



WAMMCO International  
A DIVISION OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEAT MARKETING CORPORATION

## New automation links for WAMMCO

WAMMCO has joined an exclusive world 'club' of automated meat processors with a recent visit to Europe by WAMMCO Katanning plant manager Tony Bessell.

Tony was nominated by Meat and Livestock Australia to join a party of Australian and New Zealand meat processors for the International Meat Automation Congress held in Malaga, Spain early in November.

He said the congress provided rare insights into the world's most advanced meat processing operations, as well as valuable contacts for future networking.

"We were invited to inspect a range of innovations in automation and robotics being used to address problems and challenges similar to those of WAMMCO – mainly in

terms of acute labour shortages," Tony said.

He said there was also a range of exciting advances in measuring, modelling and data capture that may have application at Katanning.

"Some of the advances would not suit our Katanning operations, but others could be readily taken up," Tony said.

"Labour remains our most serious limitation and we look like starting the 2007 season at least 100 people short.

"Denmark is well advanced with automation as it tackles similar labour problems to those we have in Australia.

"There is also intense competition throughout Europe for workers from Poland and other Eastern bloc countries."

Tony said he had the opportunity to study Norway's Gilde producer cooperative, which is responsible for processing and marketing all of that country's pigs, cattle and lamb.

"They are facing challenges of deregulation similar to those confronted by WAMMCO as it moved from a statutory to a cooperative structure several years ago," he said.

"However, increasing regulation and consumer demands were a more common problem for processors at the congress."

He said Australia had learned of the dangers of going too far with concepts of automation, as with Futuretech, but said MLA was looking at a number of possible joint venture projects with European and other overseas countries.

## 53 combined years with WAMMCO

ALBERT Ejin and Daud Laurie, two Christmas Islanders who have both retired after more than 50 years combined service to WAMMCO, were farewelled at the Katanning works last week.

Albert was one of the original Christmas Islanders to join the former Southern Meat Packers, Katanning, as a slaughterman in 1974.

Most of his 31 years at the plant were spent in the boning room with subsequent employers Metro Meat, Metro Meat International and for the past decade with WAMMCO.

"When I started at Katanning, the works had sheep, cattle and pig chains," Albert said. "The pig chain was closed when we moved to Halal processing and the cattle chain closed soon afterwards."

He married in Katanning in 1976 and raised two children in the town.

Daud Laurie arrived in Katanning with his wife in 1977 and is also a father of two.

He joined Metro Meat in 1983 and spent his 22 years in the boning room at the Katanning plant.

WAMMCO Katanning plant manager Tony Bessell, supervisor Rob Panting, local AMIEU representative Darren Miles, and Islamic Community leader Aklie Laurie attended a small ceremony at the plant to farewell the long serving workers.

Tony Bessell said Albert and Daud were valued members of the pioneering Christmas Island community who had made the qualities of skill, dedication and loyalty synonymous with both the works and the town.

"We are all privileged to have worked and lived beside them and their families and the other members of the Christmas Island community over such a long, significant era," Tony said.



WAMMCO's Katanning manager Tony Bessell (front centre) congratulates retirees Daud Laurie and Albert Ejin supported by Islamic Community leader Aklie Laurie (back left), supervisor Rob Panting and local AMIEU representative Darren Miles.

## New unloading ramps for Katanning

PRODUCERS and carriers delivering lambs to Katanning should enjoy the benefits of a new unloading system when the plant re-opens for business in 2007.

Two new ramps are modelled on those at a lamb processing facility in the Dandenongs, Victoria and will be installed at a cost of around \$50,000.

WAMMCO Katanning plant manager Tony Bessell said the ramps were safer for operators and because they were longer, with a lower gradient, they would further reduce the potential for animal stress and injury.

## By-product upgrade

WAMMCO is seeking State Government assistance for a major upgrading of its by-products rendering equipment in a bid to improve efficiency and reduce odour emissions from the Katanning plant.

WAMMCO Katanning manager, Tony Bessell said WAMMCO had cooperated with officers from the Department of Environment, acting on emission reports they had received in October from local residents.

"The reports coincided

with a period of peak activity at the plant both in terms of our own capacity and as a result of a decision by WAMMCO to assist the nearby Beaufort River abattoirs by taking by-product," Tony said.

"Preliminary planning to bring our facilities up to the required standard, indicates that the cost will be around \$3 million, some of which may be eligible for government contribution, and we are currently exploring those opportunities."

## Works to close on December 22

WAMMCO will close for the Christmas/New Year break on December 22 with last lamb deliveries on December 20.

Receivals will re-commence on January 1, 2007

# WAMMCO *Info*

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## Precision feedlotting

A NEW lamb feedlot calculator system developed by Geoff Duddy, senior livestock officer with the NSW DPI, will be demonstrated at a series of grower meetings next week.

WAMMCO's supply development manager Rob Davidson said he had organised meetings of producers to learn about the new calculator and to provide feedback on its use in WA. "Geoff Duddy and the NSW DPI developed the system using Sheep CRC funding and he will be in WA to promote its use and to learn how it might be improved and adapted to WA conditions," Rob said.

Limited seats are available at the following venues and interested producers should contact the WAMMCO Perth office on 9262 0999:

**Sunday, Dec 10:** Wongan Hills Recreation Centre, 3:30pm - 6pm

**Monday, Dec 11:** York Café Bugatis, 8am - 10:30am

**Monday, Dec 11:** Lake Grace Bowling Club, 3pm - 5:30pm

**Tuesday, Dec 12:** Dept of Ag and Food Esperance, 3pm - 5:30pm

**Wednesday, Dec 13:** Dept of Ag and Food Jerramungup, 10:30am - 1pm

**Wednesday, Dec 13:** Commercial Hotel Kojonup 6pm - 8:30pm.

## New producer forum

A LOCALISED cell format that WAMMCO hopes will develop as a means of enhancing the flow of information and advice between the cooperative and its members will be launched at a meeting in the Upper Great Southern late in January.

WAMMCO's supply development manager, Rob Davidson said he hoped to establish an initial group of up to 20 members in the Pingelly/Wandering/Popanyinning/Narrogin area to enable them to work more closely with him on production techniques and to provide practical feedback to the cooperative.

"Many producer members are unable to get to our annual workshops, meetings or events, and the idea is for us to get together two or three times a year to discuss opportunities, ideas and issues," Rob said.

"WAMMCO can now provide a great deal of assistance and advice to its members, but can also learn from the experiences and ideas of producers, especially in terms of addressing local problems."

Rob said the groups may also serve as a catalyst to obtain funding under MLA's Producer Initiated Research and Development funding program.

"We are keen to help local lamb production groups to submit for funding under this program," he said.

Members wanting more information on PIRD funding opportunities should contact Rob on 9262 0999.

## Tight season affects lamb competition

TOUGH seasonal conditions have restrained WAMMCO's \$13,000 State Carcase Competition with entries and weights down considerably.

WAMMCO's competition coordinator Rob Davidson said entry numbers were expected to reach 60, representing more than 10,000 lambs by the December 20 shut-off.

However he said it was pleasing to see a number of new entrants this year as well as regular contestants, and the competition would again be extremely keen.

"Entries represent a good spread of genetics with a slightly higher percentage of F1 ewes and second cross lambs compared with other years, possibly indicating F1 ewes may have offered their progeny a better start to life during the dry winter," Rob said.

"Carcase weights are down around 1.5 kg on average because of the tough season, with most entries in the 21-24kg range".

The 2006 competition is sponsored by WAMMCO, Farm Weekly, Elders, Primaries and FarmWorks, with product prizes from Milne Feeds, Ballard Seeds and Superior Livestock Services.

Rob said the awards day would be in mid-February 2007 to coincide with prominent overseas customers of WAMMCO.

Growers have until December 20 to nominate a minimum number of 100 lambs for the 2006 competition and queries about the competition should be directed to Rob at the WAMMCO Perth office on 9262 0999, or to Fiona Clay at Katanning on 9821 2000.

## Bruce is November producer of month

WAMMCO director Bruce Wright of Mt. Barker capped off a big lamb delivery season when he won the cooperative's Producer of the Month title for November.

Bruce (right) pictured here with WAMMCO buyer Wayne Radford, won the award with a large line of 929 lambs.

Half of the draft was by Kelso blood rams from Roger House at Kojonup, over Border Leicester cross ewes and the other 50 percent were Poll Dorset-Merino cross.

Bruce said his season at Mt. Barker was reasonable and the winning consignment was drafted straight from their mothers.

He said this week that with a final draft of 1,000 lambs set to go, his total deliveries to

WAMMCO this year would reach just under 10,000 head.



## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

CHRISTMAS 2006 marks another milestone for WAMMCO members and staff in that we have managed to once again move ahead despite extremely difficult seasonal and labour conditions.

The poor seasonal start was responsible for cutting lamb weights quite significantly, and despite our best efforts, a severe labour shortage continues to hamper opportunities to develop new market opportunities and to better service our existing customers.

These are challenges that we look forward to wrestling with and hopefully overcoming in the new year.

On behalf of the WAMMCO directors and management I would like to pass on our sincere thanks for your support during 2006 and to wish you a more abundant season in 2007.

We look forward to working with you again in the New Year.

*Dawson Bradford*  
WAMMCO  
chairman

