



Your strong and independent
voice for livestock producers

LIVESTOCK SA...

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Livestock SA Position Paper for 2022 State Election

The SA livestock industries contribute more than \$3.3 billion in gross revenue to the State economy annually. Livestock SA is the peak industry body representing more than 3500 beef cattle, sheep, and goat producing businesses in South Australia and acts as the voice for livestock producers on all industry related issues. Livestock SA works to inform government, businesses, and the wider community on the contribution of livestock producers to the food and fibre industries and to the South Australian economy.

Furthermore, Livestock SA is the custodian of the SA Sheep and Beef Industry Blueprints which are recognised within South Australia and nationally as the 'reference point' for all industry stakeholders, acting as a guide to decision-making about where research, extension, investment, and effort should be directed to achieve the goals of our sheep and beef industries. South Australia's sheep and beef industries contribute to the State's economy through agricultural product at the farm gate with even larger flow on effects through the domestic and export product supply chains. The sheep and beef sectors are major employers in the State.

South Australia's livestock producers continue to improve and expand in their production of premium quality red meat and wool. Both the sheep and beef sectors are now in a growth phase. With the sectors being invaluable to the State's economy and vital to regional communities, it is essential to support the livestock industry to continue their mission to produce premium, clean and green food and fibre destined for global markets, helping to put South Australia on the world trade map. During the lead up to the South Australian election, Livestock SA will advocate for commitment from all parties, for the following priorities. These are essential for the continuing viability and expansion of the State's livestock industry.

The livestock sector in South Australia.

South Australia is a state with a strong and resilient livestock sector. Any future Government needs to ensure they support, rather than hinder the development of the livestock sector in SA. In addition to the identified areas for improvement and support, the costs associated with doing business in South Australia are of critical concern to livestock producers. The industry needs assistance to manage the costs and to ensure that the sector is not hit with additional costs in the future. The sheep (meat and wool) industry has always been important to the South Australian economy. Compared to other states, there are proportionally more sheep in South Australia than at any other time, with more than one in seven of the national flock from South Australia. More than one third of farms derive income from sheep production, with production occurring in all regions of the state. Our sheep industry is growing.

The South Australian beef industry is vibrant and continues to achieve outstanding annual growth in revenue. The industry is an important contributor to the agricultural output of the state and the economy at large. The beef industry has potential for further growth, through both sustainable gains

in on-farm productivity and adding value across the supply chain. The development of a South Australian Beef Industry Blueprint and a corresponding Sheep Industry Blueprint has highlighted the significant opportunities open to both the industry and the State in the coming years. We look forward to partnering with the incoming government to realise these opportunities. There is also a strong need for support for research and development adoption to assist agriculture's increased contribution to the SA economy, and for industry's continued improvement in traceability for all livestock products for premium market access and farm management purposes.

Summary of priorities

Primary Production

- Commitment to developing and enacting a Pastoral Lands Act.
- Commitment to developing and enacting a Biosecurity Act.
- Commitment to subsidising the Farm Fire Units program to help with maintenance, upgrades, and repairs.
- Commitment to the continuation of the Red Meat and Wool Program.
- Commitment to policy setting, funding, and ongoing research investment that ensure the South Australian red meat and wool industries can be at the forefront of carbon neutrality.
- Commitment to supporting ongoing research investment into the benefits of using electronic identification (EID) to improve on-farm animal health and biosecurity.

Environment and Water

- Commitment to a review of the *Native Vegetation Act, 1991*.
- Commitment to maintaining water security and cost efficiencies to ensure sustainable agricultural businesses in SA.
- Commitment to continuing funding of the Revitalising Private Conservation program.

Planning and Infrastructure

- Commitment to a review of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act, 2016*. (Linked to Land Access and Pastoral Lands Bill).
- Commitment to increase funding for capital works and ongoing maintenance of the South East Drainage Network.

Health and Wellbeing

- Commitment to improved health/mental health services in regional and remote areas.

Education

- Commitment to more funding support for Vocational Educational and Training programs that develop the future work force.
- Commitment to supporting the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, in particular funding a Distance Education Teaching Allowance.

LIVESTOCK SA

2022 State Election Priorities

Primary Production

A Pastoral Lands Act

Livestock SA urges the Government to continue development and enactment of the Pastoral Lands Act to deliver a sustainable pastoral industry that protects and enhances the pastoral region (with 100-years lease option). This is a 1 in 40-year opportunity to help grow our cattle and sheep industry in the pastoral region.

The slow progress of the draft *Pastoral Lands Bill 2020* has been a source of frustration for Livestock SA and our pastoralist members, predominately because of the lack of progress over the past 18 months. Livestock SA and pastoralists met with conservation groups and reached broad agreement on many points. It is vital that funding is made available to allow adequate resourcing for the development of enhanced monitoring programs as was described during consultation relating to the proposed new Act. The ongoing discussion regarding the Pastoral Lands Bill has highlighted the public and private benefit that is derived from the sustainable management of the Pastoral Estate. It is important that the immediate and ongoing funding allocations are drawn from Treasury to match ongoing private funding of the Pastoral Unit through lease payments.

A new Biosecurity Act

In 2019 the current State Government proposed to develop a consolidated Biosecurity Act for South Australia. The purpose of this was to provide a simpler and more effective legislative framework for the management of pests and diseases, the trade in plant and animal products and the response to biosecurity emergencies. No mention was made for providing funding to support any provisions under a new Act. If there is any suggestion of a new Biosecurity Act levy, then this must be discussed in consultation with the livestock industry. If the development of this Act goes ahead, Livestock SA will call for greater investment in more biosecurity staff on the ground, working with producers in isolated regions, in addition to provisions that will empower greater traceability.

Whilst Livestock SA would support increased enforcement provisions to increase compliance, a new Act should ensure consistency with other livestock and biosecurity legislation both nationally and in other jurisdictions. Any new biosecurity Act should also encompass all provisions of the current *Livestock Act, 1997*. In South Australia, the Livestock Act safeguards livestock biosecurity in this State.

Farm Fire Units program

The efforts of farmers and producers with their Farm Fire Units (FFUs) are often essential in the fight against bushfires. The combined efforts of the Country Fire Service (CFS), Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and the FFUs result in massive economic benefits to the state. The CFS recognises the importance of the agricultural industry as one of the economic mainstays of SA and as the custodians of so much of the land in the state. Livestock SA will advocate for the incoming Government to subsidise the Farm Fire Units program and help with maintenance, upgrades, and repairs. Funding will assist with replacement or recovery of equipment after a fire.

Continuation of the Red Meat and Wool Growth Program

Livestock SA urges the Government to commit to the continuation of the Red Meat and Wool Growth Program. The South Australian Government has committed \$7.5 million over three years and partnered with industry to grow our red meat and wool industries.

The Red Meat and Wool Growth Program supports livestock producers to:

- rebuild stock numbers and quality
- increase uptake of AgTech and data-based decision making
- enhance business planning skills
- adopt best practice farm management
- strengthen biosecurity.

Red meat and wool industries and carbon neutrality

(Shared priority with Primary Producers SA - PPSA)

The South Australian red meat and wool industries have experienced significant stock number declines in recent years through drought, bushfire and wild dog and fox predation. This has impacted the consistency of supply of product to processors. Increased global demand for high quality red meat and wool, heightened international standards and greater consumer traceability expectations also present challenges for the red meat and wool industries. Government needs to ensure that producers can improve their ability to maintain or increase market access (particularly for export and premium markets), increase the number and quality of sheep and cattle available and boost return on assets managed.

Livestock SA is calling for the incoming Government to commit to funding and support for research and development and adoption to assist agriculture's increased contribution to the SA economy, and to focus on achieving the targets set out in the South Australian Beef and Sheep Industry Blueprints.

Livestock SA urges the incoming Government to commit to supporting carbon farming and other programs that support the reduction of agricultural emissions. With a commitment from both Government and industry, the right policy settings and ongoing research investment, the South Australian red meat and wool industries can be at the forefront of carbon neutrality. Livestock SA will advocate for greater investment and support in developing viable technologies and practices, that will maintain or increase livestock productivity whilst lowering methane emissions by:

- improving the integration of trees and shrubs for improved carbon storage, animal health and biodiversity outcomes,
- creating feed base solutions that underpin CN30 outcomes by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing soil carbon,
- supporting practice change through investing in leadership-building activities such as training of producers, professionals, and extension providers,
- driving adoption of innovation that improves management of water, energy, waste and GHG emissions,
- improving animal genetics and husbandry practices to reduce methane emissions,
- advancing methods for improving and measuring soil carbon sequestration,
- developing technology to avoid methane emissions from waste management at processing facilities,
- developing renewable energy technology to reduce CO₂ emissions from the use of fossil fuels.

Traceability

Livestock SA calls on Government to commit to supporting the livestock industry through continuous improvement of traceability for all livestock products for market access and farm management purposes.

Traceability is extremely important for disease management and the benefits of using modern technologies to capture reliable data will support a broad range of management, animal health and biosecurity decisions. The premium market Livestock SA is aiming for requires growers to prove provenance, welfare and health practices and traceability is vital to this.

The Biosecurity, Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Committee of Livestock SA is actively reviewing and contributing to the commentary and effort across Australian jurisdictions to ensure South Australia is prepared for any future changes in livestock traceability demands. Conversations about sheep traceability are often dominated by whether the South Australian industry should mandate the use of electronic identification (EID) tags to enhance supply chain traceability, as has occurred in Victoria.

Livestock SA calls on Government to prepare a meaningful business case and implementation plan in consultation with industry before any decision regarding mandatory EID is imposed. Our Victorian counterparts offer a great example to provide insights into mandating EID. Their lessons on technology uptake, infrastructure design, State investment and reliability of data must be taken into consideration when preparing any case for an EID mandate.

Environment and Water

Review of the Native Vegetation Act 1991.

The *Native Vegetation Act, 1991* provides for the management and protection of native vegetation in South Australia. Native vegetation must not be cleared without approval. Approval can be granted where there are corresponding actions taken to mitigate the impacts of the approved vegetation clearance. Management of tree canopy cover, especially those that overhang roadways, is a key concern for the livestock industry. Local government acknowledges that it can influence road safety on the roads it maintains, but a review of the Act could assist in removing impediments for the approval and removal of problem vegetation.

Livestock SA is of the view that pastoral lands should be exempt from the application of clearance by livestock grazing regulations in the Act. The regulations of the Act potentially limit the use of pastoral land for pastoralism where land has been effectively un-grazed for 10 years. Currently, approval from the Native Vegetation Council is required to approve the ongoing use of land for pastoral purposes. In contrast, the proposed Pastoral Lands Bill focuses on supporting the continued growth of South Australia's pastoral industry, while ensuring the sustainable management for future generations.

The system by which Heritage Agreements (HAs) are administered under the Native Vegetation Act is outdated. The provisions under the Act that relate to Heritage Agreements needs to be modernised. Heritage Agreements lock out livestock grazing, and this does not allow for crash grazing for fire management purposes to reduce fuel loads. Also, revegetation agreements under Heritage Agreements requires the reseeded stock to be sourced from a maximum 20km radius of the site to ensure genetic consistency. Livestock SA believes that this requirement needs to be reviewed to allow for climate change resilience planning in revegetation planting. Finally, there is a need to review the requirements regarding support funding for exclusion fencing to separate livestock from Heritage Agreements. When Heritage Agreements were first introduced, funding was provided for fence management, but now all costs fall on landholders while the benefits are primarily received by the public.

Water security and cost efficiencies to ensure sustainable agriculture businesses in SA

Livestock SA would like to see a further reduction in the cost of water used for livestock production and a differentiation in water prices for water used from SA Water. The move away from 'postage stamp' pricing has unintended ramifications. A program needs to be established that could deliver grants and research surrounding water efficiencies, links between farmers and relevant business information, desalination and storage technology and a rebate on water used by livestock. There are opportunities to attract Commonwealth Funding to support SA initiatives in this area through the Future Drought Fund.

Security of water supplies for livestock at reasonable prices is a major concern to livestock producers. Livestock SA will advocate for the incoming Government to work closely with industry to maintain water security and improve cost efficiencies to ensure sustainable agriculture business in SA. Livestock SA will call for greater Government investment to clean recycled water (e.g., at Bolivar).

Livestock SA also calls for the incoming Government to commit to continued investment in the drought fund and a grants program where agriculturalists can access supporting infrastructure to bring sustainable water supplies onto their properties. If no mains water, then these grants could significantly assist pastoralists.

Continue the Revitalising Private Conservation Program

Livestock SA would like the incoming Government to continue or increase the funding of the Revitalising Private Conservation program.

The initiative is a collaboration between five leading environmental and agricultural organisations (Nature Foundation, Livestock SA, Trees for Life SA, Nature Conservation Society of SA and Conservation Council) and provides technical and financial assistance to current and aspiring native vegetation Heritage Agreement owners across the State.

Heritage Agreements protect native vegetation from development and clearance forever and are vital to combating the impacts of climate change and protecting native species.

In the past 12 months alone, the program has rolled out 3 grant rounds worth \$2 million to 131 successful projects (from 336 applications), facilitated the provision of \$4.5 million worth of in-kind donations and has established 97 new Heritage Agreement applications, protecting an additional 970 hectares of privately-owned native vegetation in South Australia.

There is an increasing need to arm property owners with the tools to manage and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The importance of this program cannot be understated.

Planning and Infrastructure

Review of the Planning, Development, and Infrastructure Act 2016

(Linked to Select Committee on Land Access and Pastoral Lands Bill 2020).

Livestock SA believes if we are to protect and grow existing broadacre agriculture and avoid conflict with other agricultural pursuits, there needs to be policies in place to ensure that with any change, it becomes the responsibility of the landowner making the change, to provide the appropriate buffers and anything else that may be required. Changes could include more intensive agriculture, viticulture, and horticulture. Livestock SA will advocate for a change to legislation with the aim of protecting existing land use when local councils are considering zoning changes. Livestock SA will also seek assurance that as farming values increase, the differential rate will be fairly set.

Livestock SA also believes where broadacre land becomes non-viable due to restrictions imposed by approved new activities, particularly in peri-urban zones, such impositions need to be addressed further. The association remains concerned that in a range of instances broadacre livestock production has already been virtually squeezed out of this zone, with a resultant loss of economic production for the State. It will be necessary to ensure the changes are compatible with two new pieces of legislation being developed by the State Government – the new Biosecurity and Pastoral Acts. Livestock SA's submission discusses the minimum land size for farming, conflicts between primary production industries and flexibility surrounding changes in farming practice.

Livestock SA will also call for the incoming Government to prioritise the backlog of rural road maintenance. The upgrade of the rural road network is needed to address the significant human safety concerns in addition to essential vehicle access along remote roads to keep the industry's supply chain functional.

Upgrade of the South East Drainage Network

Livestock SA is calling for the incoming government to commit \$5 million towards capital works to upgrade the South East Drainage Network. These funds should be in addition to regular maintenance works, as a number of the existing 2,500 structures (which include bridges, regulators, weirs and culverts) are in dire need of replacement or upgrading.

The State Government currently commits \$2.5 million per annum to the South East Water Conservation and Drainage Board, which manages assets with a current replacement value of \$260.5 million (excluding the value of the land).

The South East region is one of the most valuable production areas of South Australia and Livestock SA believes more funds must be dedicated to ensure basic infrastructure needs are delivered for this prosperity to continue.

Health and Wellbeing

Improved health/mental health services in regional and remote areas

Livestock SA will advocate strongly for improved health/mental health services in regional and remote areas.

Regional hospitals are good, but there is an urgent need for a more specific focus on mental health, in particular 24/7 specialist support. According to coronial data collected by the National Rural Health Alliance, between 2009-2018 the average suicide rate in farmers was almost 60% higher than non-farmers. There clearly needs to be better access to specialist trained professionals for mental health care and emergency care in rural, regional and remote areas.

Livestock SA will advocate to greater resources and investment for rural and remote health services, including involvement of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Education

Funding support for Vocational Education and Training programs to develop future work force

(Shared priority with Primary Producers SA - PPSA)

The SA Sheep and Beef Blueprints have identified a shortage in skilled labour as a significant barrier to achieve production goals.

We need to attract more employees to work in the industry. Often agriculture is overlooked when apprenticeships and traineeships are considered. With an ageing workforce, there is a need to attract new trained staff into the industry who can work with modern production and husbandry systems.

Livestock SA, in partnership with PPSA, will advocate for more support, red tape reduction and a greater focus on funding for agricultural training that leads to and supports employment and develops a future work force. The Agribusiness Industry Skills Council could undertake the work in the first instance.

Livestock SA is looking forward to working in partnership with Government to ensure the development of flexible industry-endorsed approaches to training and skills development. So often in the past, we have relied on TAFE-run courses which are not always relevant or flexible to fit in with the seasonal and other demands within agriculture. The tyranny of distance adds further complexity.

Support for isolated children in remote regions

There are thousands of families in geographically isolated areas for whom distance education is the only means to educate their children. Livestock SA will advocate for the incoming Government to commit to supporting the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, in particular the proposal of a Distance Education Teaching Allowance (DETA) as financial recognition of the essential work a distance education tutor performs.