

Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association



Media release

International speakers talk food, markets and why NT has winning edge

March 16, 2010

A strong international focus and an insight into why the Northern Territory beef industry is one of the best placed food production sectors in the world to benefit from changing consumer trends lead this year's NT Cattlemen's Association annual conference agenda.

Two speakers are being brought from overseas for the March 26 event - food marketing expert Professor David Hughes and Chinese economic specialist Chenjun Pan.

Professor David Hughes is Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at Imperial College in London.

"Prof Hughes has had his finger on the pulse of global food industry developments for the past 30 years and is widely regarded as the "go-to" man if you want to find out what consumer groups are thinking," NTCA executive director Luke Bowen said.

"What motivates a person to buy one product over another? Do they make their decisions as a citizen or a consumer? These are the sort of questions Prof Hughes will be getting the audience to think about," Mr Bowen said.

"Consumers are increasingly seeking something different and this often involves buying food and other products that guarantee, for example, certain levels of environmental or animal welfare credibility.

"Getting a good grasp of what buyers are looking for is of critical importance to our industry.

"Changing our production systems, marketing and distribution can take considerable time and to remain a competitive and viable industry we need to be ahead of the game."

Chenjun Pan is a senior industry analyst with Rabobank International.

Her advice is often sought by many of the world's leading agri-food corporations looking at market entry strategy into Asia.

"Chenjun will talk about Asia's capacity for domestic production and where the Australian beef industry can fit into this," Mr Bowen said.

Emerging trade opportunities in India will also feature in her presentation.

"China and India were the world economic powerhouses leading to the 15th century," Mr Bowen said.

"Their position was overtaken by Europe, America and other emerging economies. Today however, we see the re-emergence of these two historical powers driving demand for consumer products, food and services.

"Chenjun will give us an insight into the potential of these markets in terms of the consumption of goods and services and what their capacity is to produce agricultural commodities.

"The Northern Territory beef industry should be preparing to tap into these markets by identifying our specific advantage and being ready when opportunities present themselves."

Other key topics being covered at this year's conference include:

- Animal welfare, with Chief Executive of the RSPCA Heather Neil and Nuffield scholarship winner Annabelle Coppin;
- Future planning and succession with Rob Cook, of Suplejack Station, and expert in the field, Lyn Sykes; and,
- The latest in market and research and development news with MLA's Tim McCrae and Rebecca Austin.

The conference is being held at the Darwin Convention Centre on March 26, 2010. Registration commences at 7.30am for an 8am start.

For a full conference program and registration details go to www.ntca.org.au or phone the NTCA office in Darwin on (08) 8981 5976.

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