



## BOARD BIS – May 2007

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### NEWS FROM THE BOARD:

*Advisory Board of Agriculture meeting:* Next meeting is set for 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June.

*ABA executive support from PIRSA:* The ABA executive met with the new appointees together with the Director, Sustainable Systems on 25<sup>th</sup> May. Helen Lamont will provide Strategic support one day a week and will work to develop formal ABA policies. Georgia Gowing is already working one day a week in her communications role to raise the profile of both the ABA and Ag Bureau.

*ABA membership 2007 / 2008:* Nomination forms from the regions where Board members are retiring this year have been received. The paperwork is now underway to get the appointment process underway in time for the AGM.

*Ministerial Bushfire Management Review:* The ABA, as a stakeholder in the process, submitted a letter and response document to the Review announced by Minister Zollo. For more information see: [www.bushfirereview.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.bushfirereview.cfs.sa.gov.au)

### BUREAU ACTIVITIES:

*Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group:* Are sowing their annual trial crops over four different sites – for the fourth year. Using the “BFIG” seeder, purchased and built with Bureau Project Funds and a lot of sponsorship. Added some D-Cup diffusers this year with some sponsorship.

*Lochaber:* For April, seven members attended MLA Livestock for Profit Day at Lucindale Field Days site. Over 500 people attended the day providing sessions on 'People'- 'Production' and 'The Future' Topics with three speakers in each session. This highly successful day was organised by a young people's Committee with participants able to attend every session - quite happy to dash through the rain to each venue. May meeting was an informative evening with a Naracoorte accountant speaking on Superannuation and its Tax Benefits creating much discussion and questions and general farm accounting.

*Lower North:* Most Branches in seeding recess during May.

*Millicent:* Andy Fisher from SAFF Farmers Fuel spoke on bio fuels in general.

### .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](http://www.service.sa.gov.au/drought)

*Further information is available from:*

- PIRSA website drought page [www.pir.sa.gov.au/drought](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/drought)
- Drought Hotline: 180 2020 (freecall)
- *New \$7.7m drought package*  
Drought assistance has been boosted by \$7.76m with the latest package to help SA farming communities tackle and recover from the drought. Minister Rory McEwen said the new package, built on the existing drought response, included:

- extra drought relief personnel and family counselling and mental health support for farming communities.
- financial relief for irrigators.
- additional funding to assist families whose income has been significantly affected by the drought to meet educational expenses such as school camps and excursions.
- maintaining existing school bus routes in drought-affected communities through the 2007 school year.
- incentives to businesses in rural communities to keep on apprentices in key skills areas; the focus will be on rural, mechanical and automotive trades that support agricultural production.
- further research into drought-tolerant crops and pastures and the development of strategies that minimise impact of low water use on permanent horticulture.

The latest package brings the State Government's drought response commitment to \$60m since September 2006.

- *Exceptional Circumstances (EC) application centres*  
Free sessions to help producers and small business people complete applications for EC support will be held in the River Murray-Lower Lakes Corridor and Fleurieu Peninsula regions from 5<sup>th</sup> June. Centres will operate at Langhorne Creek, Renmark, Mannum, Berri, Barmera and Waikerie. Appointments are required and can be arranged by calling 1800 836 211. Farmers and small business owners with questions about income support can also call the Drought Assistance Hotline on 13 23 16 or visit their nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre.
- *Wellington weir decision*  
The Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, says a decision on whether to build a temporary weir near Wellington will not be made until September at the earliest, rather than in June as had been planned.  
Improved storage levels in reservoirs because of pumping from the Murray and recent local rainfall across the Adelaide Hills have contributed to the date being extended. The change will leave more time for inflows to improve and for storage to be replenished before a decision is made.
- *Kangaroo Island Exceptional Circumstances (EC) application backed*  
The State Government has given approval for an application for EC drought relief for KI to be forwarded to the Federal Government for consideration. Minister, Rory McEwen, said about 150 farms and 15 agriculturally-dependent small businesses on KI were likely to be eligible for EC support if the application was successful.
- *Drought E-news*  
Drought E-news is an electronic newsletter sent out every week. To subscribe, visit [www.service.sa.gov.au/drought.asp](http://www.service.sa.gov.au/drought.asp)  
A drought hotline has been set up for access to drought related information including support services, local rural financial counsellors, information on Centrelink payments and services, maintaining land condition and managing stock and crops in dry times. Telephone 180 2020 or log onto <http://www.service.sa.gov.au/drought.asp>

*Eastern Eyre Peninsula:* Most seeding wrapped up, with rain generally adequate, and in some cases possibly excessive. Some farmers – Kimba, Darke Peak and Mangalo areas had severe thunderstorms and wash causing considerable damage.

*Lower Eyre Peninsula:* Good rains over LEP over the last few days, but Tumby Bay area still seems to be missing out. Other areas seeding is in full swing with earlier sown crops emerging well, the lack of fertiliser has held farmers up for several weeks

*Lower North:* After a fantastic opening to the season, over 75mm in some areas around ANZAC day, the weather dried up during May and allowed croppers to get their seed in the ground. Now have a dry top, still wet underneath, so some are looking for further follow up rain. Early sown crops jumped out of the ground in as little as six or seven days

and some early wheat is starting to tiller! Beans and canola have generally emerged well in the region with barley crops now coming up. Quite a few growers have finished seeding in May for the second year running.

*Kangaroo Island:* Significant rainfall throughout the month. Seeding well underway if not finished. Lambing has started in most areas, and ewes are looking in good condition for lambing.

*Upper South East:* To date 108mm of rain since the end of April. A wonderful weed / feed germination and to date no frosts so cropping is well underway. Lucerne flea and red mite are only hatched in small numbers. There is an air of optimism but it is how the season finishes that counts.

*Mid and Lower South East:* 75 mm at Penola to 25<sup>th</sup> May. Everything is looking nice and green in the Lower SE, although there are a lot of weeds showing up in pastures. Some feeding of hay on alternate days at last.

*Mid SE:* Slow start to the season with 25 mm rain to the end of April, but good follow up with 85 mm during May. Grasses and clovers have germinated extremely well with the warmer conditions. Lambing progressing well - hand feeding slowly coming to an end. Ideal conditions for Lupins and barley seeding since mid May.

*Lower SE:* After a dry start Millicent has had 150mm rain for May with 75mm in one week. Crops are starting to go in, with wheat and beans. Pastures have been sown but paddock feed is still slow to get away with hungry stock all around but in some soils struggling with bare spots showing. Lambing has started well with scanning results of ewes promising. Most calving has finished.

The **next issue** for 2007 will be produced on **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June**. **Any comments or questions**, please contact Executive Support team on 1800 652 258 / 8226 0351.