

Chair's report

Glenroy Logan

FARMERS OR FOOD PRODUCERS? IN THIS AGE OF MODERN MARKETING terminology, we as farmers must start to get a bit smarter and call ourselves food producers. You see, for far too long now, we have been referred to as whingeing farmers—you know, those people who cut down all the trees and go about degrading the land and using up all the water so there is none left to run down the creeks and rivers. The list could go on for a country mile. So let's baffle them with modern terminology: we are all now food producers. Don't believe me? Just take a moment



and think about it—tractor mechanics aren't just mechanics anymore, they're technicians. Why not us? But if we're going to modernise our name and change anyone's thinking about us, we'd better modernise our thinking as well.

The topic on everyone's lips in the last few months has been the lack of rain. With so many people working on water issues all around this great nation of ours, we still just do not have the answers. What this country really needs, aside from a good drenching from Mother Nature, is for all of us food producers to take a good look at our food-producing factors and put in place some very good irrigating practices to conserve water. I'm not saying we don't now, but we can, and should, improve.

Here, in south-east Queensland, we are in what I guess is the worst drought ever. There's very little water in bores and the weather forecasts are not sounding very positive. But, that is the nature of our land and as food producers, we must be mindful of water rights. If whoever has control of the price of water sees fit for it to be high and to make money, we must go to the other extreme and demand that a standard of set production costs be established and minimum prices set for our produce as a trade-off for the high price of water.

The other day I heard on the radio that chocolate manufacturers are to do away with king-size bars as they are being viewed as a possible cause of obesity. Once again, all in moderation, although I don't know if there have been any cases registered of people becoming overweight from eating too many vegetables.

We have all heard of the benefits of eating more vegetables—something we onion producers have known for quite

a long time now—but there has been a big push in recent times to get more people to eat fresh vegetables. Many of the successful diets reported on the TV of late have centred on the eating of more vegetables and, of course, getting more than the usual exercise.

Since I became chairman of Onions Australia, I've met many truly genuine people who make up the food production chain. I have travelled the country and visited so many farms and businesses in the last two years, I almost don't know where to start to thank people for the wonderful experiences I have had in that time. I thank the committee members for their efforts and input into the organisation, and I certainly wish the incoming chairperson and their committee all the best for the future.

On a sad note, I have received a letter of resignation from our executive officer, Jody Magerkorth. Jody has been a real treasure to work with and has certainly organised the meetings, guest speakers, sponsors, and *Onions Australia* magazine and newsletters with the utmost professionalism and dedication. She explained that although she enjoyed her time with Onions Australia and her leaving was not any fault of the committee, her husband, Hermann, has been diagnosed with a health problem and she felt she could no longer give the association the effort required of her position.

Jody, we all wish you well whatever the future may hold for you, Hermann and your girls.

And to all the food producers around Australia, I hope you have a good harvest and receive some good prices for your efforts.