

Nuffield Scholarship

A world of difference



Churinga Rangelands is a fully certified organic enterprise with 3000 Damara x Wiltshire and Dorper ewes, and 2000 merino ewes. A small herd of cattle and goats are also run. Owner Garry Hannigan is a third generation owner.

Garry Hannigan, from Churinga Rangelands, Broken Hill, NSW, has won the 2005 Nuffield scholarship for a livestock producer supported by Meat and Livestock Australia.

The Nuffield scholarship was created by Lord Nuffield, William Morris, in the UK after World War II and has spread around the world. Australia, NZ, Canada, UK, Ireland, France and Zimbabwe all have Nuffield scholarship programs. In this it is unique – there are no other global networks of farmers.

The mission of the Australian Nuffield Farming Scholars' Association is to promote excellence in all aspects of Australian agricultural production, distribution and management through the adoption of local and international best practice, and the continuous development of a unique network of industry leaders and innovators.

Hannigan plans to visit countries where there is a high disposable income, countries that have community and legislated environmental concerns and countries where there is already a strong organic food market. Furthermore, there is already concern in Europe and the US about the "humane" treatment of animals, and the production methods of African breeds would fulfil even the most stringent "humane" production requirements.

There is a growing move towards organic produce in the US and all research indicates there is a strong potential for Australian organic lamb into the already growing US lamb market. This will enable the expansion of drought-resistant sheep in the rangelands of Australia by developing export markets.

If successful, the marketing of new breeds of organic lamb will revitalise and revolutionise the arid rangelands of Australia.

Nuffield farming scholarships give a unique opportunity to farmers to stand back from their day-to-day occupation, and to study a subject of interest.

The scholarship entails 16 weeks of overseas study, the first six weeks being an organised Global Focus program usually comprising of two weeks in Australia and New Zealand, two weeks in Europe and two weeks in North America.

During that period scholars learn about EU policies, US Free Trade and the World Trade Association. The following 10 weeks is for individual study of a farmer's chosen topic that entails visiting relevant countries of their choice.

Upon returning to Australia it is expected that the scholars will actively spread the knowledge and understanding they have gained among their fellow farmers and others in the community by filing a written report that details the findings, observations and outcomes within three months of returning from their travels.

Hannigan owns and operates Churinga, a 49,000 hectare station 130 kilometres east of Broken Hill. He is a third generation owner of the station, which has been in the family since 1951. Churinga is a fully certified organic enterprise running 3000 Damara x Wiltshire and Dorper ewes, also 2000 Merino ewes, all for organic lamb production. Lambs are marketed into the domestic Sydney market. There are also small herds of cattle and goats.

The property contains 5000 hectares of land, fenced, destocked, managed and monitored solely for conservation outcomes. ■

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