



ANNUAL REPORT

2006 / 2007



Back Row: (left to right): Richard Murdoch, Tony Loffler, Tony Rathjen, Richard Konzag, Andrew Hansen, Janette Ridgway, Trevor Wilksch, Mark Dennis, Lyn Teakle, Vic Walter, Shirley Pledge

Front row: (left to right): Heather Baldock, Allen Meissner, Neville Ferme, Yvonne Correll, Anne Madden

Absent: Bill Davies [DWLBC], Georgia Gowing [PIRSA], Geoff Knight [PIRSA], Helen Lamont [Rural Solutions SA], Rob Lewis [SARDI], Don Plowman [PIRSA],

ADVISORY BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

2006 - 2007

	<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	Shirley Pledge	Kangaroo Island	2005
Executive	Richard Konzag	Lower North	2005
Executive	Philip Wheaton	Far West Coast / Central Eyre Peninsula	2003
Treasurer Elect	Heather Baldock	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	2006
	Yvonne Correll	Mid and Lower South East	2006
	Andrew Hansen	Murraylands	2005
	Allen Meissner	Adelaide Hills	2005
	Richard Murdoch	Yorke Peninsula	2006
	Janette Ridgway	Upper South East	2006
	Lyn Teakle	Women in Agriculture & Business	2005
	Vic Walter	Fleurieu / Murray Plains	2005
	Trevor Wilksch	Barossa Valley	1999
<i>Agency staff</i>	Bill Davies	DWLBC	2006
	Geoff Knight	PIRSA	2006
	Rob Lewis	SARDI	1993
	Don Plowman	PIRSA	2005
<i>University of Adelaide</i>	Tony Rathjen		2003
<i>Support Team</i>	Anne Madden	PIRSA	1991
	Georgia Gowing	PIRSA	2007
	Helen Lamont	Rural Solutions SA	2007

2006 / 2007 Advisory Board of Agriculture Chairman's Report

As the Agricultural Bureau celebrates its 120th anniversary in 2008 this organisation is as important as ever, helping farmers and the community through hard times. One thing that hasn't changed in the last 120 years is that nature always has something left to pull out and hit us with.

The drought of 2006 was one of the worst in history with all areas of the State well down on winter and spring rainfall. The season started off with so much hope after good autumn rains, which enabled the broad acre farmers to sow their normal areas to crop and the inputs kept being applied until the end of August when that good inch of rain we needed so badly never came. As a result, farmers around the State had spent the same amount on fertilizer and chemicals as they would have in a normal year. With bank reserves run down, overdraft limits had to be lifted by many farmers to sow the 2007 crop. Livestock producers were hit just as hard with the drought having to sell stock in poorer condition than normal and buying in extra feed to keep breeding stock.

Depending on seasons, many farmers are saying it will take them up to five years to recover from the 2006 drought. Weather predicting / forecasting is probably the greatest challenge to be solved and the Ag Bureau will be there to help educate our members and rural communities about the latest ideas and methods, just as we have for the last 120 years.

For most broad acre farmers, 2007 started with good rains in April, allowing crops to be sown in May and early June. As we head into August there are some areas of the State where the last couple months have been very dry and the chances of getting an average season are starting to diminish very quickly. For producers and communities who rely on the River Murray for water, they look like having some tough years ahead of them while water allocations are down. Let's hope they have enough water to keep the trees / vines alive as the consequences of losing to many will be disastrous for those producers, and the affects will be felt for many years by the rest of the State.

Board members travelled to Ceduna in August 2006 for the AGM and district tour and we farewelled Paul Turner, Lawrie Merrett, Peter Rayner and Michael Richards. I would like to thank these now past-Board members for their time and involvement with the Board over many years. We welcomed Heather Baldock, Yvonne Correll, Tony Loffler, Richard Murdoch and Janette Ridgeway to the Board. Together with the ongoing Board members, this is a very dynamic group from all areas of the State and covering many different fields of agriculture. I believe that as Board members are nominated and elected by their region, a mix of people with a wide range of skills and backgrounds are brought together. It was a great honour to be elected as Chairman of a group of people so passionate and positive about agriculture.

It had been several years since our strategic plan had been reviewed, and 10 new Board members have come on to the Board in that time, so our first two meetings for the year devoted a significant amount of time to reviewing and rewriting the Board's strategic plan. The key goals to come out of this process are:

- Be pro-active in communicating rural issues to Government and agencies
- Become a recognised point of reference to media and Government agencies on rural matters

- Develop media strategy (communication) to raise the profile of and to promote the Advisory Board and Ag Bureau
- Develop strategy for Board and Ag Bureau to remain relevant and grow
- Provide encouragement and support to Ag Bureau Branches and projects

Following this process, a review of PIRSA's support to the Board was conducted by a working group of Board members and Ben Bruce, Director of the Sustainable Systems Group within (now) Agriculture, Food and Wine. The aim was to identify the key areas where support was needed to meet our strategic plan and to provide meaningful advice to PIRSA and the Minister of Agriculture. A new support structure was developed which commenced on 1st June 2007.

The support team is now:

- Helen Lamont: will work at the strategic level to develop key priorities and issues the Board wishes to address.
- Georgia Gowing: will work to lift the profile of the Board, to improve our media profile and promote the Ag Bureau
- Anne Madden: will continue in her administrative support role for the Board and Ag Bureau and provide support to both Helen and Georgia.

The Executive Officer position has therefore been disbanded. James McDonald had been in that role for two years and he is thanked for his commitment to and efforts for the Board and the Bureau.

Our meeting format has changed to a day and half Board meeting, with the executive meeting on the first morning. This has worked extremely well, with more time for the three working groups to plan and achieve outcomes. The working groups are having phone hook ups on an as-needs basis between Board meetings.

Presentation of the Agricultural Bureau Services to Primary Production Award 2006 was made to Rob Smyth at the Awards Dinner on 31st October 2006. For the first time, all seven nominees were invited and presented with a nomination certificate. A commemorative plaque and a basket of items from around the State were presented to the winner. A perpetual trophy has also been established listing all previous winners. We owe these people a great deal for the many hours they have put in to rural industries.

The Peter Olsen Fellowship for Young Farmers winner for 2006 was Brendon Johns of Port Pirie. We appreciate PIRSA's continued support and contribution to the Fellowship. The Fellowship has been boosted by the donation of \$5 000 from the Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Recovery and Response Team. This has been split over three years with the Fellowship increased from \$5 000 to \$7 000 in 2006, \$7 000 again in 2007 and the remaining \$1000 to be used in 2009. Also in 2006 the age was increased to 35 years (from 30 years) and as usual we received very high quality applications.

The Lois Harris Scholarship, for the first year student with the highest TER entering the University of Adelaide's Bachelor of Agriculture course was won by Michael Noble from Cleve in 2007: Frances Bowley winning last year. These exceptionally bright young people are the future of our industry. All the best for their tertiary studies and future careers in agriculture.

Congratulations to these outstanding people and I wish them well in their future endeavours. With people like these involved in rural industries the boundaries will continue to be pushed.

With the drought having such a devastating affect on our rural communities, the Board decided to fund each Bureau Branch that wanted to run low key community gatherings. Up to \$100 was offered and in a meeting with Minister McEwen, the offer to match the Bureau's funding, 10 or so Branches took up this offer.

Working with Rural Solutions SA and with sponsorship from ABB, "P Week" was held in March to allow farmers to test soils for phosphorous at a cheaper cost then normal. Many farmers took advantage of this offer to make more informed decisions as to fertilizer rates for 2007.

Only one Board member is not continuing for another term. I wish Andrew Hansen all the best and thank him for his contribution to Board over the last two years. Welcome to Peter Rose and I trust you have and enjoyable and satisfying time as a Board member.

A big THANK YOU to Board members for their time and enthusiastic commitment to the Board, Ag Bureau, and ultimately the rural communities of this State in what has been a very trying and difficult year.

THANK YOU to PIRSA, SARDI, DWLBC, Rural Solutions and any other government agency that has supported or been involved with the Board. To try and name all the people from these agencies would be impossible and would lead to some missing out. It seems you only need to mention that you are on the Advisory Board of Agriculture and people are more then willing to help. Agriculture is facing some challenging issues with climate change/variability, costs of production increasing at a greater rate than sale price in many areas, a work force shortage as people look for a more constant and reliable income and all those other problems associated with growing things that need soil and water. If we continue to work together, we can solve some of these, and lessen the impact of others.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Dennis".

Mark Dennis
President, Agriculture Bureau of South Australia
Chairman, Advisory Board of Agriculture

Board meetings – 2006 – 2007

- Monday 31st July / Tuesday 1st Aug 06 AGM in Ceduna
- September 5 / 6, 2006
- October 31 and November 1, 2006
- February 6 / 7, 2007
- April 10 / 11, 2007
- June 26 / 27, 2007

Bureau Project Funds

-	Loxton Irrigation	Loxton Research Centre Farm Tour Grower Crop Watch & Training Day	\$500
-	Kangaroo Island	Information Gathering: WA Farm Study Tour	\$1 000
-	Owen	Chemical Certification – Membership Drive	\$200
-	Meadows	Lime Trials	\$1 000
-	Bute / Paskeville	Bio-fuel Development and Opportunity Information session	\$960
-	Koppio	Rotation Evaluation for Sustainability and Profitability	\$1 000
-	Nelshaby	Fluid Fertilisers in the Wandearah District	\$1 500
			<i>Total \$6 160</i>

Displays

- EP Field Days, Cleve (8th to 10th August, 2006)
- Riverland Field Days (13th & 14th September, 2006)
- Karoonda Field Days (30th and 31st March 2007)

Projects, Industry and Community Involvement

- Ag Bureau Awards Dinner 31st October
- Chairman's Regional visits to Upper North, Lower North and Barossa Valley
- Ag Excellence Alliance Forum
- Chairman attended the 2 drought forums ran by Minister McEwen
- International Emergency Management Conference & Exhibition
- 2007 South Australian Agribusiness Conference

- Board members attended numerous government briefings etc
- Submission to Ministerial Bushfire Management Review
- Sandy Soils Project, NLP funded
- Precision Ag Project, NLP funded,
- Meetings of Chairman and Executive Officer with Minister McEwen.
- Waite Campus Open Day
- Board Bis
- Heather Baldock's SA RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year GMO Forums
- Board members at regional level involved with local issues
- Support to Women in Agriculture and Business to run first aid courses
- South Australian Rural Leadership Program

Membership Awards 06 / 07

20 years

Don Bottrall	Appila
Richard Koch	Charra
Peter Nielsen	Charra
Reuben Noack	Koonunga
Paul Rudiger	Loxton Dryland
Kevin McGrath	Millicent

40 years

Murray Klemm	Angaston
Ross Borlase	Charra
Rodger Freeman	Charra
William Oats	Charra
Richmond Jones	Loxton Dryland
Garth Huppatz	Millicent

50 years

Cedric Neldner	Lone Pine Tanunda
Geoff Neldner	Lone Pine Tanunda
Kevin Neldner	Lone Pine Tanunda
Don Ross	Lone Pine Tanunda

70 years

Arnold Wurst	Appila
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