

The latest news from the Barossa Improved Grazing Group

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Natural Resources
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Natural Resources
SA Murray-Darling Basin



The BIGG Bulletin

December 2015

Better Bull Selection Workshop

Join us for a 'Better Bull Selection' workshop in February 2016, just prior to the main bull buying season here in SA.

The workshop will feature:

- A visit to Tungkillo to discuss assessing bull structural soundness with Darren Koopman.
- We will then move onto Taillem Bend for Dr Francis Sabbe to present on animal health and avoiding introducing STDs from bull purchases, followed by Dr Wayne Pitchford covering breeding objectives and using BREEDPLAN to inform bull selection.
- The day will finish with a BBQ dinner.

More details will follow at a later date. Please register to stay updated.

[Register Now](#)

Producers struck again in Pinery Fire

Bushfire has again threatened the lives and livelihood of local farmers, with the recent Pinery bushfire destroying over 85,000 Ha of farmland, with massive losses of crops, livestock, farm buildings, homes and tragically, two lives.

With bushfire becoming a common event in South Australian summers, producers are urged to ensure their bushfire survival plan is up to date. Key aspects include:

- Whether you will leave early or stay and defend. It is absolutely critical to decide in advance; on Black Saturday in 2009, at least a quarter of deaths were people who were going to 'wait and see' before deciding what to do.
- Catastrophic fire danger ratings: Fires will be uncontrollable and homes are not designed to withstand fires in these conditions, all residents are urged to leave early on these days.
- Is your home well prepared, including clearing vegetation, and house gaps filled (e.g. under roofing tiles, under floors and window sills)?

For more information on bushfire survival plans, visit the CFS website

http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/prepare_for_bushfire/know_your_risk/bushfire_survival_plan.jsp

Producers should also ensure their home and farm insurance is up to date. In the 2014 Eden Valley fire, most affected producers were under-insured, and it is likely this will also be the case in the Pinery fire. Many producers, for instance, assume that not everything will be lost at once, and therefore are under insured for things like fencing, home contents and farm machinery. While the cost of premiums may seem challenging, being under-insured in the event of a bushfire will be a far more significant challenge.

How to help

Producers & Barossa community members will offer their individual support in many and varied ways, but for those interested in a collective group response, it's suggested you consider talking among the numerous local church and service groups, and or rock along to the Angaston Ag Bureau's January meeting on Tues 5th at Uniting Church Hall where they'll discuss the possible coordinated and or targeted response in the likes:

- Attending the community relief functions
- Donations to the Bushfire Recovery Fund
- Blazaid – clearing fence and fence-lines (chainsaws), fence erection, catering for the crew
- Fodder Donations – Livestock SA(LSA)
- Fodder Transport – LSA. As each new fire occurs, more fodder seems to be offered without transport
- Agistment
- Seed for sowing – Grain Producers SA
- Pastoral Care – having a chat, helping to move on

Further 'Pinery Fire recovery' information and regular newsletter updates that may give you ideas on how to help are at:

<http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/emergencies-and-safety/pinery-fire>



A flare-up of the Pinery bushfire the day after the main fire. Photo: Robert Barr



A hayshed burnt down in the Pinery bushfire. Photo: Robert Barr

New resources to help fire-affected producers

Almost two years after bushfires devastated 25,000Ha of grazing land, BIGG have compiled a series of resources with the aim of helping producers affected by bushfires in the future. The BIGG project Recovery and Management of Native Pastures after the 2014 Eden Valley Bushfire has come to a completion with the development of a case study booklet and video and a fact sheet of key learnings.

This project was funded by Natural Resources Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges with co-funding from Natural Resources SA Murray Darling Basin. BIGG would like to thank Daniel Schuppan from Landmark Jamestown and Nicola Barnes from SAMDB for their work on the project. Some of the key points include:

- Keep in contact with other farmers affected by the fire to ensure opportunities are not missed and to provide a sounding board to help make the difficult decisions.
- Finding the balance between providing an income and allowing the recovery process is difficult however should be managed with the long term gain in sight. This may mean turning stock off earlier, reduced stocking rates or obtaining off farm employment.

- Take advantage of donated hay, however be aware of the weed issues. Some producers fed in their containment lot to prevent possible weed dispersal across their property.
- Take the time to inspect agistment paddocks: While agistment can be a lifesaver after a fire, it's important to check the quality of the paddocks.
- Consider new fencing materials, many producers are now utilising all steel products to prevent loss if another fire occurs.
- Monitor stock after the fire, particularly when lambing or calving to ensure teats were not burnt which can prevent them rearing young.
- Bury waterpipes to prevent them burning in future fires.
- Livestock will preferential graze the burnt pastures compared to the non-burnt because of the fresh green shoots.
- Consider the use of temporary electric fencing in areas which are partially burnt to allow different grazing regimes.
- Don't undo your good work from resting pastures in the first year by over grazing in following years. Continue to monitor and be tactical with grazing management depending on the season.
- After the fire it was thought 2 years would allow full recovery, however after two dry springs it appears this could take another one to two years.

The case study video can be found online now at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7ylltvCycU>. The case study booklet and fact sheet will be available in January.



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Long term recovery
of Native Pastures
after Bushfire

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Sustainable Farm Dinner



From the Inbox...

- National MLA funded audit reveals the potential productivity gains that could be achieved through improved pasture management and utilisation. Read more [here](#).
- [Read](#) the latest edition of Natural Resources' 'Small Talk', which contains practical advice and technical information for rural landholders in the Board's region.
- BIGG member Craig Hage has invested in a new Round Bale Silage Maker. Read the [Stock Journal article](#).
- Another interesting workshop by Volunteering SA and NT is being held in February. [View the flyer](#).
- A message from Dr David Peacock, Biosecurity Research Officer – Pest Animals, Biosecurity SA, Primary Industries and Regions SA – PIRSA. [Read more here](#).
- If you are interested in travelling to Nepal to participate in Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness training please [view the paper](#). All suitable applicants will be considered,

including growers, shearers, agents, transporters, vets and others in the wool supply chain. The wool industry will be funding several places for real-time training next year in addition to the positions offered by the federal government – the months identified as most likely for travel are May, November, December but as yet have not been confirmed.

Your BIGG Contacts

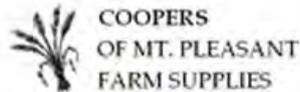
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Government of South Australia
Department of Environment,
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