concept of agriculture and the state doesn’t play a role, this is where Agricultural Societies have a role to play”

Session 2 – DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING OUR SHOWGROUNDS

Paper 18 – Enhancing Showground’s assets through private development

Part 1 - Charlie Smith Populous

Charlie started with the words “It’s always about the money”. Showgrounds are increasingly being lost because they can’t sustain themselves. He spoke of the severe issues faced by the California expo once their funding was significantly impacted by a change in government policy.

Charlie outlined some very innovative ways showgrounds are securing their income streams through partnerships. “Be careful with residential though”, he cautioned “they’re not our friend, we’re dusty, noisy and smelly”, he said. As our facilities develop according to the varying and diverse uses for income they can provide, they must still be us uniquely on the inside, Charlie advised.

Charlie reminded us of the very successful Disneyland concept – “Happy in, happy out, tell someone about it and come again”

Part 2 – Stephen Hutt, CEO, The Royal Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland

Stephen was introduced to us as a man with a business background. He started by expressing his unease at the term “Show Society”. At Royal Highland we are an AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY that has a show.

RHASS is about delivering aspirations, Stephen said. He spoke about the Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) and the success this has proven to be for the society. Most importantly it is tied to Scotland’s educational curriculum. Later in questioning we heard that it is not always a matter of seeking curriculum change to accommodate agriculture but using agricultural concepts which already tie in with much of what is exists in varied curricula. Maths, science, home economics, history and geography are all relevant to agriculture and vice versa.

“We showcase all that’s best about Scotland” Stephen said.

“There are no mistakes, no coincidences, all events are blessings given to us to learn from”
“What is right today is not necessarily right for tomorrow”
“opportunities come to the prepared mind”
“We have to encourage risk taking”

“Do not confuse your enabling activity with your objective” Stephen advised. “Keep the making money department and the spending money department separate”

Stephen agreed with other speakers in making the statement “We don’t understand how important we are” and amongst the unrecognised things we do is our ability to provide a forum where business is done.

Lastly Stephen highlighted the huge value we have in “organisational memory”.

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Part 3 – Brendan Christou, CEO, Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland (RNA)

Brendan gave an update of the redevelopment of the RNA Showgrounds and started by outlining their drivers for change: a maintenance backlog, a decline in show attendances, an undiversified business model and a desire to remain on their current site.

Brendan showed a graph with dire predictions for his society by 2022 with a continued downturn in attendances. He spoke of the opportunities of business diversification, but with them comes the challenge of business departments working together and deciding where the money goes.

Brendan outlined a fantastic redevelopment project for this society and how wonderful that we will get to see the finished product as the venue for our 2014 Commonwealth Agricultural Conference.

Paper 19 – The ACSZ Showgrounds Story – Cosmas Michello, ACSZ

Mr Michello spoke of the ACSZ Showground – 141 Hectares of prime land in Lusaka. A range of partnerships with leaseholders has been negotiated over time to see the society maximize its financial return from the land it has, year round while still retaining the space and access to facilities it needs to stage a successful show.

This was a proven success story of sustainable showground development. The ACSZ were one of the first of our societies to go down this path and theirs has proven to be a very sustainable model over an extended period of time. Mr Michello said “increased revenue has seen an increase in exhibitors at the show as the society became more financially successful”. No doubt proof that enabling activity can deliver the society’s actual objective if it is handled appropriately.

Paper 20 – Show Societies and How They Add Value to Agriculture – John Rothwell, Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of South Australia

John started with the same point we have heard several times today – “You must first look back to history”. He spoke of the challenges of early farming settlers in Australia, starting agriculture from scratch. They formed Agricultural or Show Societies to hold competitions and provide a forum to exchange knowledge in agriculture and begin to feed the colony. John reminded us that many standards used in modern commercial agriculture today were first developed at Agricultural Shows.

Today though, John spoke of Agriculture diminishing in its contribution to GDP in comparison to other sectors, “it’s just not as important as it once was” he said. “But if agriculture isn’t as important, then why are shows still important” he asked. John said first we have to decide if we are a show society or an agricultural society. Shows contribute a lot through their competitions, but their relevance is being challenged, John said. John’s show is seeing significant growth in their competitions and he said this is a result of delivering tangible benefits to exhibitors. “Producers do see business value in competition” John said, he also highlighted the importance of providing a forum where business is done, echoing the words of Stephen Hutt earlier.

John showed a very good table he uses to link each facet of his show directly to agriculture. Where a link could be made he had assigned up to 5 stars as a measure of the effectiveness of the link. This tool had been of benefit to his organization in determining where work could and should be done in delivering their objects.

John also agreed with others at the conference in saying Agricultural Societies need to engage in policy discussion to a greater extent, but he held that this was likely to be a very gradual process.
Report on outcomes

The workshop was carried out in the format of a strategic appreciation. Its purpose was to consider the aim of the Society, suggest and test the factors which affect the aim, plot perceptual maps and identify the courses open.

The current aim of Society requires it to engage in matters of sustainable agriculture, forestry and fishing, the rural economy and productivity, the promotion of agriculture and rural concerns and development and extension work. There was general agreement that the scope of the current aim was too wide and it was not therefore achievable.

Eight factors affecting the aim were discussed:

Human resources.
A majority of delegates considered that a CEO was required. Most thought that membership is too exclusive. Senior members have the same outlook and thus the same views on issues. It was felt that the volunteer factor is most important. There was a consensus that NGs are not sufficiently involved in decision making. The royal connection is important – the Society should focus on the young royals.

Time
Opinion was varied on the 2-year cycle based around the conference. Some thought the pulse of activity was beneficial, others felt it created vague aims and goals. There was little enthusiasm for a 5-10 year business plan (possibly because some delegates considered that it was sufficient to have commenced planning on the next two conferences). Ideas for the better use of time included annual meetings for special interest groups, a 3-year conference cycle and CEOs engaging in a mission (c.f. NG mission). There were several ideas as to how time at conference could be better programmed.

Geography (Space)
There was general agreement that the Society should engage more widely and specifically outside the Commonwealth. The aim should be able to address regional, developmental and cultural differences. There was a sense that the Commonwealth is more highly regarded outside the UK. The travel distance problem is reducing as web based communication increases.

Finance
The vital importance of enabling finance was acknowledged. It was considered that with sponsorship, conferences should be value driven and self funding. Income streams for non-conference activities could be derived from Commonwealth direct funding, governments (e.g. Gift Aid), investments from member societies, broadening membership to non-Commonwealth countries, introducing additional membership categories and various forms of merchandising.

Internal/External Customers
It was agreed that the Society’s charitable objective should be public benefit. However there were mixed messages as to whether the Society’s aims should be similar to those of its members or complementary. There was firm opinion that in delivering on its aim, the Society must be relevant to its members, add measurable value, encourage regional networking and foster commercial relationships. It should have dealings with the public and at government level.

Communication
It was felt that the RASC needs to develop direct communication channels. The RASC News should be distributed by email. It was noted that communication by social media is essentially a reserve of the developed countries. The RASC should have a user friendly interactive web site. It was considered that the aim should embrace broad based communication, communication to non-members and external agencies, members’ reports, physical interaction, media activity. Communication should include Pidgin English. It was recommended that the conclusions of the strategy workshop should be published.
SWOT

Strengths Royal patronage, Commonwealth brand, common goals, NGs, strong leadership, willing participants, commitment, knowledge base.

Weaknesses Lack of clear vision and purpose, <50% membership of Commonwealth countries, no succession planning, poor financials, resistance to change, relevance to large show societies, lack of continuous action, transient workforce (new people at every conference), cost, apathy post conference.

Opportunities: NGs as decision makers in member societies, additional financial support from member societies, partnering between members, travel, agricultural issues are taking world centre stage, RASC geographical spread means the message can be widely disseminated.

Threats: Losing relevance to broader agriculture, loss of delegate sponsorship, member societies undervalue NGs, effect of socio cultural environment, societies undervalue RASC membership, decline in member societies, apathy post conference (also a weakness).

SMART

It was agreed that the aim should be:

- **Specific** – with a well defined strategy
- **Measurable** – with strategic goal milestones
- **Achievable** – with broad based stakeholder agreement
- **Realistic** – within the limited resources available
- **Timely** – there is indeed a time limit

PERCEPTUAL MAPS

Perceptual maps for influence, impact and scope were plotted. These come with “health warnings” – particularly that the delegates do not have an in-depth knowledge of the RASC and thus their opinions may not be well informed and their conclusions may be subjective.

Nevertheless, the perceptual map for influence suggests that delegates consider that a significant proportion of stakeholders are unaware of the activities of the RASC and it is on the borderline of being ineffective. Delegates think awareness should be raised significantly and the society needs to be considerably more effective in carrying out its aim.

The map for impact suggests that the delegates consider the RASC moderate in outlook and slightly passive in its approach. They think it should become significantly more active and slightly more radical in its efforts to make an impact.

The map for scope suggests that there is no consensus among delegates as to what the scope of the RASC is or should be. This reflects the earlier general agreement among delegates that the scope is too wide. The balance of views is that the RASC should be slightly less show oriented and become involved in a variety of activities. It should be slightly less populist in outlook and concentrating slightly more on the application of science.

COURSES OPEN / BEST COURSE

There was no single conclusion as to what the aim of the RASC should be. Of those who expressed an opinion, the majority (36%) considered that the best course was to increase awareness of agriculture and rural concerns. Significant minorities considered that best course was to encourage high standards in sustainable agriculture, forestry and fishing (23%) and to encourage development and extension work by agricultural societies (21%).
Information about the 26th Commonwealth Agricultural Conference, which will be held in Brisbane, Australia will be available soon at

www.therasc.com