



Initiatives Promoting Agricultural Careers in Central Queensland

May 2008





Blue Dog Agribusiness

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Introduction

Central Queensland has a significant agricultural sector covering beef, grain, cotton and horticulture. It needs a considerable agricultural workforce to cover on-farm activities and the off-farm industries that service the sector.

The agriculture sector provides varied and interesting work for individuals of all ages who would like to pursue the many diverse and rewarding careers that are available. Also a wide range of professions operate within the rural industries such as engineering, finance, accountancy, law, education and research to name a few. Although not unique to agriculture, it is commonly recognized that there is a looming labour shortage crisis occurring across rural industries. This is likely to get worse before it gets better when you consider the aging profile of those in the industry, competition from the continuing resource boom, and the declining interest in school leavers pursuing further training in agriculture.

This problem has been recognized for some time. There has been considerable effort put in by many groups and organisations to promote agriculture as a career within Central Queensland and nationally. However it is a huge task to reverse the trend, and consequently these efforts need to be coordinated to get maximum effect.

With the generous support of the **Kestrel Mine Community Development Fund** a report was commissioned to develop strategies to attract skilled workers into the agricultural and pastoral industries of Central Queensland. The objectives of this report were to find out what recruitment and training activities were being undertaken, conduct a structured analysis, and provide direction on where we can take action.

Finally I would like to thank **Liz Alexander** of **Blue Dog Agribusiness** for undertaking this report and also the time given freely by **members of the Steering Committee**. The financial support by the **Kestrel Mine Community Development Fund** has allowed this work to be done, but it will be to no avail unless there is a commitment by stakeholders to continue the momentum. This strategy has provided a starting point for a coordinated approach and now I urge all stakeholders to support the recommended activities as they are rolled out.

Initiatives to combat labour shortages are implemented at a national and state level with support from the Australian Government, Queensland Government and rural industry. Closer to home, rural industry, local communities and schools offer programs to promote agricultural career pathways in Central Queensland.

The following scoping study adds this snapshot with initiatives of direct relevance to Central Queensland, as identified by the Steering Committee, and by secondary school principals, career officers, agricultural teachers, Registered Training Organisations and Employment Agencies in Central Queensland.



Dr Jim Sands
Campus Manager
Australian Agricultural College Corporation (Emerald)



AgAware Ltd

- Coverage/region: Queensland
- Funded by: Residual funds from previous activities.
- Currency: 1997 - current
- Events: AgAware will operate two networking events in the second half of 2007.
- Resources: Web site to be created in late 2008 to provide a central repository of information for students, teaches and industry.

Since 2007, AgAware has re-focussed on promoting careers in agriculture within schools. The association encourages communication between sectors and encourages networking between interested parties to achieve this. Initially, AgAware was a project designed to develop and facilitate educators' access to quality curriculum materials which use agriculture as a context for students' learning. The materials for Levels 1 – 4 were developed by the AgAware Group in collaboration with the Queensland School Curriculum Council (now the Queensland Studies Authority).

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Web: to be developed in late 2008.

AgForce School to Industry Partnership

- Name/Title: AgForce School to Industry Partnership Program
- Organisation(s): AgForce Queensland
- Coverage/region: Queensland
- Funded by: AgForce Queensland, the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (through Blueprint for the Bush)
- Currency: Program funded from January 1 2007 to January 1 2011

The AgForce Queensland School to Industry Partnership Program is an AgForce initiative supported by the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries from 2007-2011. The program aims to:

- Link key career education drivers in the regions with rural industry representatives in order to heighten the awareness of high school students, parents, teachers and school careers and guidance counsellors of the various careers options available in the rural and related industry sectors.
- Strengthen school to industry partnerships by encouraging increased student participation in on-ground awareness programs, formal training, work experience and traineeships based around industry needs in the regions.
- Build industry capacity to support rural industry awareness activities, work experience and vocational education and training (VET).



New events planned in CQ

- CSIRO Rendel Labs Teacher PD – science teachers, 2007 (with Andrew Daly Senior Science Officer)
- DPI&F Biloela Research Station Teacher PD – science teachers 2007 (with Andrew Daly Senior Science Officer)
- Blueprint for the Bush funding application for a central Queensland “School to Industry Partnership Program” school to industry liaison officer (as well as a north Qld and southern Qld liaison officer role)

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Students learn more about Queensland Grains. AgForce/DPI&F Biloela Fresh Futures: Smart Science & Careers in the Primary Industries Day, Biloela Research Station. (Photo & caption supplied courtesy of AgForce)

AgForce School to Industry Partnership Program: Summary of Events 2004 - 2006



Event	School group	Where held	Date	Partners	Outcomes
2004 Careers Education Roadshow - School talks "Want a career with Animals, Plants and Science?"	Kepnock SHS, Bundaberg Christian College, Gladstone SHS, Capricornia School of Distance Education, Marist College Emerald, Emerald SHS, Springsure SS, Capella VET teachers meeting, Emerald training reference group, Clermont SHS and industry, Longreach School of Distance Education, Longreach SHS.	As per previous column	11-22 October 2004	AgForce, FRRR	Over 1000 students throughout this region participated in these talks and heard more about opportunities available in the rural industries.
AgForce/CSIRO Ag Science Discovery Days 2005	Years 10-12 science/ag science students and teachers	CSIRO Belmont Research Station	4 and 5 May 2005	CSIRO, AgForce, Youth Futures Capricornia (ETRF)	Over 140 students from 14 high schools and 25 teachers learning more about the agriculture science research and careers.
AgForce/CSIRO Ag Science Discovery Days 2006	140 Years 10-12 science/ag science students and teachers	CSIRO Belmont Research Station	23 and 24 May 2006	CSIRO, AgForce, Youth Futures Capricornia (ETRF), Spotlight on Science (Ed Qld)	140 students and 12 teachers learning more about the agriculture science research and careers.
DPI&F/AgForce Fresh Futures: Smart Science and Careers in the Primary Industries Biloela	Years 11-12 science/ag science students (4 schools - Rockhampton/Biloela) and 5 accompanying teachers.	DPI&F Biloela Research Station	2 August 2006	DPI&F, AgForce, Youth Futures Capricornia (ETRF), Spotlight on Science (Ed Qld)	30 students from 4 schools (Mt Morgan SHS, Rockhampton Girls Grammar, Rockhampton SHS, Biloela SHS).
Rural Roundup! Industry Tour - Rockhampton 2004	3 rural industries visited in the Rockhampton region	Saleyards, Belmonth Research Station and Nursery. Guest speakers: CSIRO, Ag College, Harvest Hotline	14 October 2004	AgForce Queensland, DEST Local Community Partnership and Youth Futures Capricornia (ETRF)	60 students from 10 schools in attendance along with accompanying teachers.



Rural Roundup! Industry Tour – Rockhampton 2005	3 rural industries visited in the Rockhampton region	Saleyards, Wholesale Nursery and Lychee Orchard. Guest speakers: DPI&F, Ag College, Harvest Hotline	15 July 2005	AgForce Queensland, DEST Local Community Partnership and Youth Futures Capricornia (ETRF)	45 students from 8 schools in attendance along with accompanying teachers.
Rural Roundup! Industry Tour – Yeppoon 2005	3 rural industries visited in the Rockhampton region	Coffee plantation, Cattle property, city council nursery. Guest speakers: Ag Colleges, Harvest Hotline	14 July 2005	AgForce Queensland, DEST Local Community Partnership and Youth Futures Capricornia (ETRF)	45 students from 8 schools in attendance along with accompanying teachers.
Rockhampton SHS Careers day – industry presentations 2006	AgForce coordinated Colonial Agriculture and Lychee orchard to present 2 presentations in collaboration with the School Liaison Officer's talk	Rockhampton SHS	4 May 2006	AgForce Queensland, Colonial Agriculture, Lychee Orchard farmer, Bill Pumpa	3 20minute talks given to over 50 students in attendance from years 10-12
Rural Roundup! Industry Tour – Rockhampton 2006	3 rural industries visited in the Rockhampton region	Saleyards, Rockhampton City council botanical gardens and Lychee Orchard. Guest speakers: DPI&F, Ag Colleges, Harvest Hotline	1 Sept 2006	AgForce Queensland, DEST Local Community Partnership and Youth Futures Capricornia (ETRF)	41 students from 7 schools in attendance along with accompanying teachers.
Mackay SHS School talk	Want a career with animals plants and science school talk	Year 10-12 ag science students	2005	AgForce Queensland and Mackay SHS	Over 50 students attended the talk
"The Science Behind Wool" State Teacher PD	2 day Teacher Professional Development Workshop (14 teachers in attendance)	UQ Gatton campus	26-27 May 2006	Sheep CRC, Spotlight on Science (Ed Qld, Qld working group: AgForce, UQ, AACC, AgAware, Somerville House	Upskilling of Science and Ag Science teachers to incorporate 'agriculture' into their classrooms. Teaching resources produced by teachers following workshop.



Agri-Food Industry Skills Council (AFISC)

Role formerly undertaken by Rural Training Council of Australia (RTCA)

- Coverage/region: Australia
- Funded by: Australian Government, Department Education Science and Training (DEST)
- Currency: August 2005 – 31 March 2008 and beyond subject to funding
- Events: AFISC National Conference 2007 - *People Matter...* 27-28 September 2007, Crown Plaza, Darling Harbour, Sydney

The Agri-food Industry Skills Council is a national body, funded by DEST. The AFISC is responsible for the development, implementation and improvement of the nationally recognized Training Packages for the Rural and related industries, including Horticulture and Natural Resource Management, which provides the framework for accredited vocational training delivered by TAFE, Australian Agricultural College Corporation, other private Registered Training Organisations and secondary schools. AFISC provides advice to the vocational and training sector about current and future skill needs. The five industry sectors represented by the Council Standing Committees include Rural and related industries, Food, beverages (wine), pharmaceuticals, Seafood, Meat and Racing. The Council has strong links with State Training Authorities regarding all aspects of the development and implementation of Training Packages. The QRITC is represented on the Council's Rural and related standing committee through its Chair. They are also liaising with the DPI&F Group regarding initiatives affecting rural training in Queensland.

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Anglicare Central Queensland

(Provider of Local Community Partnerships)

- Coverage/region: Blackwater S.H.S, Capella S.H.S, Capricornia (Emerald Campus) School Of Dis.Ed, Emerald S.H.S, Marist College, Mt. Larcom S.S, Mt. Morgan S.H.S, Moura S.H.S, St. Brendan's College, St. Ursula's College, School of Today, Springsure S.S, Theodore S.S, Wadja Wadja S.H.S, Yeppoon S.H.S, Keppel Education Pathways.
- Funded by: Australian Government, Department of Education Science & Training
- Currency: July 2005 – June 2008
- Events: Support for schools in our local district to have opportunities to attend Careers Expo's & industry visits in their area.
- Resources: Some financial assistance for Professional development for teachers or software required for career information.

Local Community Partnerships are incorporated not-for-profit, community-based organisations that work with schools, local businesses and community organisations to help young people gain skills, experience and career guidance as they move through and beyond school. They have limited capacity to directly deliver services to



young people. Local Community Partnerships facilitate three programs aimed at increasing the involvement of local businesses in young people's career development: Structured Workplace Learning where work placement involves a business taking on, training and mentoring students, and students may gain recognised VET qualifications while they train and learn; Career and Transitions Support; and the Adopt a School Program, where businesses are encouraged to adopt a school and give young people hands-on learning experiences in specific industry sectors.

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Australian Agricultural College Corporation (Emerald campus)

- Coverage/region: Central Highlands (Emerald, Springsure, Capella, Clermont)
- Funded by: Queensland Government, Department of Employment, Training and the Arts (DETA)
- Currency: 1971 – current (Colleges amalgamated 1 July 2005)
- Events: Emerald Campus Open Day held annually September, TASTE 2007 23 – 27 September for Yrs 10 - 12(The Agricultural Skills & Technology Experience), AACC attends Career Markets and Expos across the State

AACC (Emerald) offers full time vocational qualifications, short courses and external traineeships specializing in beef cattle, horses, cotton and horticulture. On-campus students learn through a combination of classroom learning and hands-on experience on the College's collection of commercial farms (Emerald 1200ha, 'Berrigurra', Blackwater 9300ha, 'Narayen', Mundubbera 9100ha). Single adult accommodation is available on campus for full time students. AACC (Emerald) visits schools, attends career markets, conducts open days and prints course guides to promote its courses. Campus facilities, guest speakers and tours of the campus are available on request for interested schools and industry groups.

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AACC (Emerald Campus) students gain practical horsemanship skills and proficiencies in breeding and equine health (Photo supplied courtesy of AACC)



The Australian Agricultural Company

- Funded by: Publicly Listed Company
- Currency: 1824- present
- Events: Employee Challenge held annually in October, AACo Football Match in August, AACo attends Career Markets, Expos and Field days throughout the year.

The Australian Agricultural Company is Australia's oldest agricultural company; formed by Royal Decree in 1824. Today AACo is a public company and is the largest beef cattle producer in Australia; running over 500 000 head of cattle across 7.9 million hectares of land comprising 24 large cattle stations, 3 farming and irrigation operations and 2 feedlots in the Northern Territory and Queensland.

AACo employs over 500 staff as a leader in the Agricultural Industry and offers employees training and career development opportunities. AACo attend Career expos, Field Days, Rural Youth forums and visit a number of schools and Colleges throughout Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory to promote the opportunities in the Beef sector and in particular AACo.

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Training being provided to AACo employees. (Photo supplied courtesy of AACo)



Central Highlands Schools Linking to the DPI&F

- Coverage/region: Central Highlands
- Funded by: DPI&F
- Currency: 2007 – current
- Events: Annual Interactive Science Day for Year 8 students at the DPI&F Research Station, June.
- Resources: Booklet and CD

A booklet (available as CD) has been written to encourage linkages between Central Highland schools and the Emerald DPI&F. It contains examples of both past use and possible future ways of connecting the DPI&F with school curriculum, including potential guest speakers, career talks, subjects, and opportunities for collaborating with research projects. The CD also contains specific teacher resources, movies and DPI&F computer programs and training manuals. The booklet/CD is a DPI&F Spotlight on Science initiative in the Central Highlands.

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Future Farmers Network

- Coverage/Region: National
- Funded by: Member fees, sponsorships and grants
- Currency: 2002 – current
- Events: 'Should I Stay or Should I Go' event run in every State and Territory between March 2007 and June 2007, funded by DAFF Community Partnerships Grant
- Resources: Online network of 700 members across Australia, quarterly discussion forums on topics voted by members

The Future Farmers Network is active in connecting young people in rural industries right across Australia. This is done mainly via FFN's email discussion forum. Many young people say it is the place they hear about opportunities, awards, funding and projects that they would not usually hear of. Through the network, members can access not just career and industry information but also other members within seconds. This information contributes to a young rural generation that is more informed, educated and proactive. The Future Farmers Network is run by young people involved in rural industry for young people and is committed to creating a prosperous rural industry for future generations to come.

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Go Agro! Cotton & Grain Careers in the Central Highlands

- Coverage/region: Central Highlands (Emerald, Springsure, Capella, Clermont, Alpha)
- Funded by: Central Highlands Cotton Growers & Irrigators Assoc. (CHCG&IA), Monsanto, Brennan Mayne Agribusiness, PCAP, Excel, Cotton Catchment Communities CRC, Cotton Australia, APS, Anglicare, Springsure, Capella and Emerald Marist School P&Cs, (initial funding supplied by GRDC)
- Other Contributors: Centricks, AACC (Emerald), Elders, DPI&F, Queensland Cotton, CHRRUP Ltd
- Currency: 2004 - current
- Events: 2 annual field trips offered to Year 10 students: Emerald district field trip held in March, followed by a South-East Queensland field trip in August/October

The *Go Agro!* program aims to provide students with first-hand experience of the careers and study pathways available in cropping industries. Young adults working in the industry host students at their businesses, discuss skills, responsibilities and earnings from on-farm activities and agribusiness, and provide an opportunity to undertake some hands-on activities. A local field trip is followed by a field trip to South-East Queensland through the Darling Downs and Brisbane to show students the links between local and national industry and agribusiness, and provide opportunities to view the latest in gene technology, commodity marketing and agricultural engineering. *Go Agro!* is run by the Central Highlands cropping industry and agricultural teachers.

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Students visit local agribusiness and farming operations during the Go Agro! tours; Aero Professional Services, Emerald.



Regional Industry Career Advisor

Part of Career Advice Australia

- Coverage/region: Mackay/Whitsunday, Central Queensland
- Funded by: Australian Government, Department of Education Science & Training
- Currency: December 2005 – December 2008
- Events: Career Options - Mackay; Teacher/Industry Tours; School Presentations; Student/Parent Presentations; Industry Forums and Presentations
- Resources: A diverse range of paper, DVD and electronic resources to assist young people gain an understanding of the wide range of career opportunities

Not agriculture specific, the Career Advice Australia Network supports young people 13–19 years of age to have access to professional career advice to achieve a successful transition through school and from school to further education, training and work. Regional Industry Career Advisors build partnerships and networks at the local level with industry, Local Community Partnerships (LCP) and schools. They identify and promote career pathways, particularly vocational education training (VET) pathways in industry, and circulating career resources to LCPs, schools and industry. The Regional Industry Career Advisors support LCPs to deliver Structured Workplace Learning (SWL), Career and Transition support and Adopt-a-school programs providing relevant work experience opportunities.

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Rural Skills Australia

- Coverage/region: Australia
- Funded by: Australian Government
- Supported by: National Farmers Federation
- Currency: 1995 - present
- Events: N/A
- Resources: On Track - Real Skills Real Future (interactive multimedia careers information available on RSA website and on CD ROM), On Track Worksheets (website), On Track Extension Activities (website), Guides to Qualifications included in the Rural Production, Amenity Horticulture, Conservation and Land Management and Animal Care and Management Training Packages (booklets), Employers Guide to Australian Apprenticeships in Rural and Related Industries (6 page handout), 8 Brochures for Australian Apprenticeship recruitment activities (trifolds), A Guide for Station Hands (booklet), Farm Recruitment Guide (website) and Learning Guides to support the National Training Packages (booklets).

Rural Skills Australia is a not-for-profit organisation with its head office in NFF House, Canberra and maintains an Education and Training Advisor in each State and Territory. RSA provides advice and information to rural and related industry organisations and their members about the National Training System, with a particular focus on Australian Apprenticeships and works with primary producers to build their capacity to address the current and future skills needs of their workforce. RSA also works with a number of other stakeholders including Government Agencies, Australian Apprenticeship Centres, Registered Training Organisations, Job Network Members and Group Training Companies.

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Rural Training Industry & Extension (RITE) Group

- Coverage/region: Queensland & Northern Territory
- Funded by: Queensland Government, Department of Employment, Training and the Arts (DETA), and Australian Government, Department Education Science and Training (DEST)
- Currency: 1987 - present
- Events: Regular school visit program
- Resources: 30 min. Educational video suitable for secondary students

RITE is a not-for-profit organisation which provides nationally accredited full time traineeships and school-based traineeships, with a particular emphasis on the cattle industry. As both a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and a Group Training Company, they also provide employment services. RITE offers a Host Employer



Program to assist employers match their labour needs with students undertaking relevant traineeships.

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A RITE trainee is given hands-on training in safe chainsaw operation. (Photo supplied courtesy of Nicky Poole, RITE)



Science Education Strategy

- Coverage/region: Queensland
- Funded by: Queensland Government, Education Queensland
- Currency: 2006 - 2009
- Resources: *Primary Connections – Linking science with literacy* (Yrs 1 – 7 only), The Peter Doherty Awards for Excellence in Science and Science Education, Science Education Officer

The Science Education Strategy 2006-2009 focuses on encouraging young people to aspire to careers in science by providing of targeted high quality professional development for curriculum leaders and primary and secondary science teachers. This includes but is not limited to fields of agricultural science. Within Central Queensland a Senior Science Officer has been employed to support and build partnerships between schools, industry, government departments, scientific research organisations and tertiary institutions including Central Queensland University. In addition to providing professional development covering contemporary issues in science education, the Senior Science Officer supports schools and students to find science-related workplace industry placements, and introduces scientists into schools as mentors and career role models.

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Teach the Teacher

- Coverage/region: Emerald (plans to include surrounding district in 2008)
- Funded by: CHCG&IA, DPI&F & Cotton Australia
- Supported by: Monsanto, Cotton Grower Services and Integrated Area Wide Management (IAWM)
- Currency: 2006 – current
- Events: Annual BBQ and visits to DPI&F research station and local irrigation property

Teach the Teacher offers primary and secondary teachers in all subject areas in Emerald the opportunity to learn about agriculture in a social environment. Guest speakers from DPI&F, IAWM and the farming industry provide information about local industries and engage in informal question and answer sessions about industry misconceptions. Hosted on a local property, teachers tour the operations, undertaking some fun hands-on activities, and then meet and greet local industry representatives over dinner.



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Teachers undertake a range of activities in the field with local farmers. (Photo supplied courtesy of Bel Wiseman, Monsanto)



Workplacement linking Industry & School Enterprise (WISE)

- Coverage/region: Emerald State High School, Emerald
- Funded by: Kestrel Community Development Fund (RTCA – Rio Tinto Coal Australia)
- Currency: 2000 - current
- Events: Agriculture & agribusiness visits linked with Go Agro Term 1 & 4, mine visits (Kestrel, Ensham and BMA) Terms 2 & 3 as well as industry-specific field trips e.g. hospitality, tourism, medical Terms 2 – 4.

WISE School to Work Programs links students and businesses by facilitating work experience, structured work placement and school based apprenticeships and traineeships. Workplace learning gives students the opportunity to apply practical skills in the work place and experience workplace culture. The WISE program links students and businesses involved by:

- Providing a flexible, negotiated program to meet the needs of local businesses
- Providing a comprehensive guidance and support network for the employer and the student.
- Provide regular visits and support for host employers

WISE includes agricultural and agribusiness placement, but is not industry specific. It provides visits to Central Highlands businesses for students to showcase local career opportunities.

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Youth + Enterprise = Success (YES)

- Coverage/region: Marist College Emerald
- Assisted by: Kestrel Coal
- Currency: 2003-current
- Events: YES Breakfast, Graduation day (presentation of VET Award)
- Resources: Community Liaison Officer, YES information pack (for both Employers and students)

The YES program aims to accommodate students interested in agriculture and agribusiness by providing pathways through work experience and traineeships in the local community. YES works in conjunction with the Australian Agricultural College (Emerald Campus) to assist students in gaining a Certificate II in Agricultural Studies, in which the ACC acts as an RTO and in some instances an employer of Marist College Students. The students timetables are adjusted to suit the additional workload of a traineeship and are given time during school hours to complete their coursework. Internally organised by the Agricultural Science teacher, the annual Go Agro! field trip is enjoyed by students at Marist College and offers an insightful first hand experience of tertiary studies in the agricultural industry and an awareness of past, current and future issues. The YES program supports this venture and many students involved in Go Agro! are also participants in the YES program.

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