



BOARD BIS – April 2007

NEWS FROM THE BOARD:

Advisory Board of Agriculture meeting: Meetings (Executive, business meeting and working group meetings) held Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th April. New Executive support arrangements to the ABA announced and discussed. Other issues covered included a drought update, finances, the AGM and ABA nominations 2007 – 2008. Michael Noble, winner of this year's Lois Harris Scholarship was presented with the first instalment of his bursary. Heather Baldock also made a presentation of her GMO Roadshow Final Report on the six workshops she conducted held late last year. Ian Pickett (former FarmBis State Coordinator) also addressed the Board on workforce development.

ABA executive support from PIRSA: Following a review of support provided by PIRSA to the ABA, and feedback provided through the consultation process, it was determined that a new approach to the provision of PIRSA support was required. This will be in the form of Strategic Level (initially from Rural Solutions SA: one day per week); Communications Support (one day per week provided by Sustainable Systems), with Administrative Support continued to be provided as at present, also providing support to the Strategic Level position.

ABA membership 2007 / 2008: All but one of the nine Board members whose terms expire at the end of August 2007 are re-nominating. Nomination forms from the regions are due in head office by 30th April, to get the appointment process underway, in time for the AGM.

GMO Roadshow: Eastern Eyre representative, Heather Baldock is distributing her GMO Roadshow final report (as RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year 2006) via email and CD, and also at industry functions.

Former ABA Executive Officer: Deane Crabb, Executive Officer for 13 years, has made an excellent recovery after his hospitalization. A farewell function has been rescheduled for 1st May at Winston's in Pirie Street, Adelaide.

BUREAU ACTIVITIES:

Bangham / Western Flat: Visited the local Blue Lake milling plant.

Bounce Back Forum at Jamestown: Many attended this. Full story in *Stock Journal* edition on 26th April.

Butler: Busy organising their 100 year celebrations in August. A framed certificate, signed by Minister McEwen is ready for presentation.

Lochaber: Members attended a "Coping with the Season" Session with Tim Prance (Rural Solutions SA) refreshing their condition scoring skills on Rob Williams' late pregnancy ewes. The group of 25 also included non-Bureau members. A question and discussion session was held with Tim. Ron Ellis from SE Community Health spoke on looking after your health in stressful times

Lower North: Mallala Branch held a meeting on bio fuels with Kevin Williams from SARDI. *Stockport Branch* held a pre-seeding meeting with Chris Butler.

Millicent: Landmark sponsored Golf Day at Hatherleigh for April meeting. Although attendance was light, those attending enjoyed the day.

ABA funded by the



Wattle Range: April meeting took the form of a Coping with the Seasons Workshop Series 2 run by Tim Prance, looking at feeding sheep and cattle as the season tightens further and animals are or are near calving or lambing. Attendance of around 15.

Wolseley: Had a session with Graham Fromm to report on the Weed Seed Bank data and where to from here. It seems there are many strategies to arrest Ryegrass seed set, but if one year is a failure for whatever reason, it's backwards for the next few years.

.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)
- *Full Exceptional Circumstances support declared*
Eligible farmers in the Fleurieu Peninsula and the River Murray and Lower Lakes will now be able to access full Exceptional Circumstances (EC) drought assistance, including income support and interest rate subsidies until 31 March 2009. Small business operators meeting strict criteria within EC-declared areas can also apply for EC assistance. This brings the number of EC declared areas in South Australia to 11.
- *Prima facie for three more areas*
Prima facie cases have been established for three areas: Clare, Light and Barossa; Mid-North; and Yorke Peninsula.
This gives producers in these three areas the ability to apply for income support from Centrelink under EC for up to six months while full assessments are undertaken by the National Rural Advisory Council.
- *Record dry continues to impact*
River Murray Minister, Karlene Maywald has stated that there is unlikely to be any water available for allocation to South Australian irrigators at the start of the 2007-08 water year unless there is significant rainfall over the next six weeks. From June 2006 to the end of March 2007, inflows to the Murray-Darling Basin were only 770 gigalitres - 57% of the previous minimum of 1353 GL in 1983, for the same period.
- *Temporary lagoon disconnections*
River Murray Minister, Karlene Maywald has said that with the potential for allocations to begin 2007-08 on zero, it is likely that work will begin on temporarily disconnecting nine water bodies to make extra water savings.
She said temporarily disconnecting Gurra Gurra Lakes and Yatco Lagoon will occur shortly and funding is being sought from the Murray-Darling Basin Commission to ensure water users can still access water from these sources during the closure. It was becoming more and more likely that Lake Bonney, Nelwood and Nelwart Swamps, Horseshoe, Ross and Jaeschke Lagoons, and Murbko South Wetland will also need to be temporarily disconnected.
- In an e-newsletter from the Drought Response Team, four South East Bureau Branches were mentioned as hosting Drought Workshops. They were:
 - "Coping with the Season Workshops" by Tim Prance (Rural Solutions SA) have been held, focussing on condition scoring, feed budgeting, managing green feed and managing stock. A very successful follow up workshop, organised with Lochaber and Wattle Range Branches, with a member of each yarding their stock for hands on assessing. The opportunity was available for anyone to attend and was followed by BBQ tea, discussion and information from a SE Community Health speaker at each centre.

- *KI EC application*: Application is progressing with several case studies underway. A Rural Liaison Officer has been appointed to assist the community with drought and health issues.

Eastern Eyre Peninsula: General rains across the region on 26th April. Reported falls of between 20 to 40 mm. Some dry sowing had commenced on Upper Eastern Eyre.

Upper North: Most farmers have geared up for the new season with machinery purchases and land sales occurring in the Munderoo area in particular. Values remain stable. Most of the northern agricultural area have done some seeding of stock feed and now with these rains will be able to continue seeding programs. Some have failed to eliminate summer weeds from paddocks, but most are ready for seeding and have green showing from their early sown stock feed.

Lower North: Still dry at writing, but the forecast sounds great. Fingers crossed for good opening rains. Getting ready for seeding and spreading chicken litter.

Kangaroo Island: An editorial in the local KI paper headed "The strain shows everywhere" summed up the feelings of most at the end of last week. But on 26th April, over 35 mm fell with more to come. People still busy with hand feeding, but hopefully carting water will be able to stop.

Fleurieu / Murray Plains: Have had very good soaking rains ranging from 23 to 70 mm across the region. There could be more activity than just feeding stock in the weeks to come.

Upper South East: 20 mm has been most welcome.

Mid and Lower South East: Things have not been this bad before. Paddocks are breaking up badly but some remnants of clover germination remain from January germination looking extremely stressed. There is a little drizzle on evening of 26th April.

The **next issue** for 2007 will be produced on **Thursday 31st May**. **Any comments or questions**, please contact Executive Support team on 1800 652 258 / 8226 0351.