Indonesia’s July announcement of a maximum live import quota of just 98,000 for the second half of this year, has come with an extra sting for northern cattle producers still struggling to get their operations back on line after one disastrous decision after the other.

The Indonesian Government is issuing permits for only 283,000 head of cattle for the whole of 2012 - dramatically less than the 2009 high of 750,000 head. It maintains the reduction is in line with its goal to achieve self-sufficiency in beef production.

The NT Cattlemen’s Association says that on top of that bad news, the Indonesians now appear to be levying a 5% import duty on all cattle entering the country.

“The possibility of this tariff has been mooted for some weeks and it now appears to be happening,” NTCA Executive Director Luke Bowen says.

“To make matters worse, we understand the import duty will be backdated to the beginning of 2012. The Australian Trade and Agricultural Ministers have formally requested clarification from the Indonesian Government, given that this may not be in line with existing agreements. In reality, this could be another significant blow to an industry already reeling from decisions like Indonesia’s 2010-imposed 350 kg live animal weight restriction, last year’s catastrophic Australian Government suspension of the entire live export trade, and continuing drastic cattle quotas.

“This import duty looks like initially being applied to importers, but the cost will end up being passed on to producers.”

NTCA President David Warriner says the tariff move is deeply concerning and disappointing, especially as the Territory cattle industry saw its long-term relationship and outlook for Indonesia as very positive.

Indonesia a vital link

Commenting during the Indonesian President’s recent Darwin visit, Mr Warriner said the event had been “a real and present opportunity” to strengthen ties, boost efforts and redirect the fortunes of the north Australian cattle industry”.

“There is no doubt that the future of this industry is irrevocably tied to Indonesia. Building our trade and social relationship with Indonesia must therefore be a central plank in achieving this objective. “No other relationship is, and arguably will be, as important as ours with Indonesia. Nothing will replace Indonesia and the Government needs to understand the cost of Indonesia not being there, versus the cost of getting our 500,000 head per year market back. Do those two sums and I’ll bet you it is cheaper to allocate the resources and commitment to getting that market back.”
Indonesian industry tour planned for September

An industry tour of Indonesia is planned for September and will provide a detailed insight into the entire live export supply chain and the new Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS). The NTCA’s Top End Branch instigated the idea and bringing together a delegation of industry people interested in being part of the tour, which will be hosted and coordinated by Austrex. The NTCA says this initial tour can take only 15 delegates but it supports regular such trips and will be pushing for this to happen. The tour is planned for 9-15 September.

Tipperary Group General Manager David Warriner took on the job of the NT Cattlemen’s Association’s President in March and wasted no time getting out on the bush roads catching up with members on their stations. David replaces Rohan Sullivan who now plans to focus full-time on his family’s Cave Creek Station cattle operations after three years as president.

Alice Springs-born David comes from a prominent Northern Territory pastoral family and started out as a jackeroo with Consolidated Pastoral in the Top End. He worked his way up the industry ranks to become a Pastoral Inspector before establishing his own agribusiness consultancy.

David is married to Gina, has three children and has lived for some years at Tipperary Station in the Daly River region south-west of Darwin.

The new president says one of the Territory cattle sector’s biggest issues is its single market focus.

“In the short term we must address current issues like the ongoing live export crisis and our absolute dependence on the Indonesian market,” he says. “We need to be part of every good story about the country from which we make our living and we need to improve the bush’s relationship with city dwellers. The political landscape is certainly not in our favour if we don’t have the ear of the broader population.”

David says he looks forward to a time when rural industry lobby groups like the NTCA can address issues proactively rather than to have to ‘stand and defend’, but he believes the association plays a pivotal role in the industry.

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KERRY SHARP (Editor) - Phone: (08) 8981 4999
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Northern Territory voters go to the polls on 25 August this year.

The NTCA has been urging all industry players to make sure they don’t miss out on the opportunity to have a say on who will govern for the next four year term. The NTCA has been canvassing members’ feedback with a view to asking the government and opposition to present their policies on wide-ranging issues that impact on the cattle industry.

“Our industry’s voter base is low at the best of times so ensuring that all potential voters are registered and able to exercise a vote is critical,” Executive Director Luke Bowen says. “This includes all staff working on Territory cattle stations. It makes things easier for the NTCA to lobby for funding from state/territory or federal governments for projects such as health, infrastructure (roads) and weed or feral eradication, if staff are enrolled to vote.” Those eligible to cast a postal vote can do so anytime before 6 pm on polling day and as soon as practicable send the envelope to the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.
NT cattle industry braces for the economic realities of a new carbon tax

Australia’s new Carbon Tax became a reality on 1 July and Territory cattle producers are bracing for its anticipated impacts on their remote area operations. The tax has already begun to sting with fuel companies notifying customers that the price of aviation fuel - critical to the cost of mustering choppers, transport and other cattle production management needs - will rise as a result.

NTCA President David Warriner says the Federal Government’s decision not to extend the tax exemption to on-property aviation fuel is another blow for the already-struggling northern cattle industry. “This comes on top of last year’s live export ban which effectively shut down the northern industry and the flow on of that impact is still accelerating, with Indonesian import quotas for Australian cattle at an all time low,” he says. “This aviation fuel hike, which is being imposed reluctantly by the fuel companies, will not only increase the direct costs for cattle stations that operate their own aircraft but also the companies that supply mustering services to the industry. This will increase the cost of production, forcing savings in other areas such as labour.

“It will also increase the cost of other essential activities such as fire management and monitoring, weed and pest management, survey and control programs.”

The NTCA has lobbied long and hard against the carbon tax legislation, calling on the government to defer its introduction until it could explain to Australians how the new tax would help arrest climate change. Outgoing president Rohan Sullivan recently labelled the new carbon tax ‘a high risk social experiment and a blind economic leap which we cannot afford right now.’

The NTCA is also concerned that fuel for road transport will attract the carbon tax after two years and this will further drive up costs. Inevitably, David Warriner says, the big losers will be employees and their families from regional and remote indigenous communities and towns. “These carbon tax-related costs will not only further stress families and business viability but also the competitiveness of our industry in the domestic and international markets on which we depend for our livelihood.”

Pastoral Lands and Native Vegetation legislation delayed

The NTCA has welcomed the NT Government’s decision to hold off on introducing its proposed new Native Vegetation legislation and revised Pastoral Lands Act into Parliament before the impending Northern Territory election. The association says the government initially planned to have the two controversial pieces of legislation passed through Parliament before going to the polls on 25 August but decided, in the wake of widespread public concerns, to take the safe road and postpone that action. “This is welcomed, given the fundamental flaws that our members and others believe were in both those pieces of legislation,” NTCA Executive Director Luke Bowen says. “We have grave concerns about both these proposed acts. Their future will now lie in the outcome of the election.”

Veteran cattleman Ian honoured

Enduring Territory cattlemen Ian McBean, who arrived in Central Australia with little more than a swag and a saddle in 1953, received a much-deserved honour recently - a Member of the Order of Australia medal for a lifetime dedicated to the northern pastoral industry. The former drover and stockman, now in his 80s and still running operations at Bonalbo Station in the Douglas Daly, has given 60 years to the Territory cattle industry. Ian acquired his first station, the VRD’s Innesvale, in a land ballot in 1964. He and wife Kay took over the 10,000 sq km Bradshaw Station in 1982 and sold it to the Defence Department in 1996. He moved with Kay and family to Darwin with the short-lived intention of taking life a bit easier. Within a week he was out hunting for some land to raise cattle - resulting in the family buying properties for sale in the Douglas Daly and setting up Bonalbo Pastoral Enterprises.
**NT cattle industry facing potential new fire threat**

NTCA members are concerned about the potential for another major bushfire crisis on Territory grazing land this year, particularly in Central Australia. The association says Bush Fires NT remains inadequately resourced, which leaves Central Australia vulnerable.

“The Territory battled major wildfires last year and early this year which really tested the resources of both landholders and emergency services and put the system under incredible strain. “Another fire season is looming and it has the potential to be a major problem, especially with the build-up of fuel resulting from excellent summer rains promoting good grass growth across most areas.”

Outgoing NTCA president Rohan Sullivan highlighted the wildfire issue in his final report to members in March, saying an estimated 60% of Central Australia was burnt last year as fires swept through the region.

“Cattle producers who had been taking the opportunity to rebuild their herds after years of drought were, in some cases, plunged back into a drought situation almost overnight. Lack of preparedness and resources were compounded in some cases by fires being deliberately lit or restarted after firefighters had them under control.

“To add to land holders’ frustration token penalties handed down by courts to the few offenders that were apprehended and charged indicate a lack of appreciation of the scale of damage and losses caused by the resulting fires.”

**... and wild dogs on the rampage**

Territory cattlemen say the NT Government is dragging the chain on coming up with an effective system for controlling wild dog numbers.

“They’re just not getting things together and landholders are still waiting for a new set of guidelines to help them tackle this very serious issue in a streamlined manner,” NTCA executive director Luke Bowen says. “Industry estimates annual losses of 60,000 head a year with a total loss of $80 million across the economy.

“Our members have called for revamped measures to include a ‘one-stop shop’ application process and streamlined procedures to allow people to be trained in wet meat bait injection. “Wild dogs are on the rampage and in huge numbers on stations now, and are causing our members huge problems with stock losses. Pastoralists are finding new calves maimed with severe bite injuries and ears ripped off, as a result of wild dog attacks.

“The current baiting system is cumbersome and riddled with red tape and we’ve got to free it up. The Government was going to outline a new better system by the end March for the industry to look at, and our members are still waiting for it.”
LIVE EXPORT CRISIS: Where are we up to one year on?

A year has now passed since a profoundly distressing ABC Four Corners report on cruelty to cattle in some Indonesian abattoirs was aired across Australia. The public outcry lead to what the industry called a knee-jerk reaction from the Federal Agriculture Minister who placed an immediate ban on all live shipments to Indonesia. The minister’s decision had a catastrophic impact on northern cattle producers, transport operators and other businesses involved in the live export trade. It also severely damaged our country’s relationship with Indonesia. One year on, the impacts are still being felt and producers fear for their future in the industry.

“Things are tough,” NTCA executive director Luke Bowen says. “On top of the devastating ban, we’re now faced with a situation where the Indonesians have reduced import permits to just 283,000 head of cattle for the whole country for this calendar year - compared with the recent 500,000 to 600,000 head a year and a peak of 750,000 in 2009. “This is obviously putting huge pressure on cattle producers because in the last half of this calendar year there will be only 98,000 head going out. “Significant industry work is taking place to try to lessen the impact and also reinforce Australia’s world-leading animal welfare standards. We now have a world-first ESCAS (Export Supply Chain Assurance System) in place in Indonesia and progressively being introduced to all other international markets by December 2012. The system is imposed on exporters as part of the export licensing process and operation. Work continues on finding alternative markets for northern cattle. “Other markets are being found but nothing of any great substance, unfortunately,” Luke Bowen says. “At the end of the day, Indonesia has taken over from a lot of other South East Asian markets because it has had the capacity to pay the price and the feeding system to go with it. “Things are getting tougher. The political climate in Indonesia is still focussed on the self-sufficiency issue despite tightening supply and increasing meat prices. They’ll keep reducing imports of both boxed beef and live animals but who knows how long it will continue. “Demand for meat is increasing strongly on the back of a population of 240 million people and an economy that’s grown at 6% a year throughout the economic crisis. The quotas are working against them. Local market forces are pushing the meat prices up and encouraging local producers to sell into the market place, thereby putting pressure on their own herd.”

Cattlemen worried about potential Foot and Mouth Disease risk

The NTCA is anxiously watching moves in Indonesia to could see a shift from existing legislation which prohibits the South East Asian nation from importing meat or livestock from a country with Foot-and-Mouth Disease. The association says there is a push to change legislation to allow meat and animals to be imported from ‘zone control’ countries (i.e. FMD-affected countries where disease-free zones have been declared).

“If that eventuates, that would bring countries like Brazil and India into the frame. “That would cause our members major concerns because it would open the potential for Foot-and-Mouth to get into Indonesia. Indonesia is currently our buffer because it’s free of Foot-and-Mouth and it lies between us and other countries that already have the disease. We see that as a major threat to our cattle industry.”

NT roads spending concern

The NTCA has again voiced concern about the NT Government Budget’s lack of overall commitment to urgently needed repairs and upgrading of the bush roads network. Executive Director Luke Bowen said the budget’s ‘trickle’ of $2 million for the Tanami Rd, about $9 million for Barkly roads would hardly make a dent in the work needed on the roads network.

“The NT Government knows that it will take at least a couple of billion dollars to get our bush roads network up to a safe and reasonable standard but most of that will have to come from the federal government. “There is no question that these roads are in general decline and desperate for attention, and that’s bad not just for the industry but also for mining, tourism, freight transport and remote community residents. “We have been lobbying long and hard for more money for improvements but year after year, we’re continuing to see major underspending on our bush roads networks.”

The NTCA welcomed budget funding for some pastoral sector-related initiatives and for rural health and medical needs including aerial medical and road ambulance services, and emergency department facilities at Tennant Creek Hospital.

Cattle Council Board will meet in Alice Springs on 13-14 August. While in the region, board members plan to hold a session with local producers to discuss industry issues and restructures. Central Australian NTCA members are warmly invited to attend. More details will follow as they become available.

Cattlenews - July 2012
NTCA Northern Beef Forum, AGM & Dinner

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Panelists from Australia’s peak livestock industry groups faced concerned northern cattlemen seeking answers, at the NTCA’s 2012 Northern Beef Forum on 30 March.

This full-day event, hosted by the Tennant Creek Branch, diverted from the traditional conference-style format to allow producers to reflect on the tumultuous eight months since the live export ban, and to look at where the industry is now placed.

The forum program began with a comprehensive global beef industry outlook from Ian Baker, Rabobank’s Asia Head of Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory. Panel members then took their place on stage. “From there, the forum involved lots of discussing and fleshing out issues around where the industry is now and what needs to happen in the future,” NTCA Executive Director Luke Bowen says. “It was a good opportunity for members to offload their concerns and get feedback from the national industry representative groups on where things are up to and how they’re working for the industry.

“One of consistent views that came across on the day was some of these national structures have failed the industry - certainly in regards to the live export crisis. After the forum, the NTCA and facilitiators did more work to come up with strong recommendation that reads: The NTCA executive seeks allocation of funds from RMAC (Red Meat Advisory Council) or other industry source up to $500,000 for a complete and independent review of industry representation structures and funding and levy arrangements. The NTCA executive directs the President and Executive Director to engage with Agforce and WA producer bodies (PGA/WAFF) in order to seek a consensus view and build weight for the call.

The NTCA says discussions have since taken place with interstate peak bodies, government and a number of major users. The association remains confident agreement to undertake the assessments will be reached. Reflecting on this year’s event, Luke Bowen says it was always going to be difficult to get a a huge amount out of an open forum, which could have run for two or three days. “With one day allocated for the forum, we had to be short, sharp and shiny so we were always limited on what we were going to get out of it. Given the circumstances, we were very happy to come away with some quite substantial recommendations.

“The NTCA has now taken the lead in driving these issues at a national level so we can see some of the recommended changes taking place. The discussion and recommendation was prompted by events over the past 12 months with the export crisis and response by industry at the state and national level. The forum also came up with some core recommendations focussed on improving industry communications. They included the need to connect more effectively with urban Australia and make more use of today’s social media outlets. An out-of-session recommendation called for a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy to be developed to better promote the cattle industry’s image, role and value to the wider Australian community.
NTCA Northern Beef Forum, AGM & Dinner

NTCA members, guests and sponsors relax at the association’s annual gala dinner after this year’s Northern Beef Forum and other program events.
Networking sets scene for a lively forum

Briefings, workshops, dinners and the ever-popular annual Ladies’ Day and Luncheon were all in the mix on the Thursday before the NTCA Northern Beef Forum. The day included an AACo briefing on its proposed northern abattoir, with an outline of progress and state of negotiations over government backing.

The NFF staged a National Blueprint for Australian Agriculture workshop as part of a nation-wide series to explain the initiative. Barkly women hosted glamorous, sell-out Ladies’ Day at Darwin’s up-market Char Restaurant, followed by champagne and a ‘Paspaley Pearl Discovery’.

Forum guests were also able to network at dinners hosted by sponsors and agribusiness groups, including NAB and Coopers.

Strong Leaders honoured

Tributes were paid to two past NTCA presidents during the 2012 Forum dinner. Outgoing president Rohan Sullivan and his predecessor Roy Chisholm received special presentations for their ‘outstanding commitment’ to the NTCA and for their strong leadership through what the NTCA described as some of the toughest times the association has faced in its 28 year history. Both have extensive industry and NTCA links going back many years, and have dedicated enormous amounts of time to representing members, while still tending to the needs of their own family stations.

‘Henbury-type sales threaten industry’s long-term future’

Central Australia’s pastoral community was angered and dismayed by the sale of Henbury Station for destocking and carbon farming purposes, outgoing NTCA President Rohan Sullivan said in his final annual report at the Beef Forum. Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke announced last August that $9 million from his department’s $400 million Australian National Reserve System, had gone to RM Williams Agricultural Holdings to help buy and destock Henbury Station and set up a carbon farming experiment.

“Purchases such as these threaten the industry’s long-term future by removing critical mass and skills from the region. They distort the property market because they operate under a different set of rules and with resources not available to other potential purchasers, they prevent new entrants to the industry and they fly in the face of other programs which are intended to encourage on-farm conservation and multiple land use.

Lobbying on shire rates

The president also pre-empted the need for future lobbying to have the current shire rating system retained. Local Government Minister Malarndirri McCarthy announced in March that a cap on conditional rates would be retained for two more years.

“This has meant that pastoral lessees have some certainty with regard to the level of rating until June 2013,” Mr Sullivan said. “But we will need to be prepared to go back to government in the next 12 months to lobby to have the current system retained.

“There’s still a school of thought within the local government sector that the pastoral industry should contribute much more to the revenue for shires. Such thinking fails to recognise the reality that the super shires do not have an adequate economic base to be sustainable, regardless of the of rates charged and that they will depend on government grants and tied funds for many years to come.”

NTCA appoints new national group delegates

The NTCA’s new voices on national industry bodies are Tom Stockwell, who replaces George Scott as Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) rep, and Tracey Hayes who’s now the National Farmers Federation (NFF) rep, replacing Roy Chisholm. Both come with extensive knowledge of, and experience within, the Territory cattle industry.

TOM STOCKWELL was the Primary Industry Department’s Katherine Regional Director for some years before departing to run Sunday Creek on the Sturt Plateau with wife Bev and their children. He was awarded an Agricultural Science Degree through the University of Queensland in 1977, followed by a Masters Degree for research into NT grazing systems in 1989. He has been a forceful, no-nonsense advocate for the cattle industry for decades, as a member of many rural industry groups.

TRACEY HAYES grew up on a northern South Australia pastoral property before moving to Central Australia where she honed her cattle production experience on Maryvale and Deep Well Stations for 25 years. After raising four boys, Tracey studied for an Advanced Diploma in Business Management and a Graduate Certificate in Rangeland Management. She’s a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has a pilot’s licence. In recent years, she’s diversified into an Alice Springs equipment hire business. Tracey has been part of the NTCA executive in various roles for many years, including Deputy President. She has also taken on industry representative roles with bodies including the Rural Industry Training Advisory Board and Alice Springs Pastoral Industry Advisory Board. She has a keen interest in rural family issues.
The NTCA has congratulated all parties involved in the recent successful determination relating to the Beetaloo / Hayfield group of Native Title claims. “This determination, involving 10 pastoral leases and some 30,000 sq km, sets an example to the rest of the country about how to do things with little fuss,” NTCA President David Warriner said. “If we look at the Northern Territory today we see almost the entire area blanketed by mining and petroleum exploration leases, and until recently, unresolved Native Title claims. In the past three to four years we have begun to address this collectively with the claimants to see Native Title accepted and agreed to. It provides certainty for all parties and is being undertaken with goodwill. “Today we see Native Title holders getting the recognition that they have sought and, importantly, ongoing development of local and regional relationships which are so important to the future of the Territory and Northern Australia.”

The Beetaloo / Hayfield group case flows from an agreement between all parties, including claimants, pastoralists and land councils, to streamline the process by grouping some regional claims together instead of dealing with each case individually. The NTCA believes this approach will result in all 130 Territory claims being resolved by consent within a much quicker timeframe.

It has expressed disquiet, however, about a recent Federal Government suggestion that funding assistance for pastoralists would be removed. “This has been met with great concern by pastoralists and also, we understand, by land councils with whom we have developed a very constructive and productive relationship to resolve claims,” David Warriner has said. “Without adequate funding for pastoral respondents there will be an increase in unrepresented or inadequately-represented respondents. That will lead to increased costs, delays and confusion in the process of resolving claims and likelihood of litigation. We think it will be a false economy.”

Native Title claims processed out of court currently cost an average $6000.

Cattlenews - July 2012

NTCA Life Memberships in 2012

Life membership for industry stalwarts

Mick Moloney and David Crombie are the latest cattle industry identities to be honoured with NTCA life membership. Here are excerpts from addresses delivered by Ken Warriner and John and Terry Underwood about Mick and David respectively during this year’s Northern Beef Forum dinner.

MICK MOLONEY has rarely missed a celebration in the north, whether it be one of the various Brahman dinners, or NTCA AGMs, private station celebrations, race meetings and, lately, funerals - and there’s no happier soul than Mick. He has had his health problems over the years, and his response when asked how he is, has always been “I am good” or, when in trouble, “There are plenty worse off than me”.

Mick is a water man. He spent 45 years with Southern Cross and was their longest serving employee on his departure in 1992. He continued doing consultancy work for them for a number of years. He spent most of his time in Northern Australia but he also spent considerable time in New Guinea and South East Asia. One of Mick’s more interesting jobs was to install the irrigation equipment on the Sultan of Brunei’s polo fields. Angus Adnam and Ric Trivet arranged for Mick and his equipment to be collected in Brisbane and, along with the 57 head of cattle they all flew in a DC8 to Brunei. The result of this job was that Mick also got the contract to install the fire fighting system in the palace and later Southern Cross installed the irrigation system on the Sultan’s new golf course.

Mick had many skills when it came to water management. Mick treated all people as equals. He has done some massive programs over the years for many of the company groups including Hookers at VRD, Vestey’s, NAPCO, CPC and AACo, but he would put in the same effort to do the right thing for the smaller operators. If he saw something not being used, such as a YB or BDC, he would put the bite on us on behalf of people who could not afford the same and, in some cases, rebuild the motors himself.

Water is the lifeline of the North and I don’t know of anyone who has done more than Mick Moloney for the pastoral industry in this area. Mick was always there to help people in any way possible, whether it be picking up kids or sick people off planes in Brisbane, or procuring goods. Mick and Edna have been great supporters of the pastoral industry in the North for over 60 years.

- Ken Warriner

DAVID CROMBIE has has been a loyal friend to the northern pastoral industry for many years. more than 30 years experience in agriculture, including as Managing Director of major agricultural development and pastoral companies, GRM and Queensland Northern Territory Pastoral Company. He is currently President of the National Farmers’ Federation, Chairman of the Australian Rural Leadership Forum, a Director of GRM and Rosewood (NT Beef) Pty Ltd, Deputy Chairman of a listed development company and the President of Queensland Rugby Union.

Mr Crombie also has experience on the boards of various industry organisations. In addition, he operates family properties, breeds cattle and farms in southern Queensland. Mr Crombie has more than 30 years commercial and representative experience in agriculture Australia and in development assistance overseas.

He served on the Board of Grainco Australia and subsequently the Boards of the Meat Industry Council and Meat and Livestock Australia where he was Chairman from 1998 to 2005.

He was Chairman of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, he served on the Board of EFIC and is immediate past President of the National Farmers Federation.

He was a founding partner in GRM International which manages Australian and overseas development projects.

- John & Terry Underwood
Indonesian students upskilling on northern cattle station work

North Australian cattle stations have been playing host to eight Indonesian university students under an NTCA training and workplace initiative designed to build stronger relationships with our closest offshore neighbour. The six male and two female third-year animal husbandry students initially trained in Alice Springs under the watchful eye of the NTCA’s Tony Freshwater and alongside a number of indigenous pastoral trainees. They then undertook work experience on a selection of corporate and family-owned northern cattle stations. The eight-week pilot program is being run under a MOU signed between the NTCA, East Java’s Brawijaya University and West Java’s Padjadjaran University. The program was identified in the NTCA Capacity Building for Asian Live Cattle Export Strategic Plan 2011 as a way to enhance cross industry relations between the Territory and Indonesia. Preliminary development of the concept began after discussions with key Indonesian officials during 2010 and 2011 and drew on some parallels with a dairy based program operating between Japan and Indonesia. The concept was further developed through the work of the NTCA’s 2010 inaugural bursary winner Mr Robi Agustair and the Cattle and Buffalo Club attached to the Padjadjaran University’s Faculty of Animal Husbandry.

The training program was initially scheduled for 2011 but was postponed in the wake of the debilitating live cattle export ban. The late-June program was delivered entirely by the cattle industry assisted by the Territory Government. All training and induction followed industry standards that were put into practice during the work experience phase on the host stations. The NTCA says while the the program has a strong practical and technical focus, it also aimed at building on the already-strong and enduring relationships between northern Australia and Indonesia. The program’s Australian partners included the NTCA, DAFF, selected pastoral companies, the NT Government, MLA and the Indonesian Consulate in Darwin. Indonesian partners include Brawijaya University in Malang, East Java; Padjadjaran University in Bandung, West Java, and the latter’s Cattle and Buffalo Club.

The NTCA wishes to thank all companies, agencies and stations whose support has made this program possible. Participants include the NT Resources Department, MLA, the MLA Jakarta office and DAFF. Special thanks go to NTCA members and stations that hosted the students, namely: Consolidated Pastoral Company (Newry and Carlton Hill Stations), Heytesbury Beef (VRD Station), Cave Creek Station and Lakefield Station.

Valuations system set for change

Exasperated NTCA members are holding out hope that a change of Valuers-General will bring desperately needed relief. The NTCA says new Valuer-General John Love appears to be committed to reviewing the current valuations system and coming up with a better way of doing things. “If this occurs, it will reduce the current frustrating debacle that’s gone on for last six to eight years,” Executive Director Luke Bowen says. “The current system has been wasting the time and resources of both the government, the valuers and the producers - and all for no apparent reason. “Our members have been getting stone-walled by the outgoing Valuer-General and his staff. We have raised serious concerns with the Valuer-General not only about the way in which pastoral properties have been valued and his approach to the objection process, but also about the manner in which the staff have conducted themselves. Their approach publically and at private meetings has been highly aggressive, confronting and offensive to our members.”
CLIMATE WATCH

With the NT Climate Services Centre

Looking ahead

A cooler-than-average Dry Season

The Northern Territory experienced the second coolest June on record this year. Central Australia has felt plenty of cool nights so far this dry season. On 3 July, the town measured its coldest morning in 10 years with a minimum -4.9 °C. May and June minimum temperatures were nearly two degrees below average for most of the Red Centre (see Fig. 1), and there are more cold nights to come, with July historically the coolest month of the year. The long-term forecast for the remainder of this dry season indicates near average to a little below average minimum temperatures can be expected until October. Average minimum temperatures across central Australia range from 6 °C to 12 °C.

El Niño and the Build-up

Since the end of the La Niña in April, neutral conditions (neither El Niño nor La Niña) have prevailed in the Pacific and will continue at least until the end of July. The eastern Pacific Ocean is beginning to warm. Does this mean the next season will be an El Niño year? Computer model forecasts suggest we will see El Niño conditions beginning sometime between August and October 2012 and peaking around December or January, although there is still a chance the pacific will remain neutral. What does El Niño mean for Australia? Each El Niño event impacts Australia differently (See Fig. 2). However, El Niño is usually associated with below average rainfall across northern and eastern Australia, especially during the tropical “build-up” period, October to December.

Sustainable land management blogspot launched

NTCA-based Regional Landcare Facilitor Peter Clifton has launched a new blogspot to ramp up communications with Territory land managers and promote discussion on sustainable practices. Landholders can use the site to read about sustainable practices developed locally, have their say by providing comment and counter-comment, and document their experiences for others to learn from. “I hope that over time this exchange of views will improve the resilience of people, profits and the environment in the Northern Territory,” Peter says. The site also provides details of the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) which is the subject of a series of workshops currently being presented throughout the Territory. The initiative gives farmers and land managers an opportunity to generate carbon credits by improving carbon storage or reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Verified credits can be traded in a carbon market. Involvement by farmers in the CFI is voluntary. “The workshops have been going well,” Peter says. “We’ve had over 100 participants at the first three, and 50% of those have been land managers.”

Participants listen in at one of the Territory CFI workshop

VISIT THE BLOGSPOT AT: http://landcarent.blogspot.com.au