

FARMERS and other ag-industry attendees were told at the recent GrainGrowers conference in Sydney to “expect the unexpected” as farm sectors worldwide entered further uncharted waters. Given the tumultuous international and domestic events of the past few years, it's hard to imagine what else can come our way to rock the boat. But at the risk of mixing way too many metaphors, it's likely the disruptions will come from left field.



It's very hard to accurately predict the economic and political impacts of a global pandemic, or an aggressive invasion of a sovereign democratic nation, however, it's a bit easier to gauge the effects of sky-high energy prices on the ability of an industry to operate efficiently and profitably. But many governments worldwide, including our own, would appear to dismiss this hard economic fact and prefer to pander to environmental and largely urban interests far removed from in-the-paddock reality.

Australia should be capitalising on its comparative advantage in the world of energy production. “Capitalising” does not have to mean damaging. We should be passing on our low cost advantage to not just farmers and manufacturers but to the whole economy – and I'm pretty sure we can do it without wrecking our environment.

Energy production technology has come a long way from half a century ago. What hasn't moved as much is the general community perception that anything coming out of the ground – particularly coal, gas and uranium – is inherently bad. The world needs affordable energy to keep our lights on, power our factories and most importantly, to produce high quality food and fibre at a reasonable cost. It's fair to say that urban communities across the world do not generally get that connection.

If there is not a shift in community awareness about safe and affordable energy production, political will is unlikely to change either. Maybe to prompt this change in mind-set we need to have a period of “expecting the unexpected” in the form of very high dollar figures at supermarket checkouts.

Greenmount farm study tours back underway

With our international farm tours being put on hold for the past few years, it's good to finally get underway again. By the time you read this, *Greenmount Travel* will have completed a Western Canada, Yukon & Alaska adventure and be well into a tour through Western Europe. With heatwaves and bushfires dominating the news coming out of Europe, one of our travellers about to join the tour group in Spain is worried that such events are bound to make him feel very homesick!

There's nothing quite like spending time away with like-minded souls and meeting other similarly minded people from far-flung fields. In coming weeks detailed itineraries and dates for the *Greenmount Travel* line-up for 2023 will be available.

But just to whet your travelling appetite, South America, Southern/Eastern Africa and Iceland/Scandinavia are on the international radar for 2023. On the domestic front, Across the Top End (from Cairns to Broome) and Gems of the West (coinciding with the height of the WA wildflower season) – both of these fantastic tours were fully booked this year – will be on offer again next year.

Keep your eye on the *Greenmount Travel* website, and your mailbox, for more information. ■

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Key climate drivers behind record rainfall

The heavy early winter rainfall in many areas of eastern Australia that led to major flooding in some catchments can be linked to changes to several climate drivers.



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Early adopters continue to refine PA

Phil, Bindy and son Tom Longmire crop 5700 hectares at Beaumont, about 100 kilometres east-north east of Esperance. As early adopters of technology, they have been able to not only make cost savings but increase productivity thanks to their use of precision agriculture tools.



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The origins of my fascination for old tractors

Why is it that some individuals develop an attachment for old tractors, that can ripen into a lifelong obsession? What is that magic ingredient emanating from these ancient pieces of ironmongery that can convert a normal well-adjusted mind into a state of consuming preoccupation?



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Green hydrogen tech ready for investment

Powering the future and achieving net zero is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Hydrogen, the most abundant element in the universe presents a unique opportunity – when it's converted to green hydrogen.



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Impact of fertiliser price increases on global agriculture

Current fertiliser price increases are reminiscent of the Great Recession period when prices nearly doubled across all major fertiliser groups at the end of 2007. At that time, prices were fueled by rising demand in many emerging markets and increased use of corn and other crops for biofuel.

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