Top-ranked speakers from across the globe ensured ‘The Business of Balance’ - as it applies to northern pastoralism - was thoroughly dissected and debated at the NT Cattlemen’s Association’s 32nd Annual Industry Conference, hosted by the Barkly Branch at the Alice Springs Convention Centre on 18 March.

Over 500 Australian and overseas industry stakeholders participated in the day-long Friday conference and other program events staged throughout the Thursday and Friday. These included the popular Ladies’ Luncheon (hosted by Northern Stock Water); a speakers’ and media field trip that observed pastoral diversification in action, leading-edge DPIF research at Old Man Plains Station and the NTCA’s Bohning Yards facilities; Welcome Drinks (sponsored by Pioneer Water Tanks), and the always-eagerly anticipated grand finale - the Elders-sponsored NTCA Gala Dinner.

The conference theme, The Business of Balance, was reinforced as integral to diverse aspects of the cattle industry. The NTCA says the business of balance plays a crucial role in the lives of all Territorians, especially the men and women of the cattle industry.

“Achieving balance is fundamental in the dynamic of everyday pastoral life,” it says.

NTCA president Tom Stockwell applauded the continuing success of the association’s annual conference.

“The event has gone from strength to strength,” he said. “The top level speakers and thought-provoking program we put in place each year ensures that it continues to attract keen interest from beef industry players across the Territory, Australia and overseas.”
President urges members: ‘Renew & rally as polls loom’

On the back of another successful annual conference, the NTCA would like to thank our members for their continued support. The NTCA annual conference attracts international guests and national interest and provides us a platform to highlight issues of importance.

As a result of consistent member engagement and high quality speakers the conference is highly sought after by sponsors and industry colleagues wishing to engage and support our event.

Continued member support has enabled the NTCA to be recognised as one of the most influential and relevant state industry bodies in Australia. The strength of the NTCA is in its membership, united voice and consistent approach to addressing challenges and opportunities for our industry.

To advance and protect the interests of our members the NTCA shall continue to remain engaged and informed at all levels, seeking at all times to enhance long-term productive relationships with our trading and supply chain partners, consumers, the broader community and other stakeholders.

We are now embarking on a year that will be dominated by a Territory and Federal election and will require NTCA leadership on key issues affecting industry and Northern Australia. The NTCA will be maximising its attention on key issues at the Territory and national levels during 2016.

The continued involvement of members in our association is critical and we encourage all members to renew.

Tom Stockwell - President

Membership renewal forms are available from the NTCA at: office.darwin@ntca.org.au

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2016 Pastoral Real Jobs Program recruits attended the NTCA’s annual conference in March and discovered there are far more aspects to cattle industry work than the dusty stock camps and sitting in the saddle rounding up cattle. “It was a huge eye-opener,” program manager Tara Fulwood says. “They didn’t realise, until visiting the displays and talking to people, just how big and broad-ranging the industry was, and the enormous spread of jobs people did to keep the industry going.

SEE Real Jobs Update - Page 17
UCV notification process now more transparent: NTCA

In what the NTCA describes as a significant step forward, the Northern Territory Government has streamlined its method of notifying pastoral landholders about their latest Unimproved Capital Valuation assessments.

“For the first time, industry will now receive these valuations in draft form and you will have a 30 day period to comment if you wish to do so,” CEO Tracey Hayes says.

“This is significant progress and has added a layer of transparency to the process. The due date for feedback is 12 May 2016 and I encourage you to make use of this opportunity to avoid the objection process if possible.”

Landowners are now receiving formal letters notifying them of their:
1. Unimproved Carrying Capacity for 1993 and draft figures for 2015, and
2. Unimproved Capital Value for 1 July 2012 and the draft figures as at 1 July 2015.

Due to industry pressure, the government has decided not to include Buffel Grass in the calculations for Unimproved Carrying Capacity.

Once the process is complete, the information will be passed on to the Minister for a decision regarding the multiplier percentage.

NTCA continues to lobby for a fair roads funding carve-up

The NTCA continues to lobby strongly for a fair share of the Federal Government’s allocated beef roads funding as talks take place to determine priority hotspots and the level of funding needed to fix them. The NTCA has nominated important beef roads throughout the Territory that it argues are in desperate need of attention.

Roads funding was a key topic during the March ministerial round table talks in Darwin, convened by the new Federal Minister for Northern Development, Matt Canavan, who was handed the portfolio during the Prime Minister’s latest reshuffle.

Participants included representatives from the NT Cattlemen’s Association, Chamber of Commerce, the mining and seafood sectors and the Darwin business sector.

Agenda items included Northern Australia Infrastructure and beef roads funding, leveraging opportunities from north Australian development, and pathways for business in the north.

Minister Canavan said the initiatives were integral to the government’s economic agenda. “When the north grows, so too does the rest of Australia - and I am excited to be part of this new era of development” he said.

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Northern Territory pastoral leaders have paid tribute to Barkly cattleman John Dunnicliff who passed away in Sydney over Easter. John and his family took up Beetaloo Station in the northern Barkly in 2002 following his decades of livestock industry experience on properties in NSW, King Island and the Kimberley. In a huge-scale effort to improve pastoral production on Beetaloo and neighbouring Mangabroom, John committed to installing hundreds of watering points across the landscape to service smaller grazing paddocks. The work, at a scale never before attempted in the Territory, allowed him to dramatically expand his cattle herd. NTCA president Tom Stockwell said John Dunnicliff was held in the highest regard by the pastoral community. “John Dunnicliff was one of those grand and lovely old bushmen and industry identities, Tom said. “His experience across the length and breadth of this land has left an impression on many districts. “His penchant for innovation, questioning how things are done normally and finding better ways of doing things, is the mark that John will leave. I suspect his development of Beetaloo will be a long lasting memorial to his way of thinking and to his efforts of property and herd development throughout his career.” “He was very generous with his time and thinking. He loved his cattle, land, family and the industry he worked in, and was prepared to give his time to anybody who asked of it. For everything that he had done, he was a very unassuming gentleman.” Chief Executive Officer Tracey Hayes described John as a best practice producer, an innovator and a ‘thinker’. “John had the courage to blaze trails and break new ground, investing in emerging technologies and methods for land and cattle management.” she said. “In success or failure he shared his knowledge and learnings, providing practical examples and evidence, inspiring others and leading industry”. Former NTCA president, David Warriner said John was always looking for alternatives to the norm and endeavoured to exploit them, usually with success. “He was rarely happy with the status quo and it would be safe to say he was an advocate of the quote ‘the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different result’. “If John was not satisfied, something was invariably about to change!” 

Family and friends celebrated John’s life at Holy Name Parish at Wahroonga, NSW on 5 April.

Indonesian student group arrives in Darwin

After a hectic round of interviews and assessments by NTCA staff in Indonesia, 20 students have arrived in the Territory to participate in the 2016 round of the Indonesia Australia Pastoral Program. This year’s mix of 10 female and 10 male animal husbandry students landed in Darwin on 1 April and after an official welcoming reception at the Indonesian Consul’s residence, travelled to Katherine to begin their NT industry journey. Their nine-week program includes training at CDU’s Katherine rural campus to learn the basics of stockmanship, animal welfare, station maintenance and other important aspects in preparation for work experience on participating cattle stations. The NTCA’s Carley Bidstrup and Tara Fulwood spent two weeks travelling to Indonesia destinations including Makassar, South Sulawesi and Lombok as part of the interview process, and worked alongside Robi Agustiar and Wahyu Ramdani to select the most suitable candidates out of 120 university students who applied for this year’s program. The interview team reported the standard of presentations was excellent, and that the passion and creativity shown by students for taking a lead on their future and building a strong and proud industry, had also been impressive. NTCA president Tom Stockwell attended the program’s alumni launch in Indonesia last year and has praised the initiative. “I said at the launch that there is no better school than a university agriculture department or a stock camp on a Territory station,” he said. “The growth in the young people from both backgrounds was an absolute joy to see and earns them and our industry a lot of credit. Amongst many others, I would like to thank Robi Agustiar and Wahu Ramdani for their continuing work with this program.”
Lush desert & fat cattle impress visitors

Principals of Sino-Australia Top Beef (SATB), a prominent online seller of Australian beef and other commodities to the Chinese market, took a close look at industry operations and facilities during a recent familiarisation tour in Central Australia.

They were also guests at an NTCA-hosted afternoon tea where they were able to meet Central Australian and Barkly cattle producers and other industry stakeholders.

The group’s visit followed the NTCA’s recent trip to China with Chief Minister Adam Giles to explore potential market opportunities for NT beef producers. SATB sources premium food products, including Australian beef, lamb and wine for online sales to China and is keen to expand its range and supply sources. It also has existing operations in Australia including a feedlot in NSW.

The delegation included SATB Board Chairman and President, Mr Zhang Yong and his daughter Vivian Zhang. Their tour out of Alice Springs included visits to the NT Government-run Old Man Plains Research Station, and to Deep Well Station where their host Billy Hayes and Viv Oldfield introduced them to the station’s prime Angus-cross cattle herd both on the ground and from above by helicopter.

The visitors expressed surprise at the region’s lush green landscape, saying they were expecting dry desert-type conditions.

Chief Minister Giles invited the company principals to visit so they could experience the beef and live cattle export supply chain across the Territory.

He said the government saw the growing Chinese middle class as providing huge potential for NT markets to fill their needs with safe, clean local cattle.

“Increasing demand for beef in China makes our live cattle exports an attractive option for Chinese companies and operations like SATB who provide high quality meat cuts online.” he said.

“SATB online sales for Chinese consumers consist of brands in frozen beef sold as steak, kids’ steaks, family packs and gift packs and with members of over 100 million, the demand is high and growing daily.

“SATB sources beef from Casino in NSW and lamb from Victoria but they aim to grow their online beef sales by 40 times, representing a potential opportunity to purchase live cattle from the Territory.”

The visitors also travelled to the Top End where they inspected primary industry facilities including DPIF’s Berrimah Research Farm and Export Yards, and AACo’s Livingstone Beef processing facility at Noonamah on the outskirts of Darwin.

NTCA representatives 2016

The recent NTCA and Branch AGMs resulted in the following committee people being elected for 2016:

NTCA
Pres: Tom Stockwell
Vice Pres: Jak Andrews
NFF: Rohan Sullivan
CCA: Markus Rathsmann

Top End Branch:
Chair: Markus Rathsmann
Deputy Chair: Colin Deveraux
Alternate: Tony Hayne

Katherine Branch:
Chair: Jak Andrews
Deputy Chair: Justin Dyer
Alternate: Jay Mohr-Bell

Barkly Branch:
Chair: Jane Armstrong
Deputy Chair: Michael Johnson
Alternate: Chris Towne

Alice Springs Branch:
Chair: Chris Nott
Deputy Chair: Anne Stanes
Alternate: Nicole Hayes

SATB representatives visiting Central Australia
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NTCA
ON RUNNING SUCH A COLLABORATIVE AND EFFECTIVE
INDUSTRY EVENT AT THE 32ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

We hope you enjoyed some fun and good fellowship over drinks served from the Pioneer Pub.

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Robust presentations and debate on critical - and sometimes-contentious industry issues - combined with a host of social networking opportunities to reinforce the Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association’s 32nd annual industry conference as one of it’s most successful to date.

More than 500 delegates packed the Alice Springs Convention Centre for the 18 March conference, arriving from around the country and across the globe to meet and listen to experts on subjects associated with trade, foreign investment, natural resource security and industry matters such as domestic and global beef markets. The forum consisted of three presentation and two panel sessions, including a first ever midday session which debated the question, ‘Is the Balance Right?’

NTCA conferences are traditionally revered for the high calibre of speakers mustered, and this year was no exception, with an outstanding list of world class speakers bringing vital messages for stakeholders across the full spectrum of the Territory cattle industry.

His Honour the Honourable John Hardy OAM, Administrator of the Northern Territory, officially opened the conference before an audience of cattle producers, business representatives, Government Ministers and MPs, and a host of other Australian and overseas beef industry stakeholders.

The day-long Friday conference was complimented by vibrant and informative sponsor displays, Welcome Drinks, the 7th annual photography competition exhibition, another packed-out ladies lunch, speakers’ field trip and the eagerly anticipated grande finale, the Cattlemen’s Gala Dinner on the helipad at Double Tree by Hilton.

NTCA President Tom Stockwell, delivered a no-holds-barred report after his first year at the helm, and applauded the outcome of the 2016 forum. “This event has gone from strength to strength and become one of the most eagerly anticipated of its kind on the calender,” he said.
A WORLD CLASS SPEAKER LINE-UP!

DAVID WILLIAMS
Managing Director Kidder Williams
David’s robust presentation on Foreign Investment focused on the balance between family, corporate and foreign ownership, and posed the question: Who owns the farm and does matter?

ANGUS GIDLEY-BAIRD
Senior Analyst, Rabobank
Angus provided a comprehensive explanation of Australia’s celebrated new Free Trade Agreements, how they work to balance customer demands, and what the industry can achieve from them.

DR TINA HUNTER
Reader of Energy Law, Aberdeen University
Tina presented critical facts and figures in addressing the subject of shale gas development, co-existence and the essential balance between petroleum resource development and pastoral sustainability.

JOHN COTTER
Chairman, Gasfields Commission Qld
Long time beef producer and rural advocate John used lessons learnt in Queensland and eastern Australia to guide the NT industry in how to avoid conflict over exploration activity on their land.

JAMES CAMPBELL
CEO, Sanger Australia
James came to the podium with breathtaking facts and statistics about the burgeoning food demands of China’s ‘100 million customers’, while explaining e-commerce marketing and the potential benefits it offers for industry.

RICHARD NORTON
Managing Director, MLA
Richard provided an important overview to beef industry players about emerging markets and trends as part of the overall global beef position.

JILL RIGNEY
Leadership & Performance Specialist
The Right Mind International
Jill’s enlightening address on the topic, ‘Harnessing the Future’, focussed on merging new ideas with established practice within the pastoral industry.

MATT LINNEGER
CEO, Australian Rural Leadership Foundation
With his high-level involvement in rural affairs, Matt was the perfect anchor to keep audience questions flowing and commentators on message at the first ever mid-program panel session, which debated the question, ‘Is the Balance Right?’.

Shale gas development and co-existence red hot issues for delegates

Moratoriums are not the answer to resolving disputes and concern over shale gas exploration, Dr Tina Hunter said in her keynote address.

“You’ve got to have the knowledge and the science, and you can’t get them if you don’t undertake the activity,” she said. “If you don’t allow research through action, such as wells being drilled and hydraulic fracturing occurring, how do you know what is good and what is bad? You must take a scientific approach.”

Dr Hunter’s key points:
• The unthinkable can become the thinkable! Co-existence between pastoralists and miners can happen - as it has for pastoralists and Indigenous landowners who were at loggerheads 150 years ago
• The NT and WA are in the best place in the world to actually do this
• There’s a need to get away from fears about fracking and identify the real risks
• An objective framework must be in place to regulate risks
• Water use and disposal are at the heart of issue
• Mandated well inspections and certificates must be in place
• There needs to be negotiations and agreement, not just stakeholder engagement
• The regulatory framework must be fit for the purpose. The regulations out for comment are an exceptionally good start.

What lessons can we learn from Queensland?

Gasfields Commission Qld Chairman John Cotter told the conference he could not stress enough the importance of keeping up to date with the facts about groundwater, in relation to shale gas development in the Territory.

“There’s a wealth of scientific research that underpins the onshore gas industry, particularly in relation to impacts on groundwater.

John’s key take-away messages for the Territory:
• Land access must be a business to business relationship
• A robust regulatory framework is critical and must fit its purpose
• Industry must understand all possible impacts
• Facts and not emotion must rule the debate
• Effective communication & engagement are essential
• All local communities must be able to benefit by leveraging legacy opportunities.
The business balancing act of the NT pastoralist

In delivering his 2016 annual report, NTCA President, Tom Stockwell embraced positive moves to advance northern development aspirations - but with caution to avoid past mistakes.

Too many times in the past, local knowledge and needs came second to such grand national plans or campaigns and the outcomes, recognised or not, could have long term negative impacts, Tom told the conference.

“The federal fervour for northern development sounds impressive, yet:

- We continue to argue with Canberra which, while prepared to hand over $1 billion to despotic island nations in case they sink with climate change, cannot maintain a weather radar in Tennant Creek.
- The process of trying to win a fair share of the $100 million in federal beef roads funding has involved 12 months of meetings and travel to engage in consultation, when the need in the Territory alone is $2 billion.

“As my predecessor David Warriner argued last year, we will wither forever as a failed colonial outpost if we wait for population growth to promote development. The NTCA publicly supported the leasing of the Port because we know that the Port needs to grow and become more efficient as we grow and contribute to the northern economies.” He said private southern investment in the north, especially in agriculture, appeared ‘resolutely timid’.

The President’s report addressed broad-ranging industry aspects including oil and gas exploration, successful indigenous and overseas pastoral programs, foreign investment and pastoral land issues. He applauded the work of the NTCA and said he felt honoured to be able to work for the Territory industry.

“The NTCA persists because our members are worthy, ethical, decent, hard-working people whose interests are worth protecting and advancing. We are relatively few in number but are stewards for a large and iconic part of the Australian landscape and psyche, and our fellow Australians trust us to maintain our country, our cattle and our standards.”

Minister applauds trade advances

In his first major address to cattle producers as the new Northern Territory Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister, Garry Higgins has highlighted industry and government advances in identifying and nurturing new offshore cattle and beef markets.

“During the past two years there has been a significant increase in market access activity in the South East Asian region, including in Thailand, Cambodia and, more recently, China,” Minister Higgins said. “This is consistent with the forecast for strong growth in global demand for agricultural products.

“While Indonesia remains the Territory’s largest and longest standing live export market, the most significant development in the live trade, particularly for the Territory, has been with Vietnam, which is now our second largest live cattle market and largest live buffalo export market. Vietnam has represented a genuine opportunity for the live cattle and buffalo export industry to diversify its customer base.”

Mr Higgins said the Territory was a trusted and reliable supplier of safe, high quality cattle that are widely accessible to domestic and export markets and its world class biosecurity and compliance were essential to this.
NTCA shutterbugs have captured all the colour and character of the Territory cattle industry in vibrant style again this year, bringing their talents to the fore for the 7th Annual NTCA & Puma Energy Photography Competition staged as part of the 32nd NTCA Annual Conference.

Scores of exceptional images, submitted for categories covering People and Animal Portraits, NT Landscapes and the Industry at Work and Play, graced the entrants’ exhibition in the Alice Springs Convention Centre foyer and won glowing admiration from hundreds of conference guests.

Winners:
- Section 1 - Portrait: Veronica Elliot from Vermelha Station with ‘Stumpy’
- Section 2 – Industry @ work or play: Cassie Cox, Anthony Lagoon with ‘Well Earn’t’
- Section 3 – Landscape: Veronica Elliot from Vermelha Station with ‘Red Earth’
- People’s Choice – Kylie Fraser with ‘Dusty Donkey’

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A ticket to the annual Ladies Luncheon has become one of the hottest items in demand in the weeks leading up to the NT Cattlemen’s Association conference each year.

This year’s sell-out luncheon at Tali Restaurant at the Casino attracted more than 100 glamorous women who had booked their tickets months before, collectively driving many thousands of kilometres from stations across the Territory to be make it to Alice in time for this event.

The vibe at Tali was electric as the champagne corks popped, mouth-watering dishes flowed and the happy throng mingled, catching up with station friends who, in may cases, hadn’t seen face-to-face since last year’s luncheon.

Serious chat about booming cattle prices, comparative rainfall and the state of the outback roads was interspersed with much lighter topics - in keeping with the relaxed mood of the event.

The consensus from the guests was that this year’s luncheon was an outstanding success and set the scene for the following day’s conference - and concluding Gala Dinner!

Central Australia’s MacDonnell Ranges at sunset provided a magical backdrop to the sea of white table clothes and sparkling lights spread across the vast outdoor dining room set up for this years’ Gala Cattlemen’s Dinner.

The bumper event, hosted by the NTCA and sponsored by Elders, was staged on the helipad at Alice Springs’ DoubleTree by Hilton, and lured just under 500 guests.

Popular Australian funny man, actor and former host of the ABC’s Can We Help You series, Pete Rowsthorn, inspired side-splitting laughter with his hilarious stand-up performance.

An exquisite Paspaley pearl was donated as the lucky door prize, and the winner was a delighted Kimberley Mckay from Umbearra Station.

The night’s proceedings also included the NTCA’s Life Member Medal being presented to retired NT Chief Veterinary Officer Brian Radunz, who was honoured for his enduring services to the livestock industry.

And with the formalities over, it was time for guests to let their hair down and take to the dance floor until the wee small hours. Another hugely successful NT cattlemen’s dinner - and conference program - over for another year!
This year’s speakers’ and media industry tour showcased important Alice Springs district research and commercial operations. The tour took in the unique Old Man Plains Research Station with stops at the Pine Gap Yards and Mulga Dam Yards, where, DPIF staff gave informative presentations on the innovative trials and projects being conducted to assist Central Australian cattle production.

The Pine Gap Yards facility focuses on rangeland and cattle production research and development under an extremely variable and unpredictable climate. It’s also a useful location for training the next generation of land managers. The Mulga Dam yards are the research station’s hub and site for the Central Australian Quality Graze Producer Steer Challenge, featuring seven popular district breeds which have undergone specialised grazing and observation before being trucked away for processing and MSA grading. The yards also showcase new remote cattle management technology and its use in cattle research.

The visitors inspected the NTCA’s Bohning Yards, a modern cattle sale and spelling centre, managed by Noel Cuffe, and boasting industry best, advanced electronic scanning capacity, EU accreditation and high level management capacity to cater for the varied and specialised needs of industry. It hosts regular and specialised cattle sales providing quality stores, re-stocker and slaughter cattle. Yard staff prepare cattle for the next leg of their journey to ensure animals arrive at their ultimate destination in the best possible condition. The facility recently saw the installation of two state-of-the art loading and unloading ramps, which add to its efficiency and operational capability and ensure cattle are loaded and unloaded in a stress free manner.

The last stop was historic Undoolya Station, where owner-manager Ritchie Hayes and his wife Leanne showed off their success with diversification on a pastoral property. Undoolya continues to grow premium cattle, while also producing commercial table grapes, sorghum and onions on it’s Rocky Hill sector.
Six new starters join Future NTCA stable

Six proud young Territorians were named as the new faces of the Future NTCA initiative for 2016. Newcomers welcomed to the program were: Josh Stephen (Katherine), Steve Hayes (Alice Springs), Tom Hayes (Alice Springs), Grayson Webster (Top End), Katelin Webster (Top End) and Georgina Chisholm (Top End).

Future NTCA was launched in 2014 to optimise the potential of young rural Territorians and enhance the association’s public image and reputation by capturing their fresh ideas, networks and enthusiasm. The successful candidates are mentored by more senior industry identities, and work as a team on important industry-related projects, such as last year’s successful ‘Barry the Bike’ campaign to promote mental health awareness in the bush.

Participants must be 35 years or under, currently involved in or closely connected to the cattle industry, and with a strong passion to be an industry leader.

The 2016 Future NTCA participants will be given the opportunity to attend NTCA Branch Meetings and learn first-hand about the topics and issues that are significant to NTCA members and the cattle industry.

Participants will also have the opportunity to learn how the government and industry interact through the NT Government’s workshop, hosted annually by DPIF and including many other Departmental Chief Executives who take the time to explain how their departments work with industry.

Other activities will include participation in personal development opportunities with the aim of fostering leadership skills.

Former CVO honoured for 40 years of livestock service

The NTCA honoured former NT Chief Veterinary Officer Brian Radunz at this year’s gala dinner, with its Life Members’ Medal for his considerable contributions to the NTCA and NT pastoral industry.

Brian retired recently after 40 years in government veterinary science roles, including Field Officer, Regional Manager and Policy Officer related to disease control of Bovine Brucellosis, Bovine Tuberculosis and Bovine Johne’s disease.

Brian was the Northern Territory CVO from 1999 to 2012. Among other key achievements, he amalgamated five pieces of livestock-related legislation into a single Act and Regulations which were introduced on 1 September 2009. More recently, he worked with others on setting up national cattle welfare standards and guidelines.

Brian said he was very surprised and grateful to receive the unexpected honour, and reflected on the ‘vast improvements in animal welfare standards’ over his 40 years in veterinary service.

He said welfare was an ongoing issue for the livestock industries and while significant improvements had been made, the sector could not afford to rest on its laurels.
THANK YOU!
To the loyal supporters of the NTCA

The NTCA is very proud to hold an annual conference that is so loyally supported by so many industry partners. Thank you for your ongoing support, we couldn’t do it without you!
Looking for a mate

A small group of friends - Brian, Bruce, Roger and Errol (Mt Isa 1966/67) - wish to locate our other good mate KEITH MURDOCH. Keith has worked for many years in the NT in the Pastoral, Mining and Construction Industries. If you know of Keith or his current or recent whereabouts, it would be greatly appreciated if you could please contact:

BRUCE McCOSH
Ph: 0428 899 916
E: brucemc1@westnet.com.au

Distinguished Territory vet remembered

Distinguished livestock vet and DPIF’s former southern regional director, Dr David Tabrett, passed away in Victoria on 29 January, aged 79.

Dave worked as a young stock inspector in Alice Springs and the Barkly Tablelands in the late 1950s and was one of the few remaining stock inspectors involved in eradicating ‘Pleuro’ (Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia) from the Territory cattle herd during the 1950s and 1960s, under the unique leadership of Colonel Rose.

Dave won a cadetship with the NT’s pre-Self Government Animal Industry Branch (AIB) to attend veterinary school at the University of Queensland from 1961 to 1966 and worked as a vet in the Alice Springs and Barkly areas after graduating. He later became Divisional Veterinary Officer South working mainly on Brucellosis and Tuberculosis as Pleuro had been eradicated from the south. During this time Dave, other AIB staff including Peter Hooper, and Alroy Downs manager Percy Crumblin, developed the innovative approach of heifer segregation until turnoff for old age with intensive testing for Brucellosis and Tuberculosis and vaccination for Brucellosis, which later became the national approach for Australia’s pastoral areas.

In 1973, Dave became Senior Veterinary Officer Brucellosis and Tuberculosis (BTB) in Darwin, coordinating southern property programs and northern voluntary property programs. From 1975 to 1977, he worked at Canberra’s new Bureau of Animal Health led by former Territory CVO Bill Gee, and was involved in the early stages of the Brucellosis component of the national Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign (BTEC), liaising with the States to develop a nationally coordinated program. Dave was one of many people who contributed to the eradication of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis, which was considered by many to be impossible especially in the large pastoral properties. Australia was declared free of Brucellosis in 1989 and from Tuberculosis in 1997.

In 1978, after a stint as District Veterinary Officer at Port Augusta, he was lured back north to work as the Darwin-based CVO, before becoming Assistant Secretary for Animal Industries and remained in that job until 1988. Dave loved Central Australia, with a preference for Alice Springs and so from 1988 took up the job of Regional Director South with overall department management in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Barkly Tablelands areas. He retired in 1999 after about 40 years in the workforce and was living in Warnambool when he died.

This is an abridged version of a tribute prepared by Brian Radunz in consultation with other ex AIB/DPIF employees.

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• restructuring eligible debt
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The Drought Concessional Loans Scheme in the Northern Territory is delivered by QRAA. Eligibility criteria, terms and conditions apply. Applications close 30 June 2016 or earlier if funding is exhausted.

For further information, visit www.dpif.nt.gov.au/concessionalloans or phone (08) 8936 4089.

This programme is funded by the Australian Government and delivered by QRAA on behalf of the Northern Territory Government.
Keen & happy recruits head for new station jobs

The latest recruits for the Pastoral Real Jobs Program have been delivered to 12 host cattle stations spread across the Territory.

“We have 14 first year recruits from across Northern Australia this year, and six have come back for their second year,” Program Coordinator Tara Fulwood says. “They recently completed two weeks of pre-employment and work readiness training in Alice Springs. They’ve now all settled in to their various postings and we haven’t had any complaints so that’s great. The feedback we’ve received from the stations is that they’re excited about their new jobs, are fitting in well and displaying good confidence. That’s a great start. They can learn the skills they need while on the job.”

Tara says the Real Jobs team embarked on a long road journey to deliver the recruits to their host stations this year. They’ve been hosted by cattle properties located as far afield as south of Barrow Creek, the Barkly, Adelaide River and the VRD to the west.

The March training phase included horseriding and motor bike riding skills, fencing, welding, and educating weaners. The recruits also spent time on community engagement, with recruits required to visit and talk to business managers - to help them build up their communication skills and confidence.

As a special highlight, they attended the NTCA annual conference, which Tara says, opened their eyes to the enormity of the cattle industry and the wide range of jobs available within its many aspects. “It made them appreciate that working in the cattle industry wasn’t just about busting their bums rounding up cattle. They particularly enjoyed checking out the conference stalls and chatting with representatives from the trucking companies, stock agencies, Charles Darwin University and other outlets - and they thought being interviewed by ABC Country Hour’s Matt Brann was pretty special too.”

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Above: Kiam Foster, familiarising himself with horses, gaining trust and confidence

Below: Steve Burke of Horsepower Training demonstrating Colt Starting with RJP 2nd year Brenton Gregory.

Below: NTCA RJP educating weaner cattle from Ambilindum Station, using low stress stock handling skills
Dr Kevin de Witte returned to the Territory in February to become the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) after 10 years with Animal Health Australia (AHA) in Canberra.

Kevin will lead and manage the Animal Biosecurity Program within the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries.

The new CVO is well known to many Territory pastoralists from his time based with the department in Katherine in the 1980s and 1990s.

He has significant experience in disease control and management working with the NT cattle industry during the eradication of Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis, the investigation and management of various disease syndromes and the extension of optimum herd management including spaying.

During his time at AHA, Kevin was Executive Manager Market Access and oversaw the management of several key national programs relevant to the cattle industry. These included general disease surveillance programs such as national significant subsidised disease investigations.

He managed the National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) for bluetongue virus, National Johne’s Disease Control Program (BJD) and Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Freedom Assurance Program (TSEFAP).

He also oversaw development of the land transport and cattle welfare standards and guidelines, and coordination of the FMD vaccine bank and FMD research. Kevin says he’s looking forward to rousing old and new friendships and working with the Territory cattle and other livestock industries again to manage biosecurity risks, maximise market access and optimise productivity.

Women travelled in from across the Territory to learnt about superannuation, project management, business development and goal setting at the recent Skilling Her Enterprise (SHE) workshops in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs.

NTCA CEO Tracey Hayes was a popular and inspirational participant, offering insights on her leadership role within the northern cattle industry, her vision, values and industry networking concepts.

The SHE workshops are designed to provide rural, regional and remote women with unique access to business and management skills in the agribusiness sector, while creating a network of like-minded business operators across the regions.

AgriFood Skills Australia and the NT Government presented the workshop and networking dinner. The facilitator was Engage & Create Consulting’s Julia Telford, a finalist in the 2014 Top 100 Women in Agribusiness.

**Apply for your postal vote NOW**

Electors can apply right now for their postal vote for the 2016 Territory Election on 27 August. This can be done online at ntec.nt.gov.au by clicking on ‘Apply for a postal vote’ on the right hand menu and selecting NT Legislative Assembly elections – Postal vote application.

You can also request a postal vote by emailing the Northern Territory Electoral Commission at postalvote.ntec@nt.gov.au or calling 1800 698 682.

Postal votes will be mailed to electors beginning Monday 15 August 2016 and must be returned to the Northern Territory Electoral Commission prior to 12.00 pm on Friday 19 September.

**FOR FURTHER INQUIRIES** - go to: ntec.nt.gov.au, visit the NTEC on Facebook or call 1800 698 683.
The Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries announced changes to the Wild Dog Management Program in December, following a review by DPIF and industry representatives, and independently chaired by Mr Richard Galton.

The key changes are:
- PAMA and Permits will be issued for 5 years. Each property will be allocated an annual bait entitlement based on bait numbers issued in 2015. Concentrate will be allocated to each property.
- More flexibility in how 1080 concentrate can be collected and transported.
- People involved in distributing baits no longer need an authorisation, but receive a workplace safety induction from the Permit Holder.
- Records are the responsibility of the Permit Holder and are entered into the 1080 Property Baiting Record Book supplied with the Permit.

The Minister has asked the NTCA to work with pastoralists to develop and adopt a Code of Practice for managing wild dogs in a targeted and coordinated manner. He has also prioritised the need to gain real measures of wild dog impacts on the pastoral sector. DPIF is working closely with the NTCA, and other relevant government and research organisations on how to best achieve this. Property managers will be kept informed on these issues.

Do you have your new permit?
DPIF’s Chemical Services Branch reminds pastoralists that 1080 Pest Animal and Permits expired on 31 December 2015, and those wishing to use 1080 products to mitigate the impacts of wild dogs on their livestock will need to apply for a new PAMA and Permit.

The current Directions for Use of 1080 for Wild Dog Control (Directions for Use), other information and forms are available at: www.chemicalservices.nt.gov.au

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Please contact:
Chemical Services Branch
Phone:  8999 2344 or
Email:  chemicals@nt.gov.au
Beef expert forecasts a five-year revolution

South East Asia livestock specialist Dr Ross Ainsworth has forecast ‘a five year revolution of the northern beef production model’ as the Australian industry deals with continuing beef price rises followed by herd rebuilding. He refers to a recent Beef Central report in which ABARES predicts further beef price rises for 2016/17 followed by a slow herd rebuilding process that by 2020 would more or less take the industry back to where it started before the current drought inflicted its savage and relentless attack.

“Since late 2015, the majority of the Australian beef industry finds itself in a new business environment where numbers are down while real prices are at the giddy heights last seen in 1973,” Dr Ainsworth says. “This unique situation provides many producers, especially those in the north, with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to review the way they conduct their business and potentially restructure their enterprises for a much more sustainable future. Up until now, many northern producers had to sell small feeders because that was effectively their only market and they didn’t have the luxury to change the way they operated because they were on such a financial knife-edge. Dr Ainsworth presented a scenario that could take the industry to a totally different place with a smaller breeder herd producing greater returns over the next five years. His key points are:

- The national beef herd declines to 23 million late 2017 (ABARES)
- Prices continue to rise steadily or at least stay high while costs rise more slowly, providing improved margins for the next 5 years at least
- China enters the live cattle market, for slaughter cattle only, in late 2016
- By 2018/19 China takes 500,000 fat steers per year primarily from NSW and Victoria – working up to 1 million head in 2020
- These live export slaughter cattle create a large gap for the southern processing sector and are “replaced” by slaughter cattle from central and southern Queensland.
- A significant proportion of producers in north Queensland and the NT will once again have the luxury of growing young cattle on to slaughter weights because they will be able to financially survive the transition and have a strong market for their end product.

Beetaloo Intensive Rotational Grazing Field Day

Monday 23 May 2016

Beetaloo Station

RSVP by Friday 13 May 2016 as numbers are limited P: (08) 8962 4494 or email acarpenter@barklylandcare.org.au. Morning tea and lunch will be provided. More information will be emailed before the field day.
The Wet Season to date

The Northern Territory has seen below average rainfall and above average temperatures over many parts, most notably the Top End. Looking at the overall numbers for the NT, for the five months from October 2015 to the end of February 2016, we have seen below average rainfall and above average mean temperatures. The only real deviation from the hot and dry conditions was during December 2015 when the NT had its wettest December on record. It was also the only month that saw below average mean temperatures. If not for the widespread rainfall during the late-December period, the NT would be looking at potentially the driest and hottest wet season on record.

While December 2015 was a standout for high rainfall totals, some of the most notable records relate to temperature – notwithstanding the very dry conditions during October 2015 and January 2016. October and November 2015 and January 2016 were standouts as far as daytime and night-time warmth is concerned, particularly across the Top End where many individual locations had their warmest average monthly temperatures on record.

Temperature and rainfall outlook for the March to May period

As far as rainfall goes, it is a story of two halves for the NT. While the northern half, particularly the Top End, is expected to see below-average rainfall most of the southern half has a greater than 50% chance of having above average rainfall. However, it’s hot across the entire Territory with both daytime and night-time temperatures expected to be above average for the period.

Blame El Niño

The climate driver for rainfall and temperatures remains the El Niño. Although it has weakened from its peak in November 2015, it remains strong enough to have significant impacts over much of the country. While the southern half of Australia often sees above average autumn rainfall following the breakdown of El Niño, northern Australia typically records below average rainfall totals. Another impact typically observed during the breakdown of El Niño is widespread warmth across the nation. In fact, the warmest years associated with El Niño generally occur in the year following its formation.

FOR MORE DETAILS, CONTACT:
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With both the Northern Territory and Federal elections approaching in 2016, the NTCA has been developing its policy platform. One key area of the platform is the development of policy around resource security, particularly in relation to the mining, oil and gas industry.

This draft policy, and the other NTCA Draft Election Platform Policies, will be discussed with members at upcoming branch meetings.

The objective of the NTCA's policy on Mining and Petroleum Exploration and Extraction is to ensure strong legislation and regulation around mining and petroleum exploration and extraction to ensure there is no threat to the integrity of:
1. Above and below ground water resources;
2. Livestock and agricultural production systems;
3. People and associated primary production businesses in the NT.

The NTCA is advocating the formation of a federal regulatory authority to ensure oil and gas well construction is as according to the approved standard.

The current situation today sees the NT entirely blanketed by petroleum exploration licences and mining exploration and extraction licences.

There are significant reserves of oil and gas in the NT, much of which is contained in shale deposits and coal deposits at depth. Exploitation of these reserves will in most cases require hydraulic fracturing of shale deposits underneath water aquifers.

Previous disastrous failures of well integrity (Deep Water Horizon & Montaro) has resulted from wells not being built to the approved standard. The exploration and exploitation of these resources has a high above-ground impact on land, water, vegetation, livestock and business operations.

The NTCA's Policy Position for the pastoral industry is:
1. Formation of a regulatory body responsible for oil and gas well certification, integrity and testing;
2. Wells to be inspected during construction and post construction;
3. Provide support to landholders before and during access agreements negotiations in terms of advice, information and appropriate resources to assist making informed decisions;
4. To ensure certainty, facilitate a process to transition mandatory access agreements from a policy directive to a legislated position;
5. Expand the legacy mine scheme to adequately address the long term requirements for remediation and the management of impacts on the cattle and primary production industry;
6. Ensure the pastoral industry maintain a position on the legacy mine unit working group;
7. Provide full disclosure in relation to rehabilitation and environmental bonds in order to build community confidence.
8. In consultation with the community, investigate a model for royalties to regions ensuring reinvestment in rural communities.

For more information, please contact the NTCA office.

UPCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS:

TOP END: Wednesday 25th May
KATHERINE: Tuesday 24th May
ALICE SPRINGS: Monday 30th May
BARKLY: Tuesday 31st May

ADVERTISING IN THE CATTLENUNES
The Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association welcomes inquiries from government and industry groups, businesses and individuals interested in advertising in our quarterly newsletter, Cattlenews.

FOR DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT:

JO SHEARN - NTCA Office Manager
Phone: 08 8981 5976
Email: office.darwin@ntca.org.au

or

KERRY SHARP - Journalist/Editor
Phone: 0419 845 714
Email: sharp@octa4.net.au

This programme is funded by the Australian Government and overseen by Territory Natural Resource Management.

NTCA Cattlenews - April 2016