

Focus.

Supporting
business success in
South Australia

October 2017



**Agriculture
enters the
digital age**



Welcome.

Welcome to the October 2017 edition of BankSA's *Focus* magazine.

In this edition, we put the spotlight on the South Australian agriculture industry, in particular how modern technologies are helping the sector reach new levels of efficiency and productivity.

Many local farmers and agribusinesses are at the forefront of the burgeoning 'agtech' space, with an increasing number adopting exciting new technologies such as drones to monitor crop health and driverless tractors to plough, sow and spray their crops.

For example, Bookpurnong Fruits in the Riverland now uses mobile devices and moisture sensors to manage irrigation of its world-class stonefruit orchard, while Mount Gambier-based Grow Systems Australia has developed an innovative new automated system for hydroponic herb and vegetable growing.

Technology is playing an increasingly important role in the agriculture sector, and will continue to do so as farmers and producers search for better ways of doing things that help them reduce time and input costs while boosting productivity.

Companies like Liquid Systems SA at Clovelly Park are designing and manufacturing liquid fertiliser delivery systems with pinpoint accuracy for farmers across the globe, while citrus grower Pyap Produce in the Riverland, and cereal farmers Dustin and Jodi Sparrow from Wudinna and the Lawrie family from Tumby Bay, are all now relying heavily on smartphones, apps and iPads to run their businesses direct from the paddock.

I'm proud to say that all of these fantastic South Australian businesses and hard-working owners are customers of BankSA, and all of them feature in this edition of *Focus*.

They have all seen – and continue to see first-hand – the evolution of farming practices from traditional methods to smarter, more systematised approaches, which they are all gradually implementing into their own operations to become more efficient, more competitive, and ultimately, more profitable.

Indeed, boosting productivity is a critical challenge facing the agriculture industry as a whole, with the anticipated spike in the world's population from 7.5 billion people currently to nine billion people by 2050 demanding an increase in global food production by 60%.

It's certainly a transformational period for the agriculture industry, and for South Australia – which already accounts for a significant share of the nation's agricultural production – the opportunities for growth on the back of new technology are immense.

Enjoy reading!

Nick Reade – Chief Executive, BankSA

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Agriculture enters the digital age.

Agriculture is tipped to become Australia's next \$100 billion industry thanks to advances in new technology, which are changing the way farms operate to help supercharge the sector.

From the use of driverless tractors, robotics and drones through to cutting-edge farm management software accessed through iPads and mobile phones, farmers across the country – and indeed the world – are steadily embracing new technologies to make their businesses more efficient than ever before.

"As with most sectors, technology has surged into agriculture, pushing aside well-worn practice, challenging long-held assumptions and up-ending our understanding of what is normal as well as what is possible," said former Australian Federal Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb in a recent wide-ranging report by StartupAUS and KPMG into the country's burgeoning agtech sector.

The report, titled *Powering Growth: Realising the potential of agtech for Australia*, draws on discussions with more than 60 stakeholders – including farmers, agtech startups, research bodies and government – and underlines the enormous potential impact of technology on the nation's agriculture sector, which Mr Robb urges Australia to enthusiastically pursue.

"We are now presented with a series of choices for the future. Automation, artificial intelligence, ubiquitous high-speed communication, drones, big data, interconnected machinery and cloud analytics offer us the opportunity to further our mastery of agriculture," he said.

"Technology promises improved productivity, quality and yield, enhanced sustainability, reduced wastage and the ability for farmers to make better decisions.

"It also offers an important opportunity for the economic benefits of technology to bring prosperity to rural communities."

He added that as populations across the world get bigger and become wealthier, particularly in Asia, demand will continue to grow for high quality agricultural goods produced in Australia.

"Australia's aspiration to be a food bowl for Asia will be helped enormously by technology," said Mr Robb, noting that global competition from places like Israel, the US and UK is already extremely strong.

"At the same time, agriculture offers a rich opportunity for developing high-growth technology businesses that have the potential to bring Australian agtech solutions to a global market. As a leader in agriculture, Australia can work to become a leader in the next wave of technology that underpins it too."

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What is agtech?

Agtech is defined as the collection of digital technologies that provide the agricultural industry with the tools, data and knowledge to make more informed and timely on-farm decisions that ultimately improve productivity and sustainability.



With the world's population forecast to increase from 7.5 billion people today to nine billion people by 2050, global food production will need to increase by 60%, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

The *Powering Growth* report expects that 85% of this production increase will be driven by greater yields and cropping intensity, highlighting the critical role that will be played by new agricultural technologies in the future.

And it is through these modern technologies that the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) – Australia's peak farming organisation – believes will drive unprecedented growth in the country's agriculture industry, pushing annual

economic activity from \$57 billion currently to an estimated \$100 billion by 2030.

However, for Australian farmers and the broader economy to take maximum advantage of the opportunities on offer, the NFF says regional telecommunications and infrastructure must be improved, including internet access for those in remote regions of Australia.

"Australian farmers will struggle to adopt new technologies and innovate without access to high quality, affordable telecommunications infrastructure," said the NFF in a submission to the Federal Government earlier this year.

This connectivity concern is echoed in the *Powering Growth* report and also by the

Australian Farm Institute in a recent paper titled *The implications of digital agriculture and big data for Australian agriculture*:

"For the benefits of digital agriculture to be realised in the form of increased productivity, huge amounts of data need to be captured, transferred and analysed," states the report. "(However), poor mobile communications networks and data transfer ability in Australia in some cases makes digital agriculture technologies expensive and practically unusable."

Despite the challenges though, the Australian Farm Institute agrees with the NFF and the *Powering Growth* report that agtech holds massive promise for Australian agriculture, with the implementation of new technologies set



“Technology promises improved productivity, quality and yield, enhanced sustainability, reduced wastage and the ability for farmers to make better decisions.”

Andrew Robb
Former Australian Federal
Minister for Trade and Investment

to enable more farmers to “change from paddock and herd average management, to square metre and individual animal management”.

And ultimately, it will be through this closer analysis of farming operations – made possible by new technology – that farms will be able to improve efficiencies and realise a new level of productivity to not only cement agriculture as one of the key pillars of the Australian economy, but also drive the industry’s competitiveness on the world stage.

FAST FACTS: Australian agriculture industry

- Consists of more than 135,000 farms nationwide, including almost 385,000ha of dedicated farming land and a further 26,000ha used for crops.
- Directly employs more than 300,000 people (77% male; 23% female).
- Contributes \$57 billion annually to the national economy, which equates to 2.4% of Australia’s GDP (forecast to reach \$100 billion by 2030).
- Supplies 93% of Australia’s total food requirements.
- Exports more than \$43 billion worth of product annually, including half of all food produced in Australia.
- 50% of Australia’s land is used for agriculture.

* Sources: StartupAUS/KPMG.





It's all about precision agriculture.

For Dustin and Jodi Sparrow, the way they run their cereal farm on the Eyre Peninsula has changed markedly over the years thanks to advances in technology.

"These days, it's all about precision agriculture," said Mr Sparrow, who is commonly known in the region as 'Spog'.

"Accuracy is addictive on the farm, so more than ever we're constantly looking at better ways of doing things, which often involves new machinery or new technology to help make the farm more efficient.

"That also means managing everything on our phones and iPads, from specialist rainfall apps and yield mapping to our record-keeping and all other areas of farm management. Nothing is recorded on paper anymore.

"And while my wife would probably call me too critical given how much time I spend on researching new methods and new technologies to try to improve things, I prefer to look at it in the context that quality is always remembered long after price is forgotten."

The husband and wife couple reside in the small Eyre Peninsula town of Wudinna, located 200km north of Port Lincoln, and to describe them as busy people would be an understatement.

In addition to managing their thriving 3,600ha farm upon which they crop wheat,

barley, peas, lentils and canola each year (depending on the seasons), they operate the local Landmark store in town which serves the broader community with farming products and expert advice from their own in-house agronomist five days a week.

They also own a gift and homewares store in Wudinna called Lil' Birdie, which sells toys, jewellery, clocks, boutique clothing and other unique gifts to townsfolk and visitors.

And as if that's not enough on their plate, they also have two children – son Chad, 13, and daughter Shannon, 11 – while Mrs Sparrow also finds time to play and coach sport on weekends.

"Yes, we certainly have our hands full," laughed Mrs Sparrow, who previously spent 13 years working for South Australia's Department for Education. "I think it's fair to say that we still need to fine-tune the whole work/life balance thing, but we love what we do, and just enjoy keeping busy and growing our different businesses."

The Sparrows began farming in 2000, starting out with 500ha of cropping land that they purchased from Mr Sparrow's mother. They have steadily grown their farm ever since, along the way managing a 4Farmers farm chemical outlet on their property until taking over the local Landmark store in August last year.

"We're passionate about farming and the lifestyle that goes with it," said Mr Sparrow, who was born and bred in the area. "It can

definitely be hard work, but it's something we love doing and wouldn't change for anything."

While Mr Sparrow works between the farm and Landmark, Mrs Sparrow manages the day-to-day running of the Landmark store, as well as her own labour of love, Lil' Birdie.

"Lil' Birdie is a great little shop where people come to buy a unique gift or something really nice for their home. We also sell a range of boutique clothing, so talking fashion with customers and offering advice is something I really enjoy doing too," she said.

"Juggling time between the two shops can be tricky, but my mum helps us out with Lil' Birdie which we really appreciate, while we also have a small number of staff across both shops and the farm who do a great job to keep the businesses running.

"We'll hopefully be able to bring on more staff to ease our workload in the future, but for the time-being we enjoy the challenge and the lifestyle we have."

Great grain.

There are about 3,000 grain producers in South Australia, who between them grow seven million tonnes of grain every year.

“Quality is always remembered long after price is forgotten.”

Dustin Sparrow
Eyre Peninsula farmer





All systems grow in the South-East.

After years of painstaking research and development, an innovative new system for hydroponic herb and vegetable growing is finally taking root in the market.

The design and manufacture of automated moving gully systems to increase the efficiency of growing fresh produce has been a labour of love for Mark Lines from Grow Systems Australia ever since he commenced tinkering with irrigation techniques for herb producer Holla-Fresh almost 20 years ago.

At the time, he co-owned Holla-Fresh with his brother, but in 2015 he sold his share of the company to focus entirely on Grow Systems Australia, which is now manufacturing and supplying glasshouses and moving gully systems to producers around Australia.

Having completed successful projects for clients in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, as well as throughout South Australia, the Mount Gambier-based business is now enjoying a watershed year in 2017 following its first export contract – a \$1 million deal to China.

“We’ve been working hard to perfect our systems and to demonstrate the benefits and massive cost savings on offer compared to traditional growing methods,” explained Mr Lines, who employs six staff in the South-East.

“Over the past couple of years, Grow Systems Australia has enjoyed some good success, which we’ve been looking to leverage to

establish an export market.

“Pleasingly, we’ve finally managed to break through and sign our first export contract with a major producer in the Anhui province in eastern China.

“We’ll manufacture this system for them from our Mount Gambier premises and send over to China in large shipping containers. We’ll then assemble the system on-site like a Meccano set, which will ultimately span approximately half a hectare and extend 120m long.

“There is an ever-growing demand in China for safe, fresh produce which our systems can facilitate, so we’re hoping this first export contract will lead to more throughout China, but also in India where we’re now receiving some strong interest too.”

Mr Lines says producers are impressed with the return on investment offered by Grow Systems Australia’s tailored solutions, which help reduce labour costs and increase yield.

“Our systems help producers enjoy twice the output for half the labour,” he said.

“Water efficiency is also a key selling point of our systems, which use only 20% of the water needed for traditional growing methods. And there’s no wastewater.

“So there are some big savings to be made for farms which are increasingly having to do everything they can to try and reduce their operating costs.”

Mr Lines says he is enjoying his work in the agribusiness sector more than ever and continues to relish his transition from herb producer to technology manufacturer.

“I had built up more than 25 years of experience growing herbs, so branching out into automated systems to help producers reduce costs and become more efficient was a logical progression,” he said.

“We have a real thirst for knowledge too and stay abreast of new advancements in technology that we may be able to incorporate into our glasshouse and moving gully systems as part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

“We’re also looking more and more at robotics and how automation will continue to change the way that producers approach their farms in the future, so it’s definitely an evolving industry.”

Export excellence.

The annual value of Australia’s farm export earnings is \$48 billion, according to the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).



Grow Sys
AUST
MARK

**“Our systems help
producers enjoy
twice the output for
half the labour.”**

Mark Lines
Grow Systems Australia owner



Fertile ground for Liquid Systems.

When Peter Burgess started Liquid Systems SA in 2002, he was on his own without any business partners or investors to help get the company off the ground. But what he did have was a unique idea and a tonne of determination.

Having previously spent decades designing and developing machinery for companies in the agriculture industry, the mechanical engineer identified a gap in the market regarding the way farmers applied fertiliser to their crops.

Armed with scientific research pointing to the benefits of liquid fertilisers over traditional granular fertilisers, Mr Burgess started designing, manufacturing and selling liquid fertiliser delivery systems to farmers around Australia.

"I'd been designing machinery all my life, so at the ripe old age of 52, I thought I'd take a chance and set up Liquid Systems," he recalled.

"I had relatively little finances so it was definitely risky, particularly in those early days when I was driving around Australia on my own to try and make sales without knowing if I'd even have enough money to get home!"

But what Mr Burgess lacked in capital, he made up for in downright doggedness to make sure Liquid Systems SA would become a success.

With more farmers realising the benefits of liquid fertilisers – as well as liquid fungicides, insecticides, nematicides, micronutrients, inoculants, soil conditioners and soil wetters – Mr Burgess' big break came in 2008 when US agriculture colossus John Deere took notice.

In fact, he impressed the multi-national corporation's engineers so much with the pinpoint accuracy of in-furrow injection of liquid fertilisers that his equipment provided, that he single-handedly changed their approach to liquid delivery.

"That was the turning point and helped put Liquid Systems on the map," said Mr Burgess.

"We now manufacture liquid delivery equipment and components for John Deere which we export to the US for fitment to their row crop planters in Moline, Illinois.

"In addition to the US, we design, manufacture and export systems to Canada, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Argentina and New Zealand, while more recently we've moved into Europe and are now looking at places like Turkey and Mongolia as well.

"Not bad for a small South Australian company which continues to design everything from our Clovelly Park premises, with all our injection-moulding still occurring at another local facility in Edwardstown."

Liquid Systems SA currently turns over \$2 million annually, which Mr Burgess is confident of increasing on the back of growing worldwide demand.

"As more farmers realise what our products can offer in terms of efficiency gains and cost savings, word of mouth is spreading which is underpinning the growth of the company," said Mr Burgess, who now employs 10 staff all based in SA.

"Social media has also been enormous for us, particularly LinkedIn which has provided some massive international business opportunities. I've been amazed at how effective it has been and would recommend it to anyone with export aspirations. Domestically, we regularly blog on Facebook and Twitter, and it goes without saying that you must have an effective website."

At 67 years of age, Mr Burgess still feels as young as ever and has no intention of handing over the company's reins anytime soon – if ever.

"I'll keep going until I drop dead," he laughed.

"I still love creating and building things for the agriculture industry, so why would I stop now?"

Crops in demand.

According to Fertiliser Australia, global crop production has expanded threefold over the past 50 years.

Peter Burgess, owner of Liquid Systems SA, is shown in a workshop setting. He is wearing a black leather jacket and has his hands clasped on a piece of equipment with yellow connectors. The background is filled with various mechanical and electrical components.

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“Social media
has also been
enormous for
us, particularly
LinkedIn.”

Peter Burgess
Liquid Systems SA owner



Riverland brothers growing strong.

For brothers Ryan, Michael and Tim Arnold, growing fruit is a passion.

As owners of Pyap Produce in the Riverland, the trio have a genuine affinity for the land and a collective desire to produce top quality citrus fruit and wine grapes.

Specialising in navel oranges, mandarins and lemons, the company – which is based just outside Loxton – has enjoyed outstanding growth in recent years to become one of the leading citrus growers in South Australia.

Its fruit is enjoyed across Australia and is also now exported to 12 countries, including Japan, the US and increasingly China as more overseas consumers develop a taste for premium Australian produce.

But while the Arnolds are now literally enjoying the fruits of their labour, it's been a long road.

"Pyap Produce started in 2001 when Dad (Barry Arnold; now semi-retired) drove past a rundown orchard and had an idea to start a business from scratch with my brothers and I," said Tim.

"The orchard spanned about 100 acres and was in pretty poor shape. It needed a lot of work and it took a long time before we started producing good crops.

"In fact, for the first couple of years we didn't pick any fruit at all. It actually took about three or four years before we started producing some decent crops of oranges, so it was certainly slow going to begin with."

However, the Arnolds have since built up the business, negotiating droughts and restrictive River Murray water allocations along the way.

"We've steadily expanded and now grow fruit across almost 200 acres, including a new 10ha (approximately 25 acres) block, which we've just picked up to start growing new trees on from this spring," said Tim.

"In addition to navel oranges, which probably account for about 50% of what we grow, we're now also looking to grow blood oranges which is exciting, as well as continuing with our mandarins and lemons, plus our wine grapes."

While a large proportion of Pyap's wine grapes are sold to local wineries for bulk wine, the Arnolds have also taken a punt to produce a retail beverage of their own – Arnold Brothers Lemon Cooler – which is a new alcoholic drink that blends their citrus and wine grapes.

"A few years ago we started thinking more about how to value-add to the fruit we produce, particularly in light of softening grape prices and the growing popularity of cider," explained Tim.

"We tried a bunch of things and eventually found a great formula using our lemons and gordo grapes, which we've combined to create Arnold Brothers Lemon Cooler.

"It has an 8% alcohol content and has been really popular. Our first run of 600 cartons last year sold out within a few months, while our second run of 1,800 cases is all but gone too.

"Our third run is coming soon and will be our biggest yet. To meet demand, we've partnered with Empire Liquor who will distribute for us across South Australia, while we'll also continue to post anywhere in Australia through our website (www.thearnoldbrothers.com.au)."

In the meantime, the Arnolds will continue their quest to produce perfect citrus fruit and aim to cover more of their Pyap orchard with protective netting.

"Thanks to a generous State Government grant, we've been able to cover 20ha of our orchard with netting, which has significantly helped reduce wind rub and skin blemishes on our fruit," said Tim.

"The netting has led to a major increase in our class-one pack-out rates, which essentially means more premium quality fruit for the market, so the more we can cover in future the better."

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Citrus hotspot.

The Riverland region of South Australia is the third largest citrus growing region in Australia.

"We've steadily expanded and now grow fruit across almost 200 acres."

Tim Arnold
Pyap Produce co-owner





Stonefruit grower turns to technology.

There wouldn't be too many people in Australia who would know more about stonefruit than Riverland grower Jason Size.

As the owner of Bookpurnong Fruits near Loxton, Mr Size has dedicated the past 25 years to learning everything there is to know about peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums, with new technologies playing an increasingly important role in his business.

"I now use mobile devices and the internet to run my irrigation, and use different apps and computer software to capture information to help run the business," said Mr Size, who employs 15 staff and up to 40 during peak times.

"I also utilise moisture sensors to keep track of my irrigation performance and I continue to keep an eye on new advancements in technology such as drones, which could form part of a solution to automate the harvesting process in years to come."

Mr Size's passion for stonefruit started in 1991 when he began working on a 30-acre farm for Riverland growers Tony and Karen Brand, who would eventually become his in-laws after he married their daughter Joanne in 1994.

That same year he co-founded Bookpurnong Fruits on land directly adjacent to his new in-laws' Brand & Co property, with both businesses developed to run in partnership with the other as part of local cooperative grower group Quality Fruit Marketing Pty Ltd (QFM).

With a focus on peach and nectarine crops, including 15 different varieties of peach and 15 different varieties of nectarines, the two businesses – which also grow apricots and plums – have enjoyed solid growth over the years and now have a combined farm land of 111 acres.

At the same time, QFM has gone from strength to strength, particularly since 2009 when the group purchased a new packing shed and 140-acre orchard near Renmark. In fact, QFM now packs up to 3,800 tonnes of stonefruit every year, of which Bookpurnong Fruits accounts for approximately 20%.

"Through QFM, and in ongoing partnership with Brand & Co, our stonefruit is now enjoyed around the world. As part of this, our new consumer brand 'The Chosen Ones' – which we only launched in 2015 – is rapidly gaining a reputation for its premium quality, which is something we continue to take very seriously to ensure the best possible produce," said Mr Size.

"In fact, QFM is home to the largest stonefruit test orchard in the southern hemisphere, and since 2005 I have trialled at least 2,000 varieties of stonefruit from breeders around the world, especially from France and the US. The site hosts up to 1,100 varieties at any one time.

"At the end of the day, it's all about continuous improvement for us, so we'll continue to trial new varieties that best match customer tastes."

In terms of export markets, Bookpurnong Fruits' produce – via QFM – is supplied to Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and more recently China, while a small amount is also sent to Europe.

"Most of our fruit is still sold to Australian wholesale markets, with export markets currently only representing about 5% of sales," said the 45-year-old father of five, who also undertakes industry roles with Summerfruit Australia, Summerfruit Export Alliance and Landcare. "But we'd love to increase our exports in the future if we can – up to around 15% annually would be great."

At the other end of the spectrum, Mr Size and his family still run a fresh fruit stall at a local Riverland farmers' market during the summer months, which remains an important avenue to gauge customer feedback on fruit quality.

"Whether it's investing in the latest irrigation or production technology to supply markets around Australia and the world, or simply chatting to local customers about taste, we have a genuine desire to grow and pick the absolute best fruit possible," he said.

Tonnes of fruit.

According to Summerfruit Australia, around 100,000 tonnes of stonefruit are produced in Australia from October to April by more than 1,200 growers nationwide.



**"At the end of
the day, it's all
about continuous
improvement."**

Jason Size
Bookpurnong Fruits owner



Working smarter not harder.

The old adage about 'working smarter, not harder' certainly rings true for Eyre Peninsula farmer Andrew Lawrie, who has embraced technology to drive efficiencies within his business.

Managing a 900ha cereal and sheep farm near Tumby Bay, Mr Lawrie says he has been amazed at how high-tech solutions have revolutionised farming practices.

"Farming practices have certainly changed over the years," he said.

"For example, we don't work the ground as much as we used to so we can conserve moisture, and we're much smarter in what we do thanks to advances in technology, including auto steer and yield mapping that enables us to target-fertilise our soil.

"I also don't go anywhere now without my phone and iPad, which allows me to sell grain at any time and run the business while I'm out in a paddock. These modern day methods help us keep our input costs down and make us more efficient overall."

Mr Lawrie took over the management of the farm in 1993, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather before him, as well as his great grandfather who originally started the family farm in the 1890s after migrating from Scotland.

"Farming life is incredibly challenging, but also incredibly rewarding," said Mr Lawrie, who also shares farms another 120ha and leases a further 1,000ha for the family's

farming operations.

"While there's always the stress of receiving enough rain and the reliance on climate and world economics, at the end of the day, we get to live in the best place in the world and be our own boss. Farming is either in your blood or it isn't, and for me, I've always had a real love of the land and wouldn't have things any other way."

The farm, which is located 14km south of the town centre near the coastline, produces between 2,500-5,000 tonnes of wheat, barley, canola and lupins every year depending on the season, which is ultimately exported around the globe, particularly in Asia and the Middle East. The farm also includes a 600-strong self-replacing Merino flock and a lamb feedlot.

Mr Lawrie operates the farm with his wife Meryn, son Mitch and his partner Leah, with Mitch steadily taking on more responsibility and will soon become the fifth generation family farm manager.

In addition to the family farm, the Lawrie's also run the Techgrow Agriculture dealership in Tumby Bay, which imports and distributes premium agricultural machinery and products, including Bogballe linkage spreaders and Bredal trailed spreaders to farmers across the Eyre Peninsula, as well as grain handling bins manufactured by Finch Engineering.

"It was quite interesting how the Techgrow opportunity came about. Mitch's fiancée Leah

is the daughter of Colin Mitchell who owns and manages Techgrow in Australia. A great opportunity was offered in 2011 to run a dealership and manage sales for the Eyre Peninsula region, which is steadily growing and now has a large customer base," said Mr Lawrie.

"I was always interested in finding an avenue for off-farm income as a way of spreading risk, so it's been good to develop the dealership over the past six years to supplement what we do on the farm."

Along with managing the farming operations and the Techgrow Agriculture dealership, the Lawrie's also run a contract spreading business to farmers in the area using a fully automatic calibrated Bogballe spreader.

Mr Lawrie, who credits BankSA for playing a significant role in the ongoing success of the family's businesses, says he is enjoying life on the land as much as ever, particularly as new technology continues to help farming practices evolve.

A leader in livestock.

Australia's national sheep flock currently stands at around 75.5 million head, according to Meat & Livestock Australia, while the country's beef cattle herd size is approximately 29.3 million head.

“We’re much smarter in what we do thanks to advances in technology.”

Andrew Lawrie
Tumby Bay farmer





Local knowledge; global view.

BankSA has been helping South Australian farmers with their banking requirements for almost 170 years and continues to provide expert assistance to business owners as technology steadily transforms the state's agriculture industry.

For Kym Lynch, who is BankSA's Rural Business Banking Manager based in Murray Bridge, the agtech revolution presents significant opportunities for South Australia and warns rural producers against ignoring new technologies.

"Farming techniques from 10 or 20 years ago are no longer able to sustain the profitability of a farm, with new technologies helping to reduce labour expenses, while also minimising costs such as chemical and spray wastage through the use of GPS and auto steer systems," he said.

"Keeping up to date with new technologies is vital for the financial performance and viability of any farming enterprise. Farmers must identify opportunities which could mitigate risks to the farm and also increase the overall profitability of their business.

"In addition, it's important for farmers to have a local banker who knows the landscape and their business as well as they do. Farming is not an exact science – it is not black or white and has many shades of grey – so forming a strong relationship with a local bank helps give farmers confidence that they'll be supported during the good times and the bad."

For Michelle Hobby, who is BankSA's Relationship Manager, Industry Banking based in Loxton, helping clients succeed is the biggest driver for the bank.

"At the end of the day, we're here to help our clients grow and prosper, and often that

means assisting them to identify solutions that make them more productive and therefore more profitable," she said.

"While we're bankers, not farmers, we definitely take great pride in understanding our customers' businesses, including knowledge of local issues and how regional communities operate and the particular challenges they face.

"We stand by our farmers through thick and thin, and as the agriculture industry evolves, we'll continue to be much more than a lender, and rather be an integral part of our customers' businesses through the local knowledge, expert advice and financial assistance we provide."

Contact: BankSA Agribusiness

Talk to your Relationship Manager, call into your local BankSA branch, or contact our Regional Managers directly:

Peter Panas | Regional Executive Manager – Industry | **0412 156 478**

Grant Pearce | Regional General Manager – SME | **0417 284 855**

Grow your crops and business with technology.

**Thinking about that next investment?
Talk to your Relationship Manager
about your finance options.**

Or contact our Regional Managers directly.

Peter Panas | Regional Executive Manager – Industry | **0412 156 478**

Grant Pearce | Regional General Manager – SME | **0417 284 855**

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At BankSA, we believe in making a positive difference to the lives of South Australians.

Thanks to employee donations and fundraising, BankSA Foundation has given away close to \$9 million in community grants since its establishment in 1941.

Do you know a great local organisation that needs our help?
Visit banksa.com.au/foundation to find out more about our grants and eligibility criteria.

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