



Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists



September 1, 2015

Agriculture Out There – an international perspective

Forums in NSW, Vic. SA and WA

The agriculture sector must actively promote itself in the community or risk being overshadowed by vested interest groups with their own very different agendas.

This is the view of a leading rural communicator, Markus Rediger, who is responsible for positioning agriculture in his native Switzerland.

“When it comes to promoting positive images and messages about agriculture you can’t afford not to do it,” says Mr Rediger who also has a global role as President of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, IFAJ.

He will share his experiences with rural press club audiences across Australia prior to attending an international agricultural journalists conference in Cairns.

Mr Rediger will address lunches hosted by the NSW Farm Writers Association in Sydney on September 28, the Rural Press Club of Victoria in Melbourne on Sept 29, and Rural Media South Australia at the Yorke Peninsula Field Days on Sept 30. The Rural Media Association of WA will hold a breakfast at Perth Royal Show on Oct 2

The Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists is presenting the speaking tour in partnership with the Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations.

The R&D Corporations are also a Platinum sponsor of the IFAJ 2015 World Congress pre-tour which is being held in Cairns and Sydney in early October.

Mr Rediger is Editor and Managing Director of the independent Agricultural Information Centre in Berne which has an annual operating budget of about five million Swiss Francs. It enjoys widespread backing from government, farmer groups, corporates and agribusiness.

He says the centre was formed in 1937 when Swiss farmers became disillusioned with how their sector was publically perceived and decided to pursue a path of advocacy through the media.

It has become a one-stop-shop for journalists seeking information on any aspect of Swiss agriculture, working to ensure a steady flow of news to the community.

Electronic and print news articles and visual content is generated as well as resources for teachers. Statistical and contact databases are maintained for media, operating across five languages. The centre is increasingly using social media to engage directly with the community.

The flow of information has had a positive impact on Swiss agriculture.

“There is so much to communicate about agriculture and food to the public. The public wants to know about agriculture because everyone eats and drinks every day,” he says.

Mr Rediger has been writing articles since the 1980s. He studied agricultural communications with the University of Illinois and completed a Masters at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich linking tourism and agriculture.

He was a farm magazine editor and a teacher at a Swiss agricultural college before moving to his current role.

“The role of agricultural journalism is important as society becomes increasingly urbanised with few people having any direct contact with the land.”

“We help build bridges of knowledge and understanding,” he says.

International journalists and their Australian colleagues will gather in Cairns from October 8 to 11 to experience tropical agriculture before travelling via Sydney to Hamilton in New Zealand for the 2015 IFAJ World Congress.

Hear Markus Rediger speak

Monday, Sept 28, NSW Farm Writers

Lunch from noon at the Grace Hotel, Corner of York and King St, Sydney.

[Booking details](#)

Contact Paul Dellow 0419 361 009

Tuesday, Sept 29, Rural Press Club of Victoria

Lunch from 12.30 at CQ Functions, 113 Queen Street, Melbourne

[Online bookings](#)

Contact Sonya Sherman 0412 712 111.

Wednesday, Sept 30, Rural Media, South Australia

Lunch at the Yorke Peninsula Field Days at Paskeville.

Contact for details, Ian Doyle 0417 819 189.

Friday, October 2, Rural Media Association of WA

Breakfast at 7.30am at Perth Royal Show, Claremont.

[Email for more details](#)

Contact Jodie Thomson 0427 423 283.