

Prominent futurist to headline LambEx 2016

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DELEGATES will get a glimpse of Australia's lamb industry in 20 years' time when futurist Paul Higgins takes the stage as the first keynote speaker at LambEx 2016 in Albury, New South Wales, in August this year.

Paul has worked across many facets of the livestock supply chain as a cattle vet, pork farmer, abattoir manager and agribusiness consultant. He has recently retired from a 16-year stint as a board member of Auspork, a public company that markets pork, beef, chicken and lamb, and has served as chair of Australian Pork Limited twice for a total of 10 years.

Against this background and his private consulting firm Emergent Futures, Paul will explore lamb's realistic future, bringing together consumer trends, technology trends and producer trends to arrive at a compelling case for what lamb looks like in 20 years' time.

In exploring the topic, Paul says there are three key elements.

"Firstly, the high-margin customer of the future – the ones lamb producers want – are going to be more discerning and more demanding," he says. "Everyone's lives are becoming more like that in that they want more information about the different aspects of their lives, which extends to food.

"Secondly, the strategic lever to be able to provide that information is in part going to be about data from throughout the supply chain.

"Thirdly, by having a customer focus approach, lamb producers will improve their capacity to run their business while reducing costs at the same time. The capacity to link up with research organisations and other types of farming systems means producers can reduce costs as well as serving their customers better."

Paul says he is most looking forward to challenging the thinking of LambEx 2016 attendees.

"To a certain extent the lamb industry is in a good space at the moment, with volumes down and demand high, but sometimes it is forgotten that these cycles come and go," he says.

"There could be some parallels between lamb production and Saudi Arabian oil production — at some stage that demand is going to run out and it is important to prepare for how we might handle it when it does."

LambEx 2016 planning committee chair Rodney Watt says Paul's presentation will give a valuable insight into the future for all lamb industry stakeholders.

"I've always been someone who's excited about the future and I see change as something that should be welcomed and not feared," he says. "I'm excited to find out what Paul thinks of the future of the lamb industry so we can take that message forward with a view for change."

Lambex²⁰¹⁶

AUGUST 10-12 ALBURY, NEW SOUTH WALES

LambEx 2016 will take place in Albury, NSW, from August 10-12. For more information visit www.lambex.com.au

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