

Growers meet on new lobby group proposal

PAULA THOMPSON
26 Jul, 2012 04:00 AM



MEMBER DEFICIT: Bordertown Merino breeder Richard Halliday says the only groups that seem to be able to attract members these days are golf and footy clubs, so he is a strong supporter of a representative body that involves all livestock producers.

THE FORMATION of a new body to replace SAFF is moving a step closer this week, with the first meeting of the five separate commodity groups involved with the proposal being held in Adelaide today.

It will be the first time all the groups have been together since the initial meeting where former Premier and SAFF consultant Rob Kerin floated the proposal for the Primary Producers Council of South Australia in late June. At that meeting unanimous in-principle agreement was given for the proposal.

Mr Kerin hopes a recommendation for the council's formation can be brought to SAFF's AGM on Friday, August 31.

But he admitted it was a short timeframe to form a new organisation, particularly to get all the different horticultural sectors on board. While a battle over national grains representation had erupted between Grain Producers Australia and GrainGrowers Limited, Mr Kerin said he hoped the same would not occur in SA. It was an issue that needed to be sorted out nationally.

"GGL is doing great industry-good functions and we need that, but we also need to be part of grain representation on a national basis and I see that more as a GPA role.

"But, at the end of the day, it's an issue for the grain industry to sort out."

Grain Producers SA chairman Garry Hansen said it was time for the new SAFF structure bedded down and for GPSA to be officially acknowledged as the voice for SA graingrowers.

Mr Hansen had renewed his SAFF membership and put forward his nomination as chairman of its new grains group.

"We need the role of GPSA to be fully recognised and to get the 5 cents (a tonne) levy doing what it's meant to do," he said.

Winegrape Council of SA executive officer Peter Hackworth said his group was still trying to work out what benefits the proposed council would offer producers.

The wine industry has not been at the table with SAFF for more than four years.

SADA chairman David Basham said he would like to see the new council up-and-running sooner than later.