

Livestock SA – one year on in new advocacy structure

Annual report for 2013-2014

It has been a year of firsts for Livestock SA – establishing as a new farm advocacy group for South Australian sheep, beef cattle and goat producers, setting policy, signing up members, and representing them to government, the community and other industry groups and businesses.

Official start

Livestock SA was officially formed on 27 May 2013.

Primary Producers SA

Livestock SA is one of six commodity groups in South Australia which focuses on the needs of its members. Livestock SA works with Primary Producers SA (PPSA) on the cross-commodity issues affecting all farmers, such as transport and natural resources management. The other five members of PPSA are Grain Producers SA, Horticulture Coalition of SA, Pork SA, SA Dairyfarmers Association (SADA) and Wine Grape Council of Australia.

Getting started ...

The first few months was spent in establishing Livestock SA, including:

- Employing chief executive officer Deane Crabb.
- Finding an office, rented from SADA and co-located with PPSA. Livestock SA shares administration and reception with SADA and PPSA, including the services of a business manager (Jen Taylor) and a part-time receptionist (Kelly Lill).
- Developing a website (www.livestock.org.au) and a newsletter (*Livestock SA NEWS*) to communicate with members and stakeholders. Deanna Lush from AgCommunicators was engaged to provide a media and communication service to Livestock SA.
- Joining peak national bodies as the South Australian member including Cattle Council of Australia, Goat Industry Council of Australia, Sheepmeat Council of Australia, WoolProducers Australia, and the South East Australian Livestock Exporters Association.
- Developing services for members, such as the provision of industrial and legal advice. Chas Cini of Mediation and Employment Relations Services provides a range of industrial relations services for members while Donaldson Walsh Lawyers provide legal services to both Livestock SA and its members. Other services being considered include a full-time Livestock Biosecurity Network Officer for SA (currently Dr Pat Kluver has been handling both Victoria and South Australia).

With this establishment work complete, Livestock SA started work on advocacy on key issues impacting the industry in South Australia.

Regional meetings

As part of this advocacy process, meetings were held around the State to gain feedback from producers on how they would like Livestock SA to operate and issues it should tackle. Nearly 250 people have attended the seven meetings held at Port Augusta (28 February), Mount Compass (9 April), Penola (15 April), Cambrai (29 April), Mount Pleasant (21 May), Karoonda (18 June) and Cleve (25 June). Those who have helped organise or attend these meetings are thanked for their involvement.

As a result of these meetings, a Northern and South East Region of Livestock SA have been formed as well as a Branch at Cambrai. Colin Greenfield, Billa Kalina Station, was elected chair of the Northern Region, while for South East Region, Peter Stock, Lucindale, was elected chair, Lachlan Grundy, Padthaway, vice-chair and Tom Dawkins, Naracoorte, secretary.

More meetings will be held in 2014/15 and Livestock SA encourages any interested producers to contact the organisation to arrange a time.

Priority issues

Based on feedback at meetings, and from members of Livestock SA, ten priority issues were identified and promoted during the 2014 State Election campaign. Work on these issues has started with the new Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Leon Bignell and other Members of Parliament.

- 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

Pastoral drought support

An immediate priority has been the drought in the SA pastoral region and ensuring that funding from the Federal drought package is available in South Australia, as well as provision of State Government support. This includes funding for wild dog control. Livestock SA was influential in getting both governments to recognise that the South Australian pastoral region is in drought and needs assistance. The State Government has re-established the South Australian Drought Reform Task Group, with Livestock SA representing PPSA.

On 24 June, Minister Bignell announced that the State Government would commit \$275,000 for a drought assistance package for pastoralists in the State's Far North. This has been provided as a grant to Livestock SA, to deliver the package to pastoral businesses in the Far North who have experienced hardship as a result of poor seasonal conditions including low rainfall. The package includes up to \$150,000 for the installation of new water infrastructure, \$100,000 for wild dog control, and \$25,000 to support Livestock SA's costs associated with delivering the package. Details of the Far North Water Infrastructure Grant Scheme have now been finalised, and the first applications received. Livestock SA would like to thank Minister Bignell and Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) for providing this much needed support.

Fire recovery assistance

Livestock SA was involved in fire recovery assistance following several bushfires during summer. With PPSA, Livestock SA provided a register to match donations of fodder, agistment and fencing with those farmers most in need. There were requests for assistance from about 60 properties, with 20,000 sheep and 600 cattle. More than 80 offers of assistance were received, including 30 offers of fodder (sending about 30 loads of hay into the affected areas) plus 16 offers of labour (including offers from groups) and offers of more than 20,000 vineyard posts for fencing through the Wine Grape Council of SA. Nearly all of the fodder offered was allocated and delivered.

Funding

Initial funding for Livestock SA has been obtained from the SA Sheep and Cattle Industry Funds. Livestock SA would like to acknowledge and thank both the SA Sheep and Cattle Advisory Groups for facilitating this.

These Funds have been established by levies paid by producers. Money is collected under the *SA Primary Industries Funding Schemes Act 1998* including 35 cents a head for every sheep transaction and \$1.10 per NLIS identification device for cattle.

All livestock producers who pay these industry levies are eligible to be members of Livestock SA and there is no additional cost. While contributions to the funds are compulsory, they can be refunded if requested by producers but the return rate is low.

The long-term aim is for a set proportion of the sheep and cattle levies to automatically fund Livestock SA, estimated at this stage to be 6 cents a head for every sheep transaction and 34 cents per NLIS tag for cattle. This is still being negotiated with the State Government although in-principle support has been given following widespread support from South Australian livestock producers.

Membership

At the end of June, more than 1,100 producers had signed to be members. This follows a membership campaign that started in December 2013, and compares more than favourably with Grain Producers SA which at the time of its second AGM had 618 members (GPSA is funded by a similar levy process of 20 cents a tonne).

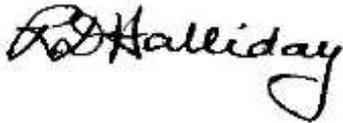
At 27 August 2014, membership had increased to 1,493. Livestock SA thanks Minister Bignell and Biosecurity SA for allowing material on Livestock SA to be mailed out free of charge with the Property Identification Code (PIC) renewal forms.

Producers who are not yet members are encouraged to contact the Livestock SA office for a membership form or to download it from the website.

The year ahead

Livestock SA is the opportunity for all South Australian livestock producers to have their say on the people and policies that best represent them.

Livestock's vision is for a strong, viable, productive and profitable livestock sector in South Australia which is valued by the community and all levels of government. Producers are encouraged to contact Livestock SA with any concerns or issues they would like to raise – either through the head office in Adelaide or via Board members and regional representatives throughout the state.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Halliday". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Richard Halliday
Livestock SA President
29 August 2014

“This is our opportunity to build a strong and independent voice for livestock producers and the group’s success will be built on how well it engages with producers and the input they give in return.”

Richard Halliday,
Livestock SA Chairman