



Agricultural Bureau
of South Australia

PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT 2021-22

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About Us

Helping to bridge the gap between scientists and farmers, the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia (Ag Bureau) encourages excellence in agriculture, business management and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Representing the interests of South Australian farmers, the Ag Bureau communicates regularly with the government and other agencies on issues that affect the farming community, including research and development, farming practices and education.

This includes the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), the Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), Rural Business Support (RBS), South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and the University of Adelaide (UoA).

A not-for-profit organisation with more than 1000 members and 50 branches across the state, the Ag Bureau was established in 1888 and is the only farmer network group of its kind remaining in Australia. Membership is open to primary-producers and those with an interest in South Australia's agricultural industries.

Members are provided opportunities for professional development, collaboration on common challenges, project funding, application support, knowledge exchange and crucial local community support.

Young farmers are mentored by experienced Ag Bureau members, and the annual Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards recognises, encourages and supports young farmers and rural youth who are pursuing careers that will sustain rural communities, with prestigious and generous scholarships.

Ag Bureau branches foster the development of vibrant communities and industry networks and provide resources to branch members, including relevant Codes of Practice, local, state and federal grants and project funding opportunities, agricultural-related articles by farmers and industry advocates.

For more information or to locate your nearest branch visit agbureau.com.au

Governing Body

Comprising representatives from each of the Ag Bureau's regions, the Ag Bureau Board is strengthened by members from government, research bodies and agriculture education.

Representing the interests of South Australia's farmers to the government, the Board contributes to the extension of emerging agricultural research and development by managing innovative projects.

The Board also manages the annual Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards which recognises and celebrates the achievements of young people. It provides winners with financial support to pursue a career of excellence in agriculture and helps promote Ag Bureau membership to a young and vibrant audience.

As a governing body, the Board is responsible for:

- Managing/administering finances, insurance, awards and projects
- Preparation/distribution of submissions on industry-relevant issues
- Facilitating the implementation of research, extension and training programs to enhance agriculture, business and management
- Promoting the Ag Bureau's aims, objectives and achievements and the importance of sustainable resource management to the broader community
- Providing a view forward to industry bodies and government departments on behalf of members.

Chair's Report



This is a chance to reflect on what has been, where we are now, and what the future holds.

The Ag Bureau has an enduring history in South Australia, dating back to its beginning in 1888. Here we are in 2022, still proudly associated with a farming organisation that has endured and adapted to the changes associated with primary production, rural communities, and supported those who call it home, the people.

I recently looked back through the historical minutes of my local branch, and while the issues have changed, the task still remains the same. Learn together, share knowledge, support and care for our local community. Now in 2022, the activities of our branches are what the members want and need at a local level and can be as flexible as the group requires.

Our Board, representing six regions across the State, aims to continually 'fly the flag' of the Ag Bureau to the wider community and stakeholders, always seeking to communicate any opportunity to the membership that may be relevant you and to your business.

In this past year, again, we have all been managing the COVID pandemic, supply chain issues, finding staff, increased input costs and the fragile and tenuous



Ag Bureau Board 2021. L-R: Clem Fitzgerald, Darren Kennedy, Richard Williams, Bevan Oster, Janette Ridgway and Corbin Schuster.

nature of the world economy, much of which is completely out of our control.

From an organisational standpoint, there have been a few changes for the Ag Bureau. Board member Clem Fitzgerald resigned as the representative for the Eyre Peninsula. He was a founding member of the Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group (BFIG) and has been farming in the Buckleboo and Kimba areas since 1971. I would like to take this moment to thank Clem, for his contribution and insight in representing the EP branches and members.

We welcome, Jasmin Piggott, a Franklin Harbour branch member and 2021 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner, to the position and we look forward to her enthusiasm and contribution to the Board.

The 2021 Spirit of Excellence Awards had a change of venue and was held in Evanston at the Terrace Function Centre. Nearly 100 guests, sponsors and members celebrated the winners of the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship, the Rural Youth Bursary and the Lois Harris Scholarship.

Innovation and thinking outside the box were common themes in the concepts and ideas presented by the finalists. The continued support from our sponsors – the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), ensures these scholarships are available to our young, rural people to further develop an idea, that may otherwise not happen.

The Ag Bureau appreciates and also acknowledges Australian Grain Technologies (AGT), Rural Business Support (RBS), South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and the University of Adelaide. Their sponsorship and continued support add value to our organisation and our membership.

We celebrated the formation of a new branch, the Aurthurton Women's Ag Bureau. With 18 active members from Minlaton to Warburton Point the new branch was unanimously voted in to join the Yorke Peninsula Field Days committee.

Long Serving Members Awards

November 2021 - August 2022

The Board recognises and congratulates the following long-serving members on reaching their milestones. Thank you for your continuing contribution to the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia.

This past year has seen the SA Drought Hub continue to offer many and varied opportunities for participation, contribution to research and knowledge sharing in the community. I urge you to get involved wherever possible. Climate variability is with us to stay, as it has been always, but learning how to manage the complexities will benefit the outcomes for agriculture.

The outcomes of the 'Discovery Project' survey, clearly indicated to the Board a need for an efficient systems approach to the way the Board communicate and serves the needs of Ag Bureau members and stakeholders, and how the members can better communicate with each other, to share knowledge and ideas. To this end, we are exploring opportunities to utilise technology and look forward to keeping you informed of our progress. In the short term this will be an investment, but in the long term will enable greater benefits to the membership and the organisation in a more efficient manner.

The Board are keen to communicate with all who are involved in the network of the Ag Bureau. Together we share the same vision for our community.

On behalf of the Board of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia, we thank all our members, stakeholders and sponsors, and look forward to the future.



Janette Ridgway
Chair

Agricultural Bureau of South Australia



Leon Pampa
Angaston

Arthur Crompton
Mount Barker



Allan Schulz
Angaston

Elizabeth Hunkin
Mount Barker



Michael Evans
Robert Lowke
Angaston

Regional & Branch Round Up

The late January record rains on the northern Eyre Peninsula caused extensive damage to farms and road infrastructure. There were a wide range of issues, with lots of farmers trying to fix the damage before seeding. The added moisture in the soil profile was a bonus for some, and other parts had a later start to seeding waiting for the opening rains.



Damage caused by record rains in the Northern EP.

Over the last 12 months, the Eyre Peninsula Ag Bureau branches have held several events, with stickybeak days being a highlight for each.

The **Franklin Harbour** branch is looking forward to this year's season, after the last few dismal seasons. This year's Mitchville trial is looking a lot nicer shade of green.

The **Streaky Bay** branch had trials happening with Dave Davenport looking at the integrated ripping and under sowing with vetch with the use of other fertilisers for the added potential within the area.

The **Tuckey** Branch held a delving/spading day at Coongawa with a good turnout for the presentation.

The **Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group (BFIG)** celebrated their 25th year with celebrations out at Buckleboo. The past and current committee members shared stories about how the group has strived to build up the research, development and extension in the area for its farmers.

The **Wangary** branch held its annual wheat crop competition in October which was a well-attended day by local farmers and agribusinesses. The top three crops were presented with a prize at the end of the day.

Jasmin Piggott
Board Member for Eyre Peninsula

September 2021

Yorke Peninsula branches **Authurton, Boors Plains, Bute, Moonta, Paskeville, Petersville, Weavers** welcomed back, albeit COVID restricted, crowds to the 2021 Yorke Peninsula Field Days.

Koonunga received two community grants of \$1000 each from the Barossa Council and the Light Regional Council which they used to co-fund an automated external defibrillator (AED) located at The Ebenezer Community Centre.

Between 48-53 participants attended different sessions at Coomandook and Malinong for the annual **Coomandook Sticky Beak Tour**.

Nelshaby & Upper North Farming Systems (UNFS) held a Sticky Beak & Western Spring Crop Walk.



Laura's pre-harvest safety & compliance truck inspections

Laura hosted a free voluntary pre-harvest NHVR safety and compliance truck inspection. 18 trucks and 22 trailers were inspected in 7 hours.

October 2021

Ag Bureau's Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards Dinner and Presentation was held on Friday 29 October at the Terrace Function Centre, Evanston, with nearly 100 sponsors, guests and members in attendance.

Lowbank bus trip had 20 members and some sponsors head to a Taylorville piggery that had installed their own mill to make their own pellets, as well as a new almond farm and an NVT trail site.



Lowbank bus trip.



Ian & Julie Pfitzner, Woodside overall winners of the Pasture Competition Les Jacobs trophy and best fire recovered pasture.

The **Mt Barker** annual pasture competition was in its 67th year. Up to 20 properties were judged by an agronomist, with feedback provided to entrants.

November 2021

Rowland Flat held a meeting focused on hail damage, looking at various vineyard blocks affected, management strategies and discussing past hailstorms and what was learned from those that could be applied.

Fleurieu Farming Systems worked alongside the Hills & Fleurieu Landscape Board's Sustainable Agriculture team on a multi-species summer fodder cropping demonstration at five sites on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

December 2021

Angaston members participated in 'Pilates for Farmers'. Diane Stewart of E tu Pilates in association with Pilates by Kate held introductory classes on Wednesday evenings.

February 2022

Laura heard from Tim Gurney from T-Ports and Lock farmer Andrew Polkinghorne about the T-Ports operation on the west coast, providing insights to the efficiencies being achieved ahead of the Wallaroo facility opening.

Nelshaby branch held a meeting featuring Andrew Whitelaw and Matt Dalgeish of Thomas Elder Markets (TEM) speaking on world grain market dynamics and global outlooks in partnership with Grain Producers SA (GPSA) under the, Beyond The Silo project.

March 2022

Bute's Wheat Crop Competition winners for 2021 were Max and James Venning. James was presented with the perpetual shield by Elders Agronomist Michael Brougham (**Owen** branch secretary) who judged the competition in October 21.

Parawa's branch meeting featured Jacqui Best, Senior Landscape Officer from Landscape SA, addressing in general terms the future of the Landscape Board on the Fleurieu, focusing on weed and pest control.

Lowbank and District branch members attended a Murrayland & Riverland Landscape Board (MLRB) workshop demonstrating the Aussie Pickle Picker, developed to collect caltrop and three-corner jack seeds from farms and orchards.

April 2022

25 participants attended the **Coomandook** Carbon on your Farm - Soil Health & Salinity Update, including looking at testing of 3 soil pits across different soil types.



Coomandook Carbon on your Farm event.

Nathan Wegener won the **Monarto** branch's Annual Ewe Hogget competition for the combined wether lamb – Wool and Carcass section. Robert Thiele took out best pen of 4 Ewe Hoggets and best single Ewe Hogget.

The **Parawa** branch, **Fleurieu Farming Systems** and Fleurieu Beef Group presented their Fleurieu Farming Field Day on Friday 29 April. Featured were new tillage options to minimise or eliminate the need for herbicides in the preparation of cropping land.

May 2022

The **Laura** and **Nelshaby** branches joined together to hear from Tony Lawry, NeuRizer, David Long from Long Seed & Grain as well as David Evans from Farmers Business Network (FBN). Hot topic of the night was locally produced and cheaper urea.

Parawa held an Innovation Night hearing from local producers on their farm trails, new technology and production methods implemented. Members were encouraged to share their own experiences.

June 2022

The Yorke Peninsula Field Days unanimously invited the new **Arthurton Women's** branch to join its committee.

Tuckey branch and **Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group** partnered with Grain Producers SA and PIRSA to host 2 days of on-farm tours to discuss the learnings following the severe storms and flood damage events at the start of the year.

Kate McCabe spoke to the **Mallala** branch about Carbon Farming, helping them understand the first principles and the opportunities available.

Parawa held their Annual Dinner, featuring guest speaker Wes Hurrell speaking about the use of Ag Technology in the dairy industry, including electronic monitoring and developing a robotic dairy.

July 2022

Owen branch elected a new president at their AGM. Richard Fabry passed the reigns to Cameron Lowe.

The **12th of July, 2022** marked the **100th year anniversary** of the **Nelshaby** branch.



2021 Spirit of Excellence Awards

The future of South Australia's agriculture industry is reliant on the younger generations' passion for diversification and sustainability, and this was highlighted in the innovative applications and the heartfelt speeches at the 2021 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards held at the Terrace Function Centre, Evanston on Friday 29 October.

The annual presentation dinner was moved from the city to the Barossa, in the hope it would be more accessible for Bureau members to attend, meet with key agricultural industry stakeholders and engage with other members from the Mid North and Yorke, Eyre Peninsula, Barossa and Light, South-East and Hills, Fleurieu and KI regions.

This year's project ideas were all exceptional and highlighted young people's innovation, passion and vision for the future of our rural communities.

*Janette Ridgway,
Ag Bureau, Chair*

Continuing with the theme of change, we also saw the Ag Bureau board members play hosts and contribute to the MC duties of the evening, thereby giving members and stakeholders a chance to hear from them directly.

These changes were well received by members and sponsors, who provided positive feedback and would like to see them continued in the future.

The Spirit of Excellence Awards was also a great opportunity to announce and introduce our new sponsor, Australian Grain Technologies (AGT). AGT is Australia's largest plant breeding company, and the market leader in wheat genetics. AGT has had an informal connection with Ag Bureau, providing opportunities for branches to tour their Roseworthy facility and learn about plant breeding.

In her opening speech, Ag Bureau Chair, Janette Ridgway spoke of the calibre of the 2021 entries. "This year's project ideas were all exceptional and highlighted young people's innovation, passion and vision for the future of our rural communities," she said.

"All the finalists' applications were of a very high standard, identifying a diverse range of local and regional issues, while outlining how they would utilise the awards to further progress their careers and contribute regionally."



Ag Bureau Chair, Janette Ridgway



Guests attending the 2021 Spirit of Excellence Awards Dinner at The Terrace Function Center, Evanston.

**2021 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Winner
Jasmin Piggott – Miltalie (Eyre Peninsula)**

Sponsored by The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and presented by Matt Ward, Director of Science and Information.

The \$8000 scholarship is for a farmer (aged 18-40) to pursue further study, take a study tour or run a special project. The scholarship is in memory of the late Peter and Wendy Olsen recognising their contribution to agriculture and landcare in South Australia. The scholarship focuses on the sustainability of the natural resources that underpin primary production.



(L-R) 2021 Sustainable Agricultural Scholarship: Michael Shanahan (finalist), Jasmin Piggott (winner) and Jessica Hardy (finalist).

**2021 Rural Youth Bursary Winner
Emily Buddle – Eudunda (Mid North)**

Sponsored by The Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and presented by the Honourable David Basham, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development (former).

The \$5000 Rural Youth Bursary is open to South Australians (aged 18-30) employed in any rural capacity and not restricted to primary production. It provides the opportunity to pursue further study, undertake a study tour or develop a special project, which will ultimately benefit the rural community.



(L-R) 2021 Rural Youth Bursary: Hamish Verco (finalist) with Emily Buddle (winner).

**2021 Lois Harris Scholarship Winner
Emma Knowles – Angaston (Barossa)**

Sponsored by the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia and presented by Janette Ridgway, Chair

The \$2000 Lois Harris Scholarship is awarded to a first-year student studying the Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide. The scholarship is named in memory of Lois Harris, a member of the Advisory Board of Agriculture from 1995 to 1998.

Big Things Grow for Sustainable Native Flower Farm

Working on her family farming business at Miltalie, northwest of Cowell, Jasmin Piggott together with her husband Wayne and father-in-law, run a mixed enterprise farm of cereal cropping, sheep and cattle.

Having experienced severe drought for a prolonged period and looking out her dining room window at the brown dirt, Jasmin was inspired to create an additional form of income, as well as a sustainable farming practice. This began her research and development on ways to use land less suitable for cropping, and the start of her native flower farm, Poodra Springs Native Flowers.

Jasmin's goal in applying for the 2021 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship was to gain further knowledge about cut flower production, learn about different farming practices and how to build sustainability into on-farm production.

If you have an idea, dream, vision on something you would like to change, implement, improve on farm for yourself or wider community, I encourage you to apply. From little things, big things can grow and what you can achieve by being a recipient is life changing. ”

*Jasmin Piggott,
2021 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Winner*

Nearly 12 months on, Jasmin has used the scholarship to undertake a cut flower production course. The knowledge she has gained has enabled her to implement the new learnings into practice straight away avoiding some of the mistakes and errors new floral businesses can easily make.



2021 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner Jasmin Piggott and Matt Ward, Director of Science and Information from The Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

She also undertook a study trip around South Australia to see a wide variety of farms and businesses thriving in their sectors. She travelled from Cowell to Port Augusta, Jamestown, Barossa, Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula, Clare and the Yorke Peninsula. The business knowledge she gained and the networks she created for further learning and development have been vital to the ongoing growth of her native flower farm.

Jasmin has hosted three farm tours, a ladies' day on her farm for 40 local women, as well as speaking at a Probus luncheon sharing the process of starting the native flower farm and how the business will continue to grow, change and adapt.

An on-farm event is planned for spring this year, to showcase her learnings from the study trip and what has been happening on her own farm. She is hoping to have guest speakers from farms she has visited, so others can learn and implement positive change within their own farming practices.

"I shared my study trip on social media so others could follow along, this created questions and people wanting to know more about the visits or wanting to go and see the places for themselves and learn," Jasmin said.

"I hope more Ag Bureau branches, community groups and schools can visit in the future so I can continue to share the knowledge I have gained from being the recipient of the Sustainable Ag Scholarship."

From Blogging to Business, Support for Rural Women

For Rural Youth Bursary winner Emily Buddle, of Eudunda, her experience of recently coming into a farming business and identifying a gap in consistent support for women entering farming, was the motivation for her winning entry.

Emily married her husband in 2019 and in the same week she entered a trading partnership in his family farm, in what she describes as a 'baptism of fire'. It led to her posting a survey on her Facebook to ask fellow women what knowledge they wish they had when entering into farming.

Overwhelmed with responses from around Australia, it captured a sentiment that Emily herself had been feeling. A need or want for more for themselves, their families or their businesses. Whether it was more financial literacy, basic bookkeeping or business management, others shared a wish for mentoring or coaching. This prompted Emily to start her blog and it was also the catalyst for her application.

Emily's goal was to use the Rural Youth Bursary to improve her skills and understanding of the coaching process and to explore ways in which she could use coaching to support and influence change.

"In the future, I would like to start a facilitation and coaching business to support people, particularly women in agriculture, to be the best they can be and to contribute to the industry," Emily said in her application.

"The Rural Youth Bursary would enable me to take the next step towards establishing my business - a business that is designed to support women in agriculture and, in turn, rural communities."

Emily has completed her Certificate I in organisational coaching with the Institute of Executive Coaching and Leadership (IECL). The course has given her a greater understanding of the coaching process and helped her to identify what type of coach she wants to be.



2021 Rural Youth Bursary winner Emily Buddle and the Honourable David Basham, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development (former)

"It has shown me that providing people advice is not necessarily going to achieve the desired outcome, instead needing to ask them the right questions and let them own the process to achieving their goal," she said.

"It has also put me on a journey to get my coaching certification with the International Coaching Federation."

The Rural Youth Bursary allows individuals to undertake any professional development opportunity that suits them in their current situation – not many bursaries are so flexible! Being able to choose what opportunity I wanted to pursue gave me greater ownership over my career and personal growth.

*Emily Buddle,
2021 Rural Youth Bursary Winner*

Emily has continued with her blog and is now offering one-on-one coaching sessions as part of her business Ellimatta Consulting. She also had the opportunity to share her learnings at the Women Together Learning (WoTL) Thriving Women 2022 Conference where she presented 'Influencing the Elephant. How to influence change when change is hard.'



2021 Lois Harris Scholarship winner Emma Knowles and Janette Ridgway, Chair of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia

Impressive TER and Agriculture is the Winner

With an incredible Tertiary Entrance Score (TER) of 99.7, former Loxton High School student Emma Knowles could have picked any course at University, so why Agricultural Science?

Emma considers herself a logically minded person who really enjoys math and science and wanted to combine those subjects with an industry that she saw as being essential and beneficial to the future.

She explained people need to eat and that food needs to come from somewhere. She believes there are some really exciting things happening in the agricultural industry right now.

Coming from the Riverland, horticulture is where Emma's passion lies. She has had the opportunity to work in the stone fruit and citrus industries, and would look into these as a possible future career.

"I'm really loving the degree," Emma said, "I'm open to all types of opportunities that could be presented from studying Agricultural Science".

The \$2000 Lois Harris Scholarship is awarded to a first-year student studying the Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide. The scholarship is named in memory of Lois Harris, a member of the Advisory Board of Agriculture from 1995 to 1998, and is provided by the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia.

Thank You to our Sponsors

Generous sponsorship and support enabled the Ag Bureau to continue delivering educational activities and events to support our valued branches and members throughout the year.

We take this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to our sponsors and supporters who have helped make these possible.

We would like to thank our major sponsor **Australian Grains Technology (AGT)**. We look forward to strengthening and enhancing our relationship.

We are grateful to the **The Department for Environment and Water (DEW)** who have kindly allocated **\$10,000** funding towards the **Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship**.

The continued support from **The Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)** who have again generously funded the **Rural Youth Bursary** for **\$5000**.

We would also like to acknowledge the dedicated team at **Rural Business Support** for their support during our Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards dinner.



Government of South Australia



RURAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

What is the SA Drought Hub?



The South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SA Drought Hub) is an exciting initiative which brings together a dynamic network of primary producers, industry groups, researchers, government agencies, universities, agribusinesses, traditional owners, and others to work towards a common vision to strengthen the drought resilience and preparedness of our farms and regional communities in South Australia.

The SA Drought Hub is one of eight established across the nation through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

Led by the University of Adelaide in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), the SA Drought Hub comprises the Hub headquarters at Roseworthy and five regional nodes at Minnipa on the Eyre Peninsula, Port Augusta in the Far North, Orroroo in the Upper North, Loxton in the Riverland, and Struan in the South-East.

The location of the Nodes ensures state-wide coverage of all pastoral, low, medium and high rainfall agricultural production zones. The Nodes are a shopfront where farmers and community members can connect with drought resilience expertise through the locally based Node Coordinators.

Node Coordinators live in the communities, enabling them to have a greater understanding of the evolving needs of local partners and primary producers.

The partners are injecting into the hub \$11.47 million in cash and in-kind support – in addition to the \$8 million in funding over four years from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

AGT Celebrates its 20th Birthday

This year we celebrate our 20th birthday at Australian Grain Technologies (AGT).

To celebrate, we have distributed a total of \$200,000 in grants to grain growing communities around Australia, to help with local projects and to say thankyou for supporting us over our first 20 years.

We chose ten regions across Australia based on their level of support of AGT varieties and support of the EPR system that funds breeding. Those communities were offered a \$20,000 grant to spend on a project that would benefit the local community in some way.

As well as our community grants project, we wanted to give back on an individual grower level. With this in mind, and to also celebrate the release of our first Open Pollinated canola varieties, we are giving away free canola seed to all growers who have supported us by growing our wheat, barley, durum and lupin varieties. We will be in touch with growers soon regarding this offer!

2022 will also see the release of two new AGT varieties of particular interest for South Australian growers – Patron, a new durum variety that sets a new yield benchmark for durum growers in the Southern region, and Titan AX, the first ever Aggressor® tolerant barley variety to be used in the CoAXium® Production System.

**For information visit www.agtbreeding.com.au or contact Brad Koster 0400 812 475
Brad.Koster@agtbreeding.com.au**



AGT's Variety Support Manager, Brad Koster presents the \$20,000 cheque to YP Field Days Restoration Project President Greg Stevens, Past President Bruce Philbey, Treasurer Rosalie Pearce & CEO Peter Anderson.

DEW on our Land and Soil

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) values our partnership with the Agricultural Bureau of SA as we share common goals of improving the sustainability of our natural resources and farming systems. These are fundamental to a productive agricultural sector and regional economies and communities. DEW also recognises the crucial role that farmers and land managers play in managing our environment.

DEW helps South Australians to conserve and sustain South Australia's environment and guide the sustainable use of South Australia's natural resources and heritage, to deliver economic prosperity, health and wellbeing. DEW supports South Australian land managers to achieve sustainable and environmentally sound management of the soil and land resource in both the agricultural and broader landscape in South Australia.

DEW's focus is to ensure our soils, vegetation and landscapes are healthy, productive and resilient. This is essential to underpin primary production; support ecosystem function and environmental services; provide for our well-being into the future; and withstand the challenges of seasonal variations and a changing climate.

There are a number of challenges to the sustainable use and management of our soil and land resources, such as wind and water erosion, soil acidification, soil salinisation, soil structure decline, low soil fertility and water repellence. The sustainable use of soil and land in agricultural areas of SA is of increasing significance, particularly in the face of a changing climate.



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water

RBS Provides Additional Relief to Farmers in Distress

On Thursday, July 7 2022, Rural Business Support (RBS) launched their Relief Fund at Inparrilla in Adelaide.

Approximately 50 guests, including the Hon. Clare Scriven MLC, Minister for Primary Industries, Regional Development, Forestry, and shadow minister, the Hon. Nicola Centofanti MLC were in attendance, sharing their commitment to resilient rural communities in SA.

The Relief Fund strengthens RBS's ability to provide practical and immediate relief to farmers, fishers, foresters and small related agricultural enterprises who are in distress and are at risk of poverty and/or suffering financial hardship due to adverse events or natural disasters.

RBS, an independent charity registered with the ACNC, has provided agribusiness support to small businesses, farmers and communities in rural and regional South Australia since 2006. The Relief Fund complements the Rural and Small Business Financial Counselling programs being delivered across the state by enabling even more support to farm families in distress.

As part of the launch, RBS announced their partnership with the Wyatt Trust, enabling them to distribute close to \$100,000 in Capacity Grants aimed at helping



Nicola Centofanti MLC, Dr John Harvey, Chair of Rural Business Support and the Hon. Clare Scriven Minister for Primary Industries, Regional Development and Forestry

local farmers working with their business financial counsellors to meet their everyday needs and to help them to develop greater efficacy in their own financial management skills.

Members of the Ag Bureau who'd like to know more and assist RBS through a tax-deductible donation to the Relief Fund are asked to contact: **Mon Saunders, Manager of Communications and Philanthropy**
Email m.saunders@ruralbusinesssupport.org.au
Freecall: 1800 836 211



RURAL BUSINESS
SUPPORT
Relief Fund

Ag Bureau Drought Project

As part of the Future Drought Fund: Natural Resources Management Drought Resilience Program, the Ag Bureau successfully obtained a grant to work with branches and community groups to examine soil improvement and water supply methods to assist farmers to manage drought.

Ag Bureau branches and groups have been involved in the soil improvement component. They have focussed on initial discussions identifying issues, field investigations and demonstrations. They will attend follow-up meetings over the next few months.

Field activities and demonstrations have included a range of activities from:

- Soil testing, including techniques to identify subsoil constraints and magnesite areas;
- comparisons of Phosphorus soil tests, including the new DGT available P tests after dry years;
- assessment of drought and erosion affected soils, in-comparison with better areas;
- assessment of soils with several years of manuring application;
- deep N and S testing;
- presentations on the latest soil carbon information; and
- identification of acid areas and comparing lime sources.

Branch and community groups involved in this component included **Lowbank, Wunkar, Mallee-Coomandook, Robertstown/Point Pass, Laura and Western Eyre Peninsula.**

A manual, 'Planning Water Supplies for the Farm', has been developed in partnership with the Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG). The manual can assist in determining property water requirements, as well as sources, and how to capture and store for farm use.

Laura Ag Bureau visited an example of a low-cost catchment for the supply of good quality water on their sticky beak day.

**For more information contact
SARDI Project Manager, Brian Hughes
Email: brian.hughes@sa.gov.au**

YP Soil Pit Workshops

Three successful soil pit workshop days were held in April 2022 with the **Petersville, South Kilkerran and Arthurton** Ag Bureau branches on the Yorke Peninsula.

This was part of a project aimed at increasing farmers' knowledge and understanding of soils to adopt best practices and sustainable agriculture. The soil workshops were presented by Andrew Harding and Brian Hughes, Senior Soil Consultants from PIRSA-SARDI.

In total nine soil pits were excavated on key soil groups. There were three soil pits per workshop. The soil pits were fully described and a sample from each layer was sent to the laboratory for full chemical analysis. From the physical description and the analysis, each soil pit had different characteristics and constraints.

The soil pits allowed farmers to look at different soil types, to help them describe their soils and to interpret soil test results.

The physical description of the soil and chemical analysis showed that there were a number of limitations to plant and root growth. Limitations included hard physical and compact layers, water repellent sands, stones, high calcium carbonate, boron, salt, soil acidity, very high soil pH and high exchangeable sodium.

General discussion with the groups was on how to overcome these barriers as well as soil fertility, soil carbon and trace elements.

New soil testing procedures such as DGT available phosphorus and deep soil nitrate were also discussed.

On the day each participant received a resource manual that contained the soil pit profile data and information on the interpretation of the results.

With the rising costs of fertilisers and freight, the soil tests showed where farmers may be able to cut back on their fertiliser applications.

The project through the Agricultural Bureau of SA was funded by the Australian Government National Landcare Program.

Ag Bureau Projects 2021-22

Current Projects

Regenerative Agriculture Program Soil Carbon Demonstration Grants

National Landcare Program – Streaky Bay

Increasing available root depth and overcoming pH constraints on calcareous soil through application of machinery and organic matter

January 2020 to April 2023 – \$10,000

The aim of the demonstration is to trial two different machines (Reefinator and FAE Rock Grinder) to break up profile stones and the rocky subsurface layer to increase usable root depth and increase available nutrients within such stony rises.

Treatments will also subsequently include application of organic matter, such as sowing of medic or applying pelletised lucerne, to treat the currently highly alkaline soil, improve phosphorus availability for crops and enable the stony rises to become productive farming land.

This project will measure the increased production that can be obtained and the financial viability of undertaking this demonstration on a large and small scale.

National Landcare Program – Franklin Harbour

Trail different treatments to improve phosphorus availability and cropping option to increase production and improve soil cover.

January 2020 to April 2023 – \$10,000

Phosphorous availability in highly calcareous soils and production of dry matter is of concern.

The project will evaluate how effective deep ripping and injecting liquid P can improve the availability of Phosphorous to plants and which cereals will utilise the phosphorous to produce better biomass for soil protection.

The demonstration will use ripping with inclusion plates, normal fertiliser applications and liquid P. The site will be crosshatched with a range of cereal that will be assessed for biomass production.

National Landcare Program – Buckleboo

Undertake a cropping trial using biological farming techniques to address key soil constraints across our soil types that have subsoil boron and heavy greyish salt scalded low productive areas known locally as "magnesia" patches.

January 2020 to April 2023 – \$10,000

Due to a combination of heavy textured topsoils and low soil cover, our soils are biologically inactive for long periods of time due to low and variable rainfall and high levels of evaporation.

The trial will evaluate the use of biological fertilisers, high grade worm liquid and compost extract to increase soil health, enhance microbial activity within the soil, and increase root system growth enabling the plant to explore the soil for moisture and nutrition

National Landcare Program – Buckleboo and Kimba

Ameliorating red and white sandy soils with high soil strength

April 2019 to April 2023 – \$11,000

This project will assist Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group (BFIG) to meet grower demands for development of knowledge and capability to implement the most appropriate strategic tillage practices.

The project is designed to improve soil health through improved soil carbon, soil biology, better nutrient use and management of soil structure leading to increased profitability, while reducing negative environmental impacts (soil acidity, nutrient leaching etc).

This project will allow BFIG to investigate effects of nutrition applied in deep ripping through an existing Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) project on Buckleboo's Red Sands, and replicate the trial south of Kimba on a white salacious sand.

Ag Bureau Projects 2021-22

Current Projects

Regenerative Agriculture Program Soil Carbon Demonstration Grants

National Landcare Program – Roberts-Veran

Soil compaction and bleach layer that is preventing roots from accessing deep moisture and nutrients.

April 2020 to April 2023 – \$11,000

Sandy soils are very common in this area and improving crop germination and biomass will improve these soils and reduce erosion risk. The soil organic carbon content of these soils is low and the aim is to increase these levels.

The trial will compare different types of deep rippers that are currently in this area. These range from homemade deep rippers to the latest technology coming from WA. The trial will also compare with and without inclusion plates, spader treatments and a plozza plough treatment.

The farmers in the Roberts Veran district will be able to assess the effectiveness of a range of machinery on sandy soils by measuring plant growth on the different machinery demonstrations.

Yorke Peninsula & Mid North Soil Acidity Project

Increasing farmers' knowledge and skills to manage 'emerging' soil acidity to improve soil health, crop and pasture production.

June 2021 to October 2023 – \$63,175

The Ag Bureau has contracted Rural Solutions to carry out the requirements of this funding agreement.

The growth of high-value crops such as lentils and chickpeas are highly sensitive to low pH (acid) soils. Due to acid soils, these crops are going yellow, not nodulating well and dying in patches.

This project will work with two Ag Bureau groups to demonstrate innovative technologies such as the Veris® soil pH mapping machine to show the spatial variation of soil pH across paddocks.

The soil pH mapping work and decision support tools will be used in workshops to increase farmers' awareness, knowledge, understanding, skills and management to treat acid soils. After the workshop farmers will have the capacity and capability to make informed decisions to improve soil health, crop production and profitability.

Natural Resource Management (NRM) Drought Resilience Program (DEW)

Support organisations, farmer groups and individuals to undertake projects that contribute to improved drought resilience of agricultural landscapes.

July 2021 to March 2023 – \$178,000

The project has two objectives, the first is to increase adoption of innovative practices to improve the productive capacity of underperforming soils by improvements in water use efficiency in low and medium rainfall areas of SA, resulting in reductions in soil erosion, acidity and salinity.

The second is to increase the adoption of innovative farm water collection, storage and reticulation techniques improving water security, and reducing the pressure and reliance of natural systems including watercourses.

Soil Improvement Component

This project will focus on a two-stage approach for the soil component:

- Healthy Soils Check – identification and assessment of limiting soil factors
- Innovative Practices – exposure to opportunities to overcome limitations using new and innovative practices.

Innovative Water Component

Develop and run a series of four workshops in regional areas to discuss and assess future alternative water supply, storage and reticulation options.

Landholders will then go through a water planning process for their property including examining the water requirements, opportunities for less invasive water supply, storage, reticulation and costing options.

Meet Our Board Members



Janette Ridgway
Chair

Board Member
for South East

M: 0427 532 338
E: ejridgway@bigpond.com

Janette works with her family on their farm, east of Bordertown, a mixed enterprise of broad acre crops, sheep, and horticulture. Member of the Wolseley branch, Janette has a passion for agriculture, community and family, she brings these skills and understanding to the Board, along with a desire for learning and sharing of information.



Bevan Oster
Vice Chair

Board Member
for Yorke Peninsula

M: 0408 824 790
E: oster5@bigpond.com

Bevan has been part of the Petersville Ag Bureau since 1980. He spent many of his early years shearing in the area and later farming. In 2012 he returned to farm at Dowlingville. He is passionate about the history of the Ag Bureau in his region and is confident the Petersville branch has a strong future.



Darren Kennedy
Treasurer

Board Member
for Riverland & Murray

M: 0438 339 837
E: djmakennedy@bigpond.com

Darren is a second-generation farmer in the Glossop region, managing wine grape and dried sultana properties. Member of the Baramba branch, Darren believes the Ag Bureau's history and standing make it the ideal vehicle for moving information and ideas from legislation to grassroots farmers and back in an informal setting, that gives voice to the non-activists within the rural community.



Corbin Schuster

Board Member
for Barossa & Light

M: 0429 939 582
E: corbinschuster@msn.com

Growing up on a diverse farm producing hay (domestic and export), grain, straw and pigs, Corbin is passionate about growing high-quality products and value-adding on farm produce. He has attended Freeling Ag Bureau meetings for over 15 years, and sees Ag Bureau as an important social network for SA farmers.

Ex Officios

Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

Tim Herrmann

Conservation and Land Management Sustainable Soils
E: tim.herrmann@sa.gov.au

Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)

Brian Hughes

Senior Soil and Land Management Consultant
E: brian.hughes@sa.gov.au

Rural Business Support (RBS)

Brett Smith

Chief Executive Officer
E: b.smith@ruralbusinesssupport.org.au

South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)

Dr Rhiannon Schilling

Program Leader - Agronom
E: rhiannon.schilling@sa.gov.au



Jasmin Piggott

**Board Member
for Eyre Peninsula**

M: 0427 527 646
E: jgalerana@hotmail.com

Jasmin runs the family farm with her husband, a mixed farm enterprise including cropping, sheep and cattle. A member of the Franklin Harbour branch, Jasmin won the 2021 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship after starting a native flower farm on their property to use land less suited to cropping and provide another form of income during dry times.



Richard Williams

**Board Member
for Hills, Fleurieu & KI**

M: 0418 845 073
E: rmwilliamsagb@gmail.com

Richard and his wife farm a smallholding in the Adelaide Hills near Echunga. He has a very successful business background in marketing, sales and management from his career in real estate and has been actively involved as a member and office bearer of the Mount Barker Branch for 13 years.

University of Adelaide

Dr Ashlea Doolette

School of Agriculture, Food and Wine
Waite Research Institute
E: ashlea.doolette@adelaide.edu.au

University of Adelaide

Dr Jenna Malone

School of Agriculture, Food and Wine
Waite Research Institute
E: jenna.malone@adelaide.edu.au



Agricultural Bureau
of South Australia Inc.
PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT



**Agricultural Bureau of
South Australia Incorporated**

C/- Rural Business Support
555 The Parade Magill
(08) 8249 7581
agbureau@ruralbusinesssupport.org.au
agbureau.com.au

