

Grain freight and logistics focus for February

From the CEO

With **DARREN ARNEY**



ONE OF the key focuses for Grain Producers SA this month is discussions on South Australia's grain freight network.

Ever since the South Australian Parliament's Grain Handling Select Committee tabled its report in September 2012, we have been calling for a review of the current infrastructure supply chain. As a starting point, we need to consider what is working well and what the requirements are into the future – both in terms of infrastructure and working collaboratively.

Our view is that the ultimate win for growers is for a grain freight network that delivers improved efficiencies for a more cost-effective supply network. The Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre quotes that for a 200 kilometre round trip, there are \$72 per tonne of supply chain costs. If we can see that figure reduced even by \$5/t then that is a significant addition to the state's economy.

While there are the season-to-season fluctuations in transport and logistics, we need a vision of what grain freight and logistics will look like in 5 to 25 years' time because it is currently a significant cost to all growers.

At GPSA, we are representing our members – both on EP and statewide – at several levels on the grain freight



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issue, including at the highest state level with the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and Primary Industries and Regions SA, at the invitation of Minister for Agriculture Leon Bignell.

One of the areas of focus at present is Eyre Peninsula. Later this month, GPSA has coordinated a meeting of all the silo committee chairs from across EP, along with other industry participants, to discuss the various freight and logistics options on the table for the region.

On EP, GPSA is working with Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula on its review of the EP ports management plan and has been part of discussions with PIRSA on the PIFS Grain Rail Fund.

The current EP rail agreement has only two more years to run and we are working to get views from all

stakeholders on different options and the capital and infrastructure required, particularly with new ports proposed. We are seeking to engage with as many stakeholders as we can so that where options are raised that will create competition, we have a clear understanding of benefits for grain producers.

Investment of any kind in our grain freight system needs a whole-of-industry discussion with transport, storage and handling and port operators, state and local government as major investors in the region's road network as well as growers to ensure the best outcome.

There's a number of players and the options are complex but if we can get it right, it has the capacity to become a step change in profitability for producers.

Seed register reminder

Grain Producers SA is reminding any farmers affected by the Pinery fire to register their interest for donated seed or seed for sale in the lead-up to sowing.

GPSA received generous offers of at least 6500 tonnes of seed for sale or donation from producers across South Australia. Many producers have been holding seed on-farm or in warehouse until fire-affected farmers have been able to consider their requirements and register.

"We know it is hard with everything you have been through to think ahead to April but we encourage growers to consider what they might need and prepare for seeding if they can to take-up the generous offers made by many SA producers who are thinking of you and wanting to help you get back on your feet," CEO Darren Arney said.

Details: Expressions of interest can be made through GPSA on 1300 734 884.

SAVE THE DATE

Grain Producers SA will host a series of shed meetings next month to gather feedback on the grain industry and issues or concerns producers may have.

Dates and locations include:

- > Maitland – Anna Binna, Ben Wundersitz, March 10, 10-11.30am
- > Balaklava – Brett Robert's property, March 10, 2.30-4pm
- > Gladstone – Phil Growden's property, March 11, 10-11.30am
- > Loxton – Bulla Burra, Robin Schaefer, March 15, 10-11.30am
- > Lucindale – David Malpas' property, March 16, 10-11.30am
- > Wudinna – Dean and Tristan Waters' property, March 23, 10-11.30am
- > Karkoo – Karkoo Sports Centre, Steve Glover, March 23, 2.30-4pm

Catch up with GPSA at:

- > February 11 - GRDC Grower Update, Auburn
- > February 18 – Mallee Sustainable Farming Research Update, Renmark
- > February 19 – SANTFA Conference, Tanunda
- > February 26 – SPAA Expo, Wudinna

News in brief

Post-Harvest Survey

Grain Producers SA's 2015-16 Post-Harvest Survey is open. It asks growers to assess the performance of bulk handlers in terms of available segregations, turnaround time, opening hours, number of buyers, communication, staff expertise and ease of access as well as overall service levels of grain buying companies. Responses from producers help determine where GPSA focuses its efforts in advocacy.

Details: Growers can complete the 2015-16 Post-Harvest Survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/RPC68QL

Small business forum

The Department of State Development is hosting a forum for small business owners and farmers, 'Employing staff: What you need to know' at Clare Country Club on Monday, February 29. The free workshop runs from 5.15pm to 8.30pm and features MERS' Chas Cini. Hear about awards, minimum wages, superannuation obligations and changes, payroll/tax requirements, lodging BAS, payslips, timebooks and record keeping. Keynote speakers include Small Business Commissioner, Australian Tax Office, Fair Work Ombudsman, SafeWork SA and Return to Work SA. Registrations are essential on **1300 742 414** or www.surveymonkey.com/r/clareforum

Employment update

Producers are being urged to check employment arrangements following warnings that Return to Work SA will start closer scrutiny of labour hire companies.

MERS' Chas Cini says it is important that farmers do their due diligence to ensure that arrangements with contractors are genuine.

"Calling an employee a contractor does not mean much if the individual is under control of the farmer," he said. "No matter what the title is, it is the manner in which the work is performed that determines if the individual is a genuine contractor or an employee.

"If an employee is categorised as a contractor, the farmer may be liable for back payments of Return to Work SA levies and income tax. In some instances there may be payroll tax and illegal workers implications. In addition to the back payments there may be fines and penalties."

Details: View Return to Work's update under 'What's News' on the GPSA home page

Healthy farmer resources

Struggling to work out how you can support healthy lifestyles in your business? Useful tools and information relevant to the farm sector to support farmers and their employees/contractors have a healthy lifestyle are available from the Primary Producers SA website. The risk factors are smoking, poor nutrition, alcohol and physical activity and stress. Find information such as healthy lunches and lunchbox tips for busy periods, barbecue and catering tips to ensure farming systems group events provide healthy food and useful phone apps to promote healthy lifestyles from reputable sources.

Details: www.ppsa.org.au or contact Sally Fisher, sfisher@ppsa.org.au and 0410 473 167

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If you are receiving the newsletter by post, we encourage you to contact GPSA to provide your email address. This means you will receive the newsletter more quickly – straight to you inbox – and from time to time, we may also provide you with important industry information or seek your feedback on proposed policy.