

Kimberley journey for leaders

By JANE MILBURN

IT WAS business as usual this week for Geoff Cornford at Wainui Feedlot on the Darling Downs in Queensland, but next week will be something entirely different.

Geoff is one of 33 rural leaders selected for Course 16 of the Australian Rural Leadership Program about to embark on a personal and professional journey which begins with experiential learning in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Since 1993, this 16-month program has been run by the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation to identify and develop people who will help lead rural and regional Australia into the future.

Participants are sponsored by scholarships from various rural and related industry organisations, philanthropic donors, research and governments and the private sector, including Rural Press Ltd publisher of *Queensland Country Life*.

Geoff is sponsored by the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA), after being encouraged to apply by colleagues who are current or past participants in the program which spans 60 contact days during the next year and a half.

"The excitement and enthusiasm for the course within my peers, who have completed or are participating in the program, is infectious and I'm looking forward to the learning experiences ahead," he said.

At North Australian Pastoral



Previous participants in the Kimberley on the Australian Rural Leadership Program.



A group of 33 rural leaders selected for the Australian Rural Leadership Program in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia.



Dallas King.



Jane Milburn.



Georgie Somerset.



Geoff Cornford.



Keelen Mailman.

Co, Geoff began his working life as a jackaroo 15 years ago and progressed through various roles to now manage a feedlot turning off 35,000 head annually and overseeing 20 staff.

"I am keen to develop leadership skills for my benefit as well as the benefit of my employer, industry and community. I believe ARLP will develop these skills through experiencing the many unique challenges and opportunities ahead," he said.

Geoff has already

demonstrated industry leadership capacity through roles including chairman of the ALFA Animal Health and Welfare Committee and member of a writing group developing new Australian Cattle Welfare Standards & Guidelines.

Foundation chief executive Dr Lesley Fitzpatrick said ARLP is committed to developing credible, connected and committed leaders who are passionate about securing and developing Australia's primary industries and rural, regional and

remote communities.

"This program really makes a difference for the individuals who complete it and for its broader impacts on rural Australia," Dr Fitzpatrick said.

St George agricultural consultant Dallas King won the Cotton Leader Scholarship sponsored by Auscott/Cotton Research & Development Corporation and is looking forward to meeting and learning from people involved with a diversified range of industries and communities.

"From the program, I hope to gain insights into new approaches that can be implemented to change and improve rural communities for the betterment of all Australians," Dallas said.

Far west Queensland Mithaka man Scott Gorringer, who currently works with the QUT Institute of Indigenous Education Leadership, won the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation Open Scholarship.

Scott also consults on indigenous leadership and governance challenges, and delivers programs across Australia. South Burnett beef producer Georgie Somerset has a background and training in agriculture, regional development, marketing, tourism and journalism which secured her the Meat & Livestock Australia Meat Leader Scholarship. Keelen Mailman is

caretaker/manager of Mount Tabor Station at Augathella, recognised as being the first female Aboriginal to run a cattle property in Australia, and sponsored by the federal Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry.

"I'm looking forward to meeting leaders in the communities we will travel to, gaining experience, knowledge and wisdom and bringing that home to my community," Keelen said.

Applications for Course 17 opened on May 8. For selection criteria, phone 02 6281 0680 or visit the foundation's website on www.rural-leaders.com.au

● Jane Milburn is media manager for AgForce and immediate past president of the Rural Press Club of Queensland. Jane won the ARLP Rural Press Open Scholarship sponsored by Rural Press Limited (the parent company of Queensland Country Life).

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