

GPSA calls for better deal on ports for producers



A 10-year strategy for growth in the South Australian grain industry would help with infrastructure investment decisions.

GRAIN Producers SA is advocating for development of a 10-year strategy to help stakeholders plan for future industry growth, particularly in its requirements for infrastructure.

Chief executive Darren Arney says such a plan would help guide investment in storage and handling in SA, particularly when growers are making decisions about building their own ports.

Eyre Peninsula growers are being surveyed on whether to support a levy to build a new grower-owned port for

grain exports, increasing competition in the region's storage and handling market.

Mr Arney says while GPSA understands producers' frustrations with the lack of competition, the real issue is getting a better deal for growers in storage and handling. This was the number one issue for producers in GPSA's 2014 Grower Priorities Survey.

He says the strategy to deliver a better deal to growers has already been identified but not yet acted on in recommendations made by the South Australian Government's Grain Handling Select Committee.

"The committee tabled its report in September 2012," he said. "One of its key recommendations was that the Essential Services Commission of South Australia should review the supply chain to set the basis for pricing and access to storage and bulk handling facilities that met the requirements of a competitive deregulated export market."

"This is one of a number of recommendations that the government has not acted on and, considering the money that was spent doing the report, a lot of the issues it addresses are still impacting growers now so urgent action is required."

"This type of regulation is likely to be the cheapest way to lower grain handling costs. While the industry talks about the cost of regulation, in reality what we are proposing would be no different to what takes place in the electricity or gas sectors, where it could be monitored by ESCOSA."

"This is why we need a master plan for where the grain industry might be in 10 years' time to determine whether extra port capacity could be required, and if so, how much."

SAVE THE DATE ... post-harvest forums

Grain Producers SA is keen to meet with growers to review the harvest that was and receive member input on issues for the year ahead.

All producers are urged to attend the short sessions. Meeting dates include:

- > Murray Bridge Golf Club – Thursday, February 12, 2 - 3pm (after the GRDC Update)
- > Riverton Football Club – Tuesday, February 17, 9.30am - 12.30pm
- > Parilla Sports Club – Thursday, February 19, 1.30pm - 5pm
- > Gladstone Bowls Club – Tuesday, February 24, 9.30am - 12.30pm
- > Maitland Golf Club – Thursday, February 26, 9.30am - 12.30pm

> Growers can contact GPSA at any time to raise issues or offer feedback. Contact the office or visit the website.



Thinking about seed treatment?

GPSA is encouraging producers ready to treat seed in preparation for season 2015 to review the new *Seed Treatment Stewardship Strategy*.

The strategy outlines measures to reduce risks from dust generated during handling and planting of treated seed and to minimise off-target movement of pest and disease management products.

It has been compiled by CropLife Australia and supported by nearly all state farming organisations, including GPSA.

View the strategy at
<http://bit.ly/1tYWY13>

Stick to the code to avoid spray drift this summer

GRAIN Producers SA is encouraging growers to stick to the *Code of Practice - Summer Weed Spraying* to reduce the chances of any damage to other crops or industries from off-target chemical application.

Biosecurity SA last month reported that there had been a decline in the number of spray drift incidences across the state which was attributed to continuing chemical user education and new regulations on Group I herbicides, including 2,4-D, 2,4-DB, MCPA, dicamba, triclopr, picloram, clopyralid and fluroxypyr.

Chief executive Darren Arney says the overwhelming majority of producers are doing the right thing and it is encouraging that drift reports are declining.

However, producers needed to remember that Biosecurity SA could conduct audits if there is a complaint about spray drift.

"New regulation on the use of Group I herbicides requires producers to have a current chemical users accreditation and keep specific records on their use," he said.

"As a result, producers need to be using a spray diary and keeping track

of weather conditions and spray use and location details. Biosecurity SA has an example record-keeping sheet which producers can use to ensure they are compliant with these regulations.

"Records should be kept on all spraying days – not just when the wind could be a bit dicey – and in all areas, not only where there are crops, such as vines and fruit trees, or bees foraging, that could potentially be affected.

Record-keeping is vital for longer term herbicide decision-making and it provides producers with self-insurance that they have been responsible while spraying.

"Producers must watch for surface temperature inversions too because these can cause chemicals to drift significantly further so that it's not just the neighbour next door affected, it could be kilometres away."

The *Code of Practice - Summer Weed Control* is available at
www.grainproducerssa.com.au/pages/links.php under 'Spray Drift' and more advice about correct record-keeping is available at www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/ruralchem/using_chemicals_safely

In short...

Fodder response

Livestock SA coordinated the recent fodder donation response to farmers affected by the Adelaide Hills' fires. In total, 15 semi-trailer loads of hay were distributed including 4000 large round or square bales and 1000 small square bales, plus donated chaff and horse feed through fodder stores. People volunteered their time to deliver the hay by trailer and some transporters contributed their time and heavy vehicles while other farmers donated tractors to help load. Livestock SA acknowledges the generosity of grain producers in the Mid North, Yorke Peninsula and Mallee who have donated feed.

Vale Jeff Arney

It was with great sadness that Grain Producers SA and the grain industry marked the passing of Jeff Arney in December. Jeff dedicated countless hours to improving the grain industry through agropolitics and was instrumental in establishing GPSA so all growers would be represented equally and fairly. He was held in very high regard and will be remembered by all for his professional abilities but also his genuine character.

Jeff served as a member of the GPSA steering committee and as an inaugural director and was an Advisory Board of Agriculture member, foundation member of AGT, member and later chairman of the SA Farmers Federation Grains Council, and a member of the SAFF board.

SA's grain haul...

Harvest 2014-15 turned out to be South Australia's sixth consecutive above-average grain crop, with 7.63 million tonnes harvested from 4.04 million hectares. This is more than the long-term average of 6.6mt. Given the driest spring on record in some parts, this is a credit to our modern farming practices and research and development.

According to the State Government, the South Australian grain industry contributes \$4.5 billion or 26 per cent of the state's gross food and wine revenue. About 85 per cent of South Australian grain is exported around the world, to locations including the Middle East, China, Japan and South East Asia.