

Mark Rodda was recently named the new chief executive officer of Eyre Peninsula-based grain trading and storage business FREE Eyre.

We asked Mark OUR TOP QUESTIONS

Optimism key for EP grain leader

1 What is your industry's greatest asset?

I consider 'my industry' to be that of agribusiness. The greatest asset in Australian agribusiness is the determination and persistence of its innovators. Whether it's developing better crop rotations, new machinery, faster logistics, value-adding or finding new markets – the Australian agribusiness community punches well above its weight. I believe this is a major reason for foreign

companies' and superannuation funds' desire to invest in this country. Why wouldn't you?

2 What is the biggest threat facing your business or industry and how will you overcome it?

I don't see threats. I only see opportunities missed. We could all focus on declining terms of trade, excessive government red tape and climate change or we can divert our energy to those things that we can control. Wise agribusiness

people are only interested in how they can run their businesses faster and smarter. These people value talent and new ideas and are prepared to put their money where their mouth is. They find complementary businesses to better utilise their existing infrastructure and they invest in developing new markets.

3 How will your industry change in the next 10 or 20 years?

The effective use and exchange of agricultural information will

become so much more important. Production, logistics and marketing decisions will be made with far more precision and reason. For the vast majority of our agricultural production, the romantic notion of owning your supply chain is idealistic at best. However, winners in agribusiness will own their share of the supply chain's information and understand how to use it to their advantage. Everyone in the agribusiness sector needs to travel more – this could be to the next district, the next state or the next country – but just do it.

4 If you were 18 again, which industry would you set out to work in and why?

I always wanted to work in agribusiness. Both my father and I knew from an early age that I'd make a pretty ordinary farmer (he'll kill me for saying this), but that I had a real passion for working on behalf



of rural industries in an attempt to expand their markets, encourage innovation and improve their profitability.

5 What has been the biggest learning curve in your career?

Firstly – listen to people – irrespective of their position, their demeanor, their nationality or their method of communicating, everyone has a good idea. Secondly – be grateful – we have nothing to complain about.

6 What is the most important business advice you have received?

Be honest and be determined, but above all, look after those around you and treat them extremely well.