

# IAFE Annual Convention 2009

Las Vegas

Nevada

Nov 30 – Dec 3 2009

Mr Chairman, distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen,

When your President Jim Tucker approached me to travel to Las Vegas to address to you, I frankly wondered if the New Zealand weather and wine were having an effect upon him. It was quite late in the evening. On checking next day I discovered that he was serious and was delighted and honoured to accept his invitation to join you. Before I start I think it is probably worthwhile to give you some indication of my background

## Personal Background

I qualified in Law from Canterbury University in Christchurch New Zealand and practiced law for seven years. Realising that it was not really my scene, and always having harboured a wish to do things rural, I left the law and went farming. I always say that at that point I gave up making money and took up debt as an occupation.

In 2001, after twenty six years farming I was persuaded to enter local body politics, and I leased the farm and have struggled with the vagaries of bureaucracy and politics ever since.

I think I attended my first show while still in a pram. In those days everyone went to the show as the major social event of the year and all attending bought a new set of clothes to honour the occasion. Haven't times changed. My first and I think last entry in a show was presenting a sand saucer (**slide 2**) for judging. This was neither successful nor up to the standard of those before you.

Moving from the country to the city for school and University it wasn't until I was in my late 20's that I again became involved in the show movement. I was invited to help for a couple of years in the sheep section and then I stood for the Committee of my local show, but I had to stand three times before I succeeded. It is perhaps interesting to note that at that time the General Committee for which I was standing numbered 52 and was oversubscribed whereas now it numbers thirty and is hard to fill. From there I slowly moved through the ranks to serve as President of my local show for four years from 1998 to 2002. I was then elected to the National body's Executive of the Royal Agricultural Society of New Zealand in 2003 and have served as their President for the last four years.

I can honestly say that my time involved in showing has been one of the most rewarding things that I have undertaken. Friendships throughout New Zealand, many hours of telling lies to each other over a few bottles of beer, and in the last four years as National President I have spent a considerable amount of time travelling New Zealand and developing International relations with Australia and other British Commonwealth nations.

When thinking of what I would include in my address to you today I pondered on what we in New Zealand could offer to you here in the USA which you hadn't already thought of and in all seriousness put in place. I am not an intellectual and the comments I make are based on hands on experience rather than theory. (**Slide 3**)

- It then occurred to me that far too many of you will not have made the trip to New Zealand (ask them how many have?) and therefore by way of introduction it would be best to set the scene about New Zealand
- Following that I will take you on a brief visual tour of our country
- I will then give you an outline of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth and the work it does. The biannual conference of this organization in Christchurch New Zealand

in November last year was where I had the pleasure of meeting Jim, your Past Chairman Rick Frenette ,first Vice-Chair Cindy Hoye and

- I will then outline the work of the RAS of New Zealand
- I will then move on to an outline of Showing in New Zealand
- And finally I will outline what I see as some of the challenges facing us in the Commonwealth and possibly you also here in the United States.

A point I would like to make at this early stage is that despite the commonly held view in some quarters, we, New Zealand, are NOT a state of Australia. To say so would be vaguely akin to saying that Canada was a state of the USA . Great friends we may be, somewhat similar we may be, but part of the same country we certainly are not. When we compete on the sports field it is war and national pride is absolutely on the line. With sports mad populations of 4.3 Million versus 20.5million in Australia I am proud to say that we currently reign supreme in the two major sports between our countries, Rugby Union, are World Champs in Rugby League and provide breeding and thoroughbred racing stock to enhance those in Aussie.

This wasn't in anyway meant as a bragging session but maybe as an illustration of the separation between the two countries!!!

#### **New Zealand (slide 4)**

As you are all aware we are geographically positioned deep in the South Pacific, as I said we have a total population of 4.3 million made up of 70% European 14.6% Maori (our indigenous people) 9.2% Asian 6.2% other Pacific Island peoples mainly from Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. There are in fact more Tongans and Samoans in New Zealand than in their home countries. .

#### **(Slide 5)**

The country comprises three main Islands as shown on the slide. I must say I have always admired the originality of thought of those who named the islands.

The total area of 268,000 km<sup>2</sup> or 103,738miles<sup>2</sup> is larger than the whole of the British Isles which has a population in excess of 60 million. As you can see there is a large spine of mountains stretching the length of the South Island and similar mountain formations in the North Island. Our largest city is Auckland with approx 1/3 of the total population. When you compare the population density figures between your country and ours you have 31per square kilometre and we have 15 per square kilometre.

#### **Talk to slides (Slide 6 & 7)**

Our economy is based very strongly around our agricultural, viticultural and horticultural production plus an ever increasing tourist trade.

To give you a snap shot of what you will see when you visit, when you leave your winter to enjoy our summer, our country know in our Maori or indigenous language as Aotearoa or "The land of the long white cloud" I have put together a number of slides which I will talk to. Another description of New Zealand often heard from those visiting is "God's Own"!!!

#### **(slide show of tourist scenes slides 8 to 25)**

You have now seen a quick snippet of what to expect. Despite what the photos show it does rain, but not often! As a tip I would also point out that when you come to New Zealand and Kiwis (this is what we call ourselves, named after our national emblem the Kiwi bird not the fruit ) and they invite you so stay they really mean it. I am only sad that Cindy, Rick and Jim were not there long enough to enjoy our home hospitality, but I am sure there will be a next time.

I well remember last year meeting a Canadian couple from Niagara Falls at a show and asking them to come and stay. They called a week later stayed three days and are now very good friends. Another couple from Canada I met a week later on the golf course were horrified that their countrymen had taken us up on our invitation. I ask you to follow the first example and not the second.

## **Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (slide 26) Click**

The creator of this body was the Duke of Edinburgh, the husband of the Queen of England. During a visit to the Royal Show in England in the early 1950's he suggested that it would be a good idea to bring together the Royal shows from around the British Commonwealth of nations to discuss matters that concerned them all in agriculture generally and showing in particular. Following this suggestion, and it may be a misnomer to call it a suggestion when it comes from on high or that level, a Society was set up in England with the responsibility of organizing a biannual conference which was to alternate between the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

With due respect, and knowing that I will probably incur the ire of a few of those involved with the RAS of C, these conferences had become a meeting place for the older and grey brigade and bore very little relevance to what was really going on in the showing scene. The Conferences are called the "Agricultural Conference of the Commonwealth". This is in my view a misnomer, as should that in fact be the case there would be Agricultural Ministers from all or most of the countries involved attending. Both at Christchurch and at Calgary the only one in attendance was the host Minister to open the conference. My personal preference for a title is "The Commonwealth Royal Shows Conference". This title accurately reflects the reason for the gathering.

The recent Conference in Christchurch was in the opinion of many, the most progressive and relevant of these meetings as it included delegates from fifteen countries, openly addressed the question of youth and devoted a full day to matters that directly related to running our shows. The Conference has historically addressed global agricultural subjects, but in my opinion, as with this conference, we were there as representatives of showing organizations. As such we can only justify attendance if we have something concrete to take back to our masters and or members.

## **Governance Click**

The RAS of C is governed by a board of Trustees who are in the main from the British Isles – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. There are also three Trustees from countries outside the British Isles. These Trustees meet quarterly and put into effect the wishes of their members. Membership is from the 47 Royal Shows around the world.

## **Why the Title Royal? Click**

You may well ask what is it that entitles a show to call itself "Royal"?

In essence the right to call yourself a Royal show is only granted after a formal application to the Royal Family and only with their personal charter can you use the title. Throughout the Commonwealth the major shows have made such an application and it has been granted. In almost all cases this has been a long standing charter with around forty in existence. These shows are very like your major Fairs with large asset bases and infrastructures. While historically they are the rich well resourced shows this is not the case with some of the more notable shows. The Royal Show in England at Stoneleigh has held its last show this year due to severe financial problems. The Asset rich cash poor situation is well and truly alive in many cases.

## **Youth at Conference Click**

At Calgary in 2006 the winds of change were certainly evident. There was a gathering of over thirty of the Next Generation, or those under 35. Alongside this was however a suspicion from many of the grey heads that they were having too much influence on the conference and a little of the attitude I will refer to later of speak when spoken to was evident.

For the Christchurch Conference I wanted to increase this number so I obtained 40 Scholarships from our Central Government to enable youth to come. In addition to that we were very well supported by the members and had around seventy at the Conference. They were such an outstanding gathering of young, from 15 countries around the globe, that they were totally accepted, included and most importantly listened to. Following the Conference they have used modern technology and are determined that friendships made are not forgotten. They have already set up their chat lines and blog sites. I have suggested they set up a specialist "skite" or "Bragging" site to record their individual achievements. If they do, I shudder to think what these

rising stars will have achieved by the time of the next RASC Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2010.

In 2008 a group of twelve travelled to Zambia to help instruct them in agricultural methods and organized a show from scratch. The attendance of the Minister of Agriculture for Zambia to the show highlighted the importance and effect of their visit.

The success of this venture has now led to a trip to Papua New Guinea by the youth group in 2009.

### **Inclusion of USA Youth Click**

The more I thought on this subject the more I became excited by the thought of extending the network to include the young up and coming stars of IAFE into the loop. Is this not a perfect way of exposing these people to a broad International group of people to whom they would otherwise not be exposed.

During my time in Sydney last Easter at the Royal Sydney Easter Show I broached the subject with some of the young Australians and they were extremely enthusiastic. They felt that to have a group from the United States at Edinburgh would add a whole new perspective to what they are striving to achieve

As the gathering of the movers and shakers within IAFE I ask you all the question? Could this resource base of the British Commonwealth be combined with the Next Generation of the United States of America?

I know the strength and dedication of those in the RASC youth group and frankly they frighten me with what they have achieved in such a short time. The combination with your young would be even more imposing and I think could really make a huge difference both globally and locally.

I must make the point at this stage that I haven't raised this with the Trustees of the RASC and therefore I may be said to be on shaky ground.

I am afraid that that has been the way I have worked in the past, but when you provide any organization with a positive advancement, I have found that it is very hard to turn down. If any of you here are in support of such an initiative I would love to spend some time with you to gain a full appreciation of your youth set up in the States and see if any progress is possible.

### **RAS of New Zealand Slide 27**

The Royal Agricultural Society of New Zealand is the umbrella organization and is similar in its function to IAFE. We are a governing body for all our shows in New Zealand. Showing in NZ began in the 1850s.

In 1924 by Act of Parliament the RAS was formed to be the overall body which would assist the shows throughout the country in their development. We now have 106 shows and 68 animal breed societies as the members of the RAS plus individual Life Members of the Society.

Our principal function is to hold a Royal Show each year and this is hosted by one of our member Societies on our behalf.

We are an organization that has very small resources but a group of dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to promote and encourage showing in NZ

The Royal show has historically moved around five venues in NZ but in 2006, the Executive made the very unpopular decision to place the show in Christchurch for three years and have recently expanded that period to six years. As you can imagine that did not win me, as President, too many friends with the rest of the country being denied a Royal show until at least 2013.

The reason for this decision was that we wanted to place our major event, at the best show in the country. As the governing body, we wanted to promote a show of excellence of which we could be proud and which could hold its head high internationally.

As I will allude to later, stock entries, which have been the backbone of our shows, have been dropping over the last ten years. There are a number of reasons for this which I will also expand upon, but Christchurch with in excess of 7500 stock competitors has been the one show which has bucked the trend. This has given the show the real opportunity to grow, both in attracting sponsors and also in the attraction of trade sites and expansion of those attending.

The umbrella character of the RAS of NZ is in stark contrast to the other Societies in the Commonwealth who are privileged to include the word "Royal" in their name. We do not own a piece of real estate on which we hold our Royal Show. We are an organization which is asset poor but has the dedication within its ranks to carry out the functions of ensuring the continued health of Agricultural & Pastoral showing in NZ. Our members are our shows, our breed societies and our life members. Our duty is to support and encourage these members in their showing endeavours.

### **Structure (Slide 27)**

We have an Executive team of eight who are representative of the major sections of our shows such as Horses, cattle and sheep but are not elected on a ward or regional basis. They are nominated and elected on their ability to do the job. They are all volunteers and they only receive travel and accommodation expenses when they are specifically representing the Executive at an event.

New Zealand is divided up into six geographic regions or Districts with each region having its own Chairman, Secretary and District Council. This slide illustrates how we are structured. You may say that it is very complicated for such a small population, but because of the geography it is very important. As you can see we also have a Horse Stewards Council to undertake the very large horse section of our shows and the extremely important forbidden substances convenor to monitor the drug testing of horses.

The NZ Society has never been a political animal. In its earlier days we were nevertheless a powerful and well recognised group within NZ Agriculture which worked hard at the seat of power in Wellington to pursue matters which affected its members and agriculture in general.

Despite the fact that today our agriculture products provide 65% of our total export earnings, the political priority of things agricultural has declined markedly from the 60's onwards. No longer is it thought of vital importance to have the Minister of Agriculture as the third ranked member of cabinet.

### **The Immediate future**

We in the NZ RAS have in the last six months asked all our members, the shows and the breed societies, to tell us what **they want** from us and what they **expect** from us.

In carrying out this exercise we were prepared for some hard consequences that may lead to the death of some sacred cows. We were prepared to listen to our members and then consider their wishes and plan to put them into our strategic plan.

One thing that really drove this in depth look at where we are was the constant message that our members felt there was a very definite case of them and us in existence. We, the Executive, were unaware of this and we are now working extremely hard to break down this barrier. From the feedback we received, it boiled down to a large degree to communications sent out to members not reaching the intended recipient.

When looking at the US fairs I was somewhat overwhelmed by the numbers that attend. I then paused for a moment and related it back to the population. In Christchurch approx 40% of the total population attend, and my home show in Hawke's Bay attracts around 45%. I am sure that you as the leaders of so many of the top fairs here in the United States would give your eye teeth for

these percentages. In Sydney Australia at their Royal Show, they budget on a million attending from a total population of in excess of 4 million – only 25%.

The job of the RAS of NZ also includes responsibility for the encouragement of young people (my pet passion), and the formation of and implementation of the rule structure for entering and running classes for showing. It is the appeal body and receptacle for all the disputes that arise during the year and generally promotes and supports our members. I am sure that your fairs are no different to ours in the matter of disputes. They seem inevitably to be more about people than about the animals that they are exhibiting. The emails I received were never from a horse a cattle beast or a sheep!!! I have a saying for which I am not at all popular and that is that there are three sexes in New Zealand, Males, Females and horse people. I hope I haven't lost too many friends in this audience!!

### **Showing in New Zealand**

I have given you an outline of our Royal Show and you have seen a video of the 2008 event. What really interested me after the event was the number of comments that I received saying what a truly Agricultural and relaxed event it was. I have thought about these comments a lot and tried to identify why it was perceived as such. I am sure that the organizers would be delighted about the relaxed comment but knowing them well it certainly didn't mirror their personal states of mind!

As an Aside this was made even harder with the attendance of the Princess Royal, Princess Anne, the Queen of England's eldest daughter, on the final day of the show. **(Slide 28)** While standing with her watching the Grand Parade of Animals a horse reared in front of her and I put my arm around her tiny waist to protect her. I then recoiled in horror, as an Australian Prime Minister had almost lost his job for laying a hand upon Royalty. He purely put his hand on a shoulder and I had given the Princess Royal the hug around the waist treatment. This was made even more pointed when the only part of her visit that appeared on the TV news was me grappling with the Princess!! She was very gracious and just smiled.

Sorry to divert from the subject.

I feel that the relaxed atmosphere at the show is directly related to those who are running it. Throughout the country the shows in New Zealand are run by an army of volunteers Who you can't say this to. **(Slide 29)** Even the Secretary of the majority of our shows are volunteers or may be in receipt of a small honorarium. The President and all the committee are volunteers as are the stewards assisting at show time. This leads to a real feeling of ownership from all these people and a pride in the event that they are part of.

At the larger 20 shows in the country they have a fulltime paid secretary and fulltime ground staff.

Those who are volunteers are in the great majority from a rural background and therefore have a commitment to retaining the rural atmosphere at the show. This in itself can often be a sure sign of being more relaxed as I find country folk can just carry on without being stressed and solve problems but many of the city folk who get involved tend to stress and wave their hands in the air. This probably comes back to the adage that give a Kiwi (as we are known because of our national symbol- the flightless bird not the fruit) a piece of number 8 wire and the problem will be solved. We are a true Do It yourself nation and every real man has his own shed. **(Slide 30)**

The sizes of shows in New Zealand also vary widely. The Royal Show and the Auckland Royal Easter show are by far the largest events with durations of three and four days respectively but in the main we have one or two day shows. With such a widely spread population and with one third of it contained in the one city of Auckland you can see why, when you divide the country by 106 you can only have a small show.

The size however does not in anyway reduce the passion and enthusiasm of those involved. It also does not prevent the number 8 wire mentality of anything the big boys can do we can do better. This can do attitude often leads to some very original and entertaining variations on the theme of showing. At one of our best and possibly most isolated shows there is a challenge

between the workers on the high country stations/ranches to see who has the best station horse, can ride bareback the best and has the most obedient dog. This all seems too easy until you realise it is done as the last event on the final day and is sponsored by the leading brewery in the country. The competitors have by this time been plying themselves with the sponsors product for a few hours. This does provide some original outcomes not all together related to skill. (Slides 31 to 34 )

### **Challenges we are facing. (Slide 35)**

When I presented my paper at Christchurch the theme of the conference was "The Challenges of Change". I prepared that paper on the basis that the challenges we faced in NZ were peculiar to us and probably were not applicable Commonwealth wide. I was staggered to discover that in almost every case the matters I raised were common throughout. Because most had not really faced up to their problems I think it worthwhile for me to repeat some for you to consider.

### **Stock Entries Click**

The major concern that we have in our shows is the sharply dropping number of exhibitors in the stock sections. The Royal Show numbers of 7500 are the exception to the rule. At our other shows, particularly in the North Island numbers have dropped dramatically. There are quite defined and clear reasons for this decline.

- First the introduction of the computer and with it the Farm Consultant. This has led to the farmers being advised that the only matters worth considering are the production figures that the computer produces. In the case of the Romney sheep breed with by far the largest numbers in New Zealand, an advisor from the centre of Auckland City advised all breeders to leave the shows as they were just a beauty contest. Thankfully this has not spread to such an extent with other breeds but none the less there is a heavy emphasis on figures rather than whether the animal can walk and has four legs two eyes and two ears.
- As a show movement we did not appreciate the extent of this fall off from showing and were too slow to react. We should have introduced classes which recognised a balance between looks and production figures. We did not and we have paid a heavy price for it.
- Secondly and possibly just as importantly following the lifting of ALL Agricultural subsidies overnight, and I mean literally overnight,- super phosphate fertilizer went from \$20/ton to \$120/ton,- many New Zealand farmers went to the wall and only the efficient thinking ones survived.
- A major part of this striving for efficiencies came at the expense of on farm jobs. No longer could the Boss tell his shepherds what the jobs were for the day and spend **his** time preparing show stock. The Boss was now the shepherd and had to do the real work himself leaving no time for the show animals. The dedicated older stud masters continued but the next generation were not prepared to put the time in.

### **The next generation. Click**

With our shows so heavily reliant upon the volunteer for their survival and growth into the future we must continue with efforts to involve the young. This was first brought to my attention when at one of our Annual Conference seven years ago a Past President made the remark "That he knew everyone at the conference" This rang alarm bells for me as I realised that we had not attracted any new talent.

In my view the Australians are the leaders in the field. This particularly applies to the State of New South Wales. Some years ago they realised that the grey haired brigade was becoming totally dominant in all their shows and that soon they would be gone and asked the question "Who will follow us?"

They took positive action by forming youth groups, and to foster this movement they put in place competitions in stock judging and stock handling as a carrot to attract them to come on board.

This then expanded to have a competition for what they describe as “The Young Rural Ambassador of the year”. Thanks to the cooperation of the Australian Societies these competitions have now expanded to include the winners of similar competitions in New Zealand. This therefore has the added International carrot to attract the young to enter.

I have spent time over the last four years working with both the young and the organizers of these competitions and have been humbled by the talent that has come out of the woodwork. From the smallest show in New South Wales (there are 198 in that state alone) to the largest at the Sydney Royal these young people are now committing significant amounts of time to foster showing. What a change from ten years ago.

Once we have them involved however the responsibility falls squarely upon us to ensure that we use them and make them, welcome. In the early days of this move in New South Wales the old only paid lip service to their inclusion. When they came up with a suggestion for the present or future they were told to wait their turn as their time would come. This led to a very short stay near shows for a large number.

Now they are well and truly included and their ideas are sought and acted upon. This still does not rid the shows of the people whose use by date has long since past and who are retaining far too much influence upon the show affairs. In New Zealand I have worked hard to try and clear the decks of the most well intentioned and hard working people who have made huge contributions in their time, but their time is now past. Not an easy assignment and even with the most diplomatic methods it is not always popular or successful. I also constantly remind myself that I do not want someone knocking on my door with this message. In the words of one of our members “There is nothing more past than a Past President”

### **Future proofing our leadership structure. Click**

I have referred at length to my passion for encouraging the next generation of the movement. I now want to refer to the steps required to ensure that they are brought forward into leadership roles at the first opportunity and not on the basis of age alone.

When I took over the Presidency of our organization a woman had never been a member of the Executive and probably the youngest to come on the Exec had been myself at 50. I got a woman of 26 on from the outset and what a contribution she has made. I am sure that you are well ahead of this or I hope you are. This year we have had two Presidents of our shows who are 20 and 29 respectively and the youngest was also a woman. We are making some progress.

These are the positives but unfortunately they are not typical of the whole movement.

- We still fail to ask the young to come into responsible positions but expect them to come forward of their own volition. Without an invitation would you at 20 ask to come and join the greybeards?
- We still have committee meetings in the middle of the day and if young have been invited to join expect them to attend when they are flat out making their own way in their chosen professions.
- We still expect them to only speak when spoken to.
- We still tend to tell them that their time will come and to save their good ideas until the grey hair appears.
- We do not openly encourage them to come up with ideas that really push the right buttons for their particular age group.
- We should in my opinion be asking them to do jobs in their own time when it suits them with a group of their friends and then report back to let the organization know of their work done.
- As I said in my own personal case these working bees or completion of jobs were the real fun experiences I had and were what led to me becoming more involved.

## **Competing Events Click**

We are now suffering from the competition provided by specialist events that were historically part of our shows. I refer here specifically to specialist horse events and machinery shows. These two examples have had a devastating effect on a number of our shows.

In the case of the horse events we are particularly hard hit as they provide us with a substantial part of our income. All flat classes in horse events in New Zealand run under our RAS rules and as such pay a levy per entry for the privilege. We now have a number who are not affiliated to the RAS body but still use our rules. As such we miss out on the income. They also occur at times which compete with our shows. So as well as the fees we lose we also lose entries at our shows.

The machinery shows, with a particular slant to agriculture, now occur at five places around New Zealand and so take the trade displays out of the show scene.

## **Education Click**

In discussions with Jim, I am aware that he is hoping to have the Scottish Royal Society secretary Ray Jones speaking to you on the progress they have made to promote agricultural education in the schools of Scotland. I will not go into the subject in depth but feel I must give a brief comment on the New Zealand situation.

Historically in a country like ours, so dependant upon agriculture, every child had a relation or friend who was involved in agriculture in some small or large way and they made visits to the farm. This meant that they had an appreciation of the rural scene. This is certainly not the case in 2009. We therefore have a real responsibility to educate and inform the next generation about where their milk and eggs actually come from. The most popular part of our shows, even in the remote farming situations, is the Animal nursery where children are able to actually touch the animals and be educated about there part in our lives.

At the Sydney Royal Show they have large footprints on the pavement which lead the school groups around the show, and when combined with a list of questions to be answered ensure that they cover the vast variety of farming experiences on offer.

Their animal nursery is a grand scale version of what we have at almost every show in New Zealand. These are two slides of what can be achieved on both the grand and the small scales.

I recently met with both our Minister of Agriculture and our Minister of Education to address this from a National standpoint. For New Zealand to have not one part of their curriculum referring to agriculture is patently wrong.

Our curriculum is so sanitized that it has equal relevance and applicability if used in Hong Kong or Singapore.

## **Entertainment Click**

Probably the greatest variation from the fairs in your country is the heavy accent you place on night time entertainment. For us there are three things that limit this.

- The first is money. We simply do not have the funds or the sponsors to provide the funds for provision of large night shows. Having experienced the night shows at Calgary, and Sydney and Brisbane in Australia there is nothing I would like to have more. They add a really different dimension to the show. I will be very interested to discuss this with some of you here to see how in the smaller shows you have overcome the problems we face.
- The second problem is one of security. This with our mixed population is a real concern and would require serious investment of funds to ensure that all was well in a night show situation.
- The third problem we face is that of the PC brigade. I am talking of what we refer to as Occupational Safety and Health. This obsession with everyone being doubly safe in anything

they do is well illustrated by this slide. **(Slide 36)** with overwhelming numbers of officials to police it, makes having fun a lot harder. I would hate to be a child now as to climb a tree I would have to have a hard hat ropes and safety harness before I could think about it.

### **Competing entertainment.**

As I have inferred earlier, times are always changing and we must move with them. This is nowhere more applicable than in the variety of entertainment available now, competing for the same discretionary dollar. Years ago when people got out of bed on the day of a show there were no other alternatives. Now in New Zealand, if the temptations advertised about attractions at the show are not totally compelling, then they will make a judgement call on the day based upon the weather and other attractions to decide what they will do.

For us, and I am sure for you the major restriction is the dollars that are available to introduce new attractions. In my view there is another way to approach this and that is to think long and hard about what it is that the people really want. Is it a high priced glossy entertainment package with a star to front it or is something much more simple and cost effective.

In New Zealand we have to look at things agricultural which will provide that special experience which people will go home and remember. Our research shows that show goers really only require one new memorable experience to make them come back next year. A recent winner for us has been the introduction of sheep shearing competitions. With the current World Champions all from New Zealand this draws huge crowds, entertains and costs us only the prize money.

We have also introduced a pensioners and children's day where they are admitted for free. This draws them in to support our trade exhibitors and also in many cases ensures that they bring their older siblings and parents to the show on other days.

### **Conclusion**

So may I conclude by alluding to the one word which we must keep as our watchword if we are to be successful in accepting the challenge to build our fairs or shows about which we are all so passionate. If we do not have this passion then we should be moving on to other challenges in our lives.

The word is "CHANGE". The moment we close our minds to this simple word we are on the slippery downward slope. To summarize what I mean I would like to leave you all with this message.

Recently I was given a book which many of you may have read which encapsulated a lot of what I have spoken about earlier. Entitled "Who moved my cheese" you may well ask what relevance does that have to the subject of showing.

From within it however, there are a number of quotes which I feel have absolute relevance to the matters I have broached. I hope you will accept the poetic licence I have taken by substituting the word Cheese with the word Show.

Here goes and I ask you to think hard on the relevance of these to your situations.

"The more important your show is to you the more you want to hold onto it"

"If you do not change you can become extinct"

"Smell the Cheese (Show) often so you know when it is getting old"

“The quicker you let go of the Old Show the sooner you find the New Show”

“Old beliefs do not lead to a new show”

“Noticing small changes early helps you adapt to bigger changes that are to come”

So to conclude I would like to thank you for bearing with me, and I hope that you have found what I have said interesting and that from within it there is a challenge there for you to take home which might benefit your fair. Even if only one of the matters I have addressed begs the question for your fair then I will feel that this paper has been worth while.

We must all be on sentry duty 24/7 because:

**CHANGE HAPPENS**

Or the goalposts are always moving

**ANTICIPATE CHANGE**

Always be ready for the goalposts to move

**MONITOR CHANGE**

Through constant updates to your strategic plan

**ADAPT TO CHANGE QUICKLY**

Accept when changes are needed and get on with implementing them Tomorrow may be too late

**CHANGE**

Change is as inevitable as the sun rising and setting and to ignore that will be terminal to your business

**ENJOY THE CHANGE**

As it is inevitable don't fight change but commit to it and enjoy it.

**FINALLY**

**BE READY TO CHANGE QUICKLY AND ENJOY IT AGAIN AND AGAIN AND SO YOU WILL POWER UP.**