



## Media Release



Thursday, June 18, 2015

### **Biosecurity cuts top Budget disappointments for Livestock SA**

Cuts to funding for Biosecurity SA's livestock area is one of a string of disappointments and missed opportunities from the State Government's Budget announcement today, Livestock SA President Geoff Power says.

Mr Power says Livestock SA wrote to Premier Jay Weatherill in November 2014 seeking more funding for Biosecurity SA but, instead, the overall budget will mean less will be spent in the coming year on this program.

"In order to expand our markets for livestock overseas, we must guarantee that our food safety, biosecurity and product integrity practices are of the highest possible standard. Cutting Biosecurity SA's funding does not ensure this," Mr Power said.

**The State Government did not address the South East drains maintenance issue, and is still proposing a levy be introduced despite the citizen's jury that it employed reaching a verdict the government should fund maintenance.**

"Maintenance of the drains is a big issue in the South East and for Livestock SA, where nearly half of our members are based. Time and time again, we have called for action on this issue and raised it at departmental and Ministerial meetings," he said.

"But the message appears not to be getting through and we cannot say it any plainer – the government must honour its commitment to the South East's land owners that the community will direct how maintenance of the network is funded and their direction is no new levies and no new taxes.

"Our concern is that with this stalemate, the drains will begin to crumble with no maintenance."

**The State Government also missed an opportunity to provide relief to livestock producers using the SA Water network for stock water.**

This has been one of Livestock SA's top 10 issues. Producers are currently paying a maximum of \$3.23 per kilolitre but Livestock SA believes the price should be set at 62 cents per kilolitre, which has been calculated by the Essential Services Commission of SA as the long-run marginal cost of supply to Greater Adelaide.

"If the price of water is not reduced to a more realistic level, it will lead to reduced livestock numbers – reducing the income to the State's economy. At 62c/kL, livestock production could even increase," he said.



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“These are our main disappointments in a budget where agriculture, and the livestock industry, was virtually ignored despite its importance to the SA economy,” he said. “Probably the only shining light for the livestock industry in the budget was that there was no new State taxes – but this benefit was shared by all South Australians.”

**ENDS**

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