



Summary of OAF Activities – December 2024 (as at 17 December)

OAF Beard

- Board work continues.
- Still working on the paper about casual professional staff following Liz Baré's and my presentation to the ATEM Conference in Brisbane in September.
- Babysitting grandchildren.

OAF Chapman

- I am working as part of a 3-person consultancy team on the development of a National Forages Strategy for the Australian dairy industry, commissioned by Dairy Australia and Dairy Moving Forward. They are seeking direction for RD&E investment on a 30-year time horizon, but with particular focus on where the money invested in projects that are finishing soon should be invested for the next 10 years. This is a ~ 6 month project, and will include a few visits to Melbourne for face-to-face meetings.
- I led the recent publication in NZ Journal of Agricultural Research (OK, not your top notch IF journal, but the right one for the topic!) of a paper "Pasture Productivity in New Zealand 1990-2020: Trends, Expectations and Factors" which identifies sharply declining rates of gain in pasture productivity since c. 2001/02, reasons for that, and some possible responses. Dairy and Sheep&beef industries (and Government) should take note given consequences for economic and environmental sustainability, but they probably won't ...
- Jennie and I have recently taken possession of a caravan for travelling holidays in Australia, hopefully for the next several years.

Additionally, people might be interested in the introduction today of a reforming bill to the NZ parliament in regard to easing the onerous regulations controlling biotech in NZ. It might enable more GM/GE research to be undertaken in NZ on pastures/forages but strong public/ideological resistance to GM will probably mean the benefits of that work will end up elsewhere, not on shore.

The Gene Technology Bill has today been introduced to the NZ Parliament. Key links are:

- The Gene Technology Bill itself - [Gene Technology Bill 110-1 \(2024\)](#), [Government Bill Contents – New Zealand Legislation](#)
- Parliament page for the Bill - [Gene Technology Bill](#)
- Departmental disclosure statement - [NZ Legislation Disclosures](#)
- The Regulatory Impact Statement - [Regulatory Impact Statement - Reform of Gene Technology Regulation](#)

OAF Egan

- Monograph "100 Years of Ruminant Physiology" in external editing.
- Home sold (just 21 days on market) and busy packing up and distributing household items before moving to my new apartment on January 24th.

- Full volume of my Bush Poetry and Yarns close to completed and being supplemented with my cartoons.

OAF Falvey

- Two multi-day meetings in ACT with ACIAR re new strategy and IAR Commission.
- A week on Bangkok to initiate planning for APAARI once/if it can conform to the new Thai Government legislation as a multi-governmental organisation.
- A week in Nairobi celebrating ILRI's 50th anniversary with Simone, surviving Board Chairs (2) and DGs (3), and hundreds of others.

OAF Fazakerley

- It's now over a year since Ann and I arrived back in the UK. We moved back into our old house in a Surrey village, made repairs, renovated the garden, sold it and bought a house in Harrogate. Harrogate is a rather sedate but pleasant small town in Yorkshire in the North of England. It started as a Georgian spa town and according to the Estate Agent's brochure, it's 'the 'happiest place' to live in England! That bodes well and indeed it does have a happy, pleasant and prosperous air to it.
- Back in Melbourne, it was a pleasure to have my last two PhD students graduate in the middle of the year and I've continued to work with my old team, postdocs and PhD students, at the Peter Doherty Institute to progress our publications with the latest accepted last week. It's on the interaction between two virus infections and how this affects immune responses. Sorry, it's not really agriculture, except that one of the infections was influenza, an important agricultural pathogen (just ask the poultry industry).
- With the house and finishing off research manuscripts, I haven't pursued many other opportunities. I'm still on the advisory board of a Wellcome Trust funded UK Biobank. I will probably make an effort to get more involved in a few things next year, UK or international, I'm open to opportunities.

OAF Hickey

- Vacation at Rainbow Bay was great and we have re-booked already.
- Gardening and home maintenance.
- Croquet.

OAF Howlett

- Participating in UniMelb senior mentoring program.
- Reading /editing research papers for Ph.D students.
- Childminding.

OAF Larkins

- Published a paper entitled Imbalance in Student Recruitment from Asia-Pacific Countries Warrant Review last week. Link is here for interested people:
<https://franklarkins.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/asia-pacific-student-enrolments.docx>

OAF Leury

- Supervision of remaining postgraduate students and other research activities.
- Work related to my role as editor in chief of the journal Ruminants and with the Awards Committee for the Australian Association of Animal Sciences.
- House and garden maintenance.

OAF Taylor

- Presented a Webinar to University Putra Malaysia on 'Challenges for mitigating risks of incursion by exotic plant pathogens'.
- Participated in an online meeting discussing Research Priorities for the European Plant Health Research and Coordination (EUPHRESCO) III Strategic Agenda (2025-2026), and attended in-person Crawford Fun Victorian committee meeting.

- Assisted PhD students with submitting manuscripts and editing thesis chapters.

OAF Topp

- St Vincents.
- Books.
- Trip to Europe in December/January.

OAF White

- Honing my cooking skills.
- Revising our wills and memo of directions.
- Improving my bridge.



Summary: Support to SAFES, the Faculty & University

High Profile Oration:

- State of Agriculture Oration: under discussion with Head SAFES for action

Publications:

- Book: History of Agricultural Education in Victoria
- Papers: tens of papers on education, research, disciplines of the agricultural sciences

International Linkages:

- Assistance in links into Asia and elsewhere
- Supervision/examination of PhD theses of partner universities

Teaching & Supervision:

- Continuing responsibilities for recent retirees to assist SAFES

Awards:

- PhD Travel Awards (SAFES): 2 per year for current candidates to present to international conferences – managed via SAFES' awards system; awardees offered lunch with OAFS to share their research
- AgriFood Award (national): created by OAFS and implemented through the Academy (ATSE) for each of an under 40 years female and male researcher –14 recipients to date (~\$400K over 8 years)
- Medal: an occasional award made by OAFS for outstanding contributions to Faculty/School
- Other Awards: within OAFS for contributions to the field.

Other:

- introductions to research opportunities where OAFs remain influential