The Tocal Stockhorse Sale

The Tocal Australian Stock Horse sale was held on Sunday 2 November 2008. The sale was an outstanding success. About 600 visitors were present when Auctioneer Jim Callinan from Pittson Elders, sold 43 horses.

25 of these horses were bred at Tocal and the remainder were sold on behalf of local Stockhorse breeders who have supported the college on an ongoing basis.

The average price for the sale was about $5400. The top mare, 6 years old “Tocal Claudia”, sold for $11,700. “Tocal Claudia” is a very handy black mare by Waiken Park Darkie.

The horses were well prepared for the sale by the college students who paraded them and demonstrated their skills during the morning of the sale. Representatives of the horse industry made positive comments on the excellent presentation of the horses, their calm temperament and the high standard of their training.

Cows Create Careers

The “Cows Create Careers” school program was started in Victoria and in the last few years it has been introduced into NSW schools.

It involves setting up a pen and shelter and bringing dairy calves to high schools for 3 weeks. During this time, students feed and care for the calves and do various units on the dairy industry. This gives them an appreciation of the importance of the industry in providing milk and dairy products. It also allows school students to find out what it is like to work on a dairy farm, and the tasks involved in raising dairy calves.

The program is supported by NSW DPI Tocal College, NSW Department of Education, local farmers who supply the calves and local businesses who provide calf feed and shelters.
Welcome to the final 2008 edition of Tocal Topics. At time of writing we are finalising enrolments for 2009.

Most of our courses appear to be filled but there are still a few places in some programs. If you haven’t finalised your application, there is still time to do this, so please contact the college.

Scholarship applications closed at the end of November. We are proud of the strong industry support we get for our students. Most applicants will receive a scholarship and applications need to be finalised by the end of November 2008. Forms can be downloaded from our website and these are also in Tocal Prospectus.

We recently hosted the Tocal Australian Stockhorse Sale. This was an outstanding success with 25 Tocal stock horses going under the hammer. Most of these were bred at the college and broken in by Tocal students.

Another 18 horses were sold on behalf of local studs that have supported the college in various ways. All the horses sold were quiet and capable of working cattle or competing in a variety of events.

Some of the horses were purchased by Tocal graduates who came back to buy the horse they had broken in whilst they were students.

Certificate IV students commence 2 February 2009. Certificate III students start their course on 9 February 2009. During the first few days students are allowed time to settle into the college environment, get to know other students and find their way around the campus. After that, the courses begin and students quickly get into the swing of college life.

If you are coming to Tocal in 2009, I look forward to meeting you in February. If you haven’t yet finalised your enrolment, I would encourage you to contact the college on 1800 025 520 as there may still be places in your preferred course.

I extend to you and your family my best wishes for Christmas and 2009.

Cameron Archer
Principal

Off Campus Work Experience

In October, Certificate IV students spent 4 weeks on work experience on properties all around Australia and New Zealand. Some went to the North Australian Pastoral Company and Kidman Properties in North Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Others completed work experience on sheep or cropping properties in NSW, Stock and Station Agents and other rural businesses.

3 students travelled to New Zealand to work on a mixed farm running sheep, cattle and deer. In most cases, the cost of travel and board were covered by the cooperating farmers.

Rachel Coman and Josh Strong went to Kurrajong Park, Coolah that employs a number of Tocal graduates. The manager, Stuart Hughes is a Tocal ex-student who was so impressed by the skills and abilities of Rachel and Josh, he offered both of them employment.

Both Josh and Rachel are working towards completing their Diploma of Agriculture before they take up these positions.

The Diploma is a self-directed course which some students complete during their spare time whilst completing Certificate IV. Diploma students study a number of units during the year and often return to college during term 4 to complete the course. This management-level course gives highly motivated students substantial credit towards a University degree.

Rachel said that the best thing about the college was the friends she made, the support from staff and the opportunities available on practical work and off campus work experience. ‘Tocal is the best thing I have ever done,’ Rachel said ‘and I would recommend Tocal to anyone interested in a career in agriculture.’

Josh said that he enjoyed the practical aspects of the course. ‘I have accepted the job at Kurrajong Park and really look forward to starting my career there.’
**Overseas Tours**

During 2008, students had the opportunity to go on overseas tours to Japan or New Zealand.

The Japan tour to Tocal’s sister college in Gifu Prefecture (near Nagoya) allowed students to see how Japanese farmers operate. They also became aware of the tastes and preferences of the Japanese consumers.

Students spent a week living on campus at Gifu College and on the weekend were hosted by farm families. It was a fantastic experience that all Tocal students enjoyed. This tour was significant especially as Japan is an important market for Australian farm produce.

Gifu college students visited Tocal in late November 2008 and stayed with local families to get a taste of the Australian lifestyle.

A group of Tocal trainees visited New Zealand in October. During this tour they visited farms and tourist facilities on the North Island. These included dairy, beef and sheep properties and a deer farm. It was a very worthwhile tour and the trainees brought a number of ideas back to implement on their home farms. Some sponsoring New Zealand employers stated that they found the Tocal trainee experience valuable.

**Summer Jobs with AWB**

Certificate III student, Olivia Twaddle has organised summer jobs for a number of Tocal students.

This work involves assisting Australian Wheat Board (AWB) staff at a large Grain Receival Depot, West Wyalong. The main duties include sampling grain as it is brought in from farms, recording weights and helping to load trains that take the wheat to shipping terminals for export.

Olivia and the other students are keen to gain further experience in this area and will earn some funds allowing them to continue into the Certificate IV at Tocal in 2009. Olivia has applied for a Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) scholarship valued at $3000. These scholarships are provided by GRDC to assist Tocal students interested in working in the cropping industry.

**Cropping Case Study**

Certificate III students do a unit on crops and fodder. This involves a tour to cropping areas in South West NSW, staying at Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre near Leeton.

They see a range of crops in various stages of growth and get to talk to farmers about their farm operations.

At Tocal, the students follow a number of crops from planting to harvesting, often for hay or silage. They learn how to make good quality conserved fodder from different types of forage crops.

Our students are also involved in operating machinery such as mowers, rakes and balers and learn about the feed value of well conserved forage.
New Machinery Training

Tocal College has launched an innovative machinery training program for the cropping industries in North West NSW.

In July and August the first two groups of students completed training at Narrabri and Moree. Participants completed a 5 day training course which covered operation and maintenance of large scale cropping machinery and related OH&S issues.

The focus of this training is on development of the skills and knowledge required to be able to safely and efficiently operate large scale farming machinery.

3 days are spent on classroom based activities and a full 2 days are allocated to practical instruction and gaining experience operating a range of machinery.

After completing the training course a number of the participants were offered jobs on cropping farms and have been able to make a start in the industry.

Case IH

Each year, Case IH sponsor 2 scholarships for students valued at $2500 each. Case IH also lends tractors to the college to help students gain experience using Case machinery on the farms.

The scholarships and tractors were organised by Robert Quinn, a Tocal ex-student, who has worked as a senior manager for Case for many years.

This support that the college receives from ex-students and industry means that there are numerous scholarships and job opportunities available for college graduates.

NAPCo Scholarship

The North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCo) is a great supporter of Tocal. They have large cattle stations in North-West Queensland and the Northern Territory. Many Tocal students complete their work experience on these properties.

NAPCo also offers scholarships to students who are interested in working in the cattle industry. The students get half their scholarship deducted from the fees and the remainder is presented to them if they accept a position with NAPCo.

This year, Sarraya Osborne from Cundeltown was granted the NAPCo scholarship valued at $2000.

“T” Job Prospects

Teacher of Agriculture

Most students work on farms when they leave Tocal. Some choose part-time study by enrolling in university degrees. Once students have a degree, they can then gain employment in other fields such as teaching at agricultural colleges, high schools and TAFE colleges.

Tractor Driver

Competent tractor drivers are in demand throughout NSW particularly during the planting and harvesting season. Those who can safely and efficiently operate and maintain tractors and machinery usually find well-paid positions in the Australian cropping regions.

New Publication “Poultry Agskills”

This new booklet provides valuable information on breeding and care of poultry.

Topics covered include:

• Selecting breeds
• Raising chickens
• Nutrition and health
• Handling techniques

A publication on “Commercial Free Range Poultry” is planned for 2009.