

## 2022 VFF ELECTION CANDIDATES

### VFF President



## EMMA GERMANO

I LOVE FARMS - MIXED VEGETABLE AND LIVESTOCK FARMING

Emma is a passionate advocate for Australian agriculture. As a third-generation farmer from Gippsland, Emma is focussed on ensuring a vibrant future for agriculture in Australia. Her family farm, 'I Love Farms' is mixed across livestock and horticulture. The business has also expanded to incorporate a retail store on farm, driven by Emma's commitment to bring farmers and Australian consumers closer together.

As the current President of the VFF, Emma is leading the conversation on key issues for Australian agriculture including food security, sustainability and climate resilience. As a strong voice for agriculture Emma makes regular media appearances highlighting issues facing farmers and demonstrating why Australians need to understand and care about primary production.

Prior to buying the family farming business, Emma operated a restaurant in Richmond, Victoria. Emma is also a Director of the Queen Victoria Market and a 2014 Nuffield Scholar examining export opportunities for Australian produce. Emma has held previous industry roles including across industry advisory panels and the Presidency of VFF Horticulture Group.

Emma believes that serving the people in Victoria's agricultural industry is a valuable thing to do. The VFF's vision is a 'secure farming future' and to be the voice of Victorian farmers. Emma diligently serves the VFF mission by being it's key spokesperson and chairperson. For the first time in more than a decade the decline in the VFF membership has halted under Emma's leadership demonstrating that Victorian farmers support a VFF that is inclusive, relevant and united.



## MEG PARKINSON

JAMONEY PTY LTD - EGG FARMING

Dear Member

We are all concerned that there has been such a dramatic loss of trust in the organisation recently.

Our strength has always been that although we have lively debates on issues of policy, we hold the same underlying values.

These values are about respect for each other, the importance of our family, our towns and about agriculture.

Members are passionate about the Commodity which reflects their business.

Our values are reflected in our policies.

Our values have been established and strengthened by VFF processes: policy issues, and the concerns of members, are passed up from branch to commodity and policy councils, where advocacy is finalised.

This process is what gives strength to our message when talking to Government and media. Both of them like that we are farmers, not just reps.

The Board administrators the organisation – it does not make issues policy.

My involvement in the VFF runs deep over many years as your Deputy President (on the Board) as well as Chair of Farrer House, a Trustee of the Disaster Relief Fund, Chair of the Animal Welfare and Industrial Committees, Egg Group President and Intensive commodities rep on the Board.

Members are very concerned that a large number of well-known competent staff, with VFF corporate knowledge, have left in the last year-ish, suggesting that it is not a happy productive organisation!

This is not what members expect. Nor is removing staff without replacing them. If money is short, members will have ideas.

A recent change in my working life, gives me time to dedicate myself to the organisation again. With your support, we can rebuild the culture we hold so passionately.

We need:

A strong Board

Working as a Team

Supporting our Staff

Rebuilding Outcomes

For Farmers and Rural Victoria

Please Vote 1 for Meg for President.

## 2022 VFF ELECTION CANDIDATES

### VFF President (*Continued*)



## PAUL MUMFORD

P & L MUMFORD PTY LTD - DAIRY AND LIVESTOCK FARMING

As a Gippsland farmer and most recently President of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria (UDV), I know all too well the challenges facing the agriculture industry. Actively involved with the federation since 2011, I possess a strong understanding of how to interact with farmers, industry stakeholders and Government, to achieve positive outcomes for the next generations.

I've seen the bureaucracy and concerning behaviours at play, within the VFF. I'm here today seeking your support to challenge the status quo which I aspire to address. We know what standard behaviours should be, and I endeavour to bring these values back to the VFF and be a true representative of the farmers' voice in Victoria.

Presidency should not have a political future in mind nor be an autocracy. I will not implement a 'top-down authoritarian' approach. I will listen to all commodities, their councils and the board as the president should be their voice!

My Vision for VFF is to re-establish a well-respected organisation that develops strong policy and advocates on behalf of farmers, including stabilizing membership and investigating a sustainable funding model.

Retaining Core values of the VFF through Policy & Advocacy with strong membership engagement.

My Election pillars are:

- Re-empower commodities allowing to engage with and represent their farmer members, however they see fit and collaborate with the Federation to work cohesively.
- The VFF President should speak from a base of strong consultation and; accurately represent the views of the Board and the commodities with good behavioural culture - that means leading with respect, treating staff with respect, establishing good governance and listening to members. Therefore, the culture at the board must change!
- Bring stability to the membership, while building a unique value proposition for members.
- The VFF can no longer rely on membership funding alone, alternative funding models should be explored.

## 2022 VFF ELECTION CANDIDATES

### VFF Vice-President



## DANYEL CUCINOTTA

LT'S EGG FARM - EGG FARMING

Danyel is a third-generation Victorian caged-egg farmer and helps operate her family's egg farm, onsite café and deli in Werribee on Melbourne's western outskirts.

Danyel holds an Agriculture Diploma, Bachelor of Business and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Whilst currently holding the Vice President's position and being a member of the VFF Board she also commits her time to Chair both The Farming Systems Policy Committee and Making our Farming Families Safer Committee as being a committee member of both Farm Business and policy council.

In addition, Danyel sits on the NFF Farming systems committee on behalf of VFF, is a member of The biosecurity reference group, State Food Relief Taskforce and Melbourne Royal Emerging leaders committee.

Danyel understands the dedication, hard work and sacrifice needed to run a successful farm and is committed to ensuring farmers receive strong government policy needed to ensure Victorian farms and agriculture thrives into the future.



## BERNIE FREE

FREEDOM DAIRYING - DAIRY FARMING

I am a 57-year-old farmer. Along with my wife and daughter we have a Dairy operation in Winslow, SW Victoria.

We as a family are passionate about advocacy and promotion of successful farming systems in agriculture.

In 1995 my wife and I were runners up in Share Farmer of the year, this success encouraged us to drive for the best outcomes for the dairy industry and agriculture in general.

I have participated in a number of leadership courses and workshops including AIM leadership course in the late 1990's, Target Ten of which I was on the western Victorian committee for several years, and more recently the Global Leadership Course and currently I am a member of the regional Industry Leadership Group.

I have taken courses which were available to me over the years, these have included Pastures for Profit, Fertiliser usage course, Cow fertility to name a few.

Having just recently sold our dairy farm at Yambuk I am now able to engage in a much greater capacity within agriculture advocacy.

Advocacy for agriculture has been a passion of mine from my early mentorship days working for and then share farming with John Harlock, a great industry leader and Agri advocate.

I have been actively involved with the UDV at a branch and state level for many years, as both deputy and acting policy councillor for the VFF UDV Wannon branch.

The importance of grass root led, representative and accountable governance is sacrosanct above all else. Sadly, this is now being taken away within the governance of the VFF. This is a key and motivating reason why I feel the need to stand for Vice President of VFF.



## **MARK BILLING**

**CRAIGLANDS PARTNERSHIP - DAIRY FARMING**

It is with great pleasure that I offer myself as a candidate for the position of President of the United Dairy Farmers of Victoria.

I farm with my wife Sam and our four children at Larpent, West of Colac. We are dry land farmers with a passion for the dairying industry, an industry that has sustained five generations of our family. As a farm business we are attuned to the pressures that confront the dairying industry but also believe it is an industry that has a strong history of adoption, adaptation, passion and persistence. I believe dairying is the best placed to keep our rural communities strong and vibrant, but it comes with its challenges and strong leadership with good policy and advocacy is imperative to ensure that our industry can be well placed to provide for us today and into the future.

As a long time UDV member, former UDV apprentice of the year and current UDV President, I understand UDV's strong history and its place in continually advocating for Victoria's Dairyfarmers. UDV has evolved and will need to continue to evolve to be well-placed to represent our members in the best possible way.

It is my belief that good leadership is the driving force behind any respected and relevant representative organization, I believe with my experience in leadership within the dairying industry, as a Group Officer in the Country Fire Authority and various community groups that I can bring a wealth of experiences to the President position.

It is vitally important with all the challenges that face dairying that we have open and free discussions and feedback, to develop good policy and advocacy. UDV must be the strongest and loudest voice for Victorian dairy with strong connections with its members and industry stakeholders. I believe I am well placed to assist UDV in achieving this.

As with any democratic process it is important to have your say so I encourage you to please take the time to cast your vote. Strong communication is key so if you wish to have a chat about the election or just want to catch up, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in Dairying,  
Mark Billing.



## **IAN MORRIS**

**CURDIES RIVER PARTNERSHIP - DAIRY FARMING**

I dairy farm in Cobden after an international career as a development economist. After 15 years farming, I believe dairy can have a profitable and sustainable future.

I am an active VFF/UDV member and a branch secretary for three years. I sit on the Dairy Industry Sustainability Committee.

Dairy is now at a tipping point with a collapsing milk pool -- despite good milk prices and good seasons.

Why are increasing numbers of farmers leaving? How can we encourage industry growth? We need to assist young farmers into the industry. Improved understanding of these issues and of what drives profitability as farmers cope with milk price volatility and variable seasons is critical to support advocacy.

Cost pressures on farmers (fertilizer, grain, energy) and labour constraints are critical. We need to anticipate emerging issues and engage on industry commitments to net zero by 2050, and "social license to operate" issues. Industry has not engaged with farmers on these issues even though they will bear the costs.

The VFF/UDV needs to respond to the anti-competitive behaviour of supermarkets. I support the Dahlsen Plan.

Membership numbers are collapsing undermining the financial base for advocacy. I have proposed a new structure to reform advocacy with a focus on transparency and accountability.

I bring a unique set of skills to the table. My professional experience means that I have a sound understanding of how to work with Governments on policy.

I seek your support as President.



## **TOM GOODEN**

**BURGESS RURAL P/L - GRAZING AND CROPPING**

I have fourteen years' experience in the livestock industry with ten of those years working with Growth Farms Australia and my latest appointment as Group Agricultural Manager for Burgess Rural.

Throughout my career I have managed prime lamb, wool and beef enterprises through New South Wales and Victoria. I believe my experience managing large scale grazing business's will allow me to bring real time issues and knowledge to the table.

I have experience in farm operations, staff development and management, WH&S policy and strategic farm budgeting and marketing.

I pride myself on my leadership skills and consciously seek ways to better lead teams, to strive for greater outcomes across our farming business.

I would like my time on the livestock commodity council to be known for working towards better outcomes for our industry, based on the research and science available.

Improving the efficiency of our industry levies into relevant research and development that will assist in the productivity and profitability of our livestock enterprises. Improving the financial sustainability of our operations, will ensure the progress of environmental and social governance outcomes.

I look forward to the opportunity in representing Victorian livestock producers and bringing to light issues and constraints that we face day to day.



## **BRADLEY VENNING**

**DL & MJ VENNING PARTNERSHIP - SUPERFINE WOOL AND GRAINS**

I am married to Victoria and together we have three Primary School aged boys, all of whom are showing a keen interest in farming. We are partners in a family farm with my brother and his wife, running self-replacing Superfine Merinos and a cropping program of wheat, canola, beans and barley, South West of Hamilton.

I have a major interest in improving the carbon levels in our soils to make better use of the sunshine and water we get in the South West. Our partnership has made major successful investments in subsoil manuring and drainage to achieve this outcome.

I would like to continue to help the Livestock Commodity Council to drive policy that will help young family farmers to get a start in the livestock industry, and to help develop environmental policy that has good outcomes for agriculture. In particular, I feel it is important that the VFF hold the State and Federal Governments accountable for Animal Welfare policy changes and quarantine regulations.

I have been the additional Councillor for the Livestock Commodity Council since 2020, and have previously held the position of Secretary for the Hamilton & District Branch.

I am currently a Lieutenant in our local CFA, and participate in the Australian Superfine Woolgrowers Association as President of the Hamilton Branch, Federal Councillor and delegate to Wool Producers Animal Health and Welfare committee.