

Weekly Wrap



Welcome to the NFF's **Weekly Wrap**, bringing you the week's farming and political news each Friday.

Headlines

Barnaby Joyce regains leadership of the Nationals, returns as DPM

On Monday, Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce was [returned as the leader of the Federal Nationals and therefore Deputy Prime Minister](#), replacing Riverina MP Michael McCormack. Mr Joyce assumes Mr McCormack's role as Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, and the move is tipped to trigger an imminent ministerial reshuffle.

WA Premier opens Towards 2030 Forum in Northam

The NFF's [Towards 2030 forum series was in Northam, WA this week in partnership with WAFarmers](#). WA Premier Mark McGowan opened the forum. WA Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan also presented to the more than 150 strong crowd. Unfortunately, next week's forum in Moree has been postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation in Sydney. A new date will be released soon.

Nationals defy Liberals in Senate to float Basin Plan changes

In Federal Parliament, [Nationals Senators broke ranks with their Liberal Government colleagues](#) to unsuccessfully introduce proposed amendments to the Murray Darling Basin Plan that would prevent the Commonwealth acquiring further water from farmers and scrap the requirements for the additional 450GL to be returned to the environment.

Coles Nurture Fund invests \$3.7m in leading Aussie farmers

[14 innovative farmers are recipients of round 9 of the Coles Nurture Fund](#), including a unique plan to use a giant vacuum to collect manure from dairy farms

and convert it into renewable energy. The Coles Nurture Fund helps producers bring innovative and sustainable ideas to life on their farms and in their factories.

APVMA rejects use of contentious poison to combat mouse plague

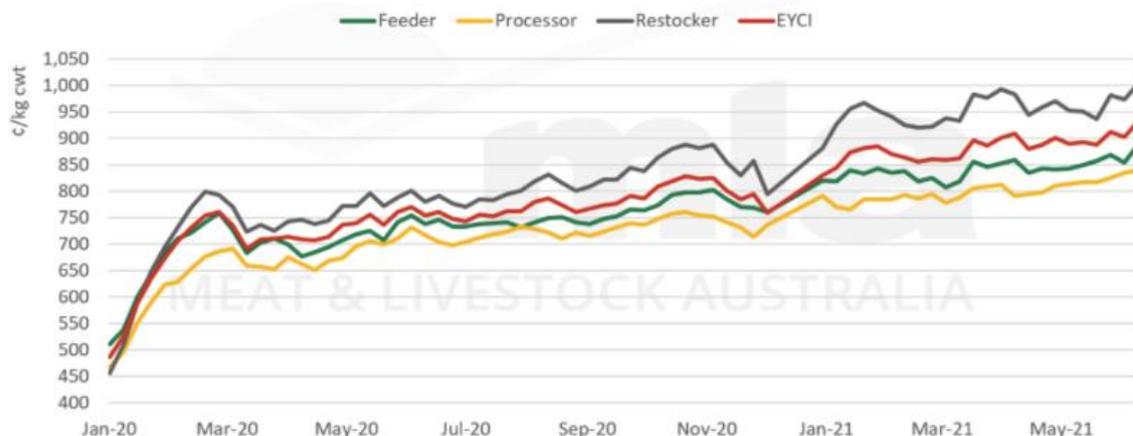
On Wednesday, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) [refused an application made by the NSW Government to use bromadiolone](#) for perimeter mice baiting. NSW Farmers had expressed concerns about the risk the chemical posed to livestock, pets and native animals.

Weekly insight

Sky-high cattle market

The Eastern Young Cattle Indicator (EYCI) reached a new record of 932.50¢/kg cwt on Tuesday, on the back of continued rain and restocker demand. Read the full report [here](#).

EYCI by buyer type



Source: MLA's NLRS

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Briefing

Why a dedicated visa solution is needed to address the growing worker shortage

The Australian agriculture sector is an economic powerhouse with huge potential for expansion, but the rate at which the sector is able to grow and prosper depends largely on its ability to overcome serious, chronic labour shortages. To provide a sustainable workforce for agriculture that is fair and equitable for both workers and employers, the NFF supports the introduction of a Dedicated Agriculture Visa program.

Studies have shown that more than 60% of growers in the horticulture (fruit and vegetable) sector experience difficulty recruiting and, as a consequence, have left produce unpicked to rot and waste. Similar difficulties in securing workers in the dairy sector has led to losses of up to \$364 million per year. Numerous studies across different commodities, regions, and job types have highlighted the scale of the problem

The solution Our proposal for an agricultural visa is built around 5 core principles:

1. **Flexibility and Portability.** Workers should be able to move from job to job (provided they remain working in agriculture) as and when they're needed. In addition to giving both worker and employer flexibility, this would minimise opportunities for abuses.
2. **Fair Workplaces.** Perhaps most critically, workers could only be hired by farms that have demonstrated fair employment practices. To this end, the visa would feature an employer approval or registration system which confirms they are 'fit and proper'.
3. **Appropriate Length.** The visa would allow entry for a short term (up to 9 months) with a multiple entry component, and the option for the worker to return to Australia year-on-year.
4. **The Right Numbers.** Currently both unskilled and skilled visa arrangements are effectively uncapped but in order to hire a migrant worker, employers must conduct 'labour market testing'. The dedicated agricultural visa would abandon this process as inconsistent with the seasonal requirements of farm work.
5. **Balanced Checks.** There should be additional mechanisms to ensure the entrant complies with visa restrictions while in Australia, and that they departs when the visa expires.

Quote of the week

"Environmental reform is critical, and it is important to get it right."

– NFF CEO, Tony Mahar



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