

Funding set for training

BENN GRANSDEN

POTATO farmers like Greg Rodert could benefit from the government's grant of \$50,000 to up-skill the potato and wine industries.

Potatoes South Australia chief executive officer Robbie Davis is delighted with the potato industry's slice of the "potato" of \$43,500.

Funding will benefit key potato growing regions including the South East, Kangaroo Island, the Mallee, the Riverland/Murraylands and the Northern Adelaide Plains.

Over \$6000 has also been awarded to Vinpac International, Australia's largest third party wine bottling service provider to further train their workforce.

"We want to establish a comprehensive workforce development plan for the whole industry sector" Ms Davis said.

"Potatoes South Australia has a 'whole of value chain' focus from the seed grower to the consumer.

"We will be looking at the primary production end first of all, but we aim to work through every link of the chain.

"It will involve collaboration between all stakeholders."

The project has already started with the first project steering committee, having met last Wednesday.

The steering committee comprises very talented members who will guide the project's progress.

Ms Davis said Potatoes South Australia is managing the project and has contracted a consultant to work with the board to deliver the plan.

"We will be very clear about the project aims, the methodology, and the task sequences, and make sure the timelines are appropriate for achieving this," Ms Davis said.

"The project will also be appropriately evaluated and potentially extended into other horticultural sectors."

Ms Davis said by doing a workforce development plan Potatoes South Australia will be visiting individual companies and looking into "identifying skills gaps and addressing competencies" in the workforce.

"Where there are gaps we will work with registered training organisations to develop a program of training which will be delivered on site.

The training will be customised to the needs of the workforce in that



COOL ROOM: Greg Rodert in his cool room holding potato seeds to be planted in October this year.

sector and that geographic region," she said.

South Australia currently produces 80 per cent of the nation's fresh washed potatoes.

The other important factor is that SA produces the most potatoes with 385,000 tonnes grown here of the 1.25 million in the country.



PROJECT IS A GO: Potatoes South Australia chief executive officer Robbie Davis.

Out of hands

A DEPARTMENT of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) investigation showed nothing could be done about circumstances in the export of Australian sheep in 2012 to Pakistan.

THE DAFF investigation revealed that nothing could be done by Wellard Rural Exports about the actions recorded in a publicly released video.

DAFF has released its investigation report recently, concluding that the handling and slaughter of sheep shown in the publicly released video footage was not compliant with OIE animal welfare recommendations.

The report also found that the intervention by Pakistan authorities and armed police on the ground were outside the scope of Australia's regulatory framework.

DAFF continues to maintain that the sheep were healthy and met all importing country requirements for Bahrain - the original destination market - and Pakistan.

A period of considerable legal and diplomatic effort and international independent laboratory testing took place to address Pakistan's concerns around the health of the sheep.



PRODUCTION: One of Greg Rodert and his brother Craig's "Guss" bagging machines at the property Rodert Farms.



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