



November 2018

Email all queries and feedback to: kotuku.media@xtra.co.nz

Congress 2019

Every year the Guild offers a travel subsidy for a member to attend the IFAJ World Congress. This is part of its members' benefit programme from the surplus made from Congress 2015.

Next year, the IFAJ Congress is being held in the USA, in Minnesota, from 26 -31 July, 2019. There is more information on the congress website, www.ifaj2019.org. The Guild will provide either the cost of registration and accommodation for the Congress, or travel costs to and from the USA.

Applicants must be Guild members, must have a current passport or be able to get one, and must be able to travel to America in July next year. An application needs to include why you should be selected, how it would benefit you as an individual and a portfolio of three articles from the previous 12 months.

Information on the Travel Grant and an application form are attached or on the Guild's website - www.nzgajc.org.nz. Applications for the Guild Travel Grants close on 14 December 2018.

Professional development grant (s)

Another member benefit grant from the surplus from Congress 2015, is one designed for either personal development, journalism-based, or expanding some aspect of agricultural knowledge.

Criteria is broad-reaching but could include tertiary studies or equivalent, travel to a conference, national or international or some sort of specialised training for a group. One or maybe two of these grants be given each year.

Contact Sue on 04 2331842, 0274510339, or kotuku.media@xtra.co.nz

In addition, the Constitution, as it was amended at the Guild's October annual meeting, has now been uploaded to the same page.

Seeking a treasurer

With our treasurer, Mick Calder, announcing he will be standing down at the next AGM, the Guild needs to find a new treasurer. In an ideal world it would happen soon, so that Mick can give the new person a good hand-over period.

Ideally we need someone who:

- 1 has a basic understanding of the role of a treasurer;
- 2 has some computing skills, particularly the Xero financial software;
- 3 has the interest of the guild at heart;
- 4 could work with our auditor;
- 5 has time available – a couple of hours at the most each week, but busier after the annual awards (October) and in Jan / Feb when the annual membership subscriptions go out and May/June when the financial year ends and the Communicator of the Year award occurs;
- 6 preferably would be prepared to be on the national executive, prepare reports for meetings every two months and teleconference in for those meetings;
- 7 can prepare the end of year financial reports to go to the auditor.

A small honorarium will be paid.

For more information, contact Sue on kotuku.media@xtra.co.nz



Updates on the website

The latest Membership Directory has been uploaded to the website and can be found under the 'About Us' tab. Thanks to all who have helped with providing updated details. If there are any errors – or omissions – do let Ali Spencer know by email ali@spencerpr.co.nz or mobile 021344 286.

Four new national executive members

Four new national members were elected at the AGM last month. Below are introductions to two of them – the other two, Hayley Gavan and Amme-Marie Case-Miller, will be in the next newsletter.

Sheryl Brown

Sheryl Brown is deputy editor for the *NZ Dairy Exporter* magazine, and the Waikato/Bay of Plenty journalist for NZ Farm Life Media. Sheryl studied a Bachelor of Arts and a Graduate Diploma in Journalism at Massey University and spent several years working in sports and police journalism before switching to agricultural journalism. She is off a dairy farm in the Waikato and now owns a lifestyle block along the Matata Straight, near Whakatane.



Tim Fulton

Tim has nearly 20 years of journalism experience and was editor of *The New Zealand Farmers Weekly* for a decade from 2004-2014 before covering the 2014 General Election for Fairfax Media.

He then covered local and national business news for Fairfax Media and *Stuff* for two years before starting his own writing and media communications business in 2017. He still contributes to several agribusiness publications.



Anna 'at home' in Scary Dairy Land

by Anna Jones

When I was first approached by the New Zealand Guild of Agricultural Journalists, inviting me to speak at their 60th anniversary convention in Wellington, I must admit I thought it was a hoax. I mean, how often does someone offer to fly you around the world to talk about your research? What an incredible opportunity – but was I up to it?

New Zealand was not one of the countries I visited for my Nuffield Farming Scholarship study, which examined the coverage of agriculture in the mainstream media. What if my findings were completely irrelevant to the Kiwis?

My fears were allayed within minutes of stepping off the plane at Auckland Airport, when I saw a magazine with this headline: "Is Dairy Still Scary?" If the Scary Dairy debate had made it as far as the Land of the Long Milky White Cloud, I was in familiar territory.

I had a day to myself before the convention to read a few newspapers, watch some TV, listen to the radio and get up to speed on New Zealand's news agenda. I wasn't surprised to see Donald Trump wittering on (is there any part of the world where he is not news?) but I was surprised to hear farmers on the mainstream news bulletins. On Radio New Zealand they were discussing the possibility of a dry summer and warning farmers to prepare for El Niño. A story about a possible/maybe threat to farming had made the national news.

Earlier this year, British farmers were battling the worst drought in living memory, buying in feed and culling cows early, before the metrocentric mainstream media woke up to the fact all the grass had gone. It took a Drought Summit with our Secretary of State and the National Farmers Union to get the news crews out.

So by the time I presented to the Guild on October 5th, I sensed there wasn't quite the level of urban/rural disconnect between farmers and the general public in New Zealand.

Though I doubt New Zealand's farmers would agree. They feel just as attacked, and bashed and



Anna on the Queen Charlotte Track

misunderstood as their counterparts in the rest of the Western world (my research established the 'anti farmer' phenomenon exists mainly in developed countries where our pockets are deep and our bellies are full.)

But I like to challenge this attitude. I believe farmers should be challenged and scrutinised, and they have a duty to answer the public's questions and concerns. But, equally, we in the media have a duty to remain impartial; to question hidden agendas on both sides of the debate – be it veganism, animal welfare or the environment.

I relished chewing over these issues with the Guild and the other guest speakers including Katie Milne,

president of Federated Farmers and Jeff Grant, the man valiantly charting a course through Brexit on behalf of New Zealand's red meat sector. I swear he knows more about Brexit than the Brits.

I was impressed with the extraordinary level of knowledge in the room and wondered why mainstream news outlets aren't calling upon on this ready stock of specialist journos, to be objective commentators on complex ag-related issues of the day. In my view, they're missing a trick.

By the weekend, my work in Wellington was done so I caught the ferry over to Picton and tramped along the Queen Charlotte Track for a couple of days before making my way down to Christchurch to speak to the Foundation for Arable Research and the Women in Arable group.

My trip culminated on a dairy farm in the Bay of Plenty, recording an interview for the BBC World Service (yup, always on the lookout for a story).

I'd like to say a huge and heartfelt thank you to the Guild for inviting me to speak, and for making me feel so welcome, and another massive thank you to AgMARDT for sponsoring my trip. It was a honour and truly one of the most memorable experiences of my life.



Anna giving the keynote speech at NZGAJC's 60th anniversary.