



# CEO REPORT 2023-24

## TO NHIA MEMBERS

### **Approachability, Engagement, and Integrity**

In my primary address at one of the first members' forums I opened as CEO, I emphasised three core values of mine: Approachability, Engagement, and Integrity. These principles guide my interactions with NHIA members, whether in forum settings or one-on-one conversations

My commitment to these values is solid because NHIA's purpose revolves around addressing the needs and priorities of our members' businesses. I encourage members to view NHIA as a partner in overcoming challenges, resolving frustrations, and celebrating successes. Our association flourishes on member involvement, and I invite you all to actively participate and share your experiences for the collective benefit.

### **Regional Forums: Learning and Connecting**

The NHIA Board's dedication to regional forums over the past couple of years has been invaluable. These forums have provided exceptional opportunities to understand the pressing issues faced by our members, especially in a climate of growing business challenges. Additionally, these events advance social connections within our industry, a significant strength of NHIA membership. I urge all members to continue engaging, whether by attending forums, speaking with Directors, or reaching out to me directly.

### **The Ruminant Trade Genetics Advisory Group (RGTAG)**

NHIA's long-term commitment to the Ruminant Trade Genetics Advisory Group (RGTAG) is a testament to our dedication to the success of Australian genetics on the global stage. RGTAG plays a crucial role in:

- Representing the industry in setting import and export protocols
- Advising the government on genetics trade issues
- Acting as a conduit between the industry and the Department of Agriculture
- Keeping RGTAG informed of current trade and protocol issues and events
- Presenting the Australian ruminant genetic industry to international audiences

Without the contributions of the RGTAG, our industry would face significant challenges, including limited industry consultation, a lack of prioritised trade partnerships, and an absence of critical input during essential protocol negotiation stages. RGTAG plays a pivotal role in facilitating practical and effective communication between the government and the industry, significantly influencing Australia's genetic trade landscape.

RGTAG's importance is exemplified by its efforts to open or reopen trade with countries where live export has declined or been prohibited. This enables producers to continue trading through internationally agreed genetic protocols. Additionally, it provides opportunities for semen companies to market their products overseas when domestic conditions are challenging, such as during periods of low milk prices or adverse weather events.

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Currently, RGTAG members serve the genetic interests of dairy, beef, goats, and sheep and encompass all small ruminants. RGTAG's work enhances the viability of genetics in Australia, achieving outcomes that would otherwise be unattainable. The dedication of the committee members is truly commendable, and I am privileged to collaborate with such committed professionals. I would like to recognise the hardworking efforts of the RGTAG committee:

Chair Person:	Penny Welch	GAC, TLG
Dairy	Ruth Barber	GAC, TLG
Embryo Transfer	Dom Bayard	Global Reproduction Solutions
Sheep/Goat	Belinda Cardinal	Caprotek
Dairy, Beef	Rob Derksen	GAC, TLG
Southern Beef	Debbie Mills	Holbrook Breeders Australia
Sheep	Michylla Seal	Genstock
Northern Beef	Alan Smith	Rocky Repro
Beef	Caitlin Warner	Australian Premier Genetics
Northern Beef	Ced Wise	Ced Wise AB Services

RGTAG's unwavering commitment ensures the continued growth and success of Australia's genetic trade, benefiting producers and the industry as a whole.

## Beef Working Group

The newly established Beef Working Group exemplifies NHIA's continued support for sector-specific needs. This group aims to unify the beef industry's voice and address collaborative needs. While still in its early stages, I look forward to the group's progress and welcome member input and questions.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the working group who have already demonstrated their passion and commitment to advancing the needs of the beef sector.

## Future Initiatives

Looking ahead, NHIA is working on further offerings, including AI technician workshops and its AI accreditation technician program. We aim to build on best practices within industry, dedicating further efforts to training and development, as well as mentorship programs. Our goal is to continue supporting our members' businesses with valuable resources and opportunities, ensuring sustained growth and innovation in the herd improvement industry.

## Gratitude and Farewell

I extend my deepest gratitude to our members for your unwavering support, which is the cornerstone of NHIA's success. I also thank the NHIA Board for their tremendous efforts. As we bid farewell to current directors Mike Rose and Anthony Shelly, I acknowledge their governance, strategic direction, and strong contributions while advocating for our industry; their strengths will be missed in the boardroom.

Looking ahead, I eagerly anticipate welcoming the newly elected directors and the fresh perspectives they will bring.

A further note of thanks to Karen Eastop, whose invaluable support in the NHIA office has been greatly appreciated. Many members have had the pleasure of interacting with Karen. Together, we remain dedicated to supporting you and welcoming your contributions, input and questions.

I am eager to collaborate with our members as we navigate the opportunities and challenges ahead together.

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Sara Merckel, CEO

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