



SADA Newsletter

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SADA Working with SA Power Networks - On farm Access.

As part of the role that SADA plays on SA Power Networks business consultation group SADA has raised the issue of the access onto and egress from farms by SA Power Network contractors. There are a number of reasons as to why a SA Power Network contractor may want to access your farm and commonly tree lopping around their infrastructure is a regular reason.



As a result of that interaction with the business consultation group SADA was invited to address SA Power Network's contractors who do this sort of work to discuss the risks that unrestrained access and egress by vehicle pose to farmers. Not just in the Dairy sector but across the whole of the primary sector in SA. SADA met with the contractors in December 2017 and presented to them about the issues risks involved with simply going on farm.

Using the example of Johne's Disease and the impact that a single positive test will have on a farm's ratings as well as describing how long it takes to recover from a positive result it was impressed upon the group that simply driving through a cow pat may be sufficient to transport the disease to another farm which is Johne's free.

We also played a television ad from McDonalds Japan which was made for the Japanese audience. The ad depicts in a positive light the numbers of controls across the supply chain that the Japanese consumer is reassured of. (See attached to this article a still from that ad showing an ear tag).

The ad does not speak of price. It exclusively concentrates on the quality that is synonymous with the Australian market place. Once this ad was played to the contractors they expressed a greater appreciation that a bio-security incident could have on the reputation of the Australian and by connection, the South Australian dairy product. (If any member wants to see the ad please contact John Elferink at SADA and he will email it to you).



As a consequence of this meeting SADA has been further invited to provide feedback to SA Power Networks on their policy for their 'Protocols for Vegetation Management'. Accordingly, a meeting was held with Alex Lewis and her team from SA Power Networks to discuss the issue.



SADA has been provided with a copy of the SA Power Networks “*Protocol for Vegetation Management Near Power Lines 2016-18.*” The document does acknowledge the issue and dedicates a paragraph to Biosecurity which covers the field across pest plants and plant and animal disease management. There are supplementary documents that outline bio-security protocols but the experience of SA Power Network has been that complexity of protocol directly impacts on compliance.

SADA has been asked to provide input into the next SA Power Networks Protocol on how to access and egress from Dairy farms from a bio-security perspective. Naturally we will be responding, however, if any of our members wants to have input please contact John on john@sada.asn.au.

Election platform

The South Australian Election is just about upon us. Last year SADA assisted PPSA to create an overarching platform for the whole primary sector focussing on those matters that can be directly affected by the next Government whomsoever should form it.

SADA has now produced its own corresponding industry specific policy. The policy document does include all matters that a pertinent to Dairy Farmers, but it does concentrate on those matters state players have influence over. Consequently, matters like communication black spots which are significant matters aren’t mentioned as communications is specifically a matter for the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, we do recognise the Liberal’s commitment to \$10 million to help build communications infrastructure at this early point. We will be interested to see if any other party matches it.



According to polling the contest will be a three way scrap which will pit Labor and Liberal against each other with the insertion of Xenophon’s SA-BEST. It does not appear that SA-Best will field enough candidates to form a government. However, if polling is to be relied upon there is a strong chance that they will hold the

balance of power. *(Picture Adelaide Advertiser featuring Messers Weatherill, Marshall and Xenophon).*

South Australia is a state with a strong and vibrant dairy industry.

The state’s dairy industry produces 500 million litres of milk each year employing 800 South Australians on far m and another 800 South Australians in associated industries.

South Australian dairy produce competes successfully and assertively with other producing states and on the international stage.

Any future Government needs to ensure they help, rather than hinder the development of the dairy industry in SA. The costs of doing business are the biggest concern for nearly all dairy producers. We need help to keep these costs as low as practicable, and ensure we are not hit with extra costs.

Agriculture Energy Investment Plan

SADA maintains the position that the current state of energy provision, both through cost and reliability, needs redress.

The Victorian Government has demonstrated enthusiasm in occupying this space by committing \$30 million to assist that state's farmers to manage energy costs through improved efficiency and new technology. Victoria's Agriculture Investment Plan will assist in lowering farm costs and creating local work through energy assessments.

Cost and reliability issues remain a key issue for dairy farmers in South Australia. Retarded technology speeds and uncertain implementation is stifling investment in South Australia in improvements in energy systems. Coupled with power pricing uncertainty there has been an effective restraint placed on investment in energy knowledge in South Australia.

Such a plan in SA would enhance, develop and leverage off the Victorian Plan as well as private investment.

The Victorian plan, which commences in 2018 will provide:

- Energy efficiency assessments on farm,
- Grants to support farm investment in energy efficiency and generation technology,
- Demonstration of energy efficiency and generation measures on farm,
- Develop links between farmers and relevant business information, and
- Provide commercial opportunities for on farm research in SA.

The South Australian dairy industry has already taken steps in these areas but a similar program to the Victorians will advance the needs of SA farmers to help this state grow.

NRM

SADA accepts that there must be management and governance of natural resource assets and risks as well as investment in NRM. It must be a system which engages, empowers and is accountable to local communities and regions is preferable to a system based on centralised decision-making in Adelaide. The NRM system needs to return to its original intent to allow regional and subregional engagement and decision-making.

NRM Boards should consist of a nimble organisational design with a small core staff, contracting additional work to the most appropriate organisations and people – including resourcing industry/producer groups for engagement, communications and project delivery.

The National Resource Management Scheme (NRM) has been operational in South Australia for a number of years. Generally, SADA believes that the scheme has fallen well short of expectations. SADA believes the scheme could meet the expectations of the primary sector but to do so would mean root and branch reform of the existing system. Less time should be spent on glossy documents and PR and more on practical actions and outcomes.

Current issues impacting the NRM are primarily:

- A top down approach
- A loss of confidence in the NRM by farmers, and
- Too many poor results.

Consequently, SADA expects all parties and candidates to support a reform of the NRM which will result in an organisational structure that will enable the existence of empowered local boards with financial independence and authority over staff.

These simple changes will make the NRM relevant to the local producer and will enable a 'results focussed' approach to local projects with meaningful outcomes.

Commitment to ACCC recommendations

The South Australian Dairyfarmers Association (SADA) expects all political parties at the next election to commit to the recommendations of the ACCC interim report into the Dairy Industry, particularly having regard to the recommended Mandatory Code of Conduct. The ACCC is managed by Rod Simms (*pictured*)

Whilst the report is to the Commonwealth Government, whomsoever forms Government after the next state election, SADA expects that each party commits to assertive communication with the Commonwealth to make the recommended Mandatory Code of Conduct a reality as quickly as possible.

The ACCC determined in their report that the disparity between negotiating parties to a dairy contract was so broken that the usual tools, such a collective bargaining, could not sufficiently remedy the imbalance and consequently recommended a Mandatory Code of Conduct.

SADA agrees with this position and calls on all parties to support the recommendation and to make it a priority of the Minister for Agriculture after the next State election. SADA expects that the Minister for Agriculture ally himself/herself with other state ministers from dairy producing states to endeavour to achieve this outcome.



Planning, Mining and Gas

SADA has expressed their frustration at a number of shortcomings within the orbit of this key area. These issues include a failure by government to adhere to existing policies, alienation of primary sector land, an absence of proper consultation, product and industry devaluation, an abandonment of inclusiveness and an absence of seeking permission from the sector with the development of projects and policies.

The approach of the current state government leaves primary producers with a clear impression that policies and projects that are important to the state government are progressed without reference to the people and industries who are impacted by the government's decisions.

This isn't good enough.

SADA members remain concerned that the current processes around planning, mining and the gas industries are exclusive. SADA accepts that mining and gas development are necessary realities in the



state. Nevertheless, the approach thus far has failed to reassure the farmers of SA that the government isn't prepared to trade off the long-term security of reputation as one of the cleanest and greenest jurisdictions in the world for an immediate return. The absence of consultation reinforces the concern of SADA members.

The primary sector is here today and will be here tomorrow and for as long as people eat and drink. SADA's message is clear do not trade off the future for an outcome today.

In a world that is increasingly populated consumers around the globe will be looking for the security of a clean and green environment to serve their food needs and experience has already proved that consumers are prepared to pay for it. SA presents as pristine and has earned its reputation through diligence and care.

SADA recognises that periodically there will be a need for development of projects and when that occurs there needs to be a process in which the local community is compensated for an impact. Such compensations can be funded through royalty payments made to the SA arising from projects should find their way back to the communities impacted. This means that locals can work to make sure that the impact is minimised and the advantage for the imposition of a project is effectively directed.

Primarily SADA believes that the best way to advance the interests of their members and SA as a jurisdiction is by seeking permission from landowners and the community for any project.

Consequently, SADA calls upon all parties and candidates to commit to a meaningful, consultative and inclusive approach when dealing with planning, mining and gas development proposals. That commitment must include a clear engagement process that is more than a mere act of going through the motions.

Research, Development and Biosecurity

South Australia has a proud history of scientific and academic excellence in the development of the primary sector. In the 20th Century successive government had demonstrated an ongoing commitment to scientific and research excellence in the primary sectors. Sadly, in the 21st Century the SA had dropped the ball with an ongoing erosion of the support frameworks around the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) and the South Australian Research Development Institute (SARDI).

SA exists in an increasingly competitive world. Part of our reputation for being the very best is reinforced by a jurisdictional government that supports its primary sector aggressively. South Australia ranks with the finest and cleanest places in the world and global recognition but in recent times the shield that has been that high standard of support has been reduced in substance and responsiveness.



Consequently, SADA calls upon all parties and candidates to make the following commitments. Firstly, that PIRSA remain its own department without being collapsed under the umbrella of a mega department even more distant from its overseeing minister and secondly, that a commitment to SARDI and PIRSA be expressed in dollar terms well before polling day.

Transport and Infrastructure

SADA calls upon all candidates and parties to commit to the existing 90 day plan. This plan outlines the issues that have been identified and which need to be attended to across the state and which effect all sectors.

Commitment to this plan is expected by the current SA Government and will be expected in the instance of a successor. SADA does not ask for anything more than what has been committed to but does expect that all parties will implement the plan within the timelines agreed with the sector.

This plan has seen a number of iterations and the current plan is a useful, budgeted for and costed program of works that support the primary sector, particularly dairy.

Parties should also commit to the development of underpasses on major roads to enable the safer movement of cows in dairy farming areas. Such a program would enhance safety for road users, farmers and their stock.

Dairy Industry fund update.

We sadly announce the retirement of Denis Mutton and Ken Lyons (*pictured*) from the Dairy Industry Fund Board. With their careful and diligent management, the fund under their command supported a number of important projects to the Dairy Industry in South Australia. Move over, they left the fund in a good financial position going forward. We thank both men for their efforts over the past three years and wish them the very best going forward.



After the last AGM the Board elected Will Rayner to the position of Chair and John Elferink from SADA will take up the role of executive officer. SADA President John Hunt remains a board member with a big welcome going out to Rob Kerin the new addition to the board. Another vacancy is yet to be filled and that will be announced in the near future. It is anticipated the new board will meet in the first week of February to set its agenda for the years. We will keep SADA members updated.

Restricted licences for farm machinery – Remember MR33.

All farmers have to move machines from time to time and doubtlessly they call on family to help them as well. The number you need to remember is 'MR33'. That is the Government form, and there's always one of those, to enable a family member of a primary producer to become licenced to move farm equipment off the farm.

That application form is for an immediate family member of a primary producer who requires a higher class of licence to drive a family farm vehicle to transport produce to a silo or other destination but due to age or driving experience, does not qualify for the appropriate licence class. Information provided on that form will be considered by the Service SA Customer Service Centre Manager before making a decision.



- The applicant must be aged 18 years or over and must have held a class C driver's licence for 12 months.
- If this application is being submitted in person, the applicant will be required to show proof of identity.

In short don't risk it, particularly from an insurance perspective but of course it's also important to obey the law.

For more information go to <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/about-sa/directories/customer-service-centres/forms>.

If anyone has any questions about any topic covered in this newsletter please don't hesitate to contact John Elferink at the SADA offices or on his mobile 0418 406400.

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