



Ref: S-09NRC\_SCISC.doc

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Innovation  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

ABN: 75 266 051 838

Telephone: (08) 8410 7233  
Facsimile: (08) 8211 7303

Level 1 / 67 South Terrace,  
Adelaide, SA 5000  
Postal Address: PO Box 6014  
Halifax Street, SA 5000

Email: [info@saff.com.au](mailto:info@saff.com.au)  
Website: [www.saff.com.au](http://www.saff.com.au)

Dear Secretary,

**RE: INQUIRY INTO METEOROLOGICAL FORECASTING**

The South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF) is the State's principal farmer organisation and has a proud history of representation and support for farmers dating back more than 100 years. SAFF represent industries which have helped to build and shape South Australia, and will continue to play a key role in its future.

The Natural Resources Section of SAFF is a major policy group representing the organisations entire membership on environmental issues. The Section is directed by the Natural Resources Committee (NRC). The Natural Resources Section vision is for an integrated and sustainable landscape that delivers simultaneous improvement of natural resource management outcomes and farm productivity, efficiency and profitability.

SAFF believes that adaptation to climate change is one of the biggest issues that will affect its membership, South Australian and Australian farming industries in the future. With climate change potentially providing an increased incidence of storms, flood, dust storms and heatwaves, which may result in an increase in the risk of bushfires; it is vital that farmers have access to the best weather forecasting data possible. Having access to accurate, reliable and regular weather information, farmers are able to plan their farming activities on a weekly, monthly, seasonal and yearly basis. With this information they are able to adjust the type of crops they sow/plant, when they harvest and plan for the amount of water resources available to them if the drought is seen to continue.

Please find attached SAFFs comments on the Inquiry. If you would like to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact myself ((08) 8569 4001 or 0417 883 659) or Ms Sandra Keane, Natural Resources Officer at the Federation on (08) 8410 7233.

Sincerely

*Sandra Keane.*

for Sharon Starick  
Chair, Natural Resources Committee



*Submission into the*

## **Inquiry into meteorological forecasting**

by

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FARMERS FEDERATION  
(SAFF)  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

On

April 2009

CHAIR: Sharon Starick

Level 1, 67 South Terrace  
Adelaide SA 5000

CONTACT: Natural Resources Executive Officer  
Ms Sandra Keane  
Email: [skeane@saff.com.au](mailto:skeane@saff.com.au)

PO Box 6014  
Halifax Street SA 5000  
Telephone: (08) 8410 7233  
Facsimile: (08) 8211 7303  
Website: [www.saff.com.au](http://www.saff.com.au)

## **EFFICACY OF CURRENT CLIMATE MODELLING METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND LONG-TERM PREDICTION SYSTEMS**

- The lack of accuracy of the current modelling methods and long term predictions makes them a less than useful tool in agricultural farming systems within South Australia.
- Agriculture has long called for the accurate long range climate forecasting to improve decision making and risk management on-farm but now question if we are pursuing the 'holy grail'.
- Greater education and awareness needs to be provided around the climate modelling methods and the long-term prediction systems around what they mean and their accuracy.
- The scale of current models make them unreliable measures on climatic differences within a region, such as on either side of a range. Future models require data to be at a more localised scale.
- Farmers are using historical data as well as predictive modelling to determine the future weather as they do not rely fully on one method. This is primarily due to farmers losing faith in previous long range forecasting, which is crucial in this current drought.
- Interpretation of data can be variable with current models.

## **THE IMPACT OF ACCURATE MEASUREMENT OF INTER-SEASONAL CLIMATE VARIABILITY ON DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND OTHER SECTORS SUCH AS TOURISM**

- If long-term climate forecasting is going to be a tool that farmers are able to use as a risk management tool, then the accuracy of long-term climate forecasting needs to be improved at the start of the year i.e. prior to the start of the growing season, when farmers are making decisions about crop and pasture area to be sown, balance of crop types, stock numbers etc.
- Long-term climate forecasting can also be used later in the season to make decisions on crop inputs and stocking rates.