



# Australian Fertiliser Services Association

Registered Number 603 301 266 ABN 41 603 301 266

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIA BRANCH HISTORY** **As written by Pam Clulow in 2005**

In 1961 the Fertilizer Company (CSML) Cumming Smith Mount Lyall (Now CSBP & Farmers) purchased a number of Marshall Spreaders to promote the supply of bulk super phosphate as an alternative to the bagged product.

The original plan was to rent the spreaders to Contractors and at the end of the season they had to return the units back to Marshalls at Harvey so they could be reconditioned then in readiness for the next season. The only means of unloading the super phosphate out of the rail trucks was the Clark Shovel again made by Marshalls, purchased by CSML and operated the same as the spreaders. After several years some contractors approached CSML to purchase their own equipment rather than return them every year. CSML agreed.

The use of bulk fertilizer grew over time and coordinated by CSBP & Farmers, so did Branches of Spread Service, this then changed to Super Bulk and Sequence Bulk Services.

In 1976 Bulk Fertilizer Service was formed to combine all three names. It was still coordinated by CSBP & Farmers and commenced with 80 members. BFSA as it was known was based around contractors unloading fertilizer from rail. In those days Clark Shovels were used to unload the fertilizer from rail wagons. The majority of Bulk Fertilizer Service Contractors either unloaded fertilizer and delivered into farmers sheds or unloaded and spread direct from rail.

The members of Bulk Fertilizer Services Association met approximately three times per year in different zones throughout the State, coming together for one annual conference in Perth once a year.

Bulk Fertilizer Services members were easily identified with their familiar yellow bins and blue stripes. Stencils were made and distributed to members to enable the name Bulk Fertilizer Services to be put on the trucks. During the peak years there were as many as 180 members of the Association. Many of these members built up a network of friendships which still continue today.

The years 1989/90 were very good years for members with large tonnages being unloaded from rail. A number of Contractors were now using mechanical grabs for unloading. In the next few years came the "recession that we had to have" a drop in wool prices and then came deregulation of the fertilizer industry from rail. This saw a lot of fertilizer then being carried by road.

During this period we saw the demise of a lot of members, a lot of their businesses had revolved around the fertilizer coming on rail. Bulk Fertilizer Service had no meaning as it had been coordinated by CSBP and relied heavily on the rail network for the main core of its delivery program.

The BFSA had been a good tool for both social and business aspects of a lot of members, but a lot of business activities were now larger than the Westrail, BFS, CSBP triangle. A lot of contractors were totally handling fertilizer from road, but all of the businesses had one thing in common they provided a service to the rural community of Western Australia and in doing so still required a forum on which to enhance their services to their clients.

In August 1993 Rod Donnes, David Holdsworth and Les & Pam Clulow attended the AFSA National Conference held at the Lakeside Hotel in Canberra. This was an informative time and many friendships were made with Contractors from the other side of Australia, many still continue today.

In October 1993 after a visit by the then President Gary Wise and Secretary Neil Henry it was decided that Western Australia would join with the Australian Fertilizer Services Association.

The inaugural meeting was held at the Metro Inn with David Holdsworth of Wyalkatchem elected as the President, Rod Donnes of Dalwallinu Vice President and Les Clulow of Katanning Secretary/Treasurer.

1994 saw Western Australia host their first National Conference. This was held at Observation City Hotel Scarborough. Organising the Conference became a steep learning curve for the Officer Bearers, but a successful Conference was held. Western Australia again hosted a Conference at Joondalup Country Resort in 2001.

During the period from 1993 we saw the WA Branch of AFSA grow with members of the Lime Industry joining the Association, then the members of the Compost Association. At one stage there were 54 members.

One meeting was held in Leeming timed to watch the AFL grand final and catch some fish. This was "Griffo" and Donnes country with Larry being an occasional visitor. For Pam & Les Clulow it was a 7 hour drive. Having arrived about 11.00pm and just settled for the night at the campsite after having unpacked and made up the bed, a familiar voice was heard driving around the camp calling "Pammy" where are you. This heralded the arrival of "Griffo" and Larry so it was then some time before we were able to settle down again for the night. It was Pam's first experience at catching lobster and one she would rather forget as she found out later it was out of season. A good weekend was had by all watching the footy at the Leeming Club and then fishing on the Sunday.

Also during this time the National Body of the AFSA grew with the need to develop the Fertcare Program, this was bought about by the mounting public interest in the environmental and food safety impacts of fertilizers leading to the development of public policy at a Federal and State level.

The Lime Association of Western Australia saw the need to set up the Agricultural Lime Industry Code of Practice, which saw suppliers provide customers with analysis of the agricultural liming material they were purchasing.

Meetings were held about three times a year usually in Perth, with the stalwarts, Larry Marchant, Alan Griffith, David Holdsworth, Rod & Liz Donnes, Pam & Les Clulow, Rob & Kaye Hollett, hardly missing a meeting. Many a social evening was held afterwards. Many

friendships have been made both within Western Australia and across the nation with members attending National Conferences in different States every year.

In February 2001 Western Australia saw its first member Rob Hollett awarded life membership for the many years he had put into both BFSA and the AFSA.

The Spreaders, Transport, Lime Suppliers and Compost worked along side of one another in the Western Australian Branch of the AFSA until very recently. The Lime Suppliers and Compost Association have both gone alone and the Spreaders and Transport members are still part of the AFSA WA Branch.

The AFSA Branch has decided to still meet three times a year, with different members being asked to co ordinate the meetings. The last meeting being held in Dowerin and hosted by relatively new members Anne and Ian Rackham. An interesting tour of farms in the Dowerin area was organized, finishing with dinner at the Bowling Club in the evening. We are looking forward to the next meeting in Mandurah in February and fishing trip on Les Clulow's new boat just purchased getting ready for his retirement in a couple of years.

The Western Australian Branch has functioned successfully in the past because of the input and generosity of the hard working members. We hope that the Branch will prosper and grow and go from strength to strength in the years to come.

