



Gala dinner celebrate grain 'champions'

Queensland's best grain producers were recognised by industry peers, sporting stars and media personalities at the Queensland Grain Industry Awards in Toowoomba last Friday night.

AgForce Grains policy director Nina Murray said Queensland Reds prop Ben Daley and ABC1 Landline's Peter Lewis were on hand to honour the industry's leaders with 120 producers and industry supporters at the Toowoomba Turf Club on Friday 9 December.

"AgForce was excited to host the awards for the first time in many years to honour Queensland's most cutting edge and passionate growers," Nina said.

"As well as recognising the winning farmers, the Awards gave a much-needed boost to the entire grains industry after a difficult year of floods and lack-lustre prices."

This year's winners were:

- **Peter Thompson, Wallumbilla (Roma):** the 'Jason Rae Memorial' Grain Grower of the Year Award, sponsored by Rabobank.
- **John Alexander, Jimbour (Dalby):** the Grain Industry Emerging Leader Award, sponsored by GrainCorp.
- **Shaun Nolan, Wallumbilla (Roma)** the Grains Innovation Award, sponsored by GRDC.

For information about the Grains Awards winners and finalists, see below.

Interviews with winners and photos from the event can be arranged upon request.

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Who is AgForce? AgForce represents thousands of Queensland broadacre producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce leads the way to ensure agriculture's social, economic and environmental contribution is recognised by all levels of government. AgForce works alongside landholders, encourages and supports the next generation, builds industry partnerships and skills and promotes agriculture - for secure, sustainable, progressive and profitable food and fibre into the future.

The finalists and winners of the 2011 Queensland Grain Industry Awards are:

2011 Queensland Grains Innovation Award:

Sponsored by GRDC

Finalists:

Shaun Nolan, Wallumbilla (winner)

Shaun is from a family partnership that encompasses grain and forage crops, a cattle breeding and fattening enterprise, and even a date palm and bottle tree plantation. After graduating from UNE with a Bachelor of Rural Science, Shaun worked with Queensland Cotton as a sales agronomist and then headed home to the family property. Shaun has helped increase the property's turnover by 150% through a number of innovative practices, such as installing GPS-based control traffic farming, replacing fertiliser with animal manure and installing grain storage, aeration and drying facilities.

David Trevilyan, Banana

David Trevilyan operates Multi Farming Systems, from his property Honey B Ranch at Banana. David's fascination with machinery began at 15 when he hooked two tractors together to gain enough power to pull two implements on a spreader bar. At 21 he built his own 52 foot spreader bar with a folding wing. These were the beginning of a lifetime of innovations to 'farm smarter'. Over the years David built a land plane, a 4-wheel drive tractor with a 90 degree rotating cab, a 49 foot hydraulic chisel plough and a no-till planter.

2011 Queensland Grains Emerging Leader Award:

Sponsored by GrainCorp

Finalists:

John Alexander, Jimbour (winner)

John Alexander grew up on his family farming property at Jimbour. He studied mechanical engineering at UQ and after a brief stint working abroad in Canada, he moved home to work on his family farm and earthmoving enterprise. John and his wife took over the farm business in 2007. John was inaugural chair of the Jimbour Action Group, sits on the Surat Basin CSG Engagement Committee, the Jimbour Floodplain Landcare group and is a member of the Jimbour Plains Branch Regional Council. John says the key to his success on the land is that "he runs a small business that specialises in farming".

Luke Arbuckle, Goondiwindi

Luke Arbuckle grew up on a cattle, sheep and dry land cropping property 100km west of Goondiwindi. Luke studied a Bachelor of Agribusiness at UQ Gatton and after graduating returned to run the family farming enterprise, which consists of three properties in the cattle and grain industry and a tyre shop in Dalby. Luke's approach to business is "always be opportunistic... it's worth it if you can minimise the risks". Earlier this year Luke was presented with the opportunity to be a special director of AgForce's Grain Board, which he credits with motivating him to become involved in the grain industry at a local, state and federal level.

Andrew Bate, Talwood

Andrew's family have run a dryland cropping and beef cattle operation on the Central Highlands for the past 30 years and recently expanded into farming and grazing country at Talwood. Andrew has a strong commitment to environmentally sustainable farming, and was involved in the pilot program of the Grains Best Management Practice (BMP) scheme and now has the full

program implemented across his property. He is actively involved with Future Food Qld, a group formed in 2008 to argue for a better deal for farmers in face of mining developments, and also the Golden Triangle group working to protect Central Queensland farming country from mining.

2011 Queensland 'Jason Rae Memorial' Grain Grower of the Year:

Sponsored by Rabobank

Finalists:

Peter Thompson, Roma (winner)

Peter Thompson is passionate about agriculture and its valuable contribution to modern society. He believes in hands-on farming and encouraging and mentoring young people who are keen to get into agriculture. Peter and his wife Nikki run the Echo Hills Farming Company, a productive and ecologically sustainable mixed dryland cropping and beef cattle grazing enterprise northeast of Roma. He has established a working model that successfully integrates coal seam gas production into their high-value agricultural operation. Peter is an avid user of social media and frequently uses Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to educate others about agriculture. Peter was a board member of the Kondinin Group for 12 and holds membership with AgForce, GrainGrowers Ltd and Conservation Farmers Inc. He chairs the Roma North CSG Landholder Group and serves on the GGL Agriculture Reference Group Australia. Peter is heavily involved in all things agriculture and is also a member of the NFF CSG Taskforce and the Surat Basin CSG Engagement Group.

Andrew Earle, Mungindi

Andrew and his wife Angela own a grain growing operation and a sheep and lamb business at Mungindi on the Queensland and NSW border. Andrew has been chairman of the local Thallon Silo committee for the last 10 years, during which time the depot has grown from a 150,000 tonne capacity depot to 300,000 tonnes. Andrew is also involved with the Southern Queensland National Variety Trials (NVT) Committee and is a founding member and chair of the Mungindi Cropping Group. With the help of DEEDI, Andrew and the Mungindi Cropping Group have held wheat, canola and chickpea variety trials at Bullawarie, as well as trials testing plant populations and fertiliser.

Phillip Otto, Clermont

Phillip Otto is a qualified engineer who runs his family enterprise, Homelea Downs. Phillip has made many improvements to his grain farm, including introducing zero till farming, precision planting and negotiating with Queensland Transport to allow cartage of a triple road trains from farm to depot. Phillip has been affiliated with the local silo industry for the past 8 years including Graincorp and Grainco. He has also helped identify and resolve depot and rail issues affecting the grain growing industry at a local level. Phillip is involved in representing local growers at ministerial meetings and campaigning on local rail issues. Phillip has also participated in research and development trials for Pacific Seeds, endeavouring to develop the best suited seed for the local region.