



**EYRE PENINSULA FIELD DAYS
21 August 2002**

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): The Eyre Peninsula field days, held biannually at Cleve, have again broken records for attendance, both for the number of exhibitors and the value and quality of the exhibits. President Errol Schuster described them as the best field days ever, with excellent reports from exhibitors. He described the educational and TAFE exhibits as one of this year's highlights. This is a tribute to the vocational and education training (VET) program that has been a strong factor in the successful transition of students from school to employment.

Students of schools from across Eyre Peninsula demonstrated projects, and the pavilion showcasing the work that students are doing was exceptional. The live bands and singers who showed talent beyond their years came from several local schools, including Cleve and Kimba, and possibly others that I did not hear personally, and added to the wonderful atmosphere of the field days. At the TAFE site, students who had completed the two-year farm training program were judged on their work over the course and their communication skills.

Of particular interest to me was the stand for the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) telescope. SKA outreach project officer Dr Michelle Storey of the CSIRO in Sydney attended with a teacher and students from Abbotsley school in Sydney. Abbotsley and Kimba Area Schools are two of the six schools across Australia helping international scientists track down regions of Australia where the \$1 billion international radiotelescope might be located. SEARFE (Students Exploring Australia's Radio Frequency Environment) set up equipment during the week at Kimba school. The field days are a great opportunity for community groups to fundraise via the provision of goods and services, some of which showcase local produce. Two that come to mind are the garfish food stall, run by the Cowell Football Club, and the kingfish stall, convened by the Arno Bay Progress Association.

SAFF (South Australian Farmers Fuel) used the event to publicise work that is being done in using canola oil as a fuel for vehicles. SAFF's biodiesel production facility is located at Millicent, where it will become the site for Australia's first dedicated Biofuels Research Centre. Canola growers on Eyre Peninsula, as well as the general public, expressed keen interest in the production of biodiesel, which is a 100 per cent renewable source of energy that can replace fossil fuels and thus significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Eyre Peninsula is one of the few areas in Australia where the season promises a generally average return, although there are pockets where rainfall has been limited. The field days always display new machinery that has come onto the market. This gives potential users the chance to discuss pros and cons so they can arrive at what is best for their specific circumstances. Several comments were heard about the size of farming equipment. The scope of the machinery on display points to the diversity of the agricultural scene and the changes in farm methods, some brought about by the fact that farms are larger.

Visitors use the field days to talk with scientists from Primary Industries of South Australia to learn and exchange views and practices. Environmental matters are always well to the fore. Fertiliser-related exhibits featured fertilisers made from everything from seaweed to basalt rock, to living organisms. The diversity of the primary industry scene from the days when cereal and sheep were the mainstays and the usual communication was by letter was evident. Wineries and wine tasting, computers, internet and satellite technology were the faces of this advance.

Secretary Jill Schultz is to be congratulated on the smooth running of such a big event. Her committee of helpers, along with the president, Errol Schuster, were Dennis Hannemann, Gloria Parker, Ken Le Raye, Leigh Dreckow, Kevin Elson, Ron Grosser, Elaine Schumann, Creagh McGlasson and Shirley Dennis. Helen

Lovegrove was coordinator of the general interest section, which also was bigger and better than ever. Her committee included Else Wauchope, Marianne Harkness, Mary Edwards, Lorrae Weiss and Leanne Norris.

A 'first time' this year was the special kits designed for hands-on participation in projects as varied as floral art, furniture restoration and greetings cards, and instructors were on hand to take participants through moments of uncertainty. Most of the rural clothing manufacturers were also on hand to display their particular brands. Cooking, beauty demonstrations and fashion parades rounded out a complete showing of all aspects of life in rural South Australia. I congratulate all concerned.