# South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

**Snapshot video transcript**

**June 2022**

**Introduction**

The South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub is one of 8 hubs across Australia. Short snapshot videos for each hub were featured in the 2022 Future Drought Fund Science to Practice Forum on 7-8 June 2022.

**Transcript**

[Video begins]

Dr Stephen Lee:

Hi, my name's Dr Stephen Lee and I'm the director of the South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub. My role is to work with the fabulous team we've got right across South Australia, from the Lower South East, right through to the West Coast of the state, to shape up projects around drought resilience adoption that improve on farm resilience and put in practices that are sustainable that'll help farmers next time we're in drought.

Beth Humphris:

I finished uni in 2018, straight into the industry into a drought. So I suppose when I think of drought, I think of the bare soil and the impact that has, both in the drought years but also in the recovery years. I work a lot with growers, one on one, talking about how to manage their cropping systems and how to, I suppose, ameliorate or push their soils to make sure that we're at our productive maximum.

Rebekah Allen:

I think at the moment, one thing that we talk about a lot is climate and weather. A lot of people asking, when are we going to get that break? So I think one of the factors at the moment that we face is just the unpredictability of weather events and potential climate change. Drought affects us all in different ways. Going forward, it's important to identify what actually is a drought for us and for farmers on individual properties.

Dr Stephen Lee:

South Australian farmers, I think are really adept at managing in quite a dry climate. We've been looking at a whole range of practices to have better farming systems and also better agronomic practices and better livestock management. So the focus of this Hub is really around mixed farming systems, so that's cropping and livestock, but we also have efforts into horticulture and viticulture. And our focus there is really around managing their businesses as well as on farm.

Peter Mitchell:

So, granddad was here for about 35, 40 years of his life working on this farm. He always used to talk about two droughts, they're either a water drought, or a feed drought. You never really get both of them at the same time. We've currently had probably four years of pretty bad, pretty average seasons. Most of those have been water droughts. Feed has been tight, but it's, I say it's easier to buy in feed than it is water. Resilience is probably the key to me. You've got to try and preempt it before it comes here. So, it's in the setup. If you're able to get secure water, if you're able to have your paddocks that are able to fire more feed and you can't always buy the stock in, you can always cut it for hay. There's always an opportunity there. It's a pretty paramount thing to be thinking worst case scenario and planning for the worst and being available for what comes, what happens.

Rebekah Allen:

Resilience is really important to strengthen a community. A lot of farmers that you'll speak to don't say that we're going to fix drought through a drought-tolerant crop, or an amendment that we put in the soil. Sometimes it's much more broader than that, talking about risk management and mental health and things like that to develop a community and also build a support network for growers and businesses and other individuals that might need it going through a tough time.

Dr Stephen Lee:

The Hub space is here at the Roseworthy campus of the University of Adelaide. This is a campus where we've been really fortunate to be able to take outstanding livestock research and development, helping to understand how to better manage sheep and beef cattle to realise their full potential in restricted feed environments or managing feed base in dry environments. The SA Hub has 60 partners. We're a Hub that reaches right through the farming systems groups, the landscape boards and the research, development and adoption providers in the state and agri business as well. The partners are absolutely core for us to be able to deliver our projects. We are only as strong as all our partners together.

Beth Humphris:

So, I'm actually part of the Upper North Farming Systems Group, which is partnered with the Drought Hub, and had quite a few workshops and a lot of talking through there with a lot of farmers attending those workshops.

Peter Mitchell:

It's about getting the research and development and opportunities out there to the people on the ground and getting that preparedness up, levels up, so we can have diversity and have opportunities when they arise.

Rebekah Allen:

I think the most important thing about the SA Drought Hub, particularly around Hart's involvement, is bringing together a group of industry researchers and growers, not only to work within rural and regional communities but also work together and come together to collaborate.

Dr Stephen Lee:

I hope they see the Hub as having equipped them, as an activity that help them evaluate and change practice on their farm, so that they know they're better prepared and have greater resilience in variable climates and in drought.

[Video ends]

**Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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