

Role description

General information

Title:	Research Farm Manager			Classification:	OPS6
Division:	SARDI	Branch:	Research Support		Business unit: Farm Network
Type of appointment:	Ongoing	Hours of duty:	37.5 per week	Location :	Turretfield Research Centre

About us

South Australia is internationally recognised for the quality of its agriculture, food, and wine. Our regions are the backbone of our state and the economic powerhouse that drives prosperity for all South Australians.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) is a key economic development agency working in partnership with our primary industries, regional stakeholders and across all levels of government to advance the prosperity and sustainability of South Australia's primary industries and regional communities.

We are a passionate team of around 800 people working across metropolitan and regional South Australia to develop and protect our state's regions and food, wine, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, grains, livestock, dairy and horticulture industries.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this role is to provide leadership, high-level operational management, and continuous improvement across research farm operations that support SARDI, industry partners, and external stakeholders in delivering research and development programs. As the lead Research Farm Manager for the SARDI Farm Network, the position is responsible for leading, mentoring, and coaching Farm Managers, fostering consistency, capability development, best practice, and operational excellence across all sites. The role also has direct responsibility for the day-to-day management and operation of Turretfield Research Farm.

The Research Farm Manager identifies and pursues opportunities to attract resources and investment into the Farm Network, while building productive relationships with industry, government agencies, research partners and local communities. The role ensures research farms deliver professional, customer-focused services that respond to the changing needs of research programs. It also carries significant responsibility for staff wellbeing, safety and performance, livestock and asset management, and the mitigation of operational and biosecurity risks across research farm operations.

The role contributes to delivering the agency's priorities of Increasing Productivity, Growing Regions, and Performing Well, while supporting the delivery of applied science that advances South Australia's primary industries.

The operations of the SARDI Farm Network, including Turretfield Research Farm, aim to:

- Demonstrate best-practice commercial and research farming systems.
- Showcase, evaluate, and challenge emerging technologies and innovations.
- Provide independent, high-quality sites to support research, development, and extension activities.
- Build the capability of Farm Managers and farm teams through leadership, mentoring, and knowledge sharing across the network.
- Maximise opportunities to attract additional resources and partnerships through mutually beneficial relationships with industry, government, research organisations, and local communities.

Role description

Key accountabilities

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and operational oversight of the SARDI Farm Network, ensuring research farm activities support SARDI, industry partners and stakeholders to deliver R&D programs. • Foster a culture of service excellence across the Farm Network, ensuring research projects are delivered professionally, safely, efficiently and in partnership with researchers and stakeholders. • Lead, mentor, and coach Farm Managers to build capability, promote best practice, and drive consistency, collaboration, safety, and operational excellence across the network. • Provide operational management of mixed crop and livestock management across the Turretfield and Kingsford sites, embracing ethical and sustainable farming methods. • Overseeing implementation of operating and capital plans, flock/herd development and ground planning and preparation. • Managing and motivating farm employees at Turretfield Research Centre to achieve high productivity levels whilst adhering to sustainable standards and work health and safety rules and regulations in all farm operations. • Promote productive, best-practice farming through leading-edge AgTech, while supporting the planning, delivery and continuous improvement of research infrastructure and operational services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the promotion and recognition of Turretfield Farm through developing and managing initiatives with external parties, such as The Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association. • Ensuring all sheep, and wool production programs (i.e., production, breeding, and selection) are effectively implemented on the property. • Ensure farm operational data, production records and research support information are accurate, accessible and managed in accordance with organisational standards. • Mitigating financial, reputational, people and safety risk to PIRSA through appropriate farm practices • Overseeing the sale and purchase of farm products and equipment • Developing and managing budgets and reports • Site manager for Turretfield Research Centre for Site Safety Management, Bushfire Preparedness, and related site • Representing SARDI and/or PIRSA on across government and external committees, including Animal Ethics Committee, SARDI WHS Peak Forum and Australia Merino Sire Evaluation Committee. |
|--|---|

Key deliverables / results

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations are managed within budget and by projected timelines. • Effective relationships with PIRSA staff, other government agencies, industry and community groups are developed and maintained. • Drive continuous improvement initiatives across the farm network to enhance productivity, service delivery, stakeholder outcomes, and the effective utilisation of farm assets and resources. • Animal Ethics and biosecurity standards are upheld for all farm activities. • Plans and schedules for planting, harvesting, shearing etc. are prepared and staff understand expectations. • Existing operations for crops, livestock, staff, and budgets are analysed and improvements recommended to General Manager, Research Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary reports, farm budgets, financial reports and other required information are submitted to the General Manager, Research Support and the PIRSA Finance team as required. • Electronic farm records, including farm production and analysis information, trial site locations and characteristics are managed in accordance with the PIRSA Data Management Framework. • Crop cycles, animal health, soil quality, and pest control are effectively managed across the farm network and Turretfield Research Centre. • Coordinate site safety management, Bushfire Response Plans, and other work health and safety (WHS) requirements across the SARDI Farm Network, ensuring compliance with legislative obligations, departmental policies, and WHS standards. • Oversee the implementation and maintenance of the Turretfield Research Centre Site Safety Management Plan and Business Continuity/Emergency Response Plans, ensuring effective preparedness, risk management, and response capability. |
|--|--|

Relationships

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role reports to General Manager, Research Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation on Animal Ethics Committee, SARDI WHS Peak Forum and Australia |
|---|---|

Role description

- Roles reporting to this role include a number of farm staff.
- Collaborates with a range of professional, research, technical, farm staff and external stakeholders

Merino Sire Evaluation Committee.

- Community, industry, across government agencies and external entities.
- Provides mentorship, guidance, and support to Farm Managers, farm staff, and trainees across the SARDI Farm Network to build capability, foster professional development, and strengthen operational performance.

Requirements

- Possession of a current driver's license and willingness to drive.
- The role involves regular outdoor work in research farm environments and requires the ability to work safely and effectively in varying weather conditions, including heat, cold, wind, rain, dust, and other environmental factors associated with agricultural operations.
- Out of hours work and inter / intrastate travel may be required.
- Australian residency or current works permit is required (responsibility of applicant to provide evidence of a current work permit).
- You acknowledge your work, health and safety obligations and our expectations when [applying for a role](#).
- The incumbent will be required to undertake emergency management training and must be willing to participate in emergency preparedness, response and recovery activities required by government agencies.

Qualifications

- Essential: Nil
- Desirable: Qualification in Agriculture or significant relevant experience in a similar role

Capabilities

Capability	Behaviours
Professional and Technical Knowledge Demonstrates sound knowledge of agriculture and operational management in best practice farming in a research environment.	• Proven experience managing crop and livestock farming operations, preferably in a research or similar environment. • A high level of understanding of cost of production, risk management, achievement of revenue targets and budget management. • Has sound knowledge and practical application of Biosecurity, Animal Ethics and Safety standards. • Keeps abreast of advances in agriculture, AgTech, and industry best practice to support continuous improvement and informed decision-making. • Experience in leading a diverse workforce, fostering collaboration, accountability, capability development, and high performance. • Knowledge of the relevant regulations relating to the transport, use, storage, and handling of agricultural chemicals • Demonstrated experience setting and meeting deadlines, monitoring, and reviewing systems and applying well developed people skills to promote a positive team environment • Demonstrates resilience and adaptability in managing changing priorities, seasonal demands, weather conditions, and operational challenges while maintaining focus on achieving outcomes.

Role description

Business and Commercial Acumen Understands and ensures sound commercial principles are applied to all aspects of area of responsibility; identifies key business drivers and opportunities to develop new processes and services to benefit the business of the whole business group and its customers	- Identifies and pursues opportunities to develop mutually beneficial relationships, partnerships, and collaborations that support business and research outcomes. - Strong communications skills and the ability to liaise with staff and external stakeholders at all levels. - Liaises confidently across government, industry, and business. - Identifies opportunities to improve efficiency, service delivery, productivity, and value for money through innovation and continuous improvement.
Planning and Organising Work Develops and manages efficient work plans for complex activities involving several elements or groups.	- Effectively manages resources using budget to the fullest. - Monitors and reviews progress of activities and revises priorities appropriately. - Sets directions and defies standards conducive to continuous improvement.
People Management Ensures work plans are established within the group; maintains staff capability and motivation to achieve group goals; demonstrates a commitment to people and actively supports direct reports to achieve agreed outcomes	- Leads by example, promoting professionalism, integrity, accountability, and a strong commitment to safety and wellbeing. - Coaches, mentors, and develops team members, encouraging continuous learning, capability development, and knowledge sharing. - Build commitment to organisational goals by engaging staff in planning, decision-making, and achieving outcomes. - Values the well-being of staff by managing stress levels and work-life balance.

HRMS no.:	A789131	ANZCO Code:		Objective ID:	
Delegate approval:	Executive Director, SARDI			Date:	August 2026
Approved and classified by People and Culture:	Manager HR Operations				