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## MONTHLY REPORT TO MEMBERS

**March 2014**

### LIVESTOCK SA election priorities

Following feedback from members, ten priority issues were identified that will need to be addressed by the incoming State Government following the election on 15 March, 2014. These issues are:

- 1 Drought support for South Australian pastoralists**
- 2 Reduction in the cost of water for livestock**
- 3 Development of South Australia's live export trade**
- 4 More support for PIRSA, SARDI and Biosecurity SA**
- 5 Review of the Pastoral Board and its activities**
- 6 A more efficient transport system to allow for efficient volume movement of livestock**
- 7 Need to balance agriculture with the environment and community**
- 8 Maintaining and recognising the value of the Dog Fence**
- 9 Encouragement for the next generation of primary producers**
- 10 Funding for Livestock SA**

We would like to thank those members who made comments. There were several comments received about the lack of market competition for livestock – while this is an issue that needs addressing, we were unsure how the State Government could easily assist.

### Australian Drought Package – What's in it for drought-affected pastoralists in SA?

With the release of the package by the Australian Government, Livestock SA has been lobbying for all parts of this package to be available in this State. This was a major issue at the Northern meeting. While we have been assured by several Federal politicians that our pastoralists are eligible, neither the State Government nor ourselves have yet to see the fine print. Both governments need to quickly work on the paperwork and red tape so that the assistance is soon available, and we have asked both Minister Gago and Shadow Minister Ridgway for a commitment.

### Need for drought assistance highlighted at northern meeting of Livestock SA

At the meeting held on 28 February at Port Augusta, a Northern Regional Group of Livestock SA was formed with Colin Greenfield from Billa Kalina Station, near Woomera, elected as Regional Chair. Nearly 30 people attended with a good representation from across the pastoral region.

Local Federal MP Rowan Ramsey together with local State MP Dan van Holst Pellekaan, attended to explain the drought package. The drought package consists of four main measures – farm household support, drought concessional loans, funding for water, and assistance to manage pests. Rowan indicated that this package was not only for the eastern States, but if procedures are put in place, those South Australian producers facing drought will also be eligible. Dan indicated that if the Liberal Party was elected, arrangements will be made with the Australian Government immediately after the State election. A motion was passed urging both major parties to make an immediate commitment before the State election to ensure that to ensure that those South Australian producers facing drought would be eligible to apply for all parts of the package, particularly for the funding available for water and pest management.

Other issues discussed at the meeting were wild dogs, the Pastoral Board and the interaction with the NRM Board and Native Vegetation Council, a goat rebate, kangaroo management, need for clarification on PIC, and disease management.

*For more details, contact Colin Greenfield Northern Regional Chair Livestock SA – phone 8672 8936.*

## President's report - Richard Halliday

- February has seen Livestock SA start to come of age.
- Over the past month I have done many interviews with both rural and metropolitan media, particularly in regards to the drought across the north of South Australia and to make the public aware of the conditions and to understand its impact.
- Early in the month Catherine Miller from the *Stock Journal* did an article on Livestock SA which was well received.
- Jack England, Deane Crabb and I meet with Paul Leonard of Thomas Foods to discuss the grower issues around dress outs, penalties and delays in unloading stock. Thomas Foods are addressing the unloading with some modifications that should be finished soon. Visiting their water treatment facility was impressive. We encourage producers to contact them if you have issues or concerns.
- Mid-month, Jack England and I were able to meet Minister Joyce at Mount Gambier and put our State's position to him.
- The Livestock SA Board met on 20 February, covering many issues including arranging regional meetings so we can engage with producers and find out the issues that we need to work on. We also decided to assist WoolTAG as they work on training young wool handlers and shearers which I believe is a real positive for the wool industry.
- Deane and I attended the northern group meeting and it was pleasing to hear from a well-organised group of producers the issues that need to be pursued.

### Fire recovery assistance

Following the fires this year, Primary Producers SA and Livestock SA established a register for both offers of assistance and requests for assistance for fire recovery – for fodder, agistment and fencing. There were requests for assistance from about 60 properties, with most requests coming from the Eden Valley region, followed by the Bangor and Rockleigh regions. The fodder requests received were for approximately 20,000 sheep and 600 cattle. Many affected primary producers have been forced to sell some of their stock.

More than 80 offers of assistance have been received, including about 30 offers of fodder (sending approximately 30 loads of hay into the affected areas so far) plus over 16 offers of labour (including offers from groups) and offers of over 20,000 vineyard posts for fencing through the Wine Grape Council of SA. Almost all of the fodder offered has been allocated and delivered. It should be noted that there have also been large donations of fodder through other local and regional networks. We have aimed to complement these local efforts (including those by local Agricultural Bureau Branches and PIRSA staff). A second call for fodder has been made, and any fodder which is offered will continue to be allocated.

There were a number of offers of agistment but it has generally been much more difficult to find agistment for cattle than for sheep. These offers supplemented the very significant contributions made by stock agents in coordinating agistment. Thousands of sheep and hundreds of cattle are now on agistment as a result of the fires. Many of these are being agisted on stubble and there is considerable concern about the displacement (again) of these stock when seeding starts.

BlazeAid has also been a welcome force towards recovery in setting up base camps in Palmer and Wirrabara, particularly given the size of the fencing task ahead.

PPSA and Livestock SA would like to thank everyone who has made such generous donations of their time, fodder, materials, equipment and agistment opportunities to assist those affected by the fires.

### Dates for your diary

Goat Industry Forum – 27 March                      Burra

Regional Livestock SA meeting at Mount Compass – 9 April

Agricultural Competitiveness Meetings at Adelaide – 7 April, Crystal Brook – 9 April, Renmark – 10 April

NEED livestock producers to attend.

LambEx 2014 – 9 to 11 July                      Adelaide Showgrounds

Livestock SA **AGM – 29 August**                      More details later

**For more details on anything mentioned in this update, please contact Deane Crabb 8297 2299.**