

# Support for new livestock body

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03 Aug, 2012 04:00 AM



A group of South East farmers voted unanimously at a special meeting of SAFF southern region members on Tuesday night to push ahead with a body to represent the state's livestock producers.

The 40 farmers who attended agreed on an autonomous, incorporated livestock entity, and a levy on all producers to fund it.

Livestock levypayers would automatically become members with voting entitlements.

A motion was also carried at the meeting for a 'one vote per member' structure, rather than a 'vote for value' approach but this will require wider industry consultation.

Under the likely fee structure, most SAFF members would pay less than their existing \$660/year membership as their contribution to the new livestock body. But it might be harder to convince non-members of the benefits of another levy.

SA's cattle producers pay 65 cents on each NLIS tag to the SA Cattle Industry Fund for market access and disease control, but an increase of 50c-60c/head has been suggested to fund strong, united industry representation. Each 10c/head rise will generate an extra \$57,700.

Sheep producers who already pay 35c/head to the Sheep Industry Fund on sale transactions may be required to pay an extra 10c/head for the levy. This would generate between \$630,000 and \$770,000 a year for the new body.

Agriculture Minister Gail Gago, who met with three members of SAFF's livestock executive last month, has expressed her support for a strong body to represent livestock.

But it could be a long road to legislate a levy with Ms Gago looking for substantial support from the livestock community before acting.

The meeting also agreed on a set of principles for the new livestock representation group, including a commitment to an overarching body, ensuring state representation on peak councils, the flexibility of all industries to work within the constitution, opportunities for both individuals as well as trading entities to become members, finding a place for regional groups to put policy forward and a focus on livestock production.