



BOARD BIS – August 2007

NEWS FROM THE BOARD:

Advisory Board of Agriculture AGM and associated activities: 12th to 14th August. A very interesting and diverse district tour was held during the day of the 13th and a successful dinner (with over 80 attending) the annual dinner that night. The AGM, followed by a brief business meeting and strategic planning session were held on 14th August.

Next ABA meeting: 11th and 12th September: To coincide with the Waite Open Day (10th September). The agenda includes a discussion on GM's (a letter supporting EEP Board member Heather Baldock's GM Roadshow last year was submitted to the GM Crop Management Review), Mark Diamond from Country Health SA will make a presentation, and new State FarmBis Coordinator, Belinda Barr will briefly address the Board.

ABA membership 2007 / 2008: Finalising paperwork for Board member nominations for forwarding to the Minister for appointment before the AGM.

Awards now Open: Applications for the *Peter Olsen Fellowship for Young Farmers* and *Agricultural Bureau Services to Primary Production* are now open. Please note the closing date for both is *Friday 14th September*.

"A Guide to Succession: Sustaining families and farms": GRDC publication 326. Compiled and written by Judy Wilkinson, Rural Solutions SA and Lyn Sykes from Dubbo. This is a free publication. For further copies please contact *Ground Cover Direct* on 1800 110 044 or email them at ground-cover-direct@camprint.com.au. Can purchases in boxes of 20 books with a charge of \$10.00 for freight.

Peter Olsen Fellowship winner a finalist: Damien Tscharke who won in 2004 is one of the six SA finalists in the "Young Winemaker of the Year Award".

BUREAU ACTIVITIES:

Butler: Held its Centenary Dinner celebrations on 24th August. Over 80 attended this most successful event, with two membership award presentations and one certificate of recognition for 35 years' service presented. Kym Shepherd (President) and the organising committee are to be congratulated on the great amount of time and effort put into the tour throughout the day and the evening's event. Butler Branch AGM was held on the evening of 27th where the Branch formally motioned to join with Ungarra.

Charra: Recently hosted its 50th annual Hogget Competition. A Certificate of Appreciation from the Agricultural Bureau is to be presented to Charra Branch.

Meadows: Meeting on 6th September deals with Cross Breeding of Beef Cattle.

Millicent: Had Minister McEwen as guest speaker. He covered a variety of topics - Drought- Water- Trees- Barley and Animal Welfare.

Nelshaby: Conducting a bus trip over Eyre Peninsula.

Upper South East: All Branches have had their AGM's and are ready to start a new year of activities.

Wattle Range: AGM Dinner held jointly with the Wattle Range Community Centre AGM as many of the same people are involved in both. Guest Speakers, Gayle and Henry



ABA funded by the

Bosman shared their life and farming experiences in Zimbabwe, their escape from Zimbabwe and their challenges settling into Australian way of things.

SEASONAL CONDITIONS:

Drought: Guidelines are available from:

- PIRSA Prudential and Rural Financial Management, toll free on 1800 182235
- Service SA Drought Link website www.service.sa.gov.au/drought

Further information is available from:

- PIRSA website drought page www.pir.sa.gov.au/drought
- Drought Hotline: 180 2020 (freecall)
- *Drought Response Team Dinner*
Held on 14th August. Certificates to DRT members presented by Minister McEwen (coming up pretty well if I say so myself!!). One signed by the entire team was in turn presented to the Minister!
- *Exceptional Circumstances (EC) declaration for North West Rangelands*
Announced that pastoralists in the NW Rangelands now eligible to access full EC assistance for up to two years. Agriculture-dependent small businesses that derive 70 per cent of their income from EC declared areas are also eligible to apply for assistance. Most regions within South Australia are now EC declared.
- *EC announcements for Kangaroo Island and Mount Lofty*
For the first time ever full EC drought assistance has been extended to Kangaroo Island primary producers. Drought-affected farmers in the region can now apply for income support as well as interest rate subsidies of up to \$100,000 a year until 31 March 2009.
Most regions within South Australia are EC declared, however, the Federal Government has decided not to provide EC assistance to producers in the Central and Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges region following advice from the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC), which visited the region July.
PIRSA staff will meet with community representatives in the region to ensure producers experiencing hardship are aware of other State and Federal Government assistance programmes available to them.
- *New counsellors for drought affected regions*
People experiencing hardship because of the drought will now have better access to personal and family support with the recruitment of six new rural community counsellors.
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Minister, Gail Gago, announced a recruitment program for six new positions around the State, including the Flinders and Far North, Lower North and Yorke Peninsula, as well as three positions for the Riverland and Lower Lakes districts.
These new counsellors will join two previously appointed in February who are now based in Booleroo Centre and Bordertown - bringing the total new positions announced this year to eight. The counsellors will offer a mobile service and their work will be all about getting out and meeting the people in the district to ensure that services are available to those that need them.
- *Confinement feeding throughout the Drought*
Farmers in the SE and on KI who confined their sheep for the first time because of drought say their paddocks have been saved from erosion. That's one of the key findings from a survey Rural Solutions SA (RSSA) is currently undertaking to see how farmers' fared in confining their sheep as a recommended drought management strategy. While the survey is still continuing, results look promising with farmers recording only 1.2 percent of deaths.

- *Succession Planning*
GRDC has created a free handbook to help farming businesses work through succession planning. *A Guide to Succession: Sustaining families and farms* includes a set of guiding principles and a range of case studies. More information: GroundCover ph: 1800 110 044.
- *Planning Ahead for Recovery*
Farmers who are in receipt of EC Interest Rate Subsidies are being encouraged to look ahead and start making plans for recovery through the drought. Attendance at a half-day Planning for Recovery session is an essential first step in this process and can assist with business planning and support. These sessions are an integral part of the Planning for Recovery Program, designed to provide extra support to the recovery phase for those affected by drought and in receipt of the Interest Rate Subsidy component of Exceptional Circumstances support. To date, more than 230 businesses have attended a session. Sessions recently held: Waikerie on 28th August; Jamestown and Quorn on 29th August.
- *Community Support through Drought*
The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal is inviting communities from drought-affected areas to apply for grants of up to \$5000 to run small local projects. Priority will be given to communities with fewer than 10,000 people that wish to run projects in areas such as community support, community infrastructure, resettlement of immigrants in rural areas or retaining young people in rural and regional areas. Applications close on 30th September.
- *EC declared:* Reported that it seems many farmers still do not know about EC and the benefits of the area being declared as such.

Upper North: Very dry in the northern agricultural. Thousands of hectares in the below 15" rainfall areas are burning up. Some are cutting hay.

Barossa Valley: Next to no rain this past month. With the prospect of only 13% water allocation from the BIL scheme, no water to be used by drip from the domestic SA Water supply. Pruning with the expectation of a good winter, many will now have too many buds on each vine for the coming drought conditions for the vine to cope. Most cereal crops are still hanging on quite well but will need rain very soon.

Adelaide Hills: Need more rain in September.

Upper South East: Travelling on an average at the moment. Pasture growth is phenomenal, as it was sown early in May. Crops beginning to respond to the warmer days, soil moisture for their growth stage is good. The outcome from here is very dependant on spring rainfall.

Mid and Lower South East: Total of 175.25 mm for winter. Hope for rain in September, but at this stage there will be no hay to cut and none in storage throughout the whole district. Season is starting to look very similar to last year weather wise, though well in front of last year because of increased soil moisture due to good rains earlier in the season. Crops looking fantastic, with good sub soil moisture a good season could result if rain fall continues: although with no significant rain fronts forecast for the next two weeks this is a concern. Some disease beginning to show up in cereals and beans but nothing that can't be controlled. Pastures are also looking good, recent warm weather has made pastures grow quickly resulting in a bulk of feed in most paddocks. Livestock are looking healthy with new lambs and calves growing fast.

The **next issue** for 2007 will be produced on **Friday 28th September**. Any **comments or questions**, please contact Executive Support team on 1800 652 258 / 8226 0351.