

A South Australian State Agriculture Plan

**‘A profitable South Australian industry
founded on excellence in agriculture,
and business management
through sustainable natural resource utilisation
that will deliver the best return to the state’.**

A B A
ADVISORY BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
Governing Body of The Agricultural Bureau
PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT





SA agriculture ripe for the picking

Agriculture is still one of the main economic land uses in South Australia. The industry earned the state \$4.7 billion in 2009-10.

Sustained growth of the agricultural sector in South Australia will see us continually adapt to rapidly changing factors such as national demographics, global and local markets, climate shifts, international affairs and local political contexts.

Overall the South Australian agriculture industry will maximise long term prosperity and sustainability if it can:

- respond rapidly to changing social, political, ecological and economic circumstances
- make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends
- manage on-going water and resource security issues
- ensure that suitable infrastructure is available
- be attentive and responsive to established markets capitalise on new and niche products/markets
- improve production efficiencies
- be flexible in terms of business sizes
- increase industry collaboration and
- attract investment which increases diversity

Each of these is a significant challenge on its own – together they represent an enormous workload for the sector. South Australian producers have coped with accelerating change to the best of their capabilities in past years. But a step-change in level of strategic coordination, support, and the information available will give our farmers a significant advantage in tackling these challenges.



We will maximise our capability to meet these challenges if we bring our collective strengths together into a coordinated approach. The time is ripe to bring all of South Australia’s producers, opportunities, farming spaces, and challenges together into a central South Australian State Agriculture Plan.

economic

A South Australian State Agriculture Plan

maximising economic sustainability, founded in a self reliant industry with competitive advantage

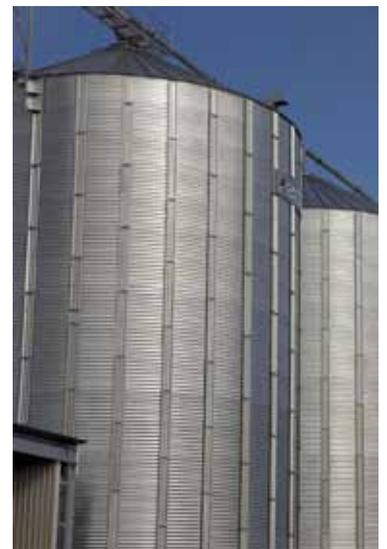
Agriculture in South Australia continues to play a key role in the state economy. Our agricultural exports in 2009-10 totalled \$3.7 billion.

Increasingly rapid developments in the global food and wine market present constant challenges for primary producers, and therefore to the competitiveness of the South Australian agri-food sector as a whole.

The SA agriculture sector must act to 'stay ahead of the game' and maintain its competitive edge. The South Australian State Agriculture Plan will be designed specifically to drive the required innovations which will give SA producers the economic environment they need in which to thrive.

A South Australian State Agriculture Plan will:

- Present strategies for sustaining the industry based upon sound understanding of markets and regional capability
- Assist farmers to target and improve return on investments made in the industry, thereby raising investor confidence
- Ensure that crop selection and production can be based upon customer expectations, incorporate changes in value chains and take into account globalisation trends
- Provide strategies to modernise infrastructure and improve efficiencies
- Allow producers to plan operations around more consistent water supply
- Create more emphasis on research into, access to, and adoption of, new technologies
- Provide a supportive policy framework which will help producers be more productive and competitive
- Improve producer confidence
- Provide a strong vision for the economic future of SA agriculture



A South Australian State Agriculture Plan

enhancing communities for long term social sustainability

The SA agriculture industry continues to experience strong community support, presently supporting over 135,000 jobs in SA. Yet the industry is facing several social challenges, including long term trends such as:

- Workforce issues - attraction and retention of youth particularly, and access to the required business support
- A continued shift to shorter commitments to roles and services in communities
- Retailer and service provider power
- Infrastructure deterioration, both as a result of, and continuing to contribute to, declines in agricultural activity
- Inadequate water allocation and water infrastructure
- Communities' wavering confidence in their economic future

In addition to these longer term trends, farming communities feel the greatest shocks from sudden changes in global and political events such as the recent live trade problems following the Indonesian abattoir concerns. Sustaining a robust SA agriculture sector means nurturing robust rural communities: which in turn support a stronger SA community overall.

The South Australian State Agriculture Plan will:

- Allow communities to plan their futures with a higher degree of certainty, leading to an environment of improved investment and employment opportunity both in the city and in the regions
- Assist producers to diversify into alternative industries which support rural communities and provide greater opportunities for associated service providers and allied industries
- Provide economic incentive for increased investment in infrastructure and technology upkeep and upgrades
- Support communities in confidently meeting the challenges of climate change
- Help both rural and metro communities get the best from their mutually dependant relationships
- Empower communities to take ownership of their future directions, making informed decisions and feeling supported by government



environmental

A South Australian State Agriculture Plan

sowing the seeds for environmental sustainability and ensuring healthy futures

In South Australia, 68% of non-arid land is managed by landholders, predominantly farmers. This presents a significant proportion of the State's natural assets.

Agriculture is, and will continue to be, a strong environmental citizen, protecting and preserving the environment not only for continued business outcomes but for future generations.

Parts of South Australia present significant environmental challenges. Salinity, exotic plants and feral animals and other biosecurity threats, a changing climate, water scarcity and erosion all require active management. A coordinated approach would allow the agriculture industry to make a far greater contribution to mitigating these problems, and provide a firmer basis for partnerships between primary producers and other natural resource managers.

The South Australian State Agriculture Plan will:

- Provide strategies to improve resource use efficiency
- Provide support in adapting to climate change
- Facilitate widespread, and common understanding of the environmental issues present in farming regions and how primary producers can mitigate and improve them
- Foster growth in new, low-impact industries such as eco-tourism, carbon plantings and solar power generation
- Provide clarity on what the SA agriculture sector can achieve in natural resource management, and reveal the best areas of opportunity for collaboration with other natural resource managers
- Provide support mechanisms for the establishment of best practice land management amongst SA primary producers.



SA agriculture: stepping ahead and staying ahead

The opportunity exists for the uptake of a stronger leadership role within the SA agriculture sector. There is an immediate need for the industry to seek and support the required leadership outcomes and for producers to identify their potential to contribute.

The South Australian State Agriculture Plan will include strategies which map the roads to achievement of the goals for agriculture's economic, social and environmental futures.

In addition to the specific benefits outlined in preceding sections, the following strategic benefits make a compelling case for the development of a South Australian State Agriculture Plan:

- The Plan will provide a baseline and starting point to monitor and understand future trends and issues that have implications for agriculture.
- The Plan will improve coordination across related South Australian agricultural planning (eg industry development plans, land use planning/ strategies, food plans etc).
- The Plan will showcase industry success and profitability, serving to increase investment opportunity and guarantee value from these investments for all South Australians.
- The Plan will outline a clear strategic direction for investors to refer to with regard to investment priorities and opportunities.
- The Plan will improve community and industry ownership of sector directions through engagement in the development phase.
- The Plan will help ensure the best return from the states resources.
- The Plan will assist in making progress toward meeting several relevant targets from the State Strategic Plan.
- The Plan will provide a unifying focal point for all stakeholders in South Australian agriculture, encourage debate, inspire confidence, support action and demonstrate strong State commitment to the future of this critical South Australian industry.



The positive legacy resulting from this significant investment in South Australia's agriculture industry will be:

- Self reliant industry
- Competitive advantage
- Stronger communities
- Growing exports
- Healthier environment
- Strength to adapt to whatever the future demands
- Sustainable economic return to the wider SA community

Agriculture is too important an industry to South Australia to risk unpreparedness and fragmentation in the face of shifting climates, markets and political contexts. Its time to unify, focus and support the industry with a shared vision and plan for the future. A South Australian State Agriculture Plan will be the first step into a secure agricultural future for the State.



The Advisory Board of Agriculture (ABA) is the governing body of the Agricultural Bureau of SA with approximately 1500 members. The ABA acts as a conduit between agricultural and rural communities through two way communication of issues to Government and Industry, and manages regional and state wide projects on behalf of ABA members. ABA Board members represent the fourteen agricultural regions of the state as well as PIRSA, DENR, SARDI and the University of Adelaide. The Agricultural Bureau of SA has a proud history, serving South Australian agriculture since 1888.

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