

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

REVIEW OF THE ROSEWORTHY FARM

NOVEMBER 2003

Andrew Polkinghorne, Farm Consultant, Chair
Phil Hynd, Interim Head, School of Agriculture and Wine
Geoff Lucas, CEO Lucas Group Pty Ltd
David Shannon, Member Southern Grains Panel, Grains Development and Research Corporation
Roger Nourse, Director, Hortus Australia
Glenn McDonald, Head Discipline of Plant and Pest Science
Jeff Arney, Chair of SA Farmer's Federation Cereals Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In pursuing its tasks, the Review Committee investigated current functional and operational issues related to the Roseworthy Farm and developed a strategic framework to address areas of concern.

The educational role for the Farm will continue to predominantly rely on the requirements that flow from the University's degree and diploma programs. Industry feedback to the Review indicated that graduates from the current University programs required improved orientation to practical industry issues, and a better range of workplace competencies. A need to provide programs linked to business, commerce and management was also indicated.

In this context, the fundamental issue is to better link the current academic program to practical production and broader agri-industry issues. Using the Roseworthy Farm is only one option to achieve this outcome and the key justification for the University to maintain a farm relates to the benefits that accrue from the farm weighed against the alternatives. The Committee concluded that if world best-practice teaching methodologies were to be deployed in conjunction with a highly credible commercial farming operation there would be significant cost /benefits in favour of maintaining the farm. However, in the course of the Review, the Committee identified issues of significant concern related to the current operation of the Farm and its relationship to the academic program.

The challenge is therefore for the University to embrace improved methodologies and practices to realise the benefits that stakeholders have identified. Continuing to operate the farm in the current way is not an appropriate option for the University.

Continuing research on the Farm was viewed by the Committee as an important function in placing the University at the leading edge in industry and to enhance the reputation and status of the organisation. Overall, the location of the Farm provides many advantages for research given its close proximity to key laboratories and professional staff.

Stakeholders also emphasised the developing market advantage related to the agricultural systems that can be demonstrated on the Roseworthy farm. Competitor institutions in a similar agricultural zone are diminishing or failing to embrace best practice delivery models.

It was concluded that only a single, focused entity (Centre) for applied education and research in agriculture could bring together currently disparate University of Adelaide resources, government and non-government stakeholders and commercial entities to achieve the appropriate vision for higher education training in agriculture in South Australia. It would serve to strengthen the links between Waite and Roseworthy campuses. Concepts involved in the establishment of the proposed Centre for Innovation in Agriculture include:

- Refocusing the Roseworthy Farm as a purely commercial entity modelling industry best practice. The problems associated with the current "dual identity"

for the farm (ie modelling commercial farm operation combined with an educational role) have resulted in a failure to deliver best practice for either function.

- Establishing an Education Unit to implement reforms identified as essential during the course of the Review. Appropriate educational leadership will be critical to achieving the cultural change required with the educational program.

The Committee proposes that all University farms be managed under the new Centre for Innovation in Agriculture. The synergies and efficiencies that can be gained will maximise dividends from the farms and establish an improved career structure for farm staff.

The combination of the changes proposed, have significant implications for the staff of the University farms. A key tenet in the proposals is that the University must model best practice in all operations including human resource management. Innovative approaches must be adopted in restructuring the staffing arrangements as an example to wider agricultural industry.

The first step is the decision of principle –The University needs to commit the appropriate resources to maximise the opportunity the Farm offers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

1. A Centre for Innovation in Agriculture be established to integrate training, education and research across agricultural industries. An overarching role for the Centre would be to drive business, research and educational opportunities in a commercially sustainable manner.
2. The educational role of the Farm be separated from the commercial operations of the Farm by establishing an Educational Programs Unit, encompassing all agriculture programs in the Faculty.
3. Academic Programs be integrated into the activities of the Farm to encompass decision making, risk management, marketing, human resource and supply chain management.
4. A strong agribusiness focus be established on the Roseworthy Campus. A key area in preparation for the workplace relates to training in commerce/business and management – areas that must be better integrated into the University of Adelaide programs.
5. An appropriate package of vocational competencies in agriculture and agribusiness for integration with the degree programs be identified utilising the resources of the Roseworthy Farm.

6. An Educational Director to be appointed to develop new opportunities in training and education in agriculture and agribusiness and to develop competency based programs.
7. All EFTSUs (Equivalent Full Time Student Units) arising from training be allocated to the training provider eg the Farm, Education Unit.
8. Recommendations of the Baldwin Report relating to problem based learning and competency based training be adopted.

THE FARM

9. The Roseworthy Farm be retained as an essential resource for the development of the Centre.
10. The management of the University's Farms be consolidated under a single management structure, under a University's Farms Manager.
11. The Roseworthy Farm Manager position to be redefined and a new appointment made as a matter of priority.
12. The Roseworthy Farm be run as a financially autonomous commercial entity.
13. A commercial approach be taken when managing research and teaching on the Roseworthy Farm.
14. The principle of full cost recovery for teaching and research activities be developed and applied.
15. The Roseworthy Farm be managed using Best Commercial Practices.
16. Staffing levels, skills and management of staff reflect Best Commercial Practice.
17. A program of ongoing staff development be introduced to enhance the technical and management skills of the staff.
18. The Competitive Neutrality Levy that is applied to the farm be discontinued.

IMPLEMENTATION

19. An interim Board be appointed to implement the recommendations of the Review.
20. A summary of the Review to be made available to those people who contributed to the Review.
21. Within 6 months after the release of the final report an independent Committee of stakeholders review the implementation of the Review's recommendations.

DIVISION OF FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PAUL DULDIG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE
ROOM 130, 1ST FLOOR, MITCHELL BUILDING
ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY SA 5005
AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE +61 8 8303 4840
FACSIMILE +61 8 8303 6011
paul.duldig@adelaide.edu.au

Our Ref: F. 2003/1644

12 December 2003

Mr Darren Koopman
Secretary
Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc
Roseworthy Bldg F3/G17
ROSEWORTHY CAMPUS

Dear Darren

I am writing to update you on progress with the Roseworthy Farm review.

The Review Group was formed, and was provided with specific information on the Roseworthy Farm and the University as a whole. A call for submissions was distributed widely to stakeholders and a significant number of submissions were received. The Committee also interviewed a number of key stakeholders.

A draft report has been prepared for consideration of the University. I am pleased to release publicly the key findings of the Review of Roseworthy Farm – that the University should:

1. retain Roseworthy Farm
2. place it under the commercial management of Martindale Holdings Pty Ltd
3. establish a stronger link between the Farm and the educational activities of the University
4. pursue leading-edge innovative commercial opportunities on the Farm, and
5. develop a stronger management focus to the University's agricultural curriculum.

The University strongly supports these findings.

In order to finalise the detailed implementation model, further consultation with the Review Group will be undertaken over the next two months.

I expect the final report will be released no later than February 2004 for consultation with stakeholders.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Roseworthy Farm.

Yours sincerely



PAUL DULDIG
Executive Director, Finance and Infrastructure

ROCA Committee Members

copy of Executive Summary
attached.

Darren



Our Ref: F.2003/1644

20 February 2004

Mr Darren Koopman
Secretary
Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc
Roseworthy Bldg F3/G17
ROSEWORTHY CAMPUS

Dear Darren

Re: Roseworthy Farm Review

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Roseworthy Farm. A copy of the final report of the "Review of Roseworthy Farm Operations" is attached.

The University of Adelaide is releasing this report for consultation, and your views on its findings would be most welcome.

Please forward any written comments to me at the above address.

Affected parties will be engaged in further consultation during the implementation stage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Duldig'.

PAUL DULDIG
Executive Director, Finance and Infrastructure

cc: Andrew Polkinghorne

DIVISION OF FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PAUL DULDIG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

ROOM 130, 1ST FLOOR, MITCHELL BUILDING

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY SA 5005
AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE +61 8 8303 4840

FACSIMILE +61 8 8303 6011

paul.duldig@adelaide.edu.au

Secretary to file
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Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc.

<http://www.roseworthy.adelaide.edu.au/Campus/ROCA/index.html>

PO Box 503 KENT TOWN SA 5071

Mr Paul Duldig
Executive Director, Finance and Infrastructure
The University of Adelaide

Dear Paul

Re: Roseworthy Farm Review

Thank you for the part copy of the "Review of Roseworthy Farm Operations". The Roseworthy Old Collegians Association has considered the report and forwards the following response for further consideration by The University of Adelaide.

Overall, we considered that the background, reasoning and conclusions were sound and were pleased to note that most of the key comments from our submission were taken into account. We fully support the recommendations of the review and encourage their full adoption

In particular, we strongly support the proposed formation of the **Centre for Innovation in Agriculture**. We see this as being promoted widely as the shop front, show case and outreach facility for the faculty's education and research. In doing so, we believe that further development of the core expertise, science and technology should be clearly defined for this Centre. We believe that this should focus on sciences, needs, systems and opportunities relevant to southern Australian agriculture and resource management. A clear Charter and modus operandi must be established and this must be adopted into the culture of all Faculty activities. We reinforce the opportunity for the University to do this in the context of the national and international scene where as there is a tendency for the review to portray a limited and parochial South Australian perspective and context.

We reinforce that the continued success of the University in leading edge research and education will be realised if there is full engagement of the rural/agricultural/agribusiness/corporate/customer communities. In this regard, we recognise that this will be difficult to realise unless the "Commercial Agricultural Unit" and the 'Education Program Unit' are created and adequately resourced. Clearly the proposed positions of 'Director, Business and Development (*Innovation*) – Agriculture' and "Agricultural Education Director" at appropriate senior classifications are critical. We would also wish to see a much stronger working relationship and interaction between these two units, their directors and the core academic staff of the faculty. More emphasis should be given to collaboration/partnerships with stakeholders and client groups. One particular need is in the innovative delivery of new educational opportunities.

We note that the Martindale Farm Manager has taken over the responsibility of the Roseworthy farm and that an interim management system is in place which will be reviewed. This is realising some immediate benefits and will appropriately provide further directions and decisions.

We note that the Baldwin Report has not led to any action. We refer you to our first submission. We urge you to revisit the report and implement its recommendations.

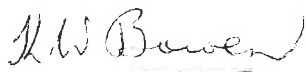
We support the discontinuation of the Competitive Neutrality Levy and urge the University to provide sufficient financial support to ensure the proposals in this report are implemented.

We are not aware of any action on other recommendations, especially those which have a bearing on our above comments. We recognise that there are staff and budget implications which make this a challenge and in the short term a threat to ongoing activities. But inaction will be the demise of the University's credibility and capacity to fulfil reasonable academic/research/education opportunities on a regional and global basis. We refer particularly to the need and development of the cultural change, commercial opportunities and innovation at the leading edge that are basic to a good outcome.

We emphasise the need for access by students and staff to the range of practical activities on the farm so that the rural community will continue to identify with Roseworthy Campus as a centre for training of readily employable graduates.

Our Association remains clearly committed to contributing to the long term success of the University's program in the agricultural sciences. We will be pleased to continue to work with the faculty and the administration of the University to realise the maximum benefit possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H.W. Bowen', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

ROCA President

19/4/04.