



The 17th symposium was back at Royal International Conference Centre next to the Brisbane Showgrounds from 17 – 19 September, 2024.

Total registrations at past symposia have hovered around 280 but in September 2024, the number soared to 360.

The format of the symposium changed slightly. The event ran for three days including the industry day. This may have suited people more than the usual three and a half days. There was a program of topical presentations that explored how global trends relate to the rendering industry.

These factors probably attracted more people. There is also a view that in the aftermath of COVID, people are looking to get out and about more.



17TH ARA SYMPOSIUM – PROUDLY SPONSORED BY:

PLATINUM



GOLD



The 17th ARA Symposium wrap-up has been prepared by Bill Spooncer AM

While some aspects of the symposium format changed, others stayed the same. Following the established plan, the symposium was preceded by an industry day. The idea of the industry day is to present topics of interest to industry practitioners while the symposium program explores bigger-picture global issues.

The industry-day program was introduced by ARA President **Peter Milzewski**.

Peter made a point of thanking the symposium committee, Tim Juzefowicz and Jess Bloomfield and all the sponsors.



Peter Milzewski, ARA President, introduces the industry day



The **Hon Julie Collins MP**, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry gave an opening video address. Minister Collins noted that all renderers that want to export are accredited by the ARA. She referred to development of the non-prescribed goods programs and she said that her department's priority for rendered products is market access.



THE GENDER GAP

Michelle Redfearn of Advancing Women in Business and Sport was the first speaker. Her topic was “Strategic Talent Management”. Her starting point was the increase in the gap between the number of women and men employed as jobs increase in seniority. She detailed the benefits of closing this gender gap. She also explained how to develop strategies to close the gender gap.

But her comments were not just about putting more women into senior roles. They were about talent management and her constructive staff-development advice could be applied to females and males.

Michelle ended with a Hillary Clinton quote: “Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world”.



Michelle Redfearn

LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY



Lance Brooks

Lance Brooks of Brooks Community Engagements talked about the importance of community engagement. In 1978, Frank Burnham, the editor of *Render* magazine, published a book called “Rendering: The Invisible Industry”. This book explained rendering and at least partially lifted the cloak of invisibility. Lance Brooks expanded on this theme and made it clear that renderers can no longer hide from scrutiny. Along with ARA and NARA initiatives to present the industry, rendering businesses must be prepared to engage with communities. Failure to engage can be very costly.

Lance listed the benefits of community engagement for the public, businesses and rendering staff. He explained the approaches to follow, how to develop a strategic engagement plan and the dos and don'ts of engagement. His main point was “listen”.

DAFF INITIATIVES

Victor Zalakos of DAFF explained the current status of non-prescribed goods (NPG) programs and the changes proposed to move to assured-goods programs. The changes are aimed at introducing flexibility in licensing and permits, to allow for the myriad requirements of different importing countries. The objective is to strengthen the regulatory back-up of NPG programs and to relieve the burgeoning administrative load and paperwork required by the volume and complexity of NPG requirements.



Victor Zalakos

SUSTAINABILITY PANEL

A panel of Kevin Bell of G-Tech, Derek Henderson of Keith Engineering, Henning Haugaard of Haarslev and Brendan O'Brien of O'Brien Energy was given the task of discussing their responses to their customer's requirements to strengthen sustainability credentials.



Derek Henderson, Henning Haugaard, Kevin Bell and Brendan O'Brien



Kevin Bell focussed on recovering resources and potential pollutants from waste streams.



Henning Haugaard spoke about reducing processing costs, being more productive, being more flexible, and the future priority to reduce social and environmental impacts.



Derek Henderson discussed the nuances of what sustainability means to different customers and how to service customers' sustainability priorities.



Brendan O'Brien explained how to improve boiler efficiency to reduce carbon emissions and reduce costs.

PLASTICS

Dr Mark Harrison of The University of Queensland talked about biopolymers and the possibility of producing rendered products free from plastic inclusions.

He explained the plastic products that are used in livestock production and processing, and the types of polymers used in these products. He then discussed the opportunities to replace existing plastics with renderable bioplastics.

He said that switching to renderable bioplastic products might not be the panacea that renderers are looking for. Life-cycle assessments must be conducted to confirm that livestock production and processing is sustainable. For example, migration of additives from plastics to products may be more of a problem for bioplastics than for traditional plastic polymers.



Dr Mark Harrison

INTERNATIONAL PRIORITIES

At a forum of WRO members, Kent Swisher of the NARA, Lars Krause-Kjaer of EFPRA, Lucas Cypriano of ABRA and Richard McColl of NZ MIA gave updates about rendering in their regions.



Kent Swisher highlighted the change in use of animal fats in the USA and how this has affected the ratio of exported to imported fats.



Lucas Cypriano discussed the differences in production of rendered products and product focus in various South American countries. He highlighted big increases in meat production in South America, something that has not happened in North America, Europe or Australasia.



Lars Krause-Kjaer spoke about the pressure on the massive salmon industry in Northern Europe to produce more sustainable products. This gives an opportunity for increased use of rendered products in aquafeeds. Lars also mentioned the competition for raw materials between renderers and energy (biogas) producers.



Richard McColl spoke about reductions in the numbers of sheep and cattle due to incentives to change land use to grow trees.

He explained that after a hiatus in the activities of the New Zealand Renderers Group of the MIA, training workshop had resumed in 2023 and 2024.

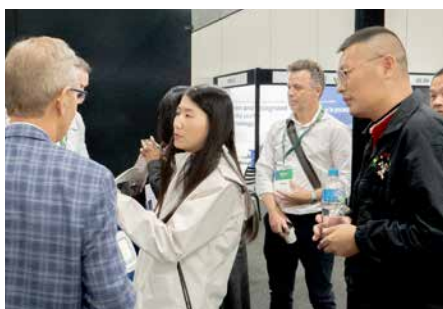
Other issues making life difficult for renderers in Europe are animal diseases e.g. African Swine Fever, war in Ukraine, biodiesel and biodiesel feedstocks imported from China and slaughter operations moving to Eastern Europe leaving renderers in the west short of raw material.

These workshops had been over-subscribed. He also said that there are plans to reinstate the NZ Renderers Group conferences.



Questions from delegates

WELCOME DRINKS



MARKET OUTLOOKS

After a stellar performance at the 2022 symposium, **Simon Quilty and Brett Stuart** returned to provide more insights into the future of markets.

This time, Simon and Brett addressed the challenge of meeting global environmental policies and rising costs while staying competitive. They explained the many factors that affect the outlook for agricultural products from chaotic environmental policies to inflationary pressures and the US election.

At the same time, cattle production cycles are coming into sync in Brazil, USA and Australia with the prospect of lower prices when livestock production is in liquidation phases and higher prices during rebuilding. This should flow through to meat and bone meal prices in Australia with lower prices when cattle kills are high and higher prices when kills are low.

Tallow prices are more at the whim of US policies on biofuels and the upcoming Harris vs. Trump election is likely to have an impact on Australian tallow.



Tony Edwards of ACE Livestock Consulting focused on protein markets. Demand for biofuels has stimulated a global increase in the production of oilseeds and corresponding excesses of vegetable protein meals. Tony explored how this might affect demand for animal protein meals.

Animal proteins are not absolutely required in animal feeds but they should retain their place. Population growth should increase demand for meat production, particularly pig and poultry, with a corresponding increase in feed production. The increased demand for feed should balance the impact of increased availability of vegetable meals and demand for Australian animal protein meals should remain stable.

PANEL ON FOOD, FUEL AND CARBON

The panel session led by Stefen Meyer of StoneX Group explored the balance between food, fuel and carbon reduction.



Food, Fuel and Carbon Panel: Simon Roycroft, Stefan Meyer (chair), Tim Jude, James Williamson, and Dennis Voznesenski.



Stefen Meyer highlighted the anomaly of importing soy from South America into Australia while exporting raw canola seed to Europe. Australia should crush more canola to produce oil and biofuel at home. The cake can be used to offset imported soy. This needs government backing to encourage biofuels production.



James Williamson of Neste confirmed there is a bright future for tallow in aviation fuels but traceability is the key to reaping the benefits.



Dennis Voznesenski had a similar story about high canola prices causing land-use change in Australia. Sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) are a major growth prospect and the question is: "is there potential for production in Australia?" Australian canola oil may not be the ideal feedstock for SAF production because low carbon-intensity UCO and tallow are preferred.



Tim Jude took a different tack with a discussion of tallow hedging possibilities. Reliable hedging products are not available. To develop products, industry support is needed.

The panel discussed how to increase demand and production of biofuels in Australia. The key is clear government policy.

BIOFUEL PRODUCTION

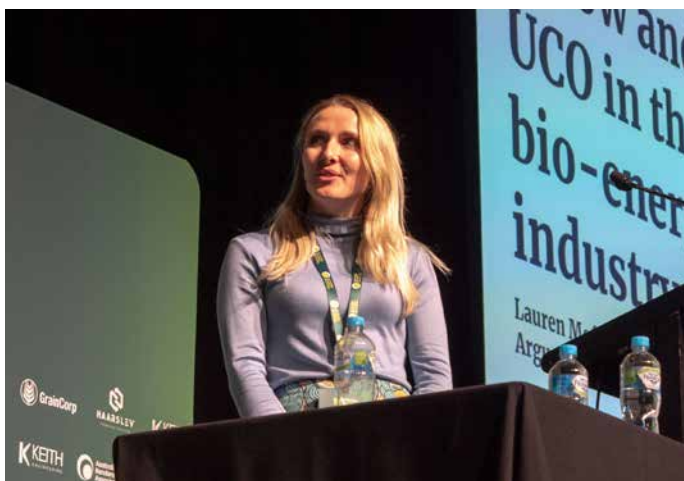
The next four speakers discussed production and use of biofuels and the required feedstocks, including tallow and UCO.

Andrea Martelli of ENI emphasised the integrated approach of being involved in feedstock sourcing, production, distribution and delivery of biofuels to consumers. The Enilive process produces 1.6 million tonnes of renewable diesel per year around the world. Capacity will double by 2026, mainly thanks to production in North America. Enilive products are available at over 5000 petrol stations with pure HVO available at 640 outlets.

The key for growth is feedstock availability with 250 million tonnes required by 2050. Vegetable oils can be supported by UCO and animal fat, cover crops such as Camelina, non-food crops such as castor and agricultural residues.



Andrea Martelli



Lauren Moffit

Simon Roycroft, Future Fuels Manager of Refuelling Solutions, focused on the potential for the use and production of biofuels in Australia. He pointed out that existing Australian biodiesel and ethanol producers are surviving but not thriving. Even in countries where there is strong governments support, producers are under pressure.

The problem is that biodiesel and the even more expensive renewable diesel cannot compete with low oil prices.

While there is growing demand for SAF, tallow and canola production is nowhere near what is required.

Oil producing algae may be an answer. Algae could be produced in conjunction with rendering by using rendering waste streams to feed algae.

Australia is currently helping other countries to decarbonise. The challenge is to bring feedstocks back to Australia to help ourselves. We do not want to move from importers of hydrocarbon fuels to importers of biofuels.

Lauren Moffit, Asia Biofuels and Net Zero Deputy Editor highlighted the effects of global policies on biofuel demand, feedstocks and pricing. These policies determine what feedstocks are favoured in different applications and regions and affect the global movement of feedstocks.

Lauren said that growth in production capacity in the USA has caused oversupply of HVO and SAF and prices have halved since 2022. This flows through to tallow and UCO prices.



Simon Roycroft

David Johnston, General Manager of Jet Zero Australia explained plans to produce 100 million litres per year of SAF in Townsville and 290 million litres of SAF in a second project.

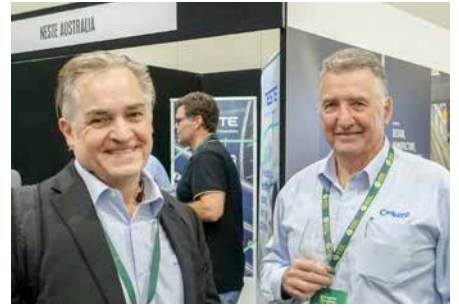
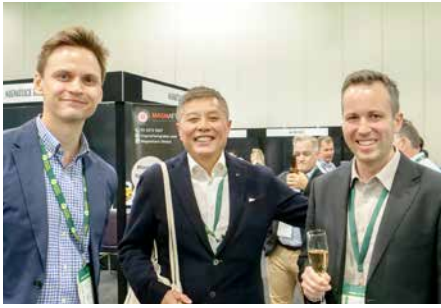
Feedstock is the challenge. The Townsville project is based on ethanol, but the second project can use tallow and UCO, provided long-term contracts can secure supply.

The message from all speakers is that there is a massive opportunity for growth in biofuel production, particularly for SAF. Sourcing feedstock with opposition from the food vs. feed vs. energy lobbies is a challenge. Tallow and UCO can take advantage of increased production of biofuels but traceability to verify carbon intensity credentials of the feedstock will be essential.



David Johnston

HAPPY HOUR



On the second day of the symposium, the program moved away from the details of biofuel production and markets to wider issues of sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Dr Margaret Jewell

Dr Margaret Jewell of the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation discussed the LEAP Technical Advisory Group and the transition to a sustainable circular economy. It’s a challenge to put objectivity into discussions about sustainability initiatives and outcomes. LEAP guidelines provide standardised methods and metrics to back-up sustainability programs.

The circular economy goes hand-in-hand with sustainability by replacing fossil fuel with energy from plants and animals. There are many different circular-economy agencies that support projects and activities. In Australia, FAO and LEAP can play a role in coordinating circular-economy initiatives. The goal of the FAO is to reduce the use of fossil fuels and carbon emissions by encouraging sustainability in production of food for all.

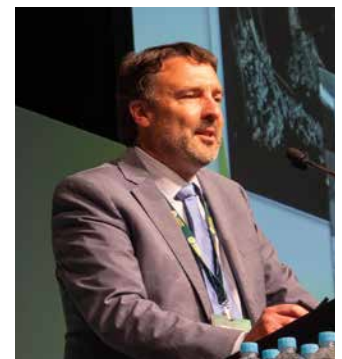


Kent Swisher and **Dana Johnson Downing** described the NARA’s journey along the sustainability path. Kent said that renderers were operating in the late 1800s in the USA. This could be considered an early application of a circular economy.

Like LEAP, the NARA promotes the use of objective data to support sustainability goals. To demonstrate the rendering industry’s sustainability credentials, the FPRF supported the development of a carbon-footprint calculator in 2012. The calculator was developed by Dr Charles Gooding of Clemson University. Renderers contributed data about rendering operations to the calculator to make carbon-footprint calculations. The results confirmed the role of rendering as a contributor to sustainability.



Dana Johnson Downing



Kent Swisher

The NARA is again conscripting members to provide data to update Dr Gooding’s calculator. This will provide industry-wide data that can be used for life-cycle analysis and calculation of the carbon-footprint of rendered products. Carbon footprint information and LCA can contribute to international data bases and can be used by individual rendering companies to benchmark operations.



Sylvia Sietsema

Sylvia Sietsema, General Manager of Control Union explained the importance of verifying sustainability credentials. She outlined the elements of sustainability expected by regulatory requirements and customers. Claims about compliance with sustainability goals should be verified by independent audits and inspections, internal assessments, and documentation and reporting.

Sylvia related sustainability expectations to the rendering industry. She said that sustainability should be built into strategic planning. This leads to compliance with regulatory and customer standards and can result in best practice for developing and implementing sustainability initiatives. The benefits of pursuing verified sustainability credentials are: improved market access, certified regulatory compliance, competitive advantage such as preferred supplier status and operational efficiency.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

A panel of **Tim Juzefowicz** of the ARA, **Verity Price** of the Australian Chicken Meat Federation and **Caroline Macgill** of the Pet Food Industry Association of Australia discussed the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into sustainability ambitions.

Verity Price explained the Australian chicken meat industry's sustainability framework. She said that it is the first poultry program of its type in the world to include metrics and targets. The program she described has clear objectives and performance metrics and sounds like a model to learn from. Verity emphasised the evolving nature of sustainability and said that the framework will be reviewed every three years.

In the panel discussion, Verity Price gave examples of how AI is used in the poultry industry. These examples helped clarify the contributions that AI can make to industry. The examples included the use of AI in staff recruitments and detection of the sex of chicks in the shell.



Verity Price



Carolyn Macgill

Caroline Macgill discussed the rise of AI and the associated ethical principles. She gave examples of how AI is used in the pet food industry now, and how its use is projected for in the future. She highlighted the use of AI in the development of personalised nutrition plans, genetic testing, predictive health analysis and development of novel products.

Tim Juzefowicz concluded the panel discussion with a glimpse of the ARA's draft sustainability principles. This answered questions about what the ARA is doing to support the rendering industry's sustainability credentials. He listed the 15 principles of the ARA's draft plan. The principles include: environmental compliance, waste reduction and recycling, and investment in technology. He suggested that the starting point is assessment and benchmarking which leads to a clear set of objectives.



Tim Juzefowicz

The final speaker on the program was **Tony Hunter**, a Global Food Futurist.

Tony started with the dilemma of how a projected world population of 10 billion by 2050 is going to be fed. He said that the necessary food will not come from existing sources because of the limitations of arable land and water.

He explained that AI will accelerate the rate of development of technologies and that these technologies will support the required growth in food production. He gave a list of the technologies that could play a part in future food production.

Tony cited the ability of AI to optimise processes. For example, AI has increased the rate of production of cultivated algae by 30%. What if the same could be done for rendering processes? It might be possible to get 5 to 10% more out of rendering. These examples relate to generative AI which can learn from data input. Tony said that if you do not have AI in your business in the next 15 months, you will fall behind and never catch up.

Tony went on to give examples of possible future food sources and products. Some of the examples were alarming but he pointed out that future generations will be more familiar with technology than the current generations and have no fear of technological solutions.



Tony Hunter



Peter Milzewski and Tony Hunter

TASTE OF QLD



SYMPOSIUM DINNER AND AWARDS

After a program of prominent speakers, it is wrong to suggest that the gala dinner was the highlight of the symposium, but it was certainly an excellent evening. Sports commentator and media personality **Ben Dobbin** was the MC of the event.

Raymond Crowe, magician and physical comedian provided the after-dinner entertainment.



“The Bat” CHARITY AUCTION

As usual, the dinner included an award presentations and fund-raising for Assistance Dogs Australia. The main fund-raiser was the auctioning of “The Bat”. EMCEE Ben Dobbin was the auctioneer.

The bat was donated to the ARA by Reg Evans in 1999. Reg then bought back the bat, often in fierce competition with Tissa Fernando, and re-donated it to the ARA at each symposium until 2013.

In 2015 Michael Betar was the successful bidder and he won the bat-auction again in 2019.

Michael Betar bought the bat for a third time at the 2024 symposium. The total amount raised for Assistance Dogs Australia at the dinner was \$8250. This amount included personal donations and proceeds from the bat auction.



Michael Betar



Ben Dobbin

RON LYON AWARD

The ARA’s premier award, the Ron Lyon Award, went to **Damian Evans**. Damian’s father, Reg, won the Ron Lyon Award in 2003. Damian set a record as the first father and son duo to take the Ron Lyon award, a record that could last for a very long time. Damian received the award for his contributions to the ARA as a director and member representing Colyer Fehr. Damian has taken on many tasks as a director. He takes on the tricky jobs that no one else wants, such as bringing the constitution up-to-date.



Peter Milzewski, Damian Evans, and Tim Juzefowicz

BRIAN BARTLETT AWARD

Trish Ryder received the Brian Bartlett Award. Trish led the AUS-MEAT programs to manage and deliver the ARA's accreditation and market access scheme and the ARA workshop on hygienic rendering. She has also contributed to ARA initiatives including reviews of the code of practice for hygienic rendering and training in preparation for market-access audits of rendering plants. Trish was probably the most excited person to ever receive an ARA award.



Peter Milzewski, Trish Ryder, and Tim Juzefowicz



Trish Ryder, and Jess Bloomfield

REG EVANS AWARD

Winners of the Reg Evans award for best student at the ARA Workshop on Hygienic Production of Rendered Aimal Products were acknowledged at the dinner. They were:

Bradley James – Craig Mostyn Group, January 2023.

Dale Foster – Norganic Proteins, June 2023.

Rain Paley – Teys Australia, Rockhampton, January 2024.

Ricky Cochrane – Eversons Food Processors, June 2024.



Tim Juzefowicz

The surprise at the dinner, was that ARA Executive Officer **Tim Juzefowicz** announced his resignation. Tim spoke about his time with the ARA and said he is moving onto to other things. He is still retained by the ARA as technical advisor.



Jess Bloomfield

President Peter Milzewski thanked Tim for his contribution to the ARA and announced that **Jess Bloomfield** has been appointed ARA Executive Officer in place of Tim Juzefowicz.



ARA Committee

GALA DINNER



GALA DINNER



GALA DINNER



GALA DINNER

