

Minister Geoff Brock

Minister for Regional Development

Agricultural Bureau
of South Australia Inc.
PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT



EMBARGO: 9.30pm, Monday October 12, 2015

Celebrating agricultural excellence

Two young South Australian will receive grants to further their agricultural careers after being recognised at this year's Agricultural Bureau of SA's annual Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture awards.

Onion grower James Smith from Bowhill Produce was awarded the \$8,000 Peter Olsen Fellowship, while Rachel Chirgwin, owner of Chirgwin Livestock, was named the winner of the \$5,000 Rural Youth Bursary, sponsored by Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock said the awards provided an opportunity for young farm innovators and leaders to build on their farming careers.

"James and Rachel are deserving recipients of these awards and will use the grants to grow their knowledge and skills," Mr Brock said.

"Both recipients are looking at better on-farm efficiency and practices and this support will be a significant boost to their careers."

James, from Bowhill in the Murray Mallee, will use the \$8,000 fellowship towards his Bachelor of Agricultural Business Management degree at Charles Sturt University. This study will complement the progress and development driven by his parents in their successful onion production and marketing business.

"Already I have learnt how we can work more efficiently on the farm and to appreciate the many aspects of farming and to implement improvements such as knowing about the different soil types," he said.

"Completing commodity trade and pricing subjects will be beneficial in gaining a better understanding of our onion packing and selling."

Rachel Chirgwin, based in Saddleworth in the Mid North, will use the \$5000 Rural Youth Bursary towards travelling interstate to research commercial studs.

Her future vision is to breed superior Suffolk genetics by using leading edge technology through genetics and streamlining on-farm management.

She hopes this will have a significant impact on the sheep meat industry by increasing productivity and profitability.

Media contact: Richard Lower – 0419 838 646

“I will use the \$5000 bursary to travel interstate to look into the barriers of adoption of technology in sheep enterprises in predominantly cereal cropping areas. I will spend time interstate visiting commercial and stud producers and feedlots that are using electronic identification technology (Eid) to increase production whilst lowering management costs,” she said.

“I also really want to mentor others in their technology based projects.”

Barmera’s Barry Mudge was also recognised at the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards, receiving the Services to Primary Production Award for his contribution to primary production over a significant period of time.

A member of the Barmera Ag Bureau for 48 years, Barry has been instrumental in changing the face of viticulture and horticulture in the Riverland and further afield.

Peter Olsen Fellowship:

An annual agricultural fellowship awarded to a young farmer between the ages of 18 and 35 which aims to boost on-farm skills and knowledge. The funds go towards further study, study tours or special projects. It is named after the late Peter Olsen, an Advisory Board of Agriculture member at the time of his death in a tragic plane accident in 2002.

2015 winner: James Smith

Rural Youth Bursary, *sponsored by Primary Industries and Regions SA*

The Rural Youth Bursary is a grant for young people, aged between 18 and 30, working in rural areas. It provides the opportunity to pursue further study, undertake a study tour or develop a special project in their chosen career.

2015 winner: Rachel Chirgwin

Services to Primary Production

This award, nominated by Agricultural Bureau branches, recognises the provision of exceptional services to primary productions. Eligibility is not restricted to farmers but to anyone involved in primary production including the service industries, government, education and agri-politics.

2015 winner: Barry Mudge

Media contacts:

Mark Grossman
ABA Chair
0408 085 682

Karen Baines
ABA Awards Co-Ordinator
0421 677 860