



AGRICULTURAL BUREAU OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
ANNUAL REPORT
2017-18



ANNUAL
REPORT
2017-2018

CHAIR'S REPORT

Achievements, awards & sponsorships

MEMBER AWARDS

More than 45 members clock up milestones

ROSS REMINISCES

70 years as an Ag Bureau member in our 130th year!



2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

2018 marks the **130th anniversary of the Ag Bureau of South Australia!** It also marks the 70th year of membership for 92 year-old Ross Roberts (pictured on our front cover), of our Nelshaby branch.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held in Adelaide in October, followed by the **Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards** presentation dinner on 12 October 2017.

The **2017 Rural Youth Bursary** helped Mount Pleasant's Kayla Starkey to progress her dreams of becoming a high school Agricultural Science teacher. Read more about how Kayla has utilised her bursary win on page 12.

The Barossa Valley's Tracy Bonython was awarded the **Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers** at last year's awards and says it has been "a huge game changer" for her and her family business, Bon Chevron. Tracy shares how the scholarship has helped her to grow their gourmet goat meat business on page 10.

Greg Cock was recognised for his Services to Primary Production and longstanding contribution to primary production. Greg's contribution to agriculture over more than 30 years includes leadership roles with PIRSA and the Ag Bureau. He has fostered strong relationships with Ag Bureau members through roles such as leading PIRSA's Regional Advisory Group for the 2006 drought response.

The 2018 winner of the **Lois Harris Scholarship** was **Alec McCallum**.

Ag Bureau **continued our contribution to PIRSA's Modern Extension** framework.

The Bureau **managed project funding of \$141,000** to increase the adoption of evidence based sustainable production methods.

Sponsorship of \$23,000 was received towards Bureau member projects.

Our **Regional Support Network** was launched this year, creating the opportunity for six Bureau members to be a voice for their local agricultural communities to the Board, government and other agencies.

"Agriculture is the most
healthful, most useful and
most noble employment
of man."

George Washington



ABOUT US

The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia (the Bureau) is a not-for-profit organisation run by farmers for farmers.

With a proud history in South Australia, the Bureau has assisted primary producers since 1888 and is the only farmer network group of its kind remaining in Australia.

Membership is open to anyone who is associated with, or has an interest in farming, agricultural development and education.

The Bureau supports agricultural development through the provision of information and expertise to producers and the wider community via an extensive network and works in close co-operation with the Government of South Australia and agricultural research institutions. This currently includes Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), the University of Adelaide and the SA Research and Development Institute (SARDI).

There are more than 1500 members of the Bureau across 70 branches throughout South Australia. Membership of an Ag Bureau branch provides opportunities for professional development, growth and a chance to network with local farmers.

In particular the Bureau provides opportunities for young farmers to be mentored and encouraged as they learn from the experience of other members.



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CHAIR'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board I am pleased to present this report of our Bureau's achievements for 2017/18 and in this, our 130th anniversary year!

Since 1888 the Ag Bureau of South Australia has provided farmers and landowners with a meeting place to discuss issues of interest to their local region. Branch activities have evolved to include hosting technical and extension trials, organising grower bus trips and supporting communities affected by natural disasters. Members of our 70 branches attend branch events and activities and contribute to the sustainability of the industry by taking part in the latest projects and trials.

One person who could tell you a thing or two about the Ag Bureau's achievements over the years is Ross Roberts, of Nelshaby branch. Ross has clocked up an extraordinary 70 years of membership! Ross kindly shares a few of his memories with us on page 6.

Historically Ag Bureau shared a strong connection with Government and was supported financially to be a key conduit of information flow from government to farmers. I am pleased to say that this tradition is re-emerging with the Ag Bureau's invitation to contribute to the Modern Extension framework.

This year saw three Modern Extension meetings held with Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), with Brett Smith from Rural Business Support, our Treasurer Janette Ridgway and myself representing the Ag Bureau. Janette Ridgway will represent the Bureau on this project steering committee moving forward.

I also have been involved with Natural Resource Management Reform project headed up by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW).

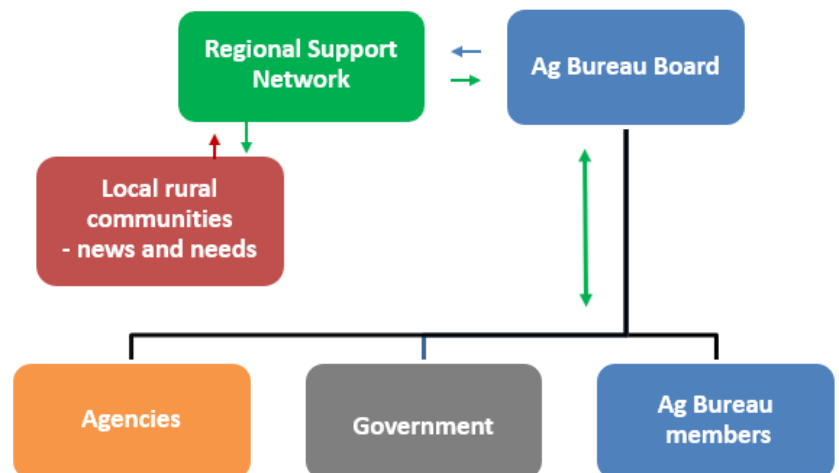
The Royal Adelaide Show acknowledged the longstanding connection with Ag Bureau in our 130th year with a special grain and fodder section. The Show has provided sections for Bureau entries over many years. This year I sponsored the Ag Bureau Chair's trophy for the best exhibit in Bureau classes.

Our newly launched Regional Support Network (RSN) has been another exciting development this year.

Six Bureau members will have the opportunity to contribute to key decision making and ensure that important local issues are communicated to the Board, government and other agencies.



Contribute. Share. Influence.
Ag Bureau of SA Regional Support Network





It has been so rewarding and inspiring to learn how our 2017 winners have progressed their agricultural careers this year - read more on pages 10 and 12. I also had the pleasure of awarding the 2017 Services to Primary Production Award to Mount Barker's Greg Cock (pictured left).

For the 2018 Awards we're pleased to again have the support of both the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and PIRSA, which allows us to provide these prestigious scholarships.

We also thank SA Water for their generous sponsorship of the Bureau's Regional Bus Tours during 2017-2018.

The strength of the Ag Bureau lies in the unique character of our volunteer based organisation. Our members are passionate about agriculture, community and learning together for the best outcomes for their businesses, family and the rural sector.

We look forward to continuing our work in the agricultural industry in 2018-19, representing our members in providing an independent voice to government departments, agencies and partners.

Mark Grossman
Chair - Agricultural Bureau of South Australia

The new board for 2017/18 was announced at our AGM and I am pleased to welcome Allan Zerna, representing the Eyre Peninsula.

Geoff Page continues to represent the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island until his retirement from the Board in October 2018. Janette Ridgway represents the South East, David Edwards the Yorke Peninsula/Mid North and I remain as the Chair and representative for the Barossa/Light region.

The Bureau is committed to encouraging and supporting rural youth who are working not only in primary production but in careers that sustain rural communities, so our annual Spirit of Excellence Awards were offered again in October 2017.



LONGSTANDING MEMBER AWARDS

The Board recognises and congratulates the following longstanding members on reaching their milestones. Thank you for your continuing contributions to our work.

70 years

Nelshaby

Ross Roberts

60 years

Rowlands Flat

**Alan Modistach
Eddie Schild
Kevin Schiller
Reg Robinson**

Moonta

Donald Bagshaw

50 years

Boors Plains

Mervyn Baker

Koonunga

**Charlie Braunack
Jeffrey Hoffmann
Marcus Kleinig**

Lone Pine Tanunda

Malcolm Graue

Nelshaby

**Daryle Johns
Henry Mudge**

Parawa

**Bill Pearce
Ian Williams**

40 years

Angaston

Richard Evans

Boors Plains

Lindsay Gordon Barker

Lone Pine Tanunda

Jeffrey Rosenzweig

Owen

John Tiller

Parawa

**Graeme Golding
Glen Rowlands
Vic Walter**

30 years

Lone Pine Tanunda

Dean Afford

Nelshaby

**Gordon Baker
Peter Bishop
Graeme Crouch
Ray Haldane
Philip Johns**

Owen

**Trevor Clifford
Peter Freebairn
Andrew Parker
Rob Saint
Lachlan Wood**

Parawa

**Peter Filsell
Charlotte Morley
Dean Whitford**

20 years

Koonunga

**Matthew Hampel
Andrew Kleinig
Allen McKenzie
Nick Riebke**

Nelshaby

**Steven A. Johns
Brendan Johns
Merv Lewis
Barry Mudge**

Parawa

Stephen Rogers



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

The pursuit and securing of additional sponsorship support for the Ag Bureau's activities and events has once again been successful this year.

Pleasingly, negotiations with both SA Water and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) resulted in funding again being allocated towards our Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards and for educational bus tours by branches.

The \$8000 DEW Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship is in memory of both Peter and Wendy Olsen to recognise the couple's collective contributions to agriculture and landcare.

We remember Peter and Wendy's passion for environmental management and advocacy for sustainable farming practices.

SA Water continued its Bronze level Ag Bureau sponsorship to facilitate more educational bus tours for branch members. Branches were able to apply for a share of these funds to run trips in local areas.

We also acknowledge the ongoing sponsorship of Primary Industries SA (PIRSA), which enables us to offer the Rural Youth Bursary.

We thank Rural Business Support as well for their contribution to our Spirit of Excellence Dinner.

GOVERNING BODY

The Board of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia comprises representatives from each of the Bureau regions, augmented with members from government, agricultural education and research bodies.

The Board represents the interests of South Australia's farmers to government and contributes to the extension of agricultural research and development through the management of projects.

On behalf of Bureau members, the Board manages the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards which comprise four awards which recognise achievements in the agricultural field.

The Awards provide opportunities to young people to pursue a career of excellence in agriculture and are an avenue to promote Bureau membership to a younger audience. As the governing body the Board is responsible for the following:

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

Advertise with Ag Bureau's e-news

ADVERTORIAL
(200 WORDS +
SMALL IMAGE)
\$250

AD SPACE:
10.5CM X 10.5CM
\$175

5.5CM X 10CM
\$110



"YOU NEVER REALLY RETIRE FROM FARMING"...

Ross Roberts claims you never really retire from farming and, at 92 (or thereabouts - he's lost count) he continues to be an active Nelshaby Ag Bureau member who takes a keen interest in local farming operations.

In this, the Ag Bureau's 130th anniversary year, Ross has reached a magnificent 70 years as a member of Nelshaby branch - an extraordinary achievement!

Ross was a broad acre cereal cropper, farming barley wheat, lupins and field peas. He continued this well into his late 80s until retiring "four or five years ago".

Ross says that while he's been "getting a bit slow" lately, he is still a regular face at the branch meetings. And armed with a new set of hearing aids recently, he doesn't miss much.

Ross' connection with Ag Bureau began from the day he was born. His father was a founding member of the Nelshaby Ag Bureau in September 1922.

Ross still remembers attending his first Bureau meeting as a young chap, just out of high school - he came home as branch secretary! In the seven decades since then he has served several stints as both president and secretary.



In the early days Ross was so devoted to his Bureau duties that his wife was forced to take drastic measures.

"She would lock my good pants in the wardrobe to keep me home and stop me going out to the meetings," Ross said, tongue in cheek.

"I didn't miss many Bureau meetings - they were the highlight of my month."

Ross recalls that Nelshaby Bureau meetings used to be held on Saturday mornings. The wives would make the most of the opportunity to go into town

shopping while the blokes met to catch up on Branch activities.

Nelshaby, a market garden area supplying the city of Port Pirie district, was formed after Port Pirie branch closed in 1921 (1886 to 1921).

When Ross' father returned home from serving in World War I, he took up a Soldier's Settler Block and began farming. He built a house on the block, carting the stone for it from the nearby hills.

This historic house is the place Ross still calls home today.



70 YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP FOR ROSS

Ross continued to farm the family land with his brother until his brother enlisted for the second World War. Returning home, his brother received a Soldier's Settler Block on Kangaroo Island - where he is still farming today.

Ross and his wife Lorna had five children. Of them, their eldest son Gary continued on the farm and is recognised as an Ag Bureau life member.

Before he retired from farming, Ross remembers there was a trial plot on his family's land about five years ago.

"I found it very interesting with all the different treatments for cereal crops - farming has changed so much during my 70 years in the rural industry," he said.

Ross has many other fond and still vivid Ag Bureau memories, including an annual trip away to visit other Bureaus around the state.

"This was a highlight and very beneficial for my farming practises," he said.

"These days farmers don't share information between themselves so much - instead they get in experts and consultants."

Ross reminisced that when he was first a member, the Ag Bureau had an informational paper that was regularly distributed. The informational papers covered many subjects over the years and focused on all aspects of life, not just on farming. One of the first papers Ross organised as secretary of Nelshaby was by the Minister of Religion, whom Ross arranged to come and speak at the Branch meeting.

When asked about the Spirit of Excellence Awards and how they encourage young farmers to grow their careers in agriculture, Ross responded with enthusiasm.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to support young farmers," he said.

In our 130th year, Ross says the most important benefits of being an Ag Bureau member are the same as what they were in 1888. He has nothing but good things to say about the direction the Bureau is heading in.

"(Belonging to) Ag Bureau is a lovely way to mix with the people of the district - that knowledge sharing between members and the social aspect, meeting with other farmers and having the support of local members... it's important."

"I'm very proud of the young people that have taken over the responsibility of the Nelshaby Bureau. They are respectful and responsible and I believe they will do good things with the continuation of the Nelshaby branch."

We're confident they will, Ross. They have big shoes to fill, but if they follow in your well trodden footsteps, the future for Ag Bureau is a bright one!

"She would lock my good pants in the wardrobe to keep me home and stop me going out to the meetings. I didn't miss many - they were the highlight of my month."

SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2017

Our Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards offer farmers and rural youth the opportunity to pursue personal and professional development to ultimately benefit their local communities.

A Barossa Valley goat meat visionary and an aspiring Ag Sciences teacher from Mount Pleasant were recognised as future leaders of South Australian agriculture at our 2017 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards.

Generously supported by the then Department of Environment Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), the Awards offer young farmers and rural youth the opportunity to pursue personal and professional development to benefit their local communities.

Tracy Bonython from the Barossa Valley was the recipient of the new 'DEWNR Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers'.

The \$8000 scholarship is for a young farmer (aged 18-35 for the 2017 Awards) to pursue further study, take a study tour or run a special project. The new scholarship is in memory of the late Peter and

Wendy Olsen to recognise both of their contributions to agriculture and landcare in South Australia. Sponsored by DEWNR for the first time in 2017, the scholarship focuses on sustainability of the natural resources that underpin primary production.

Kayla Starkey from Mount Pleasant was awarded the 2017 Rural Youth Bursary sponsored by Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

Kayla is studying a Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide and aims to go on to complete a Masters in Teaching. She also co-manages two sheep studs with her father.

The Rural Youth Bursary consists of a \$5000 grant from PIRSA for rural young people (aged 18-30) working in a rural community, not necessarily in agriculture, to pursue further study, undertake a study tour or develop a special project in their chosen career.



LEFT: 2017 Award winners. Tracy Bonython - 'DEWNR Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers'; Greg Cock - 'Services to Primary Production' recipient and Kayla Starkey - 'PIRSA Rural Youth Bursary winner.'

SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2017

Passionate about educating young people to pursue success in agriculture, Kayla planned to use the grant to attend the 2018 National Association of Agricultural Educators conference in Launceston in January 2018.

The October 2017 ceremony also saw Greg Cock of Mount Barker recognised with the Services to Primary Production Award.

Greg's contribution to agriculture over more than 30 years includes leadership roles with PIRSA and the Ag Bureau. He has fostered strong relationships with Ag Bureau members through roles such as leading PIRSA's Regional Advisory Group for the 2006 drought response.

Greg has an ongoing interest in rural financial services, natural resource management and sustainable agriculture. He is a firm believer in empowering others to identify their own priorities and support them in achieving them.



Services to Primary Production winner for 2017, Mount Barker's Greg Cock, with Alison Lloyd-Wright (PIRSA), Mark Grossman and Daniel Casement (PIRSA).

“Even if you think it’s the smallest idea that may help in your community, or help your career in the rural sector, have a go. It’s such a great prize. ”

Kayla Starkey
2017 PIRSA Rural Youth Bursary winner

WHERE COULD AN AG BUREAU BURSARY TAKE YOUR CAREER?

Each year the Ag Bureau of SA's Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards provide two young people with the opportunity to open doors, chase an idea or follow their dreams.

The \$8000 DEW Sustainable Agricultural Scholarship honours the memory of Peter and Wendy Olsen, former members of the Ag Bureau who died in the Whyalla Airlines crash of May 2000. It is open to primary producers aged between 18 and 40.

Anyone aged 18-30 and living in a rural area can apply for the Rural Youth Bursary. The winner receives \$5000 to spend on a project or study tour to further their career opportunities.

Next year's awards will be launched in July 2019. This means there's plenty of time to start working on your application...



ONE YEAR ON WITH 2017 AWARD WINNERS



Winning the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers at last year's Spirit of Excellence Awards has been "a huge game changer" for Tracy Bonython and her family business, Bon Chevon, a Barossa Valley gourmet goat meat business.

Tracy and husband Owen started the business as a hobby in 2014 after purchasing 10 Boer does to breed their own wethers. Tracy was an agriculture teacher with Faith College in Tanunda and had been trying to find wethers for students to compete with at the Royal Adelaide Show. The goats were brought home after the Show – and Bon Chevon was born.

As the Bonythons added to their herd, local restaurants discovered the rare, locally produced gourmet meat. It didn't take long for the unique paddock-to-plate operation to become an award-winning local food brand.

Receiving the 2017 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship gave Tracy the confidence in the family's unique business to "really consider what role we can play" as part of the Australian agriculture and goat industries.

"I've met some amazing people and have been given opportunities to not only grow our business but also to become associated with groups like the Goat Industry Council of Australia and Meat & Livestock Australia," Tracy said.

When asked about the next step for Bon Chevon, Tracy says "a lot more growing and a lot more learning!"

"Our business has recently purchased numerous stud animals with amazing structure and size so that we can continue to improve the quality and genetics of our animals," she said.

"We want to continue growing the number of local restaurants we supply to and always keep the quality of our product at the forefront."

2017 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner Tracy Bonython

Winning the 2018 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship allowed Tracy to:

- Conduct pasture trials to work towards better practices for grazing goats and more sustainable options.
- Purchase equipment and training to complete on-farm Faecal Egg Count tests so that drench resistance can be controlled on farm.
- Participate in a study tour of Victoria to establish connections with similar businesses that are promoting farmed goat meat in Australia and with breeders of stud Boer goats so that genetic improvement can be achieved in the Bon Chevon herd.
- Observe other unique farming operations in the form of Community Supported Agriculture.
- Create a new housing facility for the Bon Chevon bucks utilising sustainable pasture options like Tagasaste trees.



ABOVE: Grazing Bon Chevon goats on Tracy and Owen's Barossa Valley property earlier this year.

"I've met some amazing people and have been given opportunities to not only grow our business but also to become associated with groups like the Goat Industry Council of Australia and Meat & Livestock Australia."

Tracy Bonython

2017 Rural Youth Bursary winner – Kayla Starkey

Winning the 2017 Rural Youth Bursary has helped Mount Pleasant's Kayla Starkey to progress her dreams of becoming a secondary Agricultural/Science teacher.

Growing up on a sheep property at Mount Pleasant, Kayla is highly passionate about teaching youth within the agricultural sector and is currently in her final year of a Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide.

Kayla's winning 2017 application included detailed plans to travel to Launceston Tasmania in January 2018 to attend the four day National Ag Teachers conference. This provided a valuable opportunity to broaden her knowledge of the agricultural education sector, as well as meeting and networking with likeminded professionals already in teaching.

With the help of Ag Bureau of SA members, Kayla organised some on-farm visits while in the Apple Isle, allowing her to explore the practises being utilised by sheep growers there, while further broadening her industry contacts.

Kayla is still heavily involved in her family's stud farm, breeding quality Polwarth and Merino sheep as part of their two studs; Bel-Antha Polwarth and Hill View Merino. Along with the breeding, Kayla also hopes to get her family stud back showing Polwarth sheep again – a highlight from their rural past – in the near future.

After completing her Bachelor of Ag Science, Kayla plans to enrol and complete a Masters of Teaching over the next two years to fulfil her dream of qualifying as a secondary educator.

Kayla says the Rural Youth Bursary highlights the community spirit of the Ag Bureau, supporting young people in rural areas to pursue and solidify their career dreams, ultimately to help build their local communities.

"No matter what your idea is, run with it – do the costing, make a budget, put it all together and be prepared," Kayla said.

If you are serious, then definitely have a good plan of how you're going to use the money because if you are shortlisted you will have to present it to the judging panel.

"Even if you think it's the smallest idea that may help in your community, or help your career in the rural sector, have a go. It's such a great prize, it really is worth giving it a shot.

"I have personally made so many contacts and connections through winning the award that have already benefited me and that I will continue to use throughout my ag teaching career."



ABOVE: During her Tasmania farm visits, Kayla had the privilege to inspect some of Georgina Wallace's rams and ewes. "This was just some of her spectacular wool that she is producing," Kayla said.



"Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness."

Thomas Jefferson

AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

The Bureau has a long and proud history of managing projects that benefit members from State to local level. Funding is from a variety of sources including the Australian Government and the Government of South Australia.

Projects continuing

Benchmarking Soil Health Under Alternative Systems, Monitoring Biochar Trial and FFF Group Support Stage 2b

Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges
NRMB - Sustainable Agriculture Industry Support Grant

\$130,115.70 (June 2017 to June 2018)

The pressure is on for farmers to increase production and maintain profitability, while providing a healthy product for consumers. Production issues for the Adelaide and Mt Lofty NRM region continue to emerge including increasing acid soils, reduced growing season length under a changing climate, a lack of adequate Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Sulphur and trace element deficiencies such as copper.

Soil health treatments such as alternative fertilisers can help overcome these issues by reducing acidity, increasing the soil organic carbon and soil moisture holding capacity, increasing the growing season length and supplying organic nutrients and trace elements. Chemical treatments cannot do this but they can increase production by providing nutrients and trace elements in a more readily available form.



Producers in the Adelaide Mt Lofty NRM region would like a better understanding of the best and most cost effective soil health treatments and their relationship to soil acidity, soil moisture, growing season, nutrient and trace element content.

Furthermore, they would like an understanding of their longer term benefit on their soil health and potential to help manage climate change impacts such as a shortened growing season.

AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Projects commenced

Improved Control of Exotic Pest Snails in the Yorke Peninsula Region of SA

Australian Government National Landcare Program (NLP) – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$52,250 (July 2018 to June 2020)

The project will evaluate new techniques to improve snail control and meet new market demands for low numbers of snails in grain.

The use of time lapse cameras, together with collection and analysis of snail species throughout the season has improved snail control, through increasing understanding of snail behaviour and snail bait efficacy. Increasing snail mortality to 85% has reduced crop damage and harvesting issues.

However snails are still a major problem in many areas in SA due to high snail reproduction rates in favourable conditions (one snail producing 200 to 400 offspring) Achieving 85% control of snails will not ensure farmers can meet forecast standards of “less than one snail per 0.5 litres” There is concern farmers may revert to increased use of bare earth treatments to meet tighter grain snail tolerances. Bare earth treatments will reduce plant soil cover and significantly increase erosion risk in loam soils.

Fleurieu Forward Farmers - Increasing profit by managing climate variability through soil health

Australian Government NLP – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$109,793.20 (July 2018 to June 2020)

Livestock producers in the Fleurieu region will be supported to better manage soil and pasture health, climate variability and improve profit.

The project will:

- Innovatively measure pasture quality, soil moisture and rainfall at six soil health sites and 15 farm sites, while continuing to measure soil health at two of the replicated soil health sites.
- Utilise and build upon decision support tools for our region incorporating data collected on feed quality, nutrition, productivity, soil moisture and soil health to support decisions for N & P scheduling, optimal hay and silage cutting, grazing management, and supplementary feeding.
- Produce a fact sheet that helps producers to understand how to build soil health.
- Conduct a field day demonstrating the tools and key project outcomes.
- Develop a one-day workshop to train producers on building soil health, using the tools developed.
- Deliver outcomes via newsletters and our web site.



AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Innovative and cost-effective methods to manage 'emerging' soil acidity to improve soil health, crop and pasture production

Australian Government NLP – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$100,188 (July 2018 to June 2020)

With more intensive and productive farming systems in the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula of SA there are now areas with emerging issues of soil acidity that have been regarded as traditionally non-acid soil areas. The growth of high value crops such as lentils and beans that are highly sensitive to low pH soils are not growing well in some areas due to increasing areas of soil acidity.

The project will work with six farmer groups. It will trial and implement new and innovative technologies of soil pH mapping to show the spatial variation of soil pH across paddocks. The soil pH mapping demonstration work will be ground-truthed and used with decision support tools with farmer workshops to increase awareness, understanding, management and treatment of acid soils.

The increased knowledge and facilitation of the new technology will allow farmers to better manage soil acidity to improve soil health, production and profitability. Case studies will be prepared.

Innovative NDVI, pH and EC mapping in the Clare Valley vineyards and investigation and management of soil constraints to improve soil health, production and profitability

Australian Government NLP – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$108,607.40 (July 2018 to June 2020)

The Clare Valley of South Australia is renowned for its Riesling wines as well as its premium red varieties including Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. In 2017 the total value of wine grapes was approximately \$32 million.

Within the vineyards there can be considerable soil variability that can have a serious impact on grape

quality as well as yield. This can be due to variation in soil type and soil qualities such as low soil pH, salt, sodic soils etc.

This project is to develop and extend new and innovative tools, methods and technologies such as NDVI (normalised difference vegetation index) with UAV (drones), pH and EC (Electrical conductivity) mapping to identify variability within vineyards. From this, management zones can then be identified. Within each management zone soil pits will be dug to look at soil constraints.

Workshops will be held with grape growers to improve their knowledge of soil and to better manage soils to improve production and profitability.



Workshops for Clare Valley grape growers will improve their knowledge of soil and to better manage soils to improve production and profitability.

AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Feasibility study to explore the technical and financial feasibility of establishing a facility for aggregating and adding value to locally produced grain

Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme

\$76,230 (July 2018 to June 2019)

The following activities will be undertaken:

- Market consultation to study requirements and determine viability of - establishing the infrastructure, including calculating capital expenditure required
- Identifying location for planned facility, if the study is positive producing information memorandum
- Seeking expressions of interest, which will be evaluated
- Negotiating an agreement with preferred parties if expressions of interest are acceptable

The outcome of the activities is to determine the viability of developing infrastructure to store and process grain.

The project will be located within the Local Government Area of the District Council of Kimba.



Ag Bureau has received funding for a feasibility study to explore the technical and financial feasibility of establishing a facility for aggregating and adding value to locally produced grain.



AG BUREAU PROJECTS 2017-18

Export Hay Trials in the Kimba district

Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme.

\$19,250 (July 2018 to June 2019)

Minnipa Research Centre is to undertake export hay trials in the Kimba district, on oaten hay in relation to yield and feed test standards to allow producers to make better informed decisions when planting and managing hay crops.

Activities include: planting, managing and harvesting trial plots, undertaking an oat rotation study, and compilation and reporting of trial and study data.

Establishing a moisture probe and weather station network across the Kimba region

Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme

\$21,693 (July 2018 to December 2018)

Establishing a moisture probe and weather station network across the region, to improve data availability and quality, and agronomic decision-making and grain yield.

Activities will include: site selection and installation of probe network (six probes in representative soil types), data collection/internet upload, and running education workshops on data interpretation and better agronomic decisions.



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ABOUT OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Grossman, Chair

Mark represents the Barossa and Light region and has been a Bureau member of the Angaston branch since 1982 where he held all office positions. He operates a family primary production partnership with enterprises including sheep (self-replacing merinos, 1st cross ewes, prime lambs and operating Koonawarra white suffolk and border leicester studs), cattle, cropping and viticulture. The farming properties are situated in the Angaston and Sedan regions. Other community involvement includes board member of Australian White Suffolk Association, elected member of the Barossa Council and Vice President of Angaston AH&F Show Society.

Geoff Page, Deputy Chair

Geoff represents the Hills & Fleurieu region on the Agricultural Bureau of SA Board which is where he resides and has his own farming business that produces cut flowers, certified organic vegetable and herb seedlings which are sold at farmers markets. The farm also produces prime lambs and hay for sale. Geoff works part-time at the University of South Australia as the student Ombudsman. Geoff has academic qualifications in education, agriculture, agricultural economics and land valuation.

Janette Ridgway, Treasurer

Janette returned to the Board this year as Treasurer and representative for the Upper South East Agricultural Bureau branches. As a farmer, Janette works on a mixed farming enterprise with her husband and son. Their farm is east of Bordertown, in the district known as Pine Hill. They grow broad acre crops, have a sheep enterprise as well as a horticulture business growing gladiolus bulbs. Janette has a passion for agriculture, community and family and brings these skills and understanding to the Board along with a desire for learning and sharing of information.

Members of our 70 branches attend branch events and activities and contribute to the sustainability of the industry by taking part in the latest projects and trials.



David Edwards

David is a fifth generation farmer at Minlaton on the southern Yorke Peninsula with his ancestors taking up the land in 1880. David's cropping rotations have changed over the last fifteen years from barley pasture rotations working the land five to seven times, to no till farming, sowing three hundred hectares each of wheat, barley and canola. David is seen the significant changes in farming over the past ten years and is very positive and optimistic about the future of farming.

Welcome Allan Zerna



Our newest Board member, Allan first became involved in the Ag Bureau movement when the Franklin Harbour branch reformed in 1983. he has since served as both president and secretary and, more importantly

in recent years, as the "Beer and Barby" Manager!

Although his parents and grandparents were pioneer farmers in the Cowell district, Allan spent his early working life at BHP Whyalla. He abandoned the life of a cadet engineer for the call of a free, easy and bohemian surfing lifestyle for a time, before accepting a job offer on an uncle's farm at Mitchellville.

After 14 years of working for his uncle, having accumulated a wife (Jan), three and a small amount of money, the family bought 1600ha just north of Cowell where Allan and

Jan continue to live in semi retirement. They ran 500 merino ewes, grew hard wheat, feed barley, oats and triticale and dabbled unsuccessfully in canola, peas and vetch.

Dry seasons, with the resultant wind erosion convinced me to become involved in the No Till movement spurred on by a West Aust bus trip organised by the late Peter Olsen.

Allan looks forward to serving on the Ag Bureau Board and hopes that by doing so, he can assist fellow farmers to become more productive and sustainable, while enjoying what they are doing.



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