



GARDINER FOUNDATION

## MEDIA RELEASE

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29 October 2009

### **Exciting opportunity for Gippsland dairy farmer Graeme Nicoll**

Graeme Nicoll from Fish Creek in Gippsland has been awarded a Gardiner Foundation Scholarship to participate in Nuffield Australia's 2010 Scholarship Program. He was among 18 outstanding primary producers from across Australia named as winners of a place in the prestigious Nuffield Australia program.

Graeme and his wife Gillian own and operate a mixed dairy-beef business on 250ha of owned/leased land south of Leongatha. They milk between 250-300 cows on a milking platform of 80 hectares with the rest of the farm used for young stock and dairy beef.

Graeme will participate in a six-week Global Focus Program, in February/March 2010 which includes visits to the United Kingdom, USA (Washington DC and California), Mexico, Brazil and New Zealand. The Global Focus Tour investigates agricultural marketing and trade issues, environmental issues and participants experience the different social and cultural aspects of each region.

An important addition to the Nuffield Program has been the introduction of a Contemporary Scholars Conference (CSC). This will be held in Washington DC and Pennsylvania in March 2010 and gives the opportunity for the approx. 50 newly selected Nuffield Scholars from around the world to spend a week together networking, building relationships, visiting state of the art agricultural operations, engaging with high level policy makers within USA agriculture and experiencing the varied cultural and social aspects of American life.

The Gardiner Foundation has been a strong supporter of the Nuffield Program, sponsoring its first Nuffield Scholar in its inaugural round of funding in 2001, with this year's award being the fourth in the series. The Scholarship is funded from the Foundation's Community and People Development Program which seeks to "*attract, retain and develop*" talented people, strengthen the capability of Victoria's dairy industry and develop leadership potential. In line with the Foundation's charter to support the Victorian dairy industry and its communities, the Gardiner Scholarships are specially directed to Victorian dairyfarmers.

The nominated specialisation for Graeme's individual study program is resilience in dairy production systems. His personal study tour will include visits to Sweden and New Zealand.

Graeme said: "Before departing for overseas, I intend to gain a greater understanding of where Victorian dairy farming systems are positioned, and the ways in which they could potentially make their operations more resilient to cope with a rapidly changing environment and fluctuations in input and output costs". "The dairy industry in Australia is operating in an increasingly challenging environment and so much has changed already in adopting components of resilience into our farming systems", he added.

"Gaining a comprehensive background knowledge of where Victoria stands at present will enable me to get maximum advantage from comparing and contrasting what is being done in other global dairy producing countries. Areas of particular interest are dairying in Brazil (an emerging player in the global dairy sector), work being done in California in dairy genetics and the operation of European farming systems in a changing political environment which impacts dairy", he said.

"I look forward to gaining a greater understanding of dairying in the global context and looking at how we can best position ourselves in the market place - I am looking for opportunities for Victorian dairy farming", he added.

His personal study program will take him to Sweden where he will spend time at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. The Centre is a joint initiative between Stockholm University and the Beijer International Institute of Ecological Economics. It is funded by the Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research (Mistra)

and is recognised as a Swedish Centre of Excellence producing world-leading transdisciplinary research which aims to contribute knowledge essential to steering development onto a sustainable path.

Graeme will also visit New Zealand, our nearest neighbour and the world's leading dairy producer, to study and compare dairying in New Zealand with our own farming systems in Australia.

Previous recipients of Gardiner Scholarships for the Nuffield Program are: Peter Best (now owning and operating Innovative Farm Imports at Neerim South, Gippsland), Jamie Snell (dairy farmer at Merrigum, northern Victoria) and Paul Mumford (dairy farmer at Won Wron, Gippsland).



(L. to R.) - Paul Ford, CEO Gardiner Foundation with Gardiner/Nuffield Scholar 2010 Graeme Nicoll and David Brownhill, Nuffield Chairman, at the Presentation Ceremony at the Hawkesbury Race Club.

**Note: Print quality photo available on request to Cynthia Mrigate, 03 9606 1911 or [Cynthia.mrigate@gardinerfoundation.com.au](mailto:Cynthia.mrigate@gardinerfoundation.com.au).**

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