



Your strong and independent
voice for livestock producers

LIVESTOCK SA...

Unit 5, 780 South Road, Glandore SA 5037

P 08 8297 2299 **F** 08 8293 8886

E admin@livestocksa.org.au

livestocksa.org.au

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Levies Task Force

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment – Levies

Locked Bag 4488,

KINGSTON ACT 2604

By Email: leviestaskforce@agriculture.gov.au; Levies.management@agriculture.gov.au)

Streamlining and modernising agricultural levies legislation

Livestock SA was formed in 2013 to represent the interests of beef cattle, sheep and goat producers across South Australia. Currently Livestock SA has in excess of 3,500 members.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has indicated that it is proposing to streamline and modernise the agricultural levies legislation, to ensure it is efficient, responsive and flexible enough to meet industry needs.

Livestock SA supports this approach. For the sake of our members, it is essential that they received value for money as levy payers and have more understanding and involvement in the process.

The Department has prepared an early assessment regulation impact statement (RIS). In this statement, two options are given on how to improve the legislation. These are to either remake the sunseting legislation in its current form, or to transform the levies legislation. Livestock SA supports the second option.

In the RIS, the Department describes the current legislation as complex, duplicative and even inconsistent, lacking flexibility, as well as not being easy to understand and also not transparent.

Livestock SA is directly interested in two Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) - Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), as well as Animal Health Australia and the National Residue Survey.

From information collected from livestock producers in South Australia, as levy payers, not only do they want to know how their money is spent by these organisations, but how they can influence these decisions.

As it is difficult for direct levy-payer input on a day-to-day basis, it is essential that the bodies that represent producers have an oversight role of their relevant RDCs. In the case of beef cattle, sheep and goats, these bodies are the Cattle Council of Australia, Sheep Producers Australia, WoolProducers Australia and Goat Industry Council of Australia. Livestock SA is a member of all four of these peak bodies and through our membership, we can represent our producers.

To ensure that the peak bodies are able to effectively undertake their oversight roles, once they are given this role it is crucial that they are adequately funded. Consideration must be given to a specific percentage of collected producer levies being allocated to the peak bodies to undertake this role, rather than being required to go cap-in-hand for funding to those RDCs they are supposed to oversee.

In South Australia, advocacy and industry assistance through Livestock SA is funded from producer levies on sheep and cattle. The money is collected through the SA Sheep and Cattle Industry Funds under SA Government legislation (*Primary Industry Funding Schemes Act 1998*). Consideration could be given to including aspects of this South Australian model, to ensure funding for the peak bodies.

It is essential that there are strong, independent and well-resourced peak industry councils. These need to be supported by policy committees that allow the production sector to have input into policy development. Both the Cattle Council of Australia and Sheep Producers Australia have policy committees where policies are formulated and tested. It is through these policy committees that the State Farmer Organisations as members of these peak industry bodies can have input, to ensure even more influence from grassroots producers.

As part of the streamlining process, it is pleasing that for livestock levy payers there is now going to be a levy payer register. Having a register will allow all livestock producers who pay levies to be properly consulted. This can only assist to ensure greater transparency and accountability.

Livestock SA would welcome the opportunity to provide further comment or clarification as required.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Curtis
CEO