



ANNUAL REPORT



Back row: [left to right]: Tony Loffler, Glenn Gale, Richard Konzag, Vic Walter, Peter Rose, Neville Ferme, Shirley Pledge, Mark Dennis, Richard Murdoch, Janette Ridgway, Don Plowman

Front row: [left to right]: Trevor Wilksch, Allen Meissner, Annie Madden, Heather Baldock, Yvonne Correll

Absent: Tim Dendy [DWLBC], Paul Erkelenz [Rural Solutions SA], Geoff Knight [PIRSA], Helen Lamont [PIRSA], Rob Lewis [SARDI], Tony Rathjen [University of Adelaide], Samantha Johnson [PIRSA]

2008 / 2009

ADVISORY BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**2008 - 2009**

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Appointed to ABA</i>
Chairman	Mark Dennis	Lower Eyre Peninsula	2003
Deputy Chairman	Neville Ferme	Upper North	2004
Treasurer	Heather Baldock	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	2006
Executive	Richard Murdoch	Yorke Peninsula	2006
Executive	Philip Wheaton	Far West Coast / Central Eyre Peninsula	2003
Treasurer Elect / Executive	Yvonne Correll	Mid and Lower South East	2006
	Helen Colliver	Women in Agriculture & Business	2008
	Richard Konzag	Lower North / Hummocks- Adelaide Plains	2005
	Tony Loffler	Riverland	2005
	Allen Meissner	Adelaide Hills	2005
	Shirley Pledge	Kangaroo Island	2005
	Janette Ridgway	Upper South East	2006
	Peter Rose	Murraylands	2007
	Vic Walter	Fleurieu / Murray Plains	2005
	Trevor Wilksch	Barossa Valley	1999
<i>Agency staff</i>	Glenn Gale	DWLBC	2008
	Geoff Knight	PIRSA	2006
	Simon Maddocks	SARDI	2008
	Rob Lewis	SARDI	1993 – 08 2008 -
	Don Plowman	PIRSA	2005
<i>University of Adelaide</i>	Tony Rathjen		2003
<i>Support Team</i>	Annie Madden	PIRSA	1991
	Paul Erkelenz	Rural Solutions SA	2008
	Samantha Johnson	PIRSA	2008

2008/2009 Advisory Board of Agriculture Chair's report

Farming has been evolving in South Australia for the last 170 years and it will continue to do so well in to the future. The seasonal conditions and commodity prices of the last four years have hastened the need for change. We are starting to see structural changes taking place, and this will be a process that will take some time to happen, as the answer to what and how the farm of 10 years time operates and looks like has not been written in stone to guide us. Families will leave the land through their own choice and others will have no other choice, because of financial pressure. The landscape will look different and we will farm differently to how we are today. We are starting to see changes already with food trees and vines removed, all owners of the farm working off-farm and operating the farm after hours and on weekends. The idea of the broad acre cropper getting bigger may not work as there are only so many hectares you can sow at the optimum time regardless of the size of your machine.

This is the real strength of the members of the Advisory Board of Agriculture. We are 15 farmers from all areas of the State living and working in our local farming communities. Many of us operate business with a mix of enterprises and we are not a single commodity group. Board members have skills and knowledge in many different primary production systems and can see how all the things fit together to make a viable farm business and rural community. Over the last three years it has been proven that farm business with a mix of income sources have been more resilient, and now other farm business are trying to move their business in this direction.

We are nominated by our local regions and that process ensures that there is a wide range of skills, ideas and views as to what is best for the farming future of all of South Australia: from all this information good advice can be forwarded to the decision-makers. Diversity of ideas will achieve the best results over the longer term as we go through this period of change.

The Advisory Board of Agriculture itself is always seeking ways to operate better and more efficiently, and to achieve more or maintain the same level on less dollars. But I know there comes a point where outputs start to drop away and the dollars saved today cost far more in the future to right the things you should have done better the first time. I believe the Government of the day gets very good value for money from the Advisory Board of Agriculture and that if they were to employ consultants to obtain the information we provide, it would cost many thousands of dollars more: our views are straight from the farm gate with no spin on it.

It has been a great privilege to have been Chair of the Advisory Board of Agriculture for the last three years. This period of time has presented many challenges to all farming business across the State. Water has been by far the biggest, whether for irrigation or falling from the sky directly onto the farm. We have seen commodity prices go from high's to very low in one or two seasons, input costs have continued to rise. The very high fertilizer peak two years ago even had producers in the better, more reliable areas of the State wondering whether money could be made out of cropping at average or below yields. The ability of primary producers to take these things in their stride and look forward to the next harvest being profitable says a lot for the strength and willpower of our rural communities in such adverse times.

Our annual awards night was held in October with several Members of Parliament attending, including Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Rory McEwen, and Shadow Minister for Agriculture Adrian Pederick, helping celebrate 120 years of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia. Rory and Adrian presented the Agricultural Bureau Services to Primary Production Award 2008 to Lindsay Dowley from Loxton.

We thank Lindsay and the other nominees for their many hours of work over many years in helping to improve agriculture in this State.

The Peter Olsen Fellowship 2008 winner was Brook Seal from Kimba. The Board is most appreciative of PIRSA's continued support and contribution to the Fellowship. A grant from PIRSA and an increase from Bureau funds has enabled the bursary to be lifted to \$8 000 from 2009. We believe this award gives young farmers a chance to push the boundaries in their own production systems and then pass on their learning to other people, which is what the Bureau movement is all about.

The Lois Harris Agricultural Bureau Scholarship 2008 was won by Jessica Crettenden of Lock. The winner in 2009 is Jared Schmaal from Saddleworth. Congratulations to these two outstanding young people and we wish them well in their tertiary studies. The Board lifted the bursary in 2008 to \$2 000 and is pleased to be able to support young people entering tertiary studies for our industry.

At this year's award night, there will be a new award given: the Rural Youth Bursary. This award has been made possible by the allocation to the Bureau of \$40 000 from the South Australian Rural Youth Movement now that this organisation has been wound up. This award will give the chance for young rural South Australians to undertake further study, a study tour or develop a special project. This Bursary will run for eight years.

Hon. Paul Caica was appointed Minister earlier in the year. We have had several meetings with him, and he has also attended a Board meeting. The ABA looks forward to working closely with him to achieve the best outcomes for agriculture in South Australia. We thank former Minister Rory McEwen for his support and easy access.

Advisory Board of Agriculture is supported by the Sustainable Systems Group of Agriculture and Wine in PIRSA. Helen Lamont was appointed as the Group's Director following Ben Bruce's departure. I thank her for attending Board meetings and providing ongoing support to the Board. Thanks also to Ben who provided guidance, advice and input and we wish him all the best in his new role. Don Plowman, as Executive Director, Agriculture and Wine has continued to attend Board meetings, and provided support and input for which the Board is appreciative and I thank you. The support structure for the Board that commenced in June 2007 has continued to work well. I thank them for their valuable input and commitment. The main support staff to the Board are:

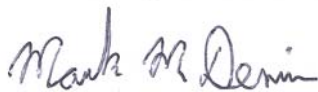
- Paul Erkelenz: who stepped in to take over the Strategic role from Helen Lamont. Paul assists the Board to deliver key messages and comments to the Minister and other relevant groups.
- Samantha Johnson: media and promotions has improve the profile of both the Board and Bureau, through regular media releases and the publication of our news letter "*Primary Interest*"
- Annie Madden: administrative support for the Board and Bureau, who also provides support to both Paul and Sam.

The Board has worked on many issues over the last twelve months with seasonal conditions and drought support being the main ones, attached is a list of some of the other things we have made comment on or had presentations made to us. We were successful in gaining funding for three projects from Caring for our Country and I would like to thank David Davenport and Brian Hughes and the other Rural Solutions SA staff for helping deliver these projects to the farming community.

Four Board members are retiring at this year's AGM: Allen Meissner (Adelaide Hills), Vic Walter (Fleurieu / Murray Plains), Shirley Pledge (Kangaroo Island) and Trevor Wilksch (Barossa Valley). Many thanks to them all for their contribution and commitment. Trevor is retiring after 10 years' on the Board, his dedication to both the Board and the Bureau over this time has been outstanding. We welcome new members: Geoff Page (Adelaide Hills), Roslyn Willson (Kangaroo Island), Amy Williams (Fleurieu / Murray Plains) and at this stage the Barossa Valley position is yet to be filled. May your time on the Board be enjoyable, challenging and rewarding.

Thank you to all Board members for the time and effort you have put in to achieve better outcomes for rural South Australians. At many of the meetings we attend we are the only farmers / rural people there, and it is important that our voice is heard. Shirley and Heather, thank you for your many extra hours of work on the Bureau's finances. Thank you also to Yvonne for your time and skill in taking notes and making the changes to the Constitution. This is the first time for many years that the entire Constitution has been reviewed, and now gives us a document that is current and up to date. Many other Board members have put extra time in on projects or gathering information to try and list them all would take too long, so thank you all once again. It is the Board working as a team that has enabled it to deliver so much. A big thank you also to the Board member's family: they are the ones that keep things going when we are at Board meetings.

In closing I would like to wish the new Chair all the best and I am looking forward to been on the Board for another term as we work towards achieving a more profitable, sustainable rural sector in South Australia.



Mark Dennis

Chair, Advisory Board of Agriculture

President, Agricultural Bureau of South Australia

Agricultural Bureau Service to Primary Production Nominees 2008

Those nominated and the Branches who nominated for the Award in 2008:

Graham Hein	Nominated by the Freeling Branch
Colin Lienert	Nominated by the Freeling Branch
Bill Murdoch	Nominated by the Karoonda and Districts Branch

Board meetings – 2008 / 2009

-	Monday 4 th / Tuesday 5 th Aug 08	
-	AGM in Upper South East	February 3 / 4 2009
-	Sept 9 / 10, 2008	April 7 / 8 2009
-	October 14 / 15, 2008	June 16 / 17 2009

Bureau Project Funds

-	Laura	Taking leading young Ag Bureau members for an update of information at main Hard Field Day	\$250
-	Buckleboo	Liquid Fertilizer / Nutrition Trip	\$250
-	Yeelanna	Centenary Booklet	\$300
-	BOAB	Grow Organic South Australia	\$1 000
-	Kangaroo Island	Micro Climate Mapping: Educating KI Farmers	\$1 000
-	Arno Bay	Bureau bus trip	\$400
-	Mallala	Future Farm Technologies & Barley for Quality Malt	\$500
-	Southern Mallee	Variety Trial regarding Clay Spread Hills	\$1 000
-	Nelshaby	Drought Cash Flow Strategies Night	\$230
-	Weavers	Disk seeders vs Tyne seeders Trial	\$900
		Total	\$5 830

Displays

-	EP Field Days	(12 th to 14 th August 2008)
-	Riverland Field Days	(17 th and 18 th September 2008)
-	Kangaroo Island Field Day	(26 th February 2009)
-	SE Field Days (Lucindale)	(20 th and 21 st March 2009)
-	Karoonda Field Days	(3 rd and 4 th April 2009)

Also attending Riverland and YP Field Days later in 2009.

Board / Bureau Functions

- Waite Open Day, conducted by the University and in liaison with SARDI, held on 14th October 2008. While a slightly disappointing attendance but enjoyable and valuable event to all that did attend. An Open Day is again planned for October 2009
- Dinner, attended by about 80 people, on the evening of 14th October 2008. Enjoyable and informative night. Announcement and presentations of the Peter Olsen Fellowship and the Agricultural Bureau Services to Primary Production were made. Also the second presentation to the winner of the 2008 Lois Harris

Scholarship. The function for this year is on 13th October, again at Hurley's Arkaba and another successful event is anticipated.

- Board linking and meeting with the regional membership: successful visits to the Fleurieu / Murray Plains and other visits are planned.
- Ag Excellence Alliance (an ABA initiative) held successful events again this year with a dinner on 6th April 2009. Eastern Eyre Rep Heather Baldock is the new Project Officer, taking over from former ABA Chair, Michael Richards from Yorke Peninsula

Membership Awards 2008 / 2009

20 years

Barry Goodall	Coomandook
Dudley Dittrich	Koonunga
Stephen Ross Riebke	Koonunga
Ray Wilksch	Lone Pine Tanunda
Chris Fielke	Loxton Dryland
Ken Jachmann	Loxton Irrigation
Tony Loffler	Loxton Irrigation
Robert Marchant	Loxton Irrigation
Andrew Daniel	Paskeville
Peter Dayman	Paskeville
Graeme Christian	Rudall Taragoro
Ken Nield	Rudall Taragoro
Ted Beare	Snowtown
Bruce Buckby	Wasleys
Brian Masters	Wasleys
John Simpson	Wasleys

40 years

Leon Pumpa	Angaston
Marcus Kleinig	Coomandook
Robert Smyth	Coomandook
Glen Arthur Becker	Koonunga
Elmore Alfred Braunack	Koonunga
Jeffrey Gordon Hoffman	Koonunga
Malcolm Graue	Lone Pine Tanunda
Michael Zerk	Lone Pine Tanunda
Brian Pfeiffer	Monarto / Mobilong
Edwin Fry	Rudall Taragoro
Ray Fairlie (decs)	Wasleys

50 years

William Oats	Charra
Desmond Richard Nietschke	Koonunga
William Stuart Plush	Light Pass
George Lucas	Wasleys
Allan Tucker (decs)	Wasleys

60 years

Hurtle Wegener	Angaston
Esmond Hoepner	Halbury-Whitwarta
Trevor Ratsch	Lone Pine Tanunda

Reviews - submissions / comments made / other involvement

- Board has made responses to the Draft Productivity Commission Inquiry into Government Drought Support, and the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Green Paper.
- ABA invited to make comments to the National Framework for Regulation, Registration and Licensing of Heavy Vehicles Impact Statement, and the Draft SA Biosecurity Strategy 2008 – 13.
- ABA submitted a response to the Fire and Emergency Services Report Plan
- ABA has representation at the Heavy Vehicle Transport Forum, Fire Season PIRSA Briefing, and Executive members attended the Premier's Food Awards function.
- The Board has representation on ChemCert and FarmSafe SA and Bureau of Meteorology Committees. It is involved with GRDC, and provided input and feedback at Drought / Industry / PIRSA Executive forums.
- PIRSA executive met regionally and Board members were able to attend this opportunity to meet and speak with Executive.
- Precision Ag Project, NLP funded, now up and running
- Risk Management project is up and running well
- Three Commonwealth Caring for Our Country Projects funded and now up and running: Responding to Climate Variability at a Local Level Workshops held around the State
- Application submitted for a FarmReady Industry Grant. Farm Ready is the new Federal Government initiative following FarmBis
- Successful application submitted for distribution of surplus Rural Youth monies. A bursary has now been established.
- Former Minister McEwen met with ABA Executive delegation on a couple of occasions throughout the year
- Richard Murdoch and Janette Ridgway have been involved in producing a Cost of Production (CoP) Tool, which was electronically sent to Bureau members. Funds to progress this have been allocated: Janette and Richard are working with a consultant to fine tune the COP tool, with a view to also producing it in a printed format, so available to all Bureau members.

Some activities / other information

Working groups, based upon the Board's strategic plan, generating outputs for the Board along the path of its future directions. The three working groups continue to meet following Board meetings.

"Achieving an Informed and Supportive Government"

- goal is to provide relevant information and develop and foster relationships with the Minister's office and government agencies

"Foster Innovation and Adoption of Best Practice"

- goal is to foster the innovation and adoption of "best practice" by the rural sector

"Active and Strong Bureau Network / Promotions and Partnerships"

- goal is the promotion of the Bureau's aims across all sectors
- goal to promote an active and informed rural sector

Projects:

Dave Davenport / Brian Hughes	Caring for Our Country
David Creeper / Richard Saunders	Risk Management / Precision Technologies
David Woodard	Barossa Sodicity

Those who've attended ABA meetings and address Board members:

September 2008	Andrew Curtis, Program Manager, PIRSA Agri Food Industry Workforce Development Plan
September 2008	Regional Drought Coordinators - Barb Cowey (Riverland), Liz Connell (Northern) and Brenton Parsons (Eyre Peninsula)
October 2008	Belinda Barr, Program Leader Skills & Education: Ignite Program (also provided written reports April 2009)
October 2008	Dean Brown, Premier's Special Adviser on Drought
October 2008	Leighton Pearce, SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Board
October 2008	Glenn Gale, Dept of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation SA Strategic Plan Target for Soil Protection and Results of the Land Condition Monitoring Program
February 2009	Richard Saunders / David Creeper, Rural Solutions SA Project Updates: Precision Ag Project
April 2009	John Badgery, Emergency Management and Biosecurity, PIRSA
June 2009	Hon. Paul Caica, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
June 2009	Kris Roberts, Executive Director, Industry Development and Renewal, PIRSA

Also on a regular basis:

Don Plowman, Deputy Chief Executive, PIRSA	PIRSA / represented the Minister (Feb 09) and other matters
Helen Lamont, Director, Sustainable Systems	PIRSA / Drought and other matters
Dave Davenport, Program Manager Rural Solutions SA	Project Updates Caring for our Country
Brian Hughes, Rural Solutions SA	Project Updates