

SA Farmer

TAYLOR
GROUP MEDIA

AUTUMN 2023

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a bumper harvest**

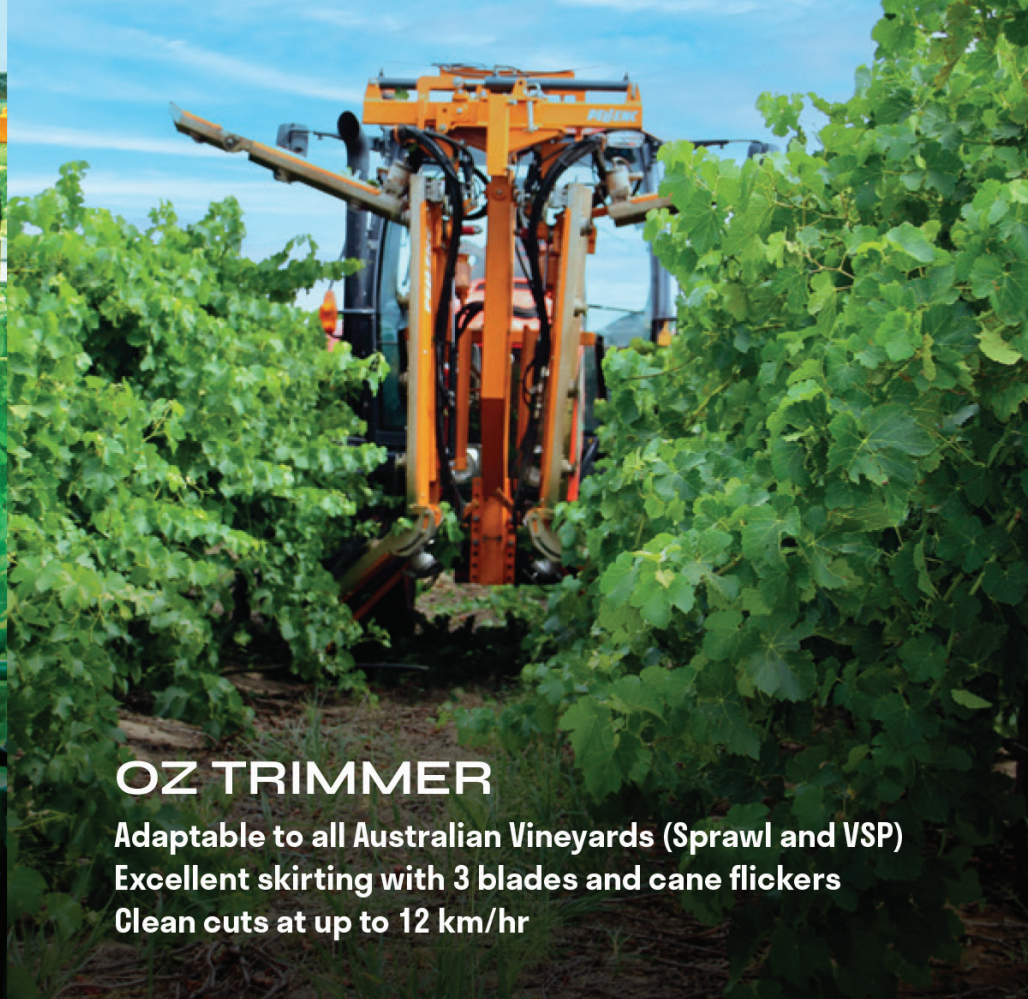
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FUMIGATION PARTNERSHIPS INNOVATION

Welcome to the autumn edition of SA Farmer

WELCOME to the first edition of SA Farmer for 2023.

This autumn edition was brought together thanks to the hard work of the Taylor Group Media team of journalists who have scoured the Riverland, Mallee and Lower North to find primary producers, business owners and industry experts to share insights into South Australian agriculture.

A wide range of people and their passions feature in this edition, starting with a Waikerie flower farmer and florist, a passionate owner and competitor of working dogs, a Renmark West husband-and-wife team tackling a fruit salad block, and a Lamerloo gin maker using some of her home-grown botanicals.

Our regular ag news section showcases what is happening at a state and national level, plus details on the latest in technologies and

harvest reports.

It's a mixed bag of ag news once again, with articles looking at farmer optimism after challenges in 2022, FarmFEST '23 in the Mallee, a GPSA project exploring grain silo bag recycling options, a livestock app taking top place in the Australian eChallenge, increased production in hands-free horticulture, and the release of a spraying efficiency guidebook, among others.

A look inside a family-run dairy business in the Barossa Valley, a South Australian worm farm improving soil quality, crops fighting the rainfall in Freeling, a woman's switch from aged care to agriculture, fresh produce grown and packaged in Virginia, silo destruction, a hydrogen-powered, distillery-producing gin and challenges for almond growers amid the River Murray flood round out the feature stories for this edition.

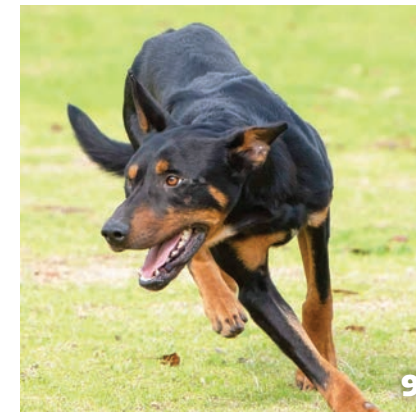
Journalist Hugh Schuitemaker has rounded up three industry experts to provide an update on cropping, wine grapes and citrus. Mallala canola farmer John Lush says this harvest was the best he has seen in 55 years; Wine Grape Council of SA's Adrian Hoffman talks about the upcoming vintage and fruit quality; and Citrus SA chair Mark Doecke discusses flood and fruit fly challenges for growers and market demand.

The SA Farmer publication and free-to-read stories on the website continue to flourish thanks to our devoted readers, advertising supporters and primary producers willing to share their stories with us.

The Taylor Group Media team hopes you enjoy the autumn edition of SA Farmer and as always, until next time, keep updated online by visiting www.safarmer.com.au.

- The SA Farmer team

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EzyBale's Corbin Schuster with freshly harvested lentils in Freeling, just outside of the Barossa.

Cover photo:
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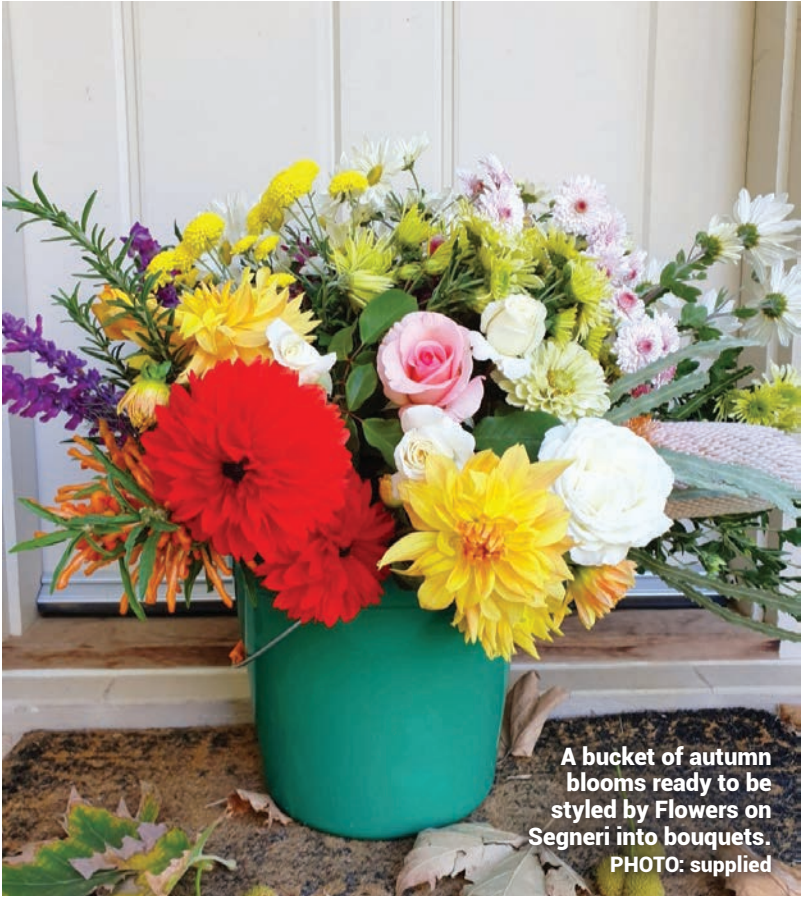


Natasha's love for flowers began as a child when she had a garden outside her cubby house.

Natasha's passion for flowers leads to fulfilment



Natasha loves growing South African natives including proteas. PHOTO: supplied



A bucket of autumn blooms ready to be styled by Flowers on Segneri into bouquets. PHOTO: supplied

"I dived in, experimenting during the early stages with what grew well with a good vase life and consumer popularity."

In 2017, Natasha decided to establish Flowers on Segneri and began advertising her business via social media.

Jacaranda Flowers had been closed for several years and a void existed in the community.

"I realised there was no one that could support with funerals, special occasions, and daily bunches of freshly grown flowers in Waikerie," Natasha said.

Since establishing a Facebook page, her business has bloomed.

Natasha grows varieties of flowers that are suited to the climate in the Riverland.

"I admire some of the beautiful plants my sister grows in Tasmania, but I would not dream of planting them here," she said.

"It is not just worth the challenge, the resources, the watering, and the covering up."

Many of the flowers Natasha grows were inspired by her trips to the Netherlands and South Africa.

"I visited the Aalsmeer flower market and the Floriade festival in Holland," she said, "and I also saw the proteas in South Africa, growing on the side of the road."

She said the proteas in South Africa flourished in a climate similar to the Riverland.

Natasha's peak flower production periods are autumn, winter and spring when she grows proteas, leucadendrons, and ranunculus.

I decided to follow my passion for growing flowers and floristry and see if I could make things work.

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WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTINE WEBSTER

WAIKERIE flower farmer and florist Natasha Waanders' love for growing flowers started when she was a child tending to the garden outside her cubby house.

The owner of Flowers on Segneri goes by the motto "from little seeds, beautiful flowers bloom," and this has become her pathway to a successful florist business.

When Natasha's dad purchased a fruit property which had a section of flowers on it, she took over growing and marketing them.

"The flowers were delivered to Adelaide by courier and were also sold locally," Natasha said.

During the late 1980s, Natasha trained as a

florist, in Adelaide completing work experience with florists both in Adelaide and Waikerie.

Her dedication paid off and she gained part-time employment with Jacaranda Flowers, a much-loved former Waikerie florist owned by the late John Maywald and Ruth Maywald, who now lives in Queensland.

In 1990, Natasha also started working as a carer at Pioneer Haven, an aged care facility at Waikerie, where she still works today.

Natasha married in 1998 and later moved with her husband to their own property where she transplanted her flowers, mainly Dutch iris.

But the millennium drought and harsh water restrictions meant growing flowers was no

longer viable.

She had three boys and family commitments meant her flower farm was put on hold for about 10 years.

Natasha and her family moved to their current property on Segneri Road at Waikerie in 2010.

Her desire to grow flowers was reignited in 2015.

"I decided to follow my passion for growing flowers and floristry and see if I could make things work," she said.

Natasha pursued her dreams as a solo mum.

"With a property and also a part-time job, I must have been crazy," she said.

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Natasha has about 1000 permanent plantings of these varieties, and she is in the process of bulldozing her orange trees to enable her to grow more.

"My parents have been great support and help out with the planting, weed control and other tasks," she said.

During summer when her main varieties are out of season, she also grows dahlias, lisianthus, liliums, and straw flowers.

She grows gums and wattles to use all year round for foliage and often sources these leaves and gumnuts from family and friends.

Flowers on Segneri also sources flowers for its customers from growers in the Barossa, Adelaide Hills, and Adelaide Flower Market.

It is part of the international Grown Not Flown movement, which was co-founded by a Victorian flower grower, Nikki Davey, during the Covid pandemic in 2021.

Natasha said the organisation encouraged consumers to purchase chemically free, locally produced flowers like her own and connects like-minded flower producers.

The Waikerie florist and farmer said flowers sold at retail outlets and markets

often come from overseas.

"The flowers that come overseas are dipped in a combination of chemicals including Roundup," Natasha said.

"They are quarantined and a lot of them are picked before they are even open."

Natasha said her emphasis was to grow and source "ethically grown" flowers from SA and sometimes interstate.

She said being chemical free may mean finding the odd insect among her bouquets.

"That is just a bonus," she said.

Natasha's busiest times are Mother's Day and Valentine's Day and the Covid-19 pandemic also led to a huge demand for her flowers.

This in turn led to her establishing an outside flower stall on her property.

Natasha said her customers are mainly local and interstate family members who order flowers for their loved ones based in Waikerie and its surrounds.

Flowers on Segneri's stall is advertised via social media and is usually open on Thursday and Friday except in January, when stock can be limited due to the heat.

Customers can also order their fresh flowers from Natasha by phoning 0438 882 675.

Natasha said her emphasis was to grow and source "ethically grown" flowers from SA and sometimes interstate.

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supply security and consistent fruit quality for the packing shed and for our customers".

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This article was written by Abbie Franklin of Australian Frost Fans



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Lee Mikan with dogs Gus, Joker, Paddy and Toby.

Teaching young dogs new tricks... Lee's right-hand men

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY ALEXANDRA BULL

WORKING dogs are often one of the most valuable assets on a livestock property – and Pyap's Lee Mikan has his own army by his side every day.

Lee was just 19 when he got his first black and tan kelpie, an interest that started from an early age.

"I grew up on a farm and I had a good friend in Pinnaroo who was right into it," he explained.

"He helped me train him and from there it has just blossomed.

Originally from Pinnaroo, Lee predominately trains kelpies to help himself and others with their farm work. He also has a couple of border collies to call his own, with his dogs working mainly sheep, but cattle and goats too.

"I have a pretty handy border collie called Joker; I have always just liked black and tan kelpies, so I got one of them to start with," he said.

"I have had a varying range of different-coloured dogs over the years: red and tans, reds, blacks, but I predominately have a kelpie team."

Lee and his family breed a maximum of two litters each year, and have been breeding kelpies for 15 years. They keep one pup from each litter and sell the rest to other farming families or kelpie lovers.

Training the dogs is no easy feat. Lee starts the training when the dogs are between three to four months old, making sure they are perfectly up to scratch before coming to work with him at Wanbi Park.

"I get up in the morning, go over to the kennels and pick the six to eight dogs that are coming to work at the farm," he said.

"Then we go and start our day, get some sheep and do some yard work."

As soon as the young pups show they are interested in stock, Lee starts training them on the weekends at home. It is usually an eight-month process until the pups are ready to be used as working dogs.

"I usually show our little pups... the sheep between eight to 10 weeks old," he said.

"I look for natural instinct and usually most of them show a bit by then.

"The dogs really start their training by four months old when their legs are a little bit longer and they can keep up with a few quiet lambs. Then they go on from there.

"I just go through the stages, until they are fully trained by 12 months. The dogs are at work with me from then on."

When looking for the perfect working dog, Lee said any herding type dog (kelpie, border collie, koolie) is easy to train, provided it has a natural instinct.

"You can't teach a dog that doesn't have natural instinct to do something it doesn't naturally want to do," he said.

"We start with three to four quiet sheep, because the quickest way to train a working dog to the level that you need them to go to work at is to build confidence.

"Every time those sheep are walking away from that pup towards me, the dog is having a win so it builds its confidence.

"Of course, they get older, they get bigger and more confident. So, we are just trying to build their confidence up to a point where they are happy and love doing what they do."

One thing that comes with breeding and training kelpies is working dog auctions, with Lee recently selling one



Working dogs Toby, Gus, Joker and Paddy are part of Lee Mikan's army of working dogs, who accompany him to work each day at Wanbi Park.

of his kelpies, Diesel, for \$14,000 at the 2022 Lucindale Working Dog Auction.

"Diesel is a dog that we bred here and he was two years old when we sold him," Lee said.

"He is the highest price we have sold, and he was the third highest price at auction on the day, so I am happy with that."

Lee said Diesel was the perfect example of a working dog, possessing a "great attitude, huge engine and a huge drive to work".

"It didn't matter how hot it got, how hard it got," he said. "Diesel has got a huge heart and would just go."

Every now and then Lee gets a dog with less appetite for work, posing a challenge.

"A few pups I have sourced from elsewhere lack desire and drive, and they don't suit my job," he said.

"We try to find them a home where they are suited to. If they are going to be a lounge lizard and lay around, I'll find them a pet home.

"If they are a little bit too what I call 'paddocky', I'll obviously find a farmer looking for a paddock dog and try and place them where they need to go.

"Then you can get the flip side of it; you can get a dog that's just all go, full noise, a bit hard headed and ignorant, and that causes the other end of the challenge."

With so many dogs coming and going over the years, Lee said it was hard to remain detached.

"With Diesel, we decided as a family at six months he was going to be an auction dog, but you still build the bond with them and the dog is still your mate," he said.

"There's dogs you do get attached to and there's dogs that you don't get attached to.

"They can brighten your day up when you are having a bad day pretty quickly.

"I love training them and working with them. I get to spend every day with my best mates."

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Toby working the sheep at the 2022 Barmera Sheep Dog Trials.
PHOTO: Shadow's Farm Photography

We are just trying to build their confidence up to a point where they are happy and love doing what they do.



Darrel and Charmaine found their Niche, and stuck to it

WORDS ELYSE ARMANINI

FROM a third-generation family fruit salad block to a successful dried fruit business, a husband and wife team are navigating the challenges and triumphs of growing 17 acres of fruit together.

Darrel and Charmaine Size run Niche Fruits out of their property in Renmark West. Darrel is dubbed the “muscle and brains” behind the business and “chief boss man”, while Charmaine takes on the role of product developer, social media guru, chief fruit packer, fruit dipper and marketing manager.

Darrel’s mum and grandmother bought the original 10-acre block in 1957, and in 1998 he and Charmaine took it over.

The pair grow a range of stone fruit including apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums and peacharines, plus pears for sun drying and several varieties of citrus for dehydrating.

The predominate fruit is the humble apricot, which makes up roughly 2500 of more than 6400 fruit trees on the property .

“I’ve always had a passion for growing, it’s what I love,” Darrel said.

“When you grow your own stuff and make your own decisions it’s more fun.

“You’re doing your decisions – and your failures. There’s only one person you can kick up the butt if it doesn’t work.

“The first 10-acre block was Mum’s and we’d always be over there working. My brother used to own our property. We’d always say, ‘You know if you ever want to sell...’ and it happened within a few years.”

In 2008, Darrel and Charmaine bought the property and registered Niche Fruits as a business in 2013.

“July will be 10 years of the Niche Fruits side

“With a fruit salad block, you’ve always got things coming in and you feel like you’re forever working...”

of things,” Charmaine said.

“We were talking about it and wondered where the 10 years had gone.”

For nine years the couple made a fortnightly trip to the Mount Pleasant Farmer’s Market, over two hours away, but decided to stop late last year.

“We would get to the fortnight and we’d have nothing done on the property,” Charmaine said.

“Niche Fruits has exploded and I can’t keep up with it all.

“The fruit that I would have had going out as wholesale or to the market is ours – and I can sell it.

“So it’s going straight to the end user.”

Darrel and Charmaine supply other businesses across the state, including Aussie Apricots in Mypolonga, Singing Magpie Produce in Monash, and The Green Shed at Gumeracha, and their products are available to purchase at visitor information centres.

Fresh fruit used to be a part of the Niche Fruits business model, but when Covid-19 and fruit fly hit, the model had to change.

“Covid stopped backpackers coming in, so there was a hole in trying to get labour, then fruit fly came along,” Darrel said.

“We lost a lot of fruit and a lot of dollars, because when that came and hit us, it was right in the middle of picking. We lost thousands of dollars and it was a hard pill to swallow, but we got through it.

“Fruit fly is still an issue – you don’t want it on your property – but everything is processed here and when we send it off we know it’s already processed, dried and safe.

“We had such great experience with backpackers – made lifetime friends with a lot of them too – but Covid killed that for us.

“This year we started using some teenagers

(for picking). We’d rather pay them good dollars – more than the award rate – because if they can do the work an adult is doing, they should be looked after.”

The Niche Fruits harvesting process seems never-ending, with apricots, plums, peaches and peacharines picked between December and January, before moving onto pears in February and nectarines in late March.

“With a fruit salad block, you’ve always got things coming in and you feel like you’re forever working,” Darrel said.

“This time of the year, you’re doing your whole year’s worth of selling in a matter of months.

“We are predominately apricots, but we’re trying to grow more peach nectarines, and more plums. We’re doing trials on another plum that we can actually run over the cutting machine.”

Like many primary producers in the Riverland and beyond, growing produce is not without its challenges for Niche Fruits.

“Mother nature has a wicked sense of humour. Last season we had hail and it took out 85 per cent of our fruit,” Darrel said.

“Last winter we had that rain, and it’s a bit hard to believe but 300 metres of our trees were under water.

“In the middle it was just above my knee for about a fortnight. I had pumps going non-stop.

“It affected some of our fruit and killed quite a few of our young apricots. So, that’s just another challenge for this year.”

Using social media, Charmaine has helped grow and connect with the customer base, showing how their fruit is grown, cut, dried and packaged.

“This year I’d like to get Darrel’s side more, because people like the story,” she said.



ABOVE: Dried fruit grown in Australia’s Riverland region by Niche Fruits, a third-generation farming family. PHOTOS: supplied



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Robin's Mallee Spirit

WORDS DEIRDRE GRAHAM

Lameroo woman Robin Valentine's main job is as a health professional, but these days she spends much of her spare time making gin – a hobby that has quickly expanded into a business called Mallee Spirit.

Robin's interest in gin began as a university student.

"I guess initially I fell in love with gin at the 'uni' bar when I was doing my first university subject," she said.

"That was a long time ago, so, yes, I have always loved a gin and tonic.

"My husband Ron thought 'Hey, I have a great idea, my wife drinks so much gin, what about if I bought her a still for a birthday present, then she wouldn't have to spend so much money on gin'.

"Then I started looking into the whole concept of manufacturing gin and wanted to know more about it, and realised that actually it is illegal to own a still.

"So, I thought I better get myself legal."

In December 2021 Robin studied a one-week course in spirit production at the University of Adelaide, and now her business features three types of gin.

"I have a myrtle gin – it is very citrus heavy, so lots of lemon myrtle and also

some aniseed myrtle," she said.

"I have a spice gin which has a lot of star anise, cardamom, and cinnamon in it, and I now have made a strawberry gin, which has lots of strawberries and a little of lavender in there for a little bit of interest."

Making gin can be a complicated and time-consuming process.

"I get a neutral spirit and put it through my beautiful still called 'Nellie', then you add your botanicals and watch as the magic unfolds," Robin said.

Each run takes between eight and 14 hours, and the still needs checking as the run progresses.

"You taste the gin and smell the gin as it is coming out to decide which parts of that run you want to keep," she said.

"You can't just go 'Okay, I will turn the still on and walk away and do nothing for the next few hours'.

"You really have got to keep an eye on it and monitor it as it is coming through as to whether you like it."

Robin's goal is to include as much Mallee produce in her gins as possible.

"I am trying my very hardest to grow a lot myself, but there is a lot that is impossible to do so," Robin said.

"I do have juniper growing on my property, but I think it is going to be a long time before I can harvest any of it.

"The coriander and the myrtle are from my garden."

For herself, Robin likes a myrtle gin and tonic in summer, and in winter enjoys the spicy gin, either straight or in a Negroni.

"I think there are like 450 distilleries and counting in Australia at the moment, and everyone has their definition of what a good gin is," she said.

"It becomes a very individual thing. I like my gin to be clean and interesting.

"When you go and have a really nice glass of wine, people say 'Oh, it has got chocolate and berry notes etc.'. Well, when I make a gin I know what is in it, so therefore I want to be able to taste it in the final product."

So far Robin has exhibited at local shows including the Pinnaroo Show and Field Day, Parilla markets, and the Karoonda market, where she will return this year.

"I have done a few shows at Lameroo football and over at Murrayville as well, which has been fun," she said.

"They have been really interesting, with a good reception, and (it has been) good to talk to people.

"When it is cold I do a warmed mulled apple and I add a shot of gin into that, and on a cold football day it is pretty yummy and very popular.

"Most of our orders are still local.



Robin Valentine has embraced making her own gin in a still gifted to her by husband Ron. PHOTOS: supplied

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Farmer optimism up, shaking off 2022 challenges

SOUTH Australian farmers finished 2022 with growing optimism following a year of challenges such as high input costs, excessive rainfall and flooding, and biosecurity concerns.

The last quarterly Rabobank Rural Confidence Survey, released mid-December, found national farmer sentiment was edging back up after four consecutive quarters of decline, with fewer farmers now expecting agricultural conditions to worsen and eased concerns on commodity prices and biosecurity.

The survey showed South Australian farmer confidence edged higher after a drop in the last quarter, and rural sentiment was recorded as the highest in the country.

Rabobank Australia CEO Peter Knoblanche said the survey reflects an enduring confidence in agriculture, despite the "mixed bag" of challenges farmers continue to face.

"Domestic and global demand for

our rural commodities underpins productivity and profitability across sectors, and, with three years of improved seasonal conditions now under our belts, farmers have the confidence to make long-term investments into their businesses," Mr Knoblanche said.

"That said, we're still seeing the seasonal resilience of farming businesses being tested – many have weathered droughts and bushfires to then face extreme wet conditions, which create challenges of a different nature. This has reined in the earlier seasonal optimism for some, while for others La Nina will deliver a record grain harvest and set up their feed base and soil moisture reserves for the new year.

"It certainly hasn't been a one-size-fits-all this year, which is driving the varied responses of farmers across states and sectors."

The survey, completed in November,

found 15 per cent of farmers were expecting improved business conditions in the coming 12 months (up from 14 per cent), while 50 per cent had a stable outlook (up from 43 per cent).

A total of 31 per cent expected operating conditions to deteriorate (down from 36 per cent with that view previously).

The high cost of farm inputs – such as fuel, fertiliser and energy – remains a concern for nearly half of farmers (49 per cent) who expect the agricultural economy to worsen, however this has dropped from the 62 per cent who had that concern in the middle of the year.

Mr Knoblanche said inflation was not found to be significantly weighing on rural confidence, with only 3 per cent of farmers listing it as cause for their pessimistic outlook.

Interest rates were reported as a concern by 11 per cent of farmers expecting deteriorating business

conditions in the year ahead, down from 15 per cent with that concern in the previous survey, despite recent interest rate hikes.

While the wet spring delivered excellent seasonal conditions for many regions, it also presented significant challenges for grain growers coming into the summer harvest period, Mr Knoblanche said.

"While growers in some parts of Western Australia and South Australia will reap record, or near-record, crops, the La Nina roulette means many growers in Victoria and NSW are coming to terms with the impact of flooding and excessive rain and some are still unable to even get out into their paddocks," he said.

"With low-lying paddocks under water for extended periods of time, these growers are facing yield, volume and quality downgrades as well as, for some, simply un-harvestable crops."

SA Farmer

FarmFEST '23 hits the Mallee

FARMERS, agricultural consultants and advisors from across SA, Victoria and NSW are invited to attend workshops and field events currently being held in the Mallee.

Mallee Sustainable Farming's (MSF) new initiative, FarmFEST '23, started on Monday, February 13 and will run until Friday, March 3, with topics covered including MSF research updates, developing variable rate technologies for Mallee farms, livestock nutrition updates, practical on-farm demonstrations of new weed smart spray technologies, soil amelioration for the Mallee and more.

"FarmFEST '23 is an exciting new approach to promoting and inviting farmers to select one or two key events where they can gain the latest technical information and research results relevant to their farming business," said MSF's board chair Nicole Byrne.

"Mallee Sustainable Farming are proud to host over 15 different events across three states. The events also allow our research partners such as Michael Moodie from Frontier Farming to share their expertise and key results coming from on-farm trials and demos."

The 2022-23 harvest "has been crazy in terms of delays and the extra time taken to harvest some near-record crops for many farmers", according to MSF FarmFEST '23 co-ordinator and

project manager Tanja Morgan.

"With many soil profiles almost bursting at the seams with available soil moisture farmers will be on the front foot when it comes to sowing the 2023 crop as early as possible," she said.

"As a result of last season's harvest there is less time to prepare and make critical decisions for the coming season's crop and livestock program.

"MSF decided to host the 15 different events over a short window of time, so that farmers could get on with their 2023 cropping program with minimal disruption.

"The FarmFEST '23 program provides a smorgasbord of different events that farmers can simply pick and choose what events they consider to be most valuable. Each event will also include a social aspect where those attending can have a yarn, 'chew the fat' and share their ideas and experiences from the event.

"Of course, information and key take home messages will be made available through the MSF website, social media and printed summaries."

All events are free to attend.

Registration can be made by visiting the MSF website (www.msfp.org.au/events) and following the prompts for more information and registration through Eventbrite.



Chris McDonough works with a group of local farmers at a recent field day, held by Mallee Sustainable Farming, looking at developing practical strategies to manage Mallee seeps, which will be a feature in some FarmFEST '23 events.



GPSA project exploring options for grain silo bags

A PROJECT looking at options to reuse and recycle grain silo bags in South Australia is under way, thanks to a \$60,000 grant.

Awarded to Grain Producers SA (GPSA), the Circular Economy Market Development Grant program – through Green Industries SA – enables GPSA to undertake a feasibility study to better understand the challenges of repurposing and reducing waste of grain silo bags.

GPSA chief executive officer Brad Perry said grain producers had increasingly raised the problem of used silo bags and lack of recycling avenues available.

"There is currently a successful recycling stewardship scheme for plastic chemical containers called 'DrumMuster' as well as pilots for plastic seed and fertiliser bags with 'BagMuster', however there is a gap when it comes to used grain silo bags," he said.

"Through the Grain Silo Bag Circular Economy Feasibility Study we are seeking to understand the scale of silo bag waste on grain farms in South Australia, what recycling avenues currently exist, and what investment strategies can be developed to provide

industry participation and circular solutions for used silo bags.

"Grain producers want to harvest their crops as quickly as possible and are increasingly utilising temporary plastic grain silo bags as a convenient storage solution.

"These silo bags are single use and once finished with, they are stored on farm or producers try to find alternate uses.

"As use of silo bags grows, the amount of plastic waste generated on farms is increasing, as is awareness of the associated waste management responsibilities.

"It's hoped that this feasibility study will lead to potentially innovative recycling solutions to this problem if no existing recycling avenues are identified as feasible."

GPSA will work with a consultant to develop the feasibility study, as well as an awareness campaign aimed to educate key stakeholders identified in the study on used grain silo bag recycling, avenues for recycling, innovative uses, and circular economy best practices.

Grain Producers SA represents 4500 grain farming businesses in South Australia.



South Australian Kate Gunn took out the 2022 Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research

Will a South Aussie take out a major award again?

JUST under a week remains to nominate a worthy recipient for the Kondinin Group and ABC Rural 2023 Farmer of the Year Awards.

The awards recognise excellence in rural and regional Australia, and offer an opportunity to celebrate individuals and families involved in Australian agriculture, encompassing a diverse range of sectors and service provisions.

South Australians have taken out multiple awards in recent years, including:

- 2022 Agricultural Student of the Year went to James Easter, Adelaide
- 2022 Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research went to Dr Kate Gunn, Adelaide
- 2022 Award for Excellence in Technology went to James Venning, Bute
- 2020-21 Award for Excellence in Technology went to Matthew Davey, Clinton Centre

Kondinin Group general manager of research, Ben White, is anticipating another outstanding crop of winners in 2023.

"Over the course of the awards, we have received around 1000 nominations," he said.

"It has been great to see nominations change over that time, and reflect the shifting landscape of Australian agriculture. This year we have modified an existing award to support this.

"The Award for Excellence in Diversification will now be known as the Award for Excellence in Diversification

and Sustainability, identifying the growing appreciation of our role in the sustainability of our land, our farming enterprises, our industry and our communities."

Potential winners of this award will be drawn from finalists in the Australian Farmer of the Year and Young Farmer of the Year categories, as well as nominees selected by senior judges as standouts in this field.

Nominations can be made in the following categories:

- Australian Farmer of the Year
- Rural Community Leader of the Year
- Agricultural Student of the Year
- Young Farmer of the Year
- Rural Consultant of the Year Award
- Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research

Visit the website (www.farmeroftheyear.com.au) to nominate by Tuesday, February 28 at 11.59pm.



AG NEWS

Livestock app takes top prize in Australian eChallenge



Trait Select team members Hector Mackenzie (left) and Tom Gameau receiving their prize at the Australian eChallenge 2022 awards night. PHOTO: supplied.

A SMARTPHONE app that allows farmers to better select livestock at auctions won top prize in the University of Adelaide Australian eChallenge late last year.

The app – dubbed an "ingenious idea" by the university – will allow farmers to filter through large numbers of animals available at auction using multiple prioritised breeding preferences and identify which animals are best suited to their enterprise.

They will have access to an Australia-wide genetic pool of livestock.

Trait Select was devised by a team of third-year agricultural science students made up of Tom Gameau, Hector Mackenzie and Liam Vanschaik, who all hail from South Australian farms.

The annual Australian eChallenge is run by the university's Business School and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Entrepreneurship), and Dean of Business, Professor Noel Lindsay, said the eChallenge teams developed an "exciting and surprising breadth of innovations".

"Each team has carefully considered some of the problems we all face, individually and as a society, and successfully developed interesting and novel solutions that have real potential for commercial success," he said.

"The aim of the Australian eChallenge is to help students build entrepreneurial capability, develop new ways of thinking about problems and solutions, and increase their capacity to think creatively and act decisively.

"In whichever direction these students

head next, we know that we have helped prepare them to be agile and resourceful, adaptable and resilient, and to harness failures and build on them for success."

As overall winners, the team of three took home \$10,000 in cash, \$1000 worth of consultancy services from Maddens Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys, and a package worth \$4000 including permanent residency for 12 months and Accelerator business workshops at the university's ThincLab business incubator.

Teams competing in the eChallenge pitch business proposals for their new, previously unfunded business concepts, to potential investors from the local business community.

They compete for a share of the total prize pool of more than \$62,200 in cash and prizes, and the prestige of being awarded the most outstanding Australian eChallenge entrepreneurial venture of the year.

Other entrepreneurial ideas from the teams of undergraduate and postgraduate students focussed on solutions to solve ambulance ramping, assist with rehab after serious injuries, help people manage money better and help domestic violence victims contact the support agencies discreetly.

The Australian eChallenge is a competition-based learning experience that develops strategic business thinking for early-stage entrepreneurial ventures.

Run since 2001, it is the longest running program of its kind in Australia and the pre-accelerator program is a proving ground for future entrepreneurs.

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Hands-free horticulture sees higher production

LABOUR use has decreased on horticulture and dairy farms, and increased on broadacre farms across the country over the past few years, according to the latest ABARES survey results.

ABARES (Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences) executive director, Dr Jared Greenville, said despite the decline in labour use, agricultural production had increased over the same period – indicating that farms have adapted to constrained labour supply.

“The total number of workers used by Australian horticulture farms decreased by around 20 per cent (29,300 workers) over the last three years, mainly due to a decrease in

overseas working holiday makers,” Dr Greenville said.

“When we look at changes to peak labour use, we have seen a reduction of close to 35,000 workers on horticulture farms compared to three years ago.

“Over the same period, horticulture production has increased by around three per cent, with farms adapting to constrained labour supply by finding ways to improve productivity, making greater use of capital equipment in the place of labour, along with increasing hours worked by employees.

“Farmers have looked to non-labour means of bringing the harvest in. Around 40 per cent of horticulture farmers have used machinery, like

fruit picking machines, to help with the harvest. Others have altered crop plantings for a longer peak harvest.

“Large farms accounted for the almost all of the decrease in horticulture labour use over the last three years, and the largest farms also had the most difficulty recruiting.

“Labour use increased on Australian broadacre farms between 2018-19 and 2020-21, driven by improved seasonal conditions and higher production.

“Labour use declined on dairy farms over the same period, mainly due to decreases in the number of operating farms and the number of domestic and overseas workers per farm.”

The full ABARES Labour use in Australian agriculture report and data

visualisation can be found by visiting the website (www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/labour).

Farmers have looked to non-labour means of bringing the harvest in.



Spraying efficiency highlighted in new guidebook

A NEW technical and troubleshooting resource for mixing and batching agricultural chemicals is now available for grain growers.

The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) guidebook is a key outcome of a four-year GRDC extension investment into spray efficiency and efficacy, which also included hands-on sprayer calibration and application workshops for growers.

Seventeen full-day workshops have been delivered so far, with the remaining three to be run this year. Mixing and Batching for Agricultural Chemical Application – A Technical Guide With Case Studies of Australian Grain Growers And Spray Contractors showcases day-to-day practicalities, with grower case studies for various enterprise sizes, bringing different concepts, ideas and creative engineering to spray operations.

The case studies included in the guidebook cover a range of operation sizes (both grower and contractor) and crop mixes in different rainfall zones. They explore the individual requirements – such as farm infrastructure, equipment and staff management – needed to service their spray operations.

WA-based spray specialist Bill Campbell said the guidebook contains information on chemical formulations and the correct mixing order, with a summary covering combining common agricultural chemical formulations together and a brief overview of common mishaps that can occur, and tips on how to avoid them.

“Fastest is definitely not always the best when it comes to mixing chemicals,” Mr Campbell said.

“Always follow label recommendations and check product compatibility and manufacturers’ mixing guidelines.

“Use good-quality water and consider using an adjuvant to improve the physical compatibility of certain tank mixes.

“When mixing a batch for the first time, conduct a jar test that replicates the tank mix. This will reduce the risk of financial losses and time-consuming and environmentally unfavourable situations, in cases where the mix doesn’t turn out as intended.”

GRDC grower relations manager Jo Wheeler said the spray workshops were an example of how the GRDC’s National Grower Network (NGN) operates.

“The National Grower Network has been established to support meaningful engagement with grain growers, improve understanding of local issues and assist in the development of investments that are locally relevant and have on-farm impact,” Ms Wheeler said.

“Growers love to look over the fence to see what their neighbours are doing to improve their production practices. The guidebook takes this one step further by including grower experiences on mixing and batching from a wider geographic area.”

Aspects to consider to identify efficiency gains for mixing and batching agricultural chemicals include:

- water availability – travelling to and from a water source wastes time
- labour availability
- farm size and layout – the amount of travel time, shifting spray equipment and chemicals
- spray units – suitability of mixing and batching equipment, size and number of units to suit farm conditions, mobility of the units
- ease of decontamination
- OHS – eye wash/shower/other safety issues should be readily accessible.

AG NEWS

MIXING AND BATCHING FOR AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL APPLICATION

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The guidebook is available on the GRDC website (grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications).

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AG NEWS



Managing heavy vehicle risks this vintage

VINTAGE is a notoriously busy time.

SA wine businesses are being reminded about heavy vehicle use and safety ahead of the 2023 vintage.

Last year 1.73 million tonnes of grapes were picked and crushed around Australia and almost all of that fruit was transported to wineries by heavy vehicles using public roads, prompting a reminder from the SA Wine Industry Association (SAWIA).

"With heavy vehicle use comes safety risk and to help manage that risk, chain of responsibility (CoR) laws exist," said SAWIA business services manager Henrik Wallgren.

"CoR laws share heavy vehicle safety responsibilities by all parties in the chain: growers, contractor, transporters, wineries."

Obligations include ensuring that goods are not overloaded, that they are secured properly, that vehicles remain roadworthy and that drivers are not encouraged or pressured to speed or drive while fatigued.

Under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), individuals can be fined a maximum penalty of \$354,000 or five years imprisonment, or both, and corporations can be fined \$3.5m for breaches that cause risk of death or serious injury.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) works with industry to raise awareness of safety issues and its authorised officers and police officers have a role in ensuring compliance.

The NHVR and SAWIA held a pre-harvest engagement session in Langhorne Creek in January to remind wine businesses of their obligations in the lead-up to vintage.

Key tips for wineries, contractors and growers include:

- Ensure transport booking systems are flexible and allow for unexpected delays without penalty.
- Ensure reasonable arrangements are made to manage loading and unloading time slots.
- Ensure drivers and their schedulers can be contacted in case of delays.
- Establish contingency plans in advance in case of delays.
- Ensure vineyards and wineries have suitable places for drivers to rest.
- Ensure loads are appropriately restrained and vehicles not overloaded before leaving a site.
- Establish a process to address overloaded vehicles, i.e. who or what caused the issue and how to avoid overloading happening again.

NHVR's Steve Eickhoff said the group's vision was to have a safe, efficient, and productive heavy vehicle industry serving the needs of Australia.

"Chain of responsibility exists to eliminate or minimise risk to the safety of the heavy vehicle industry and wider community," he said.

"It ensures everyone who works with heavy vehicles – from the business that employs a driver to the place where goods are delivered – is accountable for safety."

To ensure a consistent national approach to chain of responsibility in the wine industry and to assist wine businesses meet their obligations, a Registered Industry Code of Practice is being developed by SAWIA and the NHVR, in partnership with Australian Grape & Wine Inc (AGW).

SAWIA and AGW held stakeholder sessions with wine industry representatives around Australia from 2020 to 2022 to source information and feedback to feed into the code, which will be drafted this year.

Once the code of practice is finalised, an educational program will be conducted across Australian wine regions and online, to educate parties in the wine supply chain about the code and how it can be practically implemented in their respective businesses.

Mr Wallgren said it was important for the wine industry to have its own code of practice as it faced its own unique set of challenges.

"For example, grape spills, which are the most visible safety risk in the wine industry, can cause vehicles to lose traction, they are difficult to clean up, residue can make roads sticky and gluey, and many of the spills are happening at night when they are more difficult to see," he said.

"Across Australian wine regions there are different grapes being picked, different bins and trucks being used, and different distances being travelled, which all contribute different challenges.

"The code of practice must be comprehensive, practical and flexible to provide effective guidance to all members of the Australian grape and wine supply chain."

State exports continue to boom amid China turnaround

AS trade ties with South Australia's biggest export market, China, pick up after months of decline, the demand for the state's exports continues to rise.

In the 12 months to November 2022, local exports hit \$15.9bn – up 22 per cent on the previous year, and just shy of the recent record-high \$16bn to the year ending October 2022.

Strong prices, good seasons and reduced global supply have led to big increases in our second (the United States, up 38 per cent to \$1.5bn) and third (Malaysia, up 35 per cent to \$1.3bn) biggest export markets – largely driven by refined metals, wine and meat.

The increased demand for canola across Europe led to huge spikes in France (up to 595 per cent) and Belgium (up 182 per cent), with both markets looking to SA after previously relying on war-torn Ukraine and drought-affected Canada.

"It's clear demand for our world-class exports continues to grow and South Australian businesses and producers are taking advantage," said SA Minister for Trade and Investment, Nick Champion (pictured below).

"We want to keep building trade ties with our biggest export partner while tapping into new and emerging markets.

"Opening up these partnerships will ensure a big year for local industries and help create jobs."

Exports from China remained steady of the past 12 months at \$2.2bn, following a low of \$1.85bn to the year ending June 2022 – showing a gradual turnaround in trade after tariffs were imposed on products such as wine.

The value of wine exports – SA's third biggest commodity, up 5 per cent to \$1.3bn – turned around to growth after boosts in other markets including the US, Canada, Malaysia and Thailand.

Wheat exports were up 60 per cent to \$2.2bn, fuelled by new markets in Sudan and South Korea, plus increases to several existing markets including China.

Global supply pressures also caused the average export price of wheat to increase by 39 per cent from \$350 per tonne to \$486 per tonne, benefiting local producers.



The canola National Variety Trial at Spalding, SA. PHOTO: GRDC

SA sowing guide helps pick winners

A NEW crop sowing guide has been released to help South Australian grain growers determine the best crop varieties for their situation.

Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) released the 2023 South Australian Crop Sowing Guide late last year.

GRDC collaborates with the South Australian Grain Industry Trust and the South Australian Research and Development Institute of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (SARDI-PIRSA) every year to develop the sowing guide.

The guide details information on current varieties of the major winter cereal and pulse crops, as well as National Variety Trials (NVT) yield, disease and pest resistance results for the past five years, plus information on crop quality attributes and other agronomic considerations.

The 2023 edition covers wheat, barley, oat, canola, field pea, lentil, faba bean, lupin, chickpea and vetch varieties.

South Australian agronomy consultant Craig Davis said the independent results in the sowing guide help growers decide what varieties to plant and how to manage them to maximise potential.

"The sowing guides are a critical decision-making tool to differentiate between varieties in terms of their yield performance, disease rating and grain quality," he said.

"Growers would not have the same level of confidence to switch varieties if it wasn't for the information available in the guides – it really helps generate better outcomes for growers."

GRDC manager NVT (south) Trevor Garnett explained the guide draws on results from the NVT program, which is updated annually and draws on data from the previous year.

"We release the sowing guide in spring to ensure growers can access the past year's results in time to make variety decisions for next season and in time to source the seed they want," said Mr Garnett.

"The sowing guide really is the definitive source of all the information growers need to choose the most suitable variety for any given location and situation."

The NVT program is the largest independent co-ordinated trial network in the world. Across Australia each year, GRDC manages more than 650 trials sown at over 300 locations for 10 crop species.

SARDI-PIRSA research officer Melissa McCallum contributed to and edited the guide, on which the SARDI-PIRSA pathology and agronomy research teams collaborated.

"SARDI-PIRSA values the opportunity to provide a comprehensive overview of the new varieties across all crop types relevant to growers in SA," she said.

"It is wonderful that SARDI-PIRSA continues to contribute to the guide and provide growers with an independent view on how the new and current varieties are suited to SA."

The 2023 crop sowing guide can be downloaded (www.grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/all-publications/nvt-crop-sowing-guides) or a hard copy can be ordered by calling (1800 110 044) or emailing (ground-cover-direct@canprint.com.au).



Lisa Werner says Jersey Fresh's new range is "a little naughty, but still a healthy treat".

Jersey Fresh brings flavour to the Barossa

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY IMOGEN EVANS

ON the western ridge of the Barossa Valley you'll find where the locals go for all their dairy and milk needs.

Jersey Fresh is the family-run business that has been supplying sweet and creamy milk since 2004.

Now, the brand is releasing its much-anticipated line of flavoured milks.

Included in the range is a collection of flavours including strawberry and chocolate.

The milks also offer a much healthier alternative to the sweet treat, with Jersey Fresh keeping the ingredients all natural.

Jersey Fresh's Lisa Werner said she was excited to finally bring the new creation to the public.

"It's taken us a little while to develop the flavoured milk on the back of that, as we've been looking for syrups that are natural and low sugar," she said.

"We found a brand to work with that has low GI, raw sugar, who are Australian.

"There's nothing fake and nasty in these milks."

Due to the natural flavourings, the milks lack the typical bright colours of other flavoured milk, but Lisa said there's nothing missing when it comes to the taste.

"We want something that tastes like a treat, tastes a little bit naughty, but it's actually a healthier option," she said.

"It's really been beautifully

refreshing, I think the staff have been drinking as much as the customers."

In the lead-up to the new collection, Jersey Fresh also released its fan-favourite collaboration with Bean Addiction coffee roasters in Nuriootpa.

"Their cold brew coffee really complements our milk because it's naturally quite sweet and creamy, and cold brew by nature is not as acidic as an espresso," Lisa said.

Their 'cold broo' coffee is also a healthier option, with no added sugar in the recipe.

"People who are addicted to more mainstream iced coffees in supermarkets may not be a fan, but if you're looking for a café style coffee you'll love it," Lisa said.

"I'm a busy woman on the go, and to be able get that caffeine hit without the sugar is great."

Jersey Fresh, as the name implies, works with the Jersey cow breed to create its products.

According to the brand, the breed is naturally high in butterfat and protein, making for a sweet and creamy milk.

Despite the cows not producing litres of milk per day like larger breeds, Jersey Fresh believes it is able to make it up in quality.

The Jersey breed is also known as the cows that came to Australia via the first fleet, due to their hardy nature and minimal fuss.

With the belief dairy products should be "simple and honest," Jersey fresh does not homogenise its milk.



Jersey Fresh is excited to have finally released its new range of flavoured milks.

It also uses sustainable farming methods to grow its crops, with the herd feeding on a diet of hay, silage, grain and fresh pasture.

Another essential for Jersey Fresh has been its local Barossa Farmer's Market, which Lisa said has become its main shopfront.

"It's such a great opportunity to meet our customers, speak to people on a regular basis and be among the atmosphere," she said.

"We come from very humble

beginnings, we don't have a lot of backing behind us, but we always have those supportive customers."

Jersey Fresh has many more ideas for future products, but for now, want to focus on keeping a family connection.

"Our family is really the focus at the end of the day," Lisa said.

"We need to be able to run a nosiness, but still have that important family time and have time with our kids."

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Jersey cows are a staple for the family business. PHOTO: supplied

We want something that tastes like a treat, tastes a little bit naughty, but is actually a healthier option.



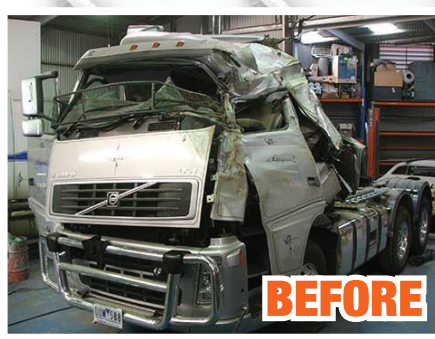
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Improving soil the organic way

Peter Heidenrich founded the Australian Worm Firm in 2019, but has seen the business grow in the space of three years.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BRENDAN SIMPKINS

ON Anderson Walk in Smithfield there's a small tin shed, once home to a plumbing company, sandwiched between a mechanic and a roller door repair service.

Blink and you might miss it. Behind the front door, though, is one of South Australia's largest manufacturers of worm farms, and the third largest in Australia.

The Australian Worm Firm was established in 2019, originally trading solely at weekend markets as a side gig for owner and managing director Peter Heidenrich.

"It was a bit of an accident if you want to put it that way," he said.

"We had a family friend who was a farmer and he got this sample of worm castings to try on his farm. At the time my sister was looking for work after high school and ... (the friend) said 'why don't you try selling some of this sample at markets?'"

"After a while I said 'I am quite interested in this, you mind if I take over as a hobby?'. In two-and-a-half years it's expanded from just selling at markets to a little bit of online during the pandemic."

The Worm Firm supplies products to both home gardeners and larger agricultural enterprises.

But what exactly is worm farming, and what are the benefits?

There are three main types of worms: deep-dwelling anecic earthworms, earthworms you find in your garden and compost worms which are usually found in a forest-floor environment.

Garden worms, sometimes referred to as 'nature's plow', help to turn over and break up soil.

Compost worms, though, break down food scraps and organic material into worm castings – an organic form of fertiliser or 'yoghurt for the soil' as Peter calls it.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

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"Just as we eat yoghurt or probiotics... to help our gut digest more of what we eat, castings does exactly the same for the plants," he said.

"If you (have a) veggie garden, for instance, and you've put down whatever fertilisers... the plant is only taking up a certain portion of that. You put castings down, that actually helps to digest the goodness and make it available to take it back to the plant.

"With certain synthetic fertilisers, when you put it down sometimes only as much as 10 per cent gets to the plant in that initial stage in soluble form. The other 90 per cent is there... but it's not in a plant soluble form.

"Putting something like castings down is basically just returning that biology to the soil."

Increasing root size results in a healthier plant, making it more disease and pest resistant and bringing down costs as a farming operation.

Peter said that using worm castings was like "going back to nature", but in a way that generates high yields and generates cost saving measures.

Last September the Worm Firm became

distributors for Microtek Organics, a Barossa Valley-based business that has spent 15 years perfecting its formula.

The fertilisers can be used across a wide range of agriculture including broadacre cropping, pasture, fruit and vegetable growing and vineyards.

Through Microtek's feeding regime, 100 per cent organic and sustainable oils are extracted from the castings.

It is designed combined with most herbicides, pesticides, copper and sulfur and can be used through applications like foliar spray, boom spray and dripper systems.

The Worm Firm breeds its own live compost worms and stocks a range worm farms, including castles and swags, as well as castings and accessories.

For the backyard grower it is both a great way to reduce household waste and improve produce.

Products suitable for worms include coffee grounds, ground-up egg shells and garden waste like weeds and bark, but not products like onion, dairy, meat or foods high in acidity.

Just as we eat yoghurt or probiotics... to help our gut digest more of what we eat, castings does exactly the same for the plants.







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A bit of rain can't stop a bumper harvest

WORDS KAYLA DEN HOLLANDER

FULL STORY ON PAGES 30 & 31

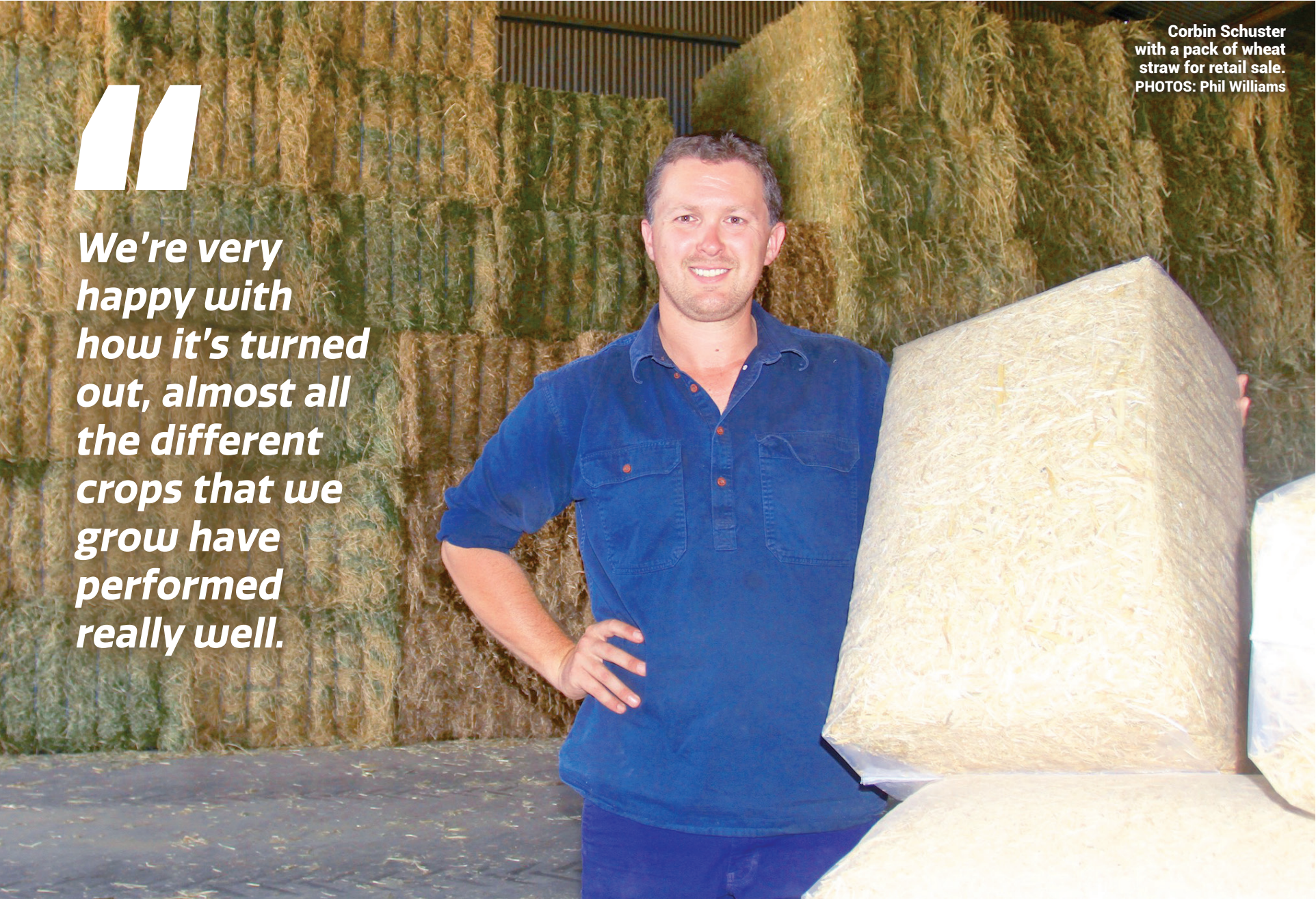


Corbin
Schuster
with freshly
harvested
lentils.

“

We’re very happy with how it’s turned out, almost all the different crops that we grow have performed really well.

Corbin Schuster with a pack of wheat straw for retail sale. PHOTOS: Phil Williams



NOVEMBER was touch and go for EzyBale’s Corbin Schuster, as he stared down the threat of water-logged and diseased crops amid record-breaking rainfall.

But a late harvest was his saving grace as many of his crops came away unscathed to produce some of his highest yields ever, in what he calls a “textbook year”.

Situated in Freeling near the Barossa Valley, EzyBale grows wheat, barley, canola, lentils, peas and more alongside hay – and now like many growers, it is revelling in a bountiful harvest.

“We’re very happy with how it’s turned out, almost all the different crops that we grow have performed really well,” Corbin said.

The cream of the crop was canola, yielding almost four tonnes per hectare, a far cry from an expected figure of two-and-a-half to three.

“A lot of the people we’ve spoken to around Freeling actually had their highest canola yields ever,

which is fantastic because there’s a bit of a canola shortage at the moment,” he said.

“We even had a paddock that averaged way over five tonne to the hectare, which is unheard of around Freeling.

“It was just the year, we had fantastic growing conditions for canola... the plants were never under any stress.”

In November, Corbin said his grain crops walked a fine line after a deluge of rain across the region, which saw storms and flash flooding wreak havoc across the state.

“We’ve had an incredible amount of rain in the growing season, which is considered to be between April and October,” he said.

“2022 was an incredibly wet year, we had probably our second or third highest rainfall year on record, so there was a lot of disease pressure.”

The threat of crop disease loomed well across the state, prompting Grain Producers SA (GPSA) to

call a roundtable discussion with disease experts in November.

GPSA CEO Brad Perry said in November that “larger than normal” areas had been impacted by disease, which were predicted to reduce harvest yield and quality.

“The persistent and consistent rainfall across South Australia in the lead-up to harvest has created unique challenges when it comes to disease,” he said.

But luckily, EzyBale defied most odds.

“The crops did really, really well growing with the amount of rain we had, but they were very expensive to grow,” Corbin said.

“It was real touch and go there, so if it continued for much longer we should have been growing rice and cotton.”

His lentils drew the short end of the straw however, prompting a late harvest as crops struggled with being waterlogged.

“They don’t like getting wet feet,” he said.

But Corbin is in the business of hay, with EzyBale establishing itself as a family-owned business in 2006 to simplify the hay transportation process.

It was born into fruition by Corbin’s father and grandfather, who knew there had to be a better solution than handling itchy hay by hand on a 40-something degree day.

Gone are the days of your typical massive cylindrical bale, with the Schusters stacking square bales onto pallets for easier transportation across the country.

Unlike the grain crops, hay also struggled with the wet weather, but still remains at the forefront of the business.

“Unfortunately the hay situation wasn’t fantastic – it’s fantastic for grains, but the rain came at the time of trying to dry hay in the paddock,” Corbin said.

“

The persistent and consistent rainfall across South Australia in the lead-up to harvest has created unique challenges...



Corbin Schuster stands in a recently harvested paddock of lentils.



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John Lush
Mallala canola farmer, Adelaide Plains councillor

Was there confidence following this season's harvest?

We've finished harvest, and this was probably the best harvest I've seen in the 55 years I've been at Mallala. The canola was really good, the wheat was good and so were the lentils.

Our rainfall was about 50mm above average and most of that came in the growing season when we needed it, so the crops were fantastic.

Did the wetter spring and summer benefit crops?

We had cool weather as well, and when you combine the rainfall and cooler temperatures, that's magnificent for the crops.

Are prices and demand for Australian grains still favourable?

Prices have been good. If I was to put a number on it, I would say prices are at about a nine out of 10 at the moment.

I don't see anything happening in the world that would decrease prices at the moment, so I think they will hang around where it is at the moment. Our dollar in the mid-60 (US cents) at the moment and that helps us, because every cent the dollar drops makes a \$3 difference to the price of grain.

So all the important factors are looking positive right now.

Was there any logistical challenges during the recent harvest?

There were lots of challenges. The cost of what we do has increased, while the access to tractor tyres and spare parts is hard.

Everything is pretty difficult... I think the logistics of getting parts and tyres, and the cost of fuel, will create problems. I think interest rates are going to go up as well, so there will be some challenges.

How will the changing weather patterns affect next season's crop?

We've probably got a really good

storage of moisture in the soil that will carry us through, and that will help us grow an average crop on below-average rainfall. That will give us a bit more confidence going forward.

What factors are most important for farmers at the moment?

The most important thing is forward planning everything that you'll need to get the next crop in the ground. Make sure you've got fertiliser and herbicides organised, and if you've got to have gypsum and lime, get that organised early.

Make sure you've got access to the latest plant varieties and seeds organised.



Adrian Hoffmann
Wine Grape Council of SA Region Two chair

Will it be a later vintage in the Barossa this year?

I would say at this stage it will definitely be a week or two later than a usual season. Most people are starting to see a little bit of colour in the southern Barossa, but I don't think there's too much poking through at the moment.

How did wet conditions in summer affect the vines?

The cooler temperatures during spring led to more vegetative growth, and there was high disease pressure during spring, but most growers got through that. People could see some remnants of downy and powdery mildew that was in the vines, but most of the vines have come through well.

People are a bit concerned if it might turn into a wet February and wet vintage, but at this stage most growers are cautiously optimistic.

How is the quality of fruit looking heading into vintage?

Crop levels seem to be average, or slightly below average, but it all depends on how they pull out. We would like warm weather to bring the vintage forward, but warm weather would also restrict the berry size a bit.

We're aiming for a good-quality season, and we don't need too much surplus. The growers that have their fruit sold are looking at a good quality marc.

The fruit is developing at a different time. It was good to have some heat because that slowed down the growth of the vine, and we needed some heat to start the vines transitioning to putting energy into the fruit.

It's all looking pretty good and fairly manageable at this stage. From a wine perspective the grenache is lighter than last year, and the shiraz quality will

be there. We've got some blocks that are quite light and others that have a reasonable amount of fruit, so there's a degree of variability and opportunities for many qualities to be grown.

Will there be any challenges accessing equipment for vintage?

I don't think there'll be any issues in getting equipment for vintage. There were some challenges early in the season, but we're looking at a pretty normal season at this stage. The vineyard has dried out and most people are looking at their preparations for vintage.

What are the most important factors for growers leading into vintage?

Growers just need to be diligent. If they haven't sold their fruit, make their blocks look presentable for potential buyers coming in. Winemakers don't want to be wading around in knee-high grass when looking at fruit.

The little bit of water people are putting on now goes a long way, because there's plenty of subsoil moisture as well. We can make the vines work a bit harder this year because the moisture is in the soil.

There's optimism among growers despite the current industry challenges?

Some growers are doing it extremely tough, but for growers who are building those relationships with the wineries, there's no reason to be pessimistic. It's looking like a very good season for 2023.

Those lines of communication have to keep going. The industry is in a tough spot.

Shiraz, cabernet and merlot are the varieties in oversupply, but most of the other varieties are in balance, or in demand.

Mark Doecke
Citrus SA chair

What varieties of citrus are being harvested at the moment?

The only variety harvested during summer is valencia.

How is the quality and quantity of fruit looking at the moment?

As all growers know, spring 2022 was very cold. Flowering was extended and growth was slow. Now it has warmed up finally growers are maximising the summer growth to try to get the most fruit growth possible.

Did the summer weather conditions benefit fruit?

Mild summers are good for everyone, including the citrus trees.

Was there any damage done to citrus orchards from the flood event?

Only a few orchards had some inundation and a few more growers lost their power due to SA Power Network's legislated rules. The river

is receding now and hopefully we can return to near normal soon.

Will shipping fruit overseas be any easier this year?

Market demand overseas is high for citrus fruit and we hope transport costs return to pre-Covid levels. Ongoing fruit fly compliance and logistic issues still affect grower returns.

Are you anticipating any other challenges for 2023?

I expect the sterile fruit fly facility expansion to be completed by June and I would also like to see some backyard growers take more responsibility for maintaining their trees, as most fruit fly outbreaks are from backyards.

What factors are most important for tree and fruit health at the moment?

Good weather and plenty of water, which is not a problem this year. Also a good nutrition program is a factor that affects tree performance.



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Cody thrilled and fulfilled after swapping aged care for agriculture

WORDS ASHLEA MILLER-PICKERSGILL

FULL STORY ON PAGES 36 & 37



Cody holds a sheep as if she were shearing it.

ON a friend's farm in dry 35 degree Australian heat, 27-year-old Cody Lee Jane Brighurst herds sheep with a charismatic smile on her face.

Despite sweat dripping from her forehead and the overpowering smell of hay and sheep in the air, Cody embraces the highly intense, fast-paced work that helps her passion thrive.

Cody wasn't born into a farming family, working in aged care before making the dramatic switch to work in agriculture five years ago.

When asked what encouraged her to enter the industry, Cody says: "The thrill and the satisfaction of working livestock successfully and the freedom that comes with working in the country."

Ruby, a determined farm dog, runs up and down the caged lane with Cody, occasionally on sheep backs to keep the herd moving.

Cody calls out to Ruby amidst the bleats and clanking metal fence, giving orders to help keep the unpredictable herd running in the right direction.

Having a supportive farm dog like

Ruby proves to be a handy asset.

"My favourite thing to do would definitely be anything that involves working my dog," Cody says.

"I have trained a couple of working kelpies now and it's definitely a huge passion of mine."

Passion for the industry can be seen in Cody's welcoming demeanour and felt from her radiating positive energy; projecting motivation, happiness and a sense of dedication to the people around her.

In a male-dominated industry, Cody feels the pressure to prove herself, but says women in the industry shouldn't feel discouraged.

"I have found in certain jobs that I've worked in, there's a lot of pressure to be able to have the strength and work skills that most male workers naturally have," she says.

"You do have times where you second guess yourself and the decisions you make, as it is easy to feel judged, but over the past couple of years this is something I've learnt to put behind me as

I have found in certain jobs that I've worked in, there's a lot of pressure to be able to have the strength and work skills that most male workers naturally have.



I know that I always work to the best of my ability and put everything into what I'm doing.

"I have also learnt a lot from the guys I have worked with and built relationships with people that are willing to help me and give me non-judgemental advice, which is something I'll always be thankful for."

In 2022, Cody became a first-time mother and hopes to find balance in her newly-adjusted life.

"Becoming a mum has been the most challenging yet rewarding time of my life," she says.

"It's about finding that balance between being a mum, trying to bring in an income and making time for myself and others.

"She is definitely the light of my life, and I can't wait to introduce her to the industry."

Cody shares her excitement for the future of women in agriculture, while 10-month-old Shelby watches her work from the sidelines.

"I feel that there is somewhat of a stigma surrounding women in the industry, but... it is a lot more common than you would think, especially in shearing sheds," Cody says.

"To be honest, you do get the odd bad opinion or comment but if you're truly passionate about what you're doing, you learn to put that all aside and ignore it.

"The majority of males I've worked with have made me feel more welcome



Cody after herding sheep, watching Ruby have a well-earned drink. PHOTOS: Phil Williams

and respected within the workplace than some female workers actually have."

After Cody finishes moving herds of sheep, with the hot sun still beaming down, Cody kneels beside Ruby, allowing her to drink from the water trough.

Slightly panting from the sweaty labour, Cody says that it "feels good getting back into work after having Shelby".

"I've always enjoyed the hard work outdoors, especially with livestock," she said. "So I'm glad I decided to take on the career challenge myself."

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Grown and packaged on the Plains

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY ELLOUISE CRAWFORD

THE Pye family is known for growing its famous potatoes at Parilla, in the Mallee region, but it relies on the ideal growing conditions of Virginia and surrounds to keep up its year-round supply of fresh vegetables.

Zerella Fresh, owned by the Pye Group family, supplies potatoes, carrots and onions to the major supermarkets of Aldi, Coles and Woolworths, as well as potatoes to McCain, Smiths and Lamb Western for processing into chips or fries.

It is also behind the Spud Lite range of potatoes, bagged with the Zerella Fresh branding and marketed as having 25 per cent less carbs than other potatoes.

About 1200 acres of land, across holdings at Virginia, Angle Vale, Port Gawler, Waterloo Corner, and Edinburgh is used to grow all three vegetables, while Virginia is also home to the company's carrot processing and packaging facility.

Zerella Fresh general manager Renee Pye is passionate about helping consumers understand where their food comes from.

"People assume (supermarket vegetables) are just grown by some big business and there is no family involved or a lot of people think it comes from overseas, even though we've got so much agricultural land right here," she said.

"It is nice getting our story out there that we are a family business, our vegetables are being grown in Australia and we support a lot of Australian people and businesses around Australia.

"We have around 450 employees, from Robe to Mount Gambier, to the Mallee and here in Adelaide."

The Virginia area is used for growing carrots, potatoes, and red and brown onions.

Its carrot-packaging facility uses some of the latest machinery in the industry, externally grading

each individual carrot for size and weight (and automatically sorting for each supermarket's preferences).

Carrots are harvested in the Virginia region from August to December, onions September to December, while potatoes are typically harvested from October to mid-December.

Zerella Fresh farm manager Gavin Hibberd said the region is used for growing over winter because it is less likely to be affected by frost.

"You've got the Adelaide Hills on one side, the ocean on the other, so traditionally it's reasonably frost resistant," he said.

"Irrigation is our biggest security net against frost.

"So for Virginia, because it is a market garden (and a) small square-scale countryside, we can have little plots of irrigation, watering more consistently, and you can eliminate frost that way."

Gavin said last year the region had one of its wettest periods on record, with Zerella Fresh suffering some potato and onion crop losses.

"It was a challenge to grow a crop underneath the soil and get it out in good condition – we had our places where it was good but there were a lot of areas that suffered," he said.

"The potatoes are no different to us in that they need to breathe as well, and when they are submerged in water it takes all the oxygen out of the soil and they suffocate.

"Locally we will start planting again in April – carrots and onions will go in first and then our potatoes will be straight after those two."

The Pye Group has owned Zerella Fresh (previously Zerella Holdings) since 2009, having rebranded it to reflect its goal of getting produce from paddock to store in the shortest possible time.

The Pyes had been involved with the Zerellas (who

Zerella Fresh carrots are triple-washed, gently brushed and graded at the Virginia packaging facility, before being packaged and delivered to stores.



Zerella Fresh farm manager Gavin Hibberd with carrots grown locally and destined for an Aldi supermarket.

established the business in 1936) since the early 1990s, supplying them potatoes from their Mallee-based farm, Parilla Premium Potatoes.

"My parents, Mark and Fiona, moved across from New Zealand in 1990," Renee said.

"In the early 1990s the Mallee was just cereal cropping and livestock but there is a good underground aquifer, so my dad and pop (Allan) spotted an opportunity and started growing potatoes."

The Pyes became the largest producer of potatoes and carrots in the Mallee region and have been credited with bringing other growers facing water issues in the Riverland to the area.

Last year the Pye Group opened the largest potato-packing facility of its kind in the southern hemisphere, at Parilla.

The \$45 million, 15,000 square-metre warehouse, has a production capacity of 45 tonne an hour.

Even with losses, Renee said the company experienced higher potato yields than expected

and has been able to take on extra orders to help mitigate a nationwide potato shortage.

The company also puts onions in long-storage and following a great onion harvest in 2021, became one of only two Australian producers to continue supplying the major supermarkets during last year's shortages.

It is nice getting our story out there that we are a family business...



Zerella Fresh general manager Renee Pye at Virginia's carrot packaging facility.



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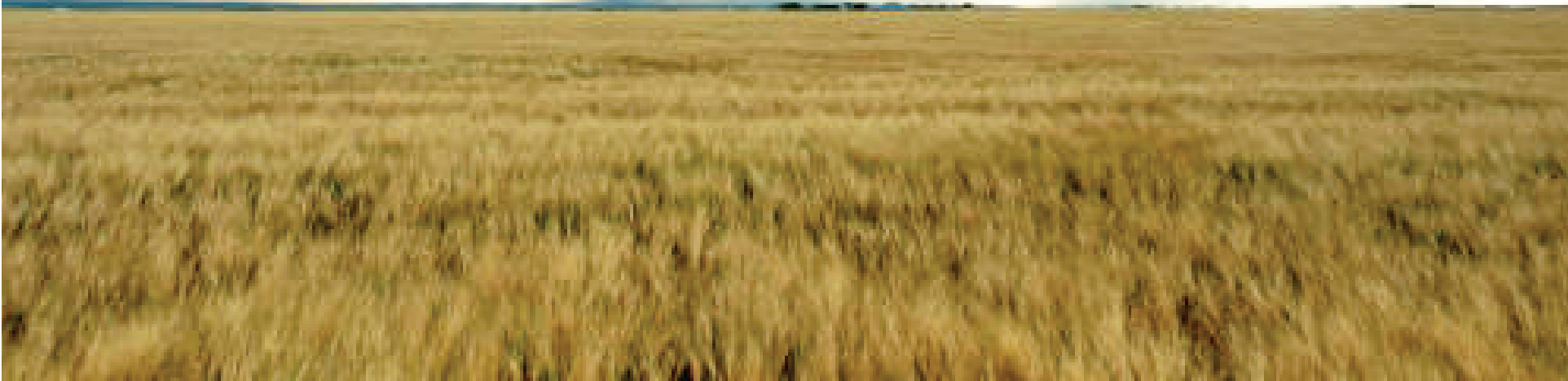
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Agriculture booms despite flooding



Rain levels

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November to January 19, 2023: 73.4mm
Rainfall to January 2022: 9.6mm
Rainfall to January average: 18.3mm

LOXTON

November to January 19, 2023: 121.2mm
Rainfall to January 2022: 1.5mm
Rainfall to January average: 18.2mm

WAIKERIE

November to January 19, 2023: 65.8mm
Rainfall to January 2022: 10.5mm
Rainfall to January average: 17.9mm

LAMEROO

November to January 19, 2023: 83.2mm
Rainfall to January 2022: 6.4mm
Rainfall to January average: 25.4mm

GAWLER

November to January 19, 2023: 121.2
Rainfall to January 2022: 3.4mm
Rainfall to January average: 18.9mm

AUSTRALIAN agriculture has stayed on track despite devastating floods in multiple areas around the country.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) Agricultural Commodities and Crop Reports, released in December, showed the sector was setting new benchmarks in export commodities and high yields for winter crops.

"The gross value of agricultural production is forecast to be a near-record \$85 billion in 2022-23, just shy of the record set the previous year," said ABARES executive director Dr Jared Greenville.

"Meanwhile, the winter crop is forecast to be the second largest on record at over 62 million tonnes. Livestock production is expected to hold steady, contributing \$34 billion to the national total.

"Another bumper year combined with high commodity prices means Australia's agricultural exports are forecast to break records at over \$72 billion in 2022-23.

"While the spring rain has

impacted production, yields and quality in some parts of the country, some states are experiencing their best winter crops on record.

"Crops in South Australia and Western Australia benefitted the most from spring conditions, with total production in both states forecast to reach new record levels.

"In other parts of the country, the results are mixed with both flooding and water-logging impacting winter crop production.

"We saw a record amount of crop planted in Victoria this year. At the state level, high yields in the Mallee and the Wimmera will offset crop losses in central and northern border regions.

"However, the full picture of damage to crops from extensive waterlogging remains an unknown.

"The current conditions are a reminder of the volatility of Australia's climate. While it's impressive how resilient the agriculture sector has been, it shows how events like floods and droughts can impact regions and Australian farmers."

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Heavy machinery adjacent to the Long Plains silos during the demolition process.

Our changing landscape

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY PHIL WILLIAMS

ONCE they were a symbol of a region's wealth and prosperity. A silent sentinel.

Today, the humble grain silo is fast disappearing from South Australia's landscape. Some people have compared their loss to that of local banks and other high-profile institutions, such is their significance to the community.

Dotted along nearly every major highway and byway across the state, the sight of a towering silo on the horizon is a sign to a weary long-distance

traveller that some level of civilisation is usually not far away. To a local they are a comforting sign that they are nearly home after a long trip to 'town'.

Since 2019, grain handling company Viterra has systematically 'mothballed', then permanently closed at least 16 silo sites across the state.

Now those same silent sentinels of reinforced concrete and steel, monoliths, that tower over the grain growing regions are disappearing at a rapid rate.

The silos, that for years have dominated the skyline of the mid north towns of Long Plains, Mallala and Hamley Bridge, are no more.

Of the three, Long Plains' was brought down first at the end of October 2022 followed by those at Mallala in early November and Hamley Bridge later that same month. All sites had not been used for some years and required maintenance.

In 2021, Viterra also demolished similar infrastructure on the Eyre Peninsula at Wudinna and

Lock. In a letter dated September 19, 2022 to residents of Hamley Bridge and signed by Alistair Ryan, Viterra's general manager, maintenance and engineering, stated that the reason for their destruction was "the site infrastructure is rundown and poses potential safety risks...".

Works at the site were scheduled to take 13 weeks, with Viterra salvaging plant and machinery for spare parts. Concrete and steel would be reclaimed and recycled. A nearby galvanised iron storage bunker was due to meet the wrecker's ball in the same time frame.

Hamley Bridge resident Ian Rycroft worked for the railways and shunted grain trains at the silos in their heyday. When SA Farmer spoke to him during the silo's demolition he said it was "a sad day for the town".

"They identify the town. We are losing part of our town's heritage," he said.

"When I told my daughter who lives in Canada she nearly cried."

Several other Hamley Bridge residents lamented to SA Farmer the loss of the once-proud giants that had been a feature of the town since 1962.

One resident said it was disappointing but acknowledged that times change and that it was the price of progress.

Another resident, Kitty Togo-Hawkins, said "the silos are a beacon".

"The kids knew we were nearly home," she said.

“
They identify the town...



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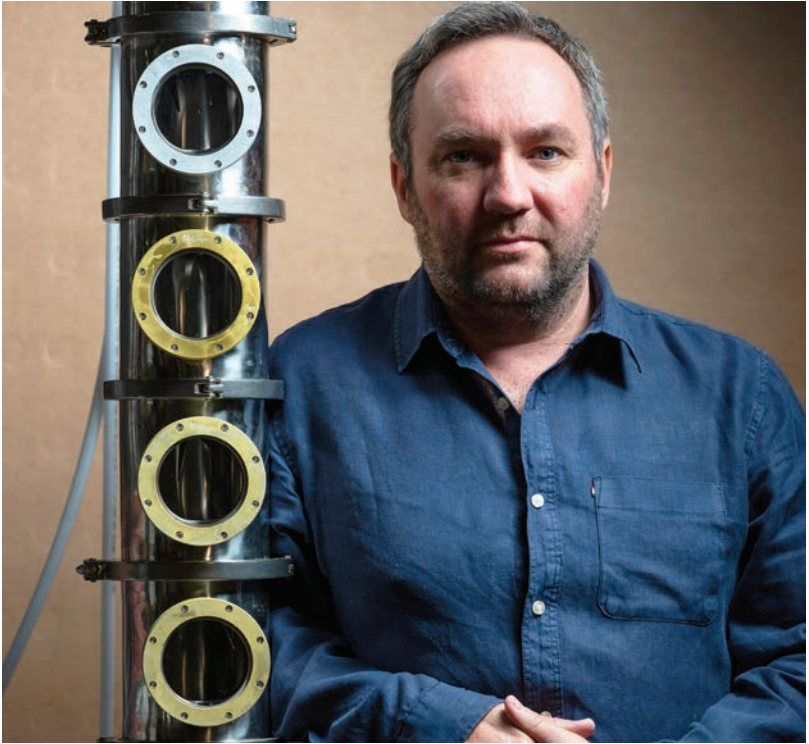
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Brett Durand at his gin making school. PHOTOS: supplied



Hydr-ogin, the future of distilling

WORDS LUKE MARCHIORO

A TANUNDA distillery is at the forefront of a world-first, with Durand Distillery producing H2Gin to a commercial quantity, all by using hydrogen while being completely off the coal-fired power grid. Inspired by his grandfather and seeking a career change to spend more time with his family, owner-operator Brett Durand started the distillery in 2016

but the Covid-19 pandemic forced Brett to change the way he operated his business. "I started the gin distillery in 2016 as a small artisan distillery, focussing on gin and we were looking to branch out, but the pandemic and a few other distractions impacted on that," said Brett. "In 2022, I had to move the distillery to a new

location due to circumstances out of my control." This move put pressure on Brett and his business, where he describes himself as everything from the CEO to the cleaner, and forced him to look at how he operated after being faced with high start-up costs. "When we moved to the new location we made



inquiries as to how we can update the power on site, the quote for all the things like new cables, transformers and that the numbers stack up quite quickly," he said. "I didn't have those available funds. I sat there one night thinking 'I am going to go broke if I can't make the distillery work'. I had been toying with the idea of hydrogen for a while." Late one night with a glass of wine in hand, Brett bought the piece of equipment which would change his business. "I was hunting for the equipment that I needed when a direct-fire, plug-in-a-hydrogen tank, make-fire piece of equipment become available," he said. "So I bought it." Brett's next step became a source of hydrogen, eventually finding it with an industrial supplier in the local community before setting up his facility. From there, he bought a 75-litre direct fire still to boil alcohol before also taking the next step in making his business environmentally sustainable. "I went and bought a bore pump, a deep cell battery and a solar panel and I run the cooling system through completely renewable sources," Brett said. "It means we are not actually connected to the coal-fired power network at the moment." Brett is currently producing one product, his H2Gin, as a completely renewable product and said it was a great test as he hopes to expand his business

over the next 12 months. "This product proves that we can do it and make a product that is commercially viable by burning hydrogen and I can," he said. "I now know the economic case for using hydrogen will work, so the next step is to build a larger facility, get more hydrogen in and continue from there." Brett's unique concept has seen significant interest from industry, government and the education sector but he said that the best ideas can sometimes come out of necessity. "I didn't have a choice. If I had the choice I would have gone the conventional method and I would've been on a greater production scale than I was right now," he said. "But I didn't have a choice and now I'm glad I didn't have that choice because it works and we can push forward with it." As well as H2Gin, Brett also runs the Barossa Gin School and he said that it is

his way of sharing what he loves doing with other people. "It's a craft gin-making workshop. It's four hours and we built recipes from raw materials right in customers' hands," he said. "That is my way of being able to share what I love with people because it can be lonely distilling in a shed by yourself. So I love sharing that with other people." As for the next steps, Brett wants to continue to grow the business and continue to develop the use of hydrogen and renewable energy in the gin-making process, with a new site firmly in his sight. "If we had this conversation in 2024, I'd like to say we have stakeholders on board and designs approved and shovels in the ground to build this new facility," he said. "I can picture what we need and we just need that expertise of those key knowledge centres to make it safe and have that commercial success."

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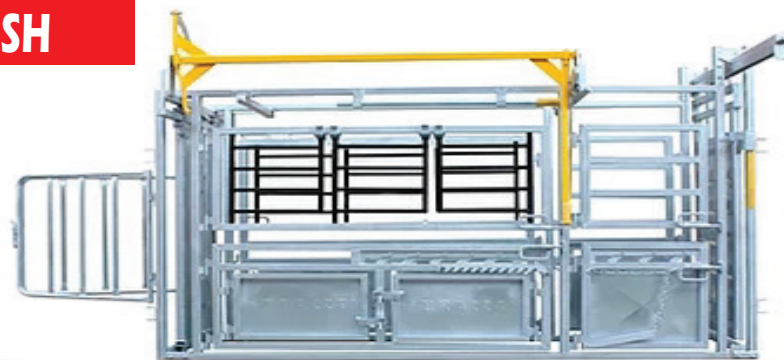
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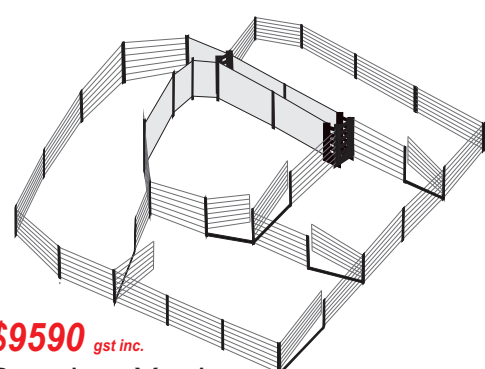
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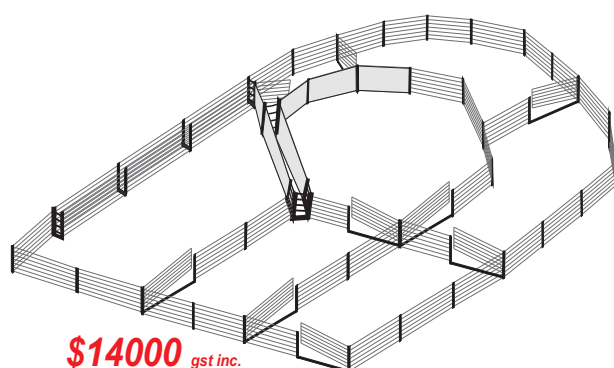
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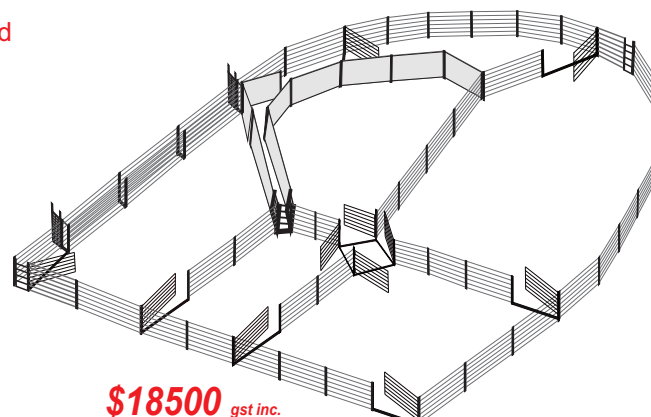
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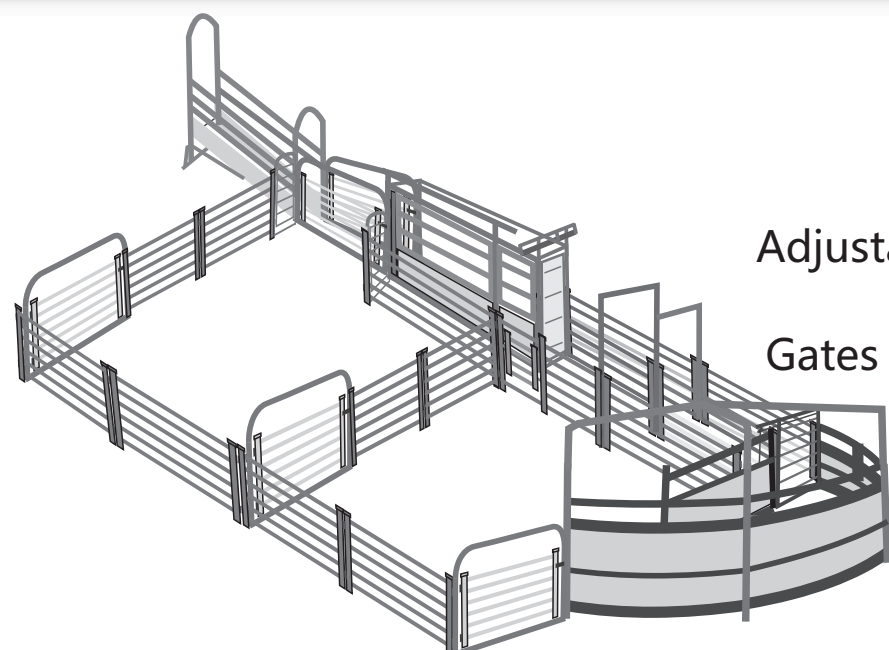
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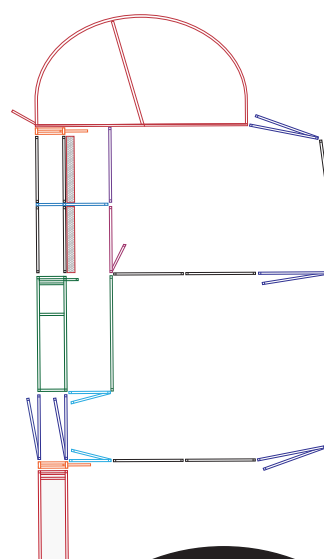
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Challenges flood in for almond growers

FLOODING along the River Murray in South Australia and the shutting down of power to irrigation pumps in the Riverland will have an impact on almond crop potential for the coming season, the CEO of the industry's peak body says.

Almond Board of Australia (ABA) CEO Tim Jackson (inset) said although orchards in NSW and Victoria would experience tree losses, SA's issues around a rising River Murray were around keeping pumping infrastructure dry and maintaining power to inundated sites.

"We have tried to work closely with SA Power Networks around power supply disruption and there have been lessons learnt from that experience on both sides," he said.

"The SA Government's proactive approach to the floods has been appreciated, especially when looking at powerline clearance heights and facilitating pragmatic solutions along the river."

The industry's long-term forecast for the 2023-24 season was initially 165,000 tonnes, but this was downgraded to 156,200 due to floods, storm damage, tree losses and reduced pollination rates in some farms.

New plantings producing better yields as they near full maturity was the major reason the national crop would still increase from the 2022-23 crop of 143,805 tonnes, Mr Jackson said.

The almond industry remained a "crop of choice" for existing and new entrants to permanent planting horticulture, he said, but warned that those entering the industry needed to think beyond planting and ensure they have processing contracts in place.

"We have a shortage of processing capacity within the industry, so the hull and shelling phase is taking longer than ever to complete," Mr Jackson said.

"Ideally you want to be hulling and shelling product within three months of harvest, but the increase volumes being produced is pushing that timeline out to six to seven months for some new growers.

"Growers who are considering a switch to almonds should start discussions with processors to ensure they can secure contracts to process their crops in a timely manner."

Mr Jackson said the wet weather last year and the lack of beehive movements into Victoria and SA were two key challenges many growers faced.

"When you combine those with very low global almond prices, many growers will be doing it tough in 2023," he said.



Mr Jackson said while the costs of production have never been higher, growers acknowledge that low water prices, and the prospect of that continuing for at least another 12 months, was a positive in an otherwise tough growing environment.

"The other bright spot is that our markers and processors are selling at a faster rate on the export market than ever before," he said.

"We're on track to surpass 100,000 tonnes of exports for the first time.

"Freight costs and availability have freed up considerably which has allowed exports to step up activity in a range of markets."

Mr Jackson said the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China remained a "godsend" as it allowed growers to secure premium pricing in one of the biggest markets in the world.

More than 50 per cent of all Australian almond exports were to China in 2022.

"Five years ago, before the FTA, we sent next to nothing to China," he said.

Other than China, Mr Jackson said the recent Australia-India Economic Co-operation and Trade Agreement (AIECTA) tariff reduction for almonds into India would also be bonus for growers as they seek to diversify marketing.

He said the 2023 harvest would begin soon, and looked like being at least two weeks late this season, with overall kernel sizing appearing to be up.



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AG NEWS

EAD Bill strengthening our defences

AN amendment passed by State Parliament late last year has increased South Australia's ability to respond to emergency animal disease incursions.

The Livestock (Emergency Animal Disease) Amendment Bill was passed late last year, allowing inspectors further resources to deal with potential outbreaks.

The amendments strengthen the powers within the Livestock Act 1997, adding to the suite of actions being undertaken by the State Government to ensure a comprehensive, rapid and effective emergency response, should an outbreak occur.

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Clare Scriven said the legislation is "vital" in the state's ongoing fight against emergency animal diseases.

"Impacts of an EAD incursion would be felt well



beyond the farm with the loss of international market access with estimates indicating a cost to Australia of \$80 billion to \$100 billion over 10 years," Ms Scriven said.

"It's important to ensure these relevant legislative arrangements are strong, so our response to EAD is swift and agile."

Inspectors will now be equipped with a myriad of resources and functions in order to restrict potential outbreaks.

Inspectors will be able to construct (or require the construction of) a fence to contain livestock, disinfect machinery, take possession of available machinery to assist with livestock disposal activities, or stop work or close a place to minimise a biosecurity risk or impact.

In the case of an increased risk of exotic disease, powers to undertake surveillance and proof of freedom testing have

been added for monitoring disease incursions or for market access purposes.

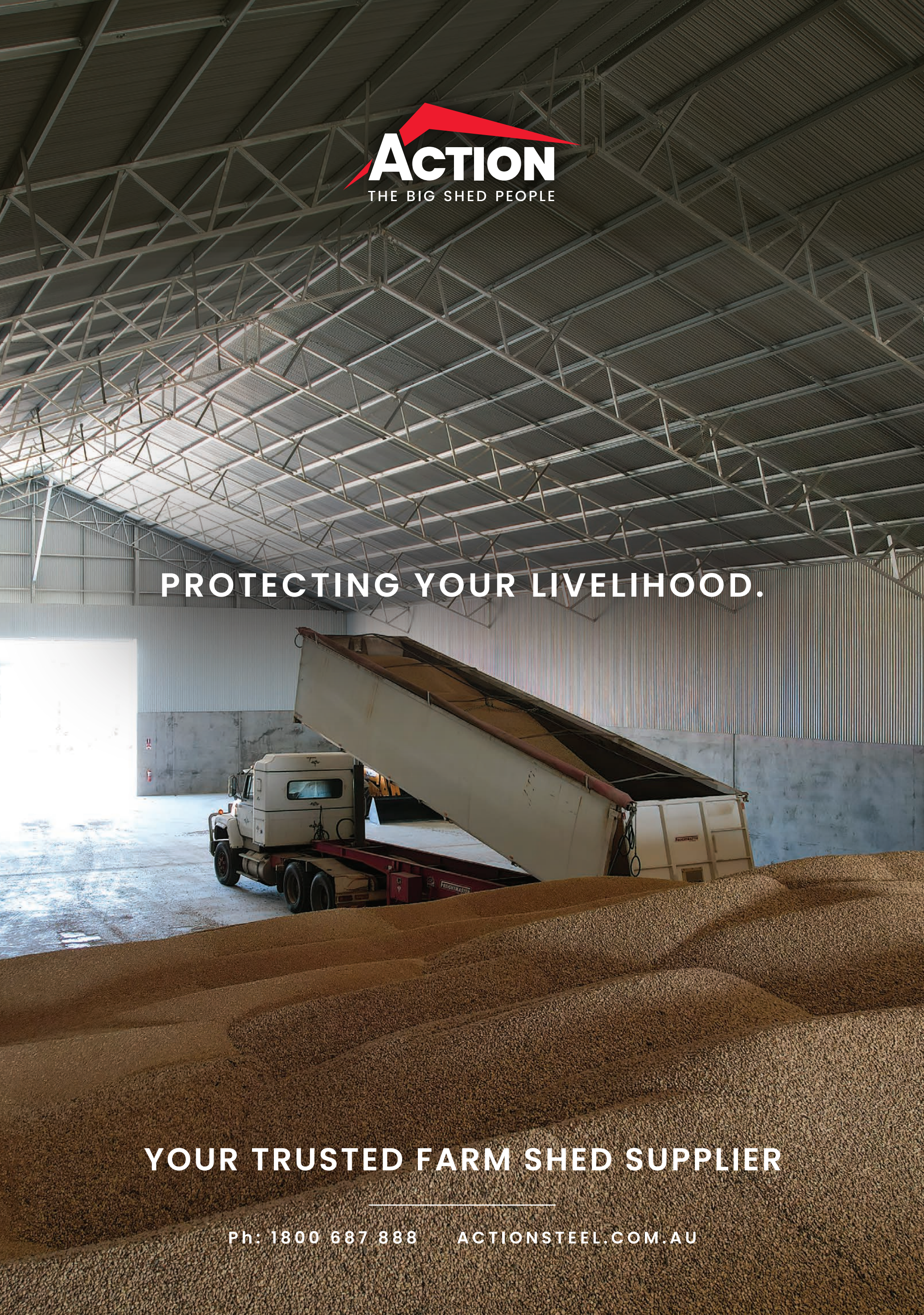
Livestock SA CEO Travis Tobin thanked the Government and Parliament for the passage of the Bill, which he believes "was needed to strengthen the

state's ability to respond to an EAD detection or outbreak".

"If faced with such an event, our industry would be operating in uncharted territory and these changes will enable more effective control and eradication processes

so we can get back to normal trading conditions as soon as possible," Mr Tobin said.

"Key to the success of any EAD response will be the effective working relationship between government and industry."



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