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Review of the Eyre Peninsula Water Demand and Supply Statement

Livestock SA represents and promotes the interests of beef-cattle, sheep and goat producers in South Australia. The organisation has over 3,000 members across the State with 360 members on Eyre Peninsula (12% of members).

We are concerned that the original Statement released in 2011 and its subsequent annual reviews make little mention of livestock. In developing a new Eyre Peninsula Water Demand and Supply Statement, the importance of the livestock industry to the area and its potential for future growth needs to be considered in more depth.

Recently there has been changes to the farming systems on Eyre Peninsula, with more farmers including livestock in their farm operations. Whilst there had been a trend towards continuous cropping during the 1990's there has been a movement back to mixed farming systems following the millennium drought. This has coincided with the ongoing increased profitability of including sheep and cattle with cropping programs. Not only has this improved the financial capacity of properties but it has also significantly reduced the environmental risks associated with purely cropping enterprises.

Eyre Peninsula has more than 1.5 million sheep and 23,000 head of cattle. Since 1996 the numbers have been described in terms of dry sheep equivalents (DSE's). It is reported that the livestock industry on Eyre Peninsula comprises 2.0 million DSE's. PIRSA states in SA Water 's Long Term Plan for Eyre Peninsula (2008) that livestock numbers will increase over the next ten years. In the current Demand and Supply Statement this figure is quantified with expected growth to be 1.5% per annum. There is little doubt that the increasing cost of pipeline water through SA Water is a major factor inhibiting the growth of livestock numbers.

The Demand and Supply Statement states that in 2011 the water requirements of the livestock industry were 7,400 ML of water. No mention was made of allowing for an expanded demand due to increased livestock numbers in the future.

Our angst relates to this lack of recognition of the importance of the livestock industry to the financial wellbeing of Eyre Peninsula. Coupled with this, is the lack of provision of water resources for future growth.

Livestock SA requests that the Statement consider the importance of the livestock industry on Eyre Peninsula and allowance is made for the predicted annual growth in livestock numbers. It would be reasonable to assume that if livestock numbers are to grow by 1.5% per annum that the water resource needed for livestock would increase by a similar figure.

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