

Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Food & Fisheries and Forests

Wednesday, 5th January 2010

Grain storage and handling frustration for farmers

Viterra, the company that holds a monopoly of most of SA's grain storage and all of our port facilities, should provide SA farmers with consistent and correct grain classification.

Shadow Minister for Agriculture Adrian Pederick said that he is frustrated that Viterra is not fully utilising an internationally recognised method of grain classification.

Frustration is also growing among SA's grain growing community who are concerned that Viterra refuses to address issues regarding the storage and potentially incorrect classification of grain.

The farming community has called on Viterra to use a falling numbers machine to prevent variations in the classification of grain at different sites.

"Farmers have to freight their grain much greater distances to receive up to an extra \$130 per tonne by taking their grain to competitor sites that are utilising the falling numbers grain grading machine.

"Silos are filling rapidly and sites are closed to some classifications of grain, leaving farmers wasting precious time on the phone trying to find a facility that will take their harvest.

"Grain growers are being sent in their trucks from site to site at times having their grain graded differently at each site costing farmers thousands of dollars.

"Increased competition in the grain sector is required to stimulate better service.

"I will be pursuing the management of the State's grain harvest vigorously when Parliament returns.

"The current arrangements have been less than satisfactory and have the potential to leave many farmers out of pocket after what has been the best harvest they have had after many years of drought.

"I call on the State Government to join the SA Liberal's efforts in gaining equity for farmers' grain storage and pricing," Mr Pederick said.