



Livestock SA 2015-16 Annual Report

In June 2016, Livestock SA celebrated three years of providing industry advocacy to sheep, cattle and goat producers in South Australia. Advocacy has been across a range of industry issues and initiatives, as outlined in the following annual report.

Highlights

SA Sheep Industry Blueprint. Development of the blueprint has been headed by board member Allan Piggott and a whole-of-industry working group. Early in 2015-16, the initiative was expanded with University of Adelaide funding extending the project to five years and appointing Blueprint Manager Stephen Lee. The funding will also cover development of a beef cattle blueprint. The Sheep Blueprint was launched at Hahndorf on 15 April and projects to achieve the objectives outlined in the strategy are under way.

Pinery fire. Following the Pinery fire on 25 November, Livestock SA called for donations of fodder and for those who need assistance. Livestock SA established a depot – managed by Livestock SA's John Sharp – at Roseworthy Campus following an offer from Professor Wayne Hein for use of the facilities. Over six months, nearly 60 producers were provided with about 1900 bales of hay (of varying sizes). This included 400 bales transported from the PIRSA Flaxley Research Station and a donation of \$3000 from north-east Victorian growers to buy hay locally for producers in need. The university's assistance in loading and unloading was much appreciated.

WoolTAG tool boxes. With funding support from the SA Sheep Industry Fund and Australian Wool Innovation, the first 'tool boxes' were officially presented to students who had completed their shearing or wool classing courses at an industry day at Gilles Plains TAFE on 11 December.

Yorke Peninsula Field Days. Livestock SA had a display at a field day for the first time, taking up a joint site with Grain Producers SA in the PIRSA tent. Over 50 new members were signed up and producers provided comments on priority issues for Livestock SA's focus.

Administration and governance

Livestock SA is committed to efficient administration and best practice corporate governance. This ensures that Livestock SA is well placed to represent livestock producers and able to take up various issues on their behalf. The key aspects of this included:

Second AGM. Livestock SA's second AGM was held on 28 August. There were nine nominations (two more than the previous year) received for five positions on the Livestock SA Board, with Geoff Power, Jack England, Richard Halliday and Andy Withers re-elected plus Allan Piggott as the only new member. Despite membership doubling since the first AGM, a similar proportion of members voted (26%). The first SA Wool Producer Forum, with support from AWI and WoolProducers Australia, was held in conjunction with the AGM and about 70 people attended.

Membership. At 30 June 2016, Livestock SA's membership was 2,886 (compared with 2,261 at the same time in 2015).

Regional input. Livestock SA has two strong regional groups – Northern (representing the pastoral region) and Southern (representing the South East). Both hold regular meetings as well as attending various functions or asked for input in their own regions. The Southern Region at its functions seek to incorporate an interesting guest speaker, time for policy discussion and an opportunity to socialise. The feedback from members is that these events are striking a good balance, which is reflected in attendance.

Staffing. Andrew Curtis began work on 1 May as the joint CEO of Livestock SA and SA Dairyfarmers' Association. While Deane Crabb stepped down as CEO, he remains with Livestock SA as Policy Officer. John Sharp continues to provide invaluable assistance on an ad hoc basis as staff workloads increase.

Communication. Livestock SA continues a solid communication program, aiming to reach members through a variety of avenues. Highlights have included good media coverage, including a front page of *The Advertiser* on 26 October titled 'Water Fight: Growing landholder outrage over yet another land grab', with a story and photo of Andy Withers and his dog Tess. Ten media releases were issued, a monthly Livestock SA News is distributed to members, and there is a regular monthly column in the Stock Journal plus for the AGM a full page promotion. Livestock SA also operates active Facebook and Twitter accounts with increasing numbers of page likes and followers.

Funding. Livestock SA having reliable access to funds remains an issue. Both the SA Sheep and Cattle Advisory Groups approved Livestock SA funding application for the next three years. While this was initially approved by the Minister, when the agreement was drawn up by PIRSA it was only for 12 months.

Interaction with PPSA. Livestock SA continues to attend various meetings and functions and to have input as a member of Primary Producers SA (PPSA). During 2015-16, this included PPSA's AGM, PPSA Council meetings, PPSA NRM Committee meetings and quarterly meetings between PPSA and PIRSA.

National advocacy. At the national level, Livestock SA continues to work closely with the national peak livestock bodies through the Livestock SA representatives. WoolProducers Australia held its national meeting in August in the Livestock SA offices, the Sheepmeat Council of Australia met at Bordertown in February, while Cattle Council of Australia hosted a Rural Awareness Tour and Forum in the South East in April. There are regular teleconferences to provide updates on issues discussed at national meetings and on specific issues such as RFID.

Livestock Biosecurity Network. Emma Rooke as the Livestock Biosecurity Network (LBN) officer for South Australia became a valued staff member in the office as well as promoting Livestock SA when working on biosecurity issues around the State with various producer groups. Emma resigned and joined Biosecurity SA in December. Disappointingly, while LBN is being revamped with a different structure and different funding, a new LBN officer has yet to be appointed for SA.

Policy and other issues

Livestock SA continues to make submissions and provide feedback on behalf of members on a range of livestock-related issues and other issues of importance to members. In 2015-16, this has included:

Anti-live export advertisements on Adelaide buses. Following a request from a South East member, Livestock SA wrote to the Minister for Transport saying the advertisements were offensive and against the State's interest with the live export trade currently worth over \$70 million per annum to the State. The Minister agreed to remove the advertisements.

Brands Act. After much lobbying by Livestock SA and livestock producers around SA, the government committed to explore whether livestock brands could be attached to PICs. PIRSA is investigating what

technological and financial barriers may exist in attaching brand diagrams to PIC records and is working with Livestock SA on a process for inclusion of brands and earmarks in PIC database.

Drought. Livestock SA continued to push for meaningful drought support in the South East. New drought concessional loans were announced jointly by the Commonwealth and State Governments. Following a drought forum at Naracoorte in November 2015, SA Minister for Agriculture Leon Bignell provided a package of support.

Electoral Boundaries. Livestock SA Northern Region chair Col Greenfield gave a presentation to the Electoral District Boundaries Commission on 27 June at Port Augusta against putting the pastoral region into one electorate with Port Pirie as its base. The Commission's draft order has now been released showing virtually no change to the boundaries in this area.

Farm Management Deposit Reforms. Livestock SA wrote to the Federal Treasury supporting the changes proposed such as doubling the FMD cap to an \$800,000 limit, allowing FMDs to be used as offset against farm debt, and allowing early withdrawal of funds within 12 months of making a deposit due to drought.

Fox control. Livestock SA made a submission to the State Government on its policy review on foxes. A Livestock SA survey of livestock producers showed that while it was felt that fox control should be the responsibility of landowners, very few considered current fox control effective. The survey also showed that managers of public land and some landowners do not see control of foxes as a high priority and, in some areas, many landowners are unaware of their responsibilities. The submission suggested that NRM Boards need to take a greater role in advising and assisting landowners in the control of foxes.

Mount Barker Council. Livestock SA made comments to the District Council of Mount Barker on its proposed *Rural (Primary Production Protection) Development Plan Amendment* expressing support for the proposed inclusion of "the right to farm" as a basic principle of the amendment. Livestock SA also wrote to Minister for Planning John Rau seeking support for the Mount Barker Amendment to be used in other parts of the State for buffer zones and right to farm.

NRM levies. While Livestock SA wrote to all NRM Boards calling for a freeze on NRM levy increases, PPSA lobbied Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Ian Hunter for an independent review of water planning and management costs as required under the National Water Initiative agreement. While the Minister did not agree to a review, he did allow PPSA to examine the department's costings.

Pastoral Board. The Northern Region has established a Pastoral Taskforce to consider changes that are required to make the Pastoral Act more workable.

Q fever. Following pressure from the Southern Region, Livestock SA wrote to the Federal Government asking for a new national Q Fever Management Program that would include subsidisation of Q fever vaccinations. After this was rejected, Livestock SA asked the peak bodies to take up this issue, which came to prominence during the recent Federal Election campaign.

Radioactive waste. With considerable opposition to the two sites proposed near Kimba, Livestock SA wrote to the Commonwealth Government asking for these to be removed from the list.

Red meat issues. Livestock SA made a submission to the Senate Inquiry on the "Effect of market consolidation on the red meat processing sector", highlighting the need for a voluntary prescribed industry code that provides an avenue for producers to seek recourse for instances of uncompetitive or unfair conduct. A submission was also made to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission cattle and beef markets study.

Regional telecommunications review. A submission was made to this review outlining members' increasing concern and frustration that regional telecommunications in SA are steadily worsening, rather than improving.

RFID. Livestock SA joined with peak industry bodies and state farmer organisations to write a joint letter to all Agriculture Ministers and issue a joint media release opposing mandatory RFID for sheep and goats.

Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal. Letters were sent to various SA federal politicians seeking support in either abolishing the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal or, at the very least, to rescind the Contractor Driver Minimum Payments Road Safety Remuneration Order 2016. This Tribunal has since been abolished.

Skin cancer research. Research findings were distributed based on a survey of 501 Livestock SA members – an impressive 30% of members participated.

Stock theft. Given the increase in stock theft, a letter was sent to Minister for Police Peter Malinauskas asking that the government make available additional funds for the creation of a stock squad. Livestock SA awaits a reply.

Support for TAFE. A statement of support was provided to TAFE: “Livestock SA wishes to express its support for TAFE SA and the courses provided for SA livestock producers, in particular the wool harvesting courses. As these are conducted in producers’ shearing sheds around SA, these are practical courses with those being trained learning in a real workplace.”

Surveillance Devices Bill. The State Government’s Bill in 2014 was defeated as the Opposition campaigned against it however the Bill was re-introduced. This time it gave greater powers to the RSPCA and access to properties. The RSPCA was also opposed to its inclusion in this Bill. Together with SA Dairyfarmers’ Association and Pork SA, Livestock SA was successful in getting an amendment in State Parliament deleting any reference to the RSPCA.

Visas for backpackers. Based on comments from the Northern Region, Livestock SA wrote to the Federal Government asking for the rules for working holidays in northern Australia to be extended to the pastoral region of SA. This would allow backpackers to be employed up to 12 months on the one property (currently six months) which would help attract backpackers to work in the region. Two of South Australia’s Federal MPs (Tony Pasin and Rowan Ramsey) have been assisting.

Water levy in the Western Mount Lofty Ranges. Livestock SA members in this region received their water levy bills for the first time and expressed anger at the higher than anticipated amount being charged, that the charge is on allocation, dams are being included, and no mention of any hardship provisions. Livestock SA took up this issue and was involved by commenting to the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board on the lack of hardship provisions, supporting public meetings and writing to the media.

Working dogs. The Dog and Cat Management Board asked Livestock SA for a practical definition for working dogs in relation to allowing exemption from compulsory desexing. Livestock SA suggested the Queensland definition. With the Dog and Cat Management Bill passed, Livestock SA is working to ensure that the regulations will be practical and workable for livestock producers.

Geoff Power
President
Livestock SA

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