

Young Crawford Meeting: Opportunities in International Agriculture Research

6th August 2015

The Department of Agriculture and Food, WA—South Perth Theatre
Guest Speakers: Prof Graeme Martin, Ms Roslyn Jettner and Ms Dominie Wright
Number of attendees: 20

James Ridsdill-Smith, Coordinator of the WA Committee, welcomed the attendees on behalf of the Crawford Fund, and Mar Hube, Senior Policy Officer at the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) spoke about the history of international agricultural research within DAFWA. He then introduced the speakers.

Professor Graeme Martin, UWA, spoke about his personal journey from school to University and how he became well known in the International Community. Graeme's words conveyed the message "if someone offers you an opportunity, seriously consider taking that opportunity. You never know where it might lead". In his case, he has supervised many PhD students who have become researchers, and then together they have set up international projects leading to further collaboration and in some cases, very valuable long-term friendships.

Ms Roslyn Jettner, AEGIC, highlighted the opportunities for international agriculture through employment with State Government, private companies, a volunteer agency and a not-for-profit organisation. Her experience as an Australian volunteer in the South Pacific nation of Samoa was highlighted, where for two years Roslyn worked towards increasing foreign earnings through the establishment of taro, Tahitian lime and misiluki banana exports.

Ms Dominie Wright, PhD student UWA, spoke about her short stint of work with the Botswana Ministry of Agriculture (AusAid funded project). The Department of Agriculture and Food, WA (DAFWA) had a 2-year project helping Botswana improve their biosecurity. Dominie spent two weeks training extension officers in disease identification skills, along with her colleague Mr Bill MacLeod. The work and conditions were quite challenging at times, however, the experience was extraordinary.

Afterwards there was time for the students to ask questions and discuss their concerns about getting work with very little experience and how to get involved in the international arena. Time, patience and networking were the advice given to the students. Each of the speakers showed that they had done this in very different ways, which had suited the individual and their circumstances.