



CGU Farmsafe Farmer Awards 2009 Media Release

15 October 2009

Farmsafe and CGU Insurance announce farm safety winners

The winners of the 2009 Farmsafe Farmer Awards were announced last night at the National Farm Health and Safety 'Time to Act' Conference in Perth.

Farmsafe Australia Inc and CGU Insurance jointly established the Farmsafe Farmer Awards to encourage the farming community to think about safety and to recognise individuals or groups who have demonstrated initiative in managing farm health and safety.

The Farmsafe Farmer Awards are made biennially, on the basis of community involvement, farm safety management, and farm safety innovation.

The Farmsafe Farmer Awards 2009 winners are:

- Farmsafe Farmer of the Year (\$500 prize) – Michael Neville, Wongan, Victoria – Warakirri Agricultural Trusts.
- Community Farm Safety Group (\$1,000 prize) – WA College of Agriculture – Cunderdin.
- Individual Farm Safety Contribution (\$500 prize) – John Dawson AM, Skipton, Victoria.

John Temperley, Executive Officer, Farmsafe Australia thanked CGU Insurance for its sponsorship and said that “the winners of the Farmsafe Awards 2009 are all worthy of being recognised for their efforts in promoting, advocating and achieving safer farm workplaces.”

Andrew Beer, CGU Retail National Manager Rural, congratulated the award winners, and everyone who was nominated, for their achievements in enhancing farm safety.

“CGU is committed to reducing risk in the community and we are delighted to support these awards which reinforce the safety message on farms,” Mr Beer said.

“We are proud to join together with Farmsafe Australia to promote safer farming and increased farm productivity through better farming practices.

“Every farm-related death and injury is avoidable and we must stop this loss of life and reduced quality of life,” he said. “Farm-related deaths and injuries also create a significant economic burden for both farmers and the communities they live in.”

John Temperley added that while there has been a reduction in farm fatalities, there is still more work to do to increase farm safety, particularly as tractors, vehicles and quad bikes are still the biggest cause of death on farms.

“There has been more than a 30% reduction in farm fatalities over the last 15 years, from more than 150 per year to now under 100. It would have been better but for the increasing deaths associated with quad bikes used on farms,” said Mr Temperley.

“There has been a ten fold increase in quad bike associated fatalities in Australia over the last 15 years, to now 14 deaths this year.” “This is not sustainable,” he added.

Congratulations to the 2009 Farmsafe Farmer Award recipients:

Farmsafe Farmer of the Year – *Michael Neville, Wongan, Warakirri Agricultural Trusts, Stoneleigh, Victoria*

Michael Neville manages Wongan, a 3,100 ha property for Warrakirri Agricultural Trusts cropping 2,800 ha. Wongan employs two full-time permanent staff, casuals as required and approximately 12 contractors at peak seasonal work times.

Michael Blakeney, Managing Director, Warakirri Agricultural Trusts was delighted to receive the award.

“Our mission statement confirms we will operate in a safe, sustainable manner for a rewarding investment. In line with this we believe work related injury or ill-health is unacceptable and Warakirri is committed to the identification and elimination of hazards on our farms. This has directly improved our operational returns and therefore has been a positive investment in our people and our business,” he said.

“Being recognised by Farmsafe Australia is a great encouragement to all of us at Warakirri. It is a positive reflection on the efforts of all involved, both past and present. We as an industry need to continue to improve the level of safety in agriculture.”

Individual Contribution to Australian Farm Safety – *John Dawson AM, Skipton, Victoria*

John Dawson, AM is a farmer from Skipton, Victoria is a past chairman of Farmsafe Australia (1996 – 98) and Farmsafe Victoria (1994 – 2003).

John was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for service to health and safety in agricultural communities, particularly through Farmsafe Australia and the development of a range of programs aimed at improving farm safety.

Following his retirement from office, John has still continued to be active in many farm safety programs, particularly advocating for safer use of quad bikes on Australian farms. John represented Farmsafe Australia Victoria tirelessly at the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry, and recently, representing Farmsafe Australia over 5 years pro bono at the Victorian Coronial inquiry examining farm related quad bike deaths.

Farm Safety Group Contribution – *WA College of Agriculture - Cunderdin*



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The WA College of Agriculture – Cunderdin is a Register Training Organisation delivering Level II qualifications under the Australian Quality Training Framework, providing a mix of classroom and work experience in real farming.

The college places a particular importance to OHS within their training program, with Brett Cox, the College's Farm Manager, a qualified Farmsafe Instructor providing lifelong OHS skills as a core tenet to all Cunderdin students, of which they are commended.

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Note to editors: jpeg images of the winners will be available.

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