



## Fortune Favours the Prepared

James Lawrence Pavilion – Room 1  
Monday, 4 May 2009 – 1.00pm - 5.00 pm

*This hard hitting and factual seminar will challenge your thinking on two big issues facing the beef industry: emissions trading and the business of producing beef.*

*Speakers will include Gerard Kennan, Phil Holmes, Drew Wagner, John Rolfe and Zanda McDonald.*

### **“The Opportunity of Crisis - in Energy, Environment, Economics and Ethics”** **(Gerard Kennan)**

Facing perfect storm conditions that now includes global crises in economies and bank credit, the agri-food sector must achieve massive *reductions in methane emissions*, supply *affordable food*, be *internationally competitive* and make *satisfactory returns* - on the face of it mutually exclusive goals. However, the challenge can be met through major innovation, in mould-breaking relationships to implement existing best knowledge as well as in new, breakthrough science-technology. The effects of this will be massive and transformational - economic, environmental, energy and ethical.

The agri-food sector, from (before) farm to fork, can massively reduce *methane per kilo of milk or beef*, reduce costs and improve sector competitiveness and profits. For example, at farm level, reductions of 30% in methane per kilo of milk or beef are achievable within 5 years through improved feed conversion efficiency, by utilizing *existing technology* and knowledge. The change required is innovative arrangements of collaboration between suppliers and customers, including shared incentives for savings and efficiency. Within 10 years, further reductions to 60% or even more will be achieved from breakthrough research and technologies yet to be developed for the new collaborative, innovative culture.

For years we've all known the industry, could be and should be better. The world conditions, which we face for the foreseeable future, mean we have no choice. Governments, short on tax revenues, will have limited resources to help. The sector must help itself - from universities, feed companies, animal and plant genetics suppliers, machinery companies, vets, agronomists and nutritionists through to producers, processors, retailers and consumers.

### **“Seduction costs” (Phil Holmes)**

It's ever so easy to be seduced in the beef production business! You can be swept up by all manner of things in your time and have a series of wild flings that leave you breathless. However, like all passionate affairs with no future, you can also be left alone, disillusioned and sometimes broke. Take the humble cow for example – she oozes seduction. You can admire her beauty, her lines, symmetry and breeding. You can buy the perfect mate for her, keep her fat and content and forgive her for all manner of sins when she lets you down. You can attend a never ending stream of seminars, field days and courses in the name of improving her lot with a plethora of technical gee whizzery and in return she will lick the bonnet of your Toyota every time you drive into the paddock. It's true love! But, seduction costs! There is another way

of looking at cows and the business of producing beef. It's harder to do, it takes you right outside your comfort zone and it creates a whole new problem, managing fat cash flows. There is just one hurdle to jump over – accepting that there is more potential love in cash than cows!

**“Climate Change and the Australian Agriculture Sector . . . the prediction, the needs, the issues and the outcomes” (Drew Wagner)**

*A snap shot of not only where we are now, but how we got to there*

### **Methane Emissions from beef cattle in central Queensland**

***(Professor John Rolfe)***

Beef cattle contribute about 7% of national greenhouse gas emissions through the release of methane into the atmosphere. Cattle in northern Australia produce more methane per unit of beef produced because of tropical (C4) grasses and slower average growth rates. While agriculture is not currently included in the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), there is potential for this to be reviewed in the future. In this talk the options and costs involved in reducing methane emissions from cattle production are reviewed, followed by some discussion on the future relationship to the CPRS.

**“A presentation from a beef producer’s perspective on the two issues of emission trading and beef business management and how MDH Holdings are addressing them now and planning for the future.” (Zanda McDonald)**

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## About the Speakers

### Gerard Keenan

After graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce degree from University College Dublin and working with John Deere in Manheim, Germany, Gerard Keenan helped launch Richard Keenan & Co. in 1978.



In 1992, he was promoted to Managing Director and Executive Chairman. During his tenure, he has led the development of the Keenan System, combining mixer-wagon and nutrition expertise, to become the global leader in total mixed ration feeding of ruminants and Europe's largest mixer wagon manufacturer with over 85% of sales in export markets.

Gerard Keenan has championed significant investments in research and technology, including the building of a scientific advisory team of US, European and Australian experts in food and agriculture.

During the 1990's he served as a non-executive director on the Irish Export Board, Ireland's national overseas trade development organization and in the last five years he has been a contributor to the O'Driscoll Enterprise Strategy Group on Irish industry and to foresight studies of the rural and agricultural communities of Ireland and Europe.

In 2005 he was a finalist in the Ernst and Young National Entrepreneur of the Year.

### Phil Holmes

Phil is the principal of Holmes & Company, a Sydney and Wagga Wagga based firm providing business information to agriculture and other non-agricultural small businesses.



Holmes & Company advised corporate and family farm businesses that extend from the New England of NSW to Victoria, the Bass Strait Islands, Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Holmes & Company also advises national and multi-national firms provide essential inputs for Australian agriculture.

Phil's special interests are commercial beef production, agricultural sustainability, finance and equity investing and general business performance. He is currently completing a PhD on the environmental and economic sustainability of arid rangeland beef production. Phil chairs the board of directors of a number of private companies.

### Drew Wagner

Drew Wagner is AgForce Queensland's Policy Advisor – Environment, which includes, for his sins in a past life, all things Carbon.

Drew has been at AgForce for just over a year, and was previously with the Federal Department of Environment for 10 years, seven of which were with the Australian Greenhouse Office. Here Drew worked on many different programme and policy areas, specifically with industry in dealing with climate change and the possible impacts of global warming.

Drew currently sits on several State and Federal task Forces and round Tables representing the Agricultural Sector and has previously represented the National Agricultural Sector at International Conferences, and taken a role in the negotiating party for Australia at the UNFCCC COP13 in Bali.

## John Rolfe

John Rolfe is a resource economist who is Professor in the Faculty of Business and Law of the Central Queensland University at Rockhampton. John has a number of research interests, but specialises in agricultural production issues, resource tradeoffs, and economic impact assessment in regional areas. He currently is Director of the Centre for Environmental Management at Central Queensland University, and is also a member of the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development.



John has more than 80 refereed publications in the form of journal articles, book chapters, book reviews and conference papers, and a further 250 non-refereed journal articles, conference papers and research reports. John has led a number of major research projects (> 30) over the past 10 years for a total funding value of more than \$3.6M. He has a background in agriculture and operated a cattle property in the Central Queensland region for a number of years.

## Zanda McDonald

Raised on a North West Queensland cattle station, Zanda McDonald completed 7 years of primary school on Mount Isa School of the Air, followed by secondary school at Downlands College, Toowoomba, during which time he obtained his pilots license



After completing school, Zanda returned home to work in the stock camp on various family owned properties before obtaining his helicopter license and flying mustering choppers full time for 3 seasons. After a 3 year stint as head stockmen, Zanda took on a more senior role in the company, including managing Devoncourt Station south of Cloncurry.

In 1996, Zanda toured South East Asia with the Brahman breed society looking for opportunities abroad. On his return, he sought and gained a live export license, and for the next 7 years exported primarily company owned live cattle to Indonesia while living and managing the remote "Rutland Plains Station" in lower Cape York with his newly acquired wife Julie.

In recognition of Zanda's industry achievements, he was awarded the 2002 Nth QLD Rural Manager of the year award from the Australian Institute of Management

To further drought proof MDH, in 2002 Zanda researched, purchased and designed the state of the art, 10,000 SCU "Wallumba Feedlot" on the darling downs. Since its construction, genetic improvement in the herd has been a focal point.

In 2006 Zanda was asked to chair the inaugural NW QLD regional beef research committee, which is part of NABRC (Nth Australian Beef Research Council)

Currently a director of MDH Pty Ltd running 165,000 head of cattle over 3.37 million hectares, Zanda now lives at Devoncourt with Julie and their 4 daughters.