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Adrian Pederick MP

Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Shadow Minister for Forests

Ag R&D – less input equals less output

South Australia's agriculture sector has borne a heavy share of Labor's budget cuts in recent years says Opposition Agriculture spokesman Adrian Pederick.

'In the 2010-11 budget 179 jobs and \$80 million was cut from agriculture over four years, including \$8 million for SARDI (South Australian Research & Development Institute).

'Now we see in the 2011-12 budget a \$2.7 million cut to SARDI funding.

'It is apparent from Agriculture Minister O'Brien's answer to my question in Budget Estimates that he has not considered what direct implications this might have on existing programs, nor the wider operational implications of such cuts on external partnerships.

'Minister O'Brien complains the opposition have not identified any research areas that have been cut. As minister, he should be telling us what the effects are.

'While SARDI 'operates independently', to use the minister's words, it does so with facilities and equipment that are owned by the government. SARDI owes its very existence to the government, whose generosity or otherwise would most surely have some influence on its independence.

'I also note that Minister O'Brien refers to \$12.8 million spent on locust control. Apparently, he's already forgotten that the statement was made in Estimates that the actual amount spent was \$11.6 million.

'Detail aside, I say again – less input equals less output. Constantly lowering support and increasing tax and levy burdens on rural SA will slow or stall research and development.'

Contact: Adrian Pederick - 0429 692 921

Visit Adrian's website www.adrianpederick.com.