Your career adventure starts with us
Food and Fibre Education SA

promotes careers, employment opportunities and experiences in South Australia’s primary industry sector to primary, secondary and tertiary students and teachers and the wider community.

Food and fibre encompasses everything from food production, wool, livestock, cropping, horticulture, viticulture, pork, dairy and aquaculture. These are the backbone industries of South Australia and they make for exciting learning, careers and opportunities.

The Food and Fibre Education SA initiative is supported by a range of sponsors and partners from across primary industries who have a common interest in drawing new people to the industry, particularly through study and employment opportunities. These include outlining the many and varied roles in food and fibre, both on-farm and through the value chain, such as research, manufacturing, processing, engineering, computer programming, communication, agribusiness and legal, business management, biology, market analysis and trade, hands-on farm jobs ... to name a few.

Program objectives

The objectives of Food and Fibre Education SA are to:

- Attract new students to study primary production or pursue careers in supporting industries.
- Enthuse teachers and careers advisers about the opportunities in agriculture so they are more likely to teach it positively or give positive advice to students.
- Represent primary industries at careers events, taking the time and financial pressures off small and rural businesses to represent and promote the entire industry.
- Create a point of reference for students to receive help in making informed career decisions.
- Increase the number of skilled graduates entering careers in food and fibre production, and supporting industries.
- Support South Australian teachers to teach the food and fibre component of the new national curriculum.
- Offer in-school food and fibre education activities, competitions and awards.

The Food and Fibre Education SA team, managed by AgCommunicators, consists of trained science communicators and qualified teachers with science, food and nutrition backgrounds. The team has a thorough understanding of the requirements of schools and has a range of resources and activities linked to the food and fibre components of the new national education curriculum. This ensures the initiative works with teachers to align learning outcomes of students studying science, home economics and nutrition, agriculture and geography.
Primary production needs people!

Food and fibre production is vital to South Australia. Primary Industries and Regions SA estimates SA’s primary industries contribute more than $5 billion in production value and at least $10 billion in value-adding to the economy.

However, the industry is in the midst of a nationwide skills shortage which is only getting worse. Recent reviews of agricultural education and training at state and federal levels in Australia recommend increasing agricultural education as a way to address industry skills shortages.

SA’s schools need access to engaging, curriculum-linked initiatives which profile research, technology and innovation in food and fibre.

The lack of students moving into the food production sector has been attributed to confusion about what a career in agriculture means, a decline in student’s agricultural literacy, teachers not having the background knowledge or confidence to teach agriculture within mainstream subjects and a lack of awareness of opportunities available in the industry.

Research has found that many students do not see agriculture as much more than farming and food production while majority of urban students have never thought about agricultural careers or had them suggested at school. In comparison, rural and agricultural students are more interested in entering the industry.

DID YOU KNOW?

- National and international research has found that students are so disconnected from agriculture that many believe yogurt grows on trees and cows have to be killed to extract the milk!
- The Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture states there are more than five jobs for every graduate in agriculture, agribusiness and related courses.
- While 63 percent of primary schools have a veggie garden, only 2 percent include grains or use agricultural concepts in their teaching.
- While at university, 85 percent of primary and secondary teachers did not study any primary industries subjects so are unlikely to teach students the fundamentals of food production (PIEFA 2012).
- Only 54 percent of students are aware that agriculture could be studied at university. Some students believe you need to be born into the sector to work in it. Many do not even have these careers suggested to them (Hargraves 2011).
A new, coordinated solution to agricultural education in SA

In 2014, AgCommunicators facilitated a workshop for the South Australian Agricultural Education Alliance, an initiative of Primary Producers SA and the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society. This included more than 20 organisations involved with agricultural education in SA. It was agreed more action is required to re-engage students, teachers, careers advisers and the community in the industry.

Participants agreed a series of education programs managed by a central education officer was needed as part of a coordinated, cross-commodity strategy to deliver the ultimate outcome for the industry – attracting new people to the sector. It was agreed this approach would help many smaller organisations in need of staff but were time poor or not in a position to attend regular careers events.

Food and Fibre Education SA is this coordinated approach. It works to engage and promote all things food and fibre with no preference for any one commodity, instead focusing on delivering quality information and education outputs across commodities.

Since October 2014, the reviewed Australian education curriculum has placed an increased emphasis on primary industries, with 168 food and fibre examples across year levels and subjects and their learning outcomes. This means there is increased opportunity for primary industries to provide resources and support to teachers to ensure the true story of food and fibre production and the amazing opportunities in the industry are told.

2017 Program of Activities

Food and Fibre Education SA operates a series of programs supported by sponsors and coordinated by the Food and Fibre Education Officer. Seven priority programs have been identified for delivery in 2017.

PROGRAM ONE: Industry representation at careers events

There are plenty of career opportunities in food and fibre, however the industry is poorly represented at many careers fairs and events. Communicating the jobs and opportunities can be time consuming and costly for many businesses – which is where Food and Fibre Education SA can help. An outreach booth has been developed for careers events and initiatives, promoting all entry pathways from certificates to tertiary and all available jobs in the sector. The booth has a wide range of information and activities to help encourage and enthuse students about the opportunities in food and fibre, including interactive games and demonstrations. The goal is to get food and fibre on students’ radar and expose them to the wealth of opportunities available.

PROGRAM TWO: Food and Fibre Science Investigation Awards

Looking for a cool way to engage students in science? Food and Fibre Education SA runs a competitive science investigation award program for students from Year 5 to 12 which teaches them about experimental design – how to design and test a hypothesis, manage variables and replications, write a science report and communicate results. Students research any chosen topic and produce a scientific investigation report in a poster form. Finalists’ entries are judged by scientists, industry and community members at a regional event with finalists competing at regional finals. The activity is curriculum-linked and teachers are provided with in-school support. This competition can be rolled out to any commodity in any region. In 2016 the Science Investigation Awards involved over 800 students from schools in Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula, Mid North and Riverland.
PROGRAM THREE: Teacher professional development
To support the teaching of food and fibre, Food and Fibre Education SA runs teacher professional development workshops to support primary and secondary teachers. This can be in science, agriculture, geography, home economics and nutrition and biology. All equipment – such as microscopes, grain mills, taste tests and more – is supplied and industry or laboratory field visits, practicals and guest speakers can be arranged to inspire teachers, along with primary industries resources which link to the new Australian curriculum. Workshops can be run in regional and metropolitan areas to enable widespread involvement of teachers around the state.

PROGRAM FOUR: Food and fibre careers camp
This scholarship program is for students participating in science at school in Year 10 to 12 and includes a camp visiting food and fibre science research and industry facilities in metropolitan and regional areas. This is followed by a facilitated placement for the students in a relevant food and fibre business. Students are engaged in activities that highlight the sustainable science, innovation and careers involved in primary industries to ensure they receive correct information to follow a career in the area.

PROGRAM FIVE: Teacher mentoring and support
Many teachers are not agriculturally trained and, as a result, do not feel confident teaching the subject, nor incorporating relevant examples in biology, geography or food and nutrition lessons. They need ongoing support and initiatives that will generate enthusiasm and inspire them to use food and fibre as a context for teaching. Food and Fibre Education SA provides support to teachers to implement the food and fibre components of the new national curriculum, provide background information about the industry and guide them to useful resources.
PROGRAM SIX: Table & Tops Technology Challenge
Table & Tops Technology is an in-school competition which partners students with robotics engineers, computer programmers and agricultural scientists to use science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) to develop an innovative solution for the primary industries sector. Students get access to a specialist kit containing microchips, cables, learning resources and computer software which enables them to build tools of the agricultural trade, such as a frost sensor or soil moisture probe. They then trial the technology in the field. It’s all about being creative with technology and developing new systems and tools to support farmers and researchers to improve the sustainability of food and fibre production. The program engages students in technology (computer programming, engineering and software design) as well as the science of food production.

PROGRAM SEVEN: In-class workshops
The workshops involve facilitated discussions and classroom activities to highlight the innovation, science and pathways to a career in primary industries. They cater to middle and senior school students studying science, agriculture, geography and environmental studies. Food and Fibre Education SA can work with schools to tailor visits to suit the current topic of focus and provide resources to support the continued links to primary industries. A range of engagement methods are used to deliver an interesting, fun and comprehensive experience which promotes primary industries to students.

HAVE ANOTHER IDEA?
Contact Food and Fibre Education SA to discuss specific sponsorship or education opportunities
Do you want to ...  
• Increase the profile of primary production as a rewarding career path.  
• Connect with young people through a range of innovative and creative educational programs.  
• Profile your research and opportunities through events, careers fairs and schools.  
• Deliver on your education mandate via a statewide initiative.  
• Build your business’s future skill base and workforce.

Sponsorship levels  
Food and Fibre Education SA has the following levels of sponsorship to support program delivery and implementation. Sponsorship levels include:  
• Platinum - $40,000 per year  
• Gold - $20,000 per year  
• Silver - $15,000 per year  
• Bronze - $10,000 per year  
• Partner - any amount under $10,000  
• Alternatively, funders are invited to contact Food and Fibre Education SA to sponsor specific events or activities.

Sponsorship benefits  
Sponsorship acknowledgement can be tailored to the level of support provided and the mix of options that appeal ...  
• Recognition as a key partner in the program, including logo placement on all Food and Fibre Education SA materials.  
• Opportunity to fund a specific component of the programs offered and receive naming rights (subject to availability)  
• Logo placement and your company/industry promotional material available at the careers booth and in careers kits distributed to careers advisers.  
• Ability to offer guest speakers at teacher professional development and in-school events  
• Ability to profile your skills gaps and employment needs through the careers booth.  
• Tailoring in-school, curriculum-linked resources to profile your latest research or technology.  
• Host students for work placements at your business.  
• Showcase your business to high-achieving students as part of an industry placement camp.  
• Send a member of your team to help staff the careers booth.  
• Access project feedback and evaluation surveys.  
• Promote career pathways or ‘industry statistics’ via the Food and Fibre Education SA Facebook page and website.  
• Receive information on your support of the initiative for your communication and marketing programs.

A schedule of sponsorship benefits can be negotiated based on the level of support.

More information  
Please direct responses or questions about this prospectus to:

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AGCOMMUNICATORS

... adding spark to communication and education

AgCommunicators has a long history of running successful agricultural education projects on behalf of industry. These include the GRDC Grains Education Resources, Seed to Store YouTube Clip Competition, More than Gumboots and Tractors Careers Advisers Workshops and resource development for the CSIRO. The team has developed resources for the University of Adelaide, Grain Research & Development Corporation, Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, Primary Industries Centre for Science Education and the Adelaide Showground Farmers Markets.

View AgCommunicators education portfolio at: http://bit.ly/2bOYgoQ

Education manager: BELINDA CAY

Belinda is a science communicator and educator with a passion for primary production. She has 15 years’ experience in using colour, fun and credibility to communicate science to non-scientific audiences – and has received national accolades for her work. With a Bachelor of Science (Honours) and a Graduate Diploma in Scientific Communication, Belinda has a deep understanding of how to engage audiences using a range of communication tools including hands-on activities, practical demonstrations plus traditional and digital media. She has worked with the Shell Questacon Science Circus, as science consultant with Beyond Television Productions making the television show Backyard Science, designed the award-winning plant biology education program Get into Genes and has worked with the Primary Industries Centre for Science Education. She is now a co-director of AgCommunicators, managing numerous projects with education and science stakeholders. She is a board member and grains and fodder councillor of the Royal Adelaide Show. She has held committee positions with National Science Week, Australian Science Communicators and Ausbiotech.

Education officer: SARAH MCDONNELL

Sarah has demonstrated experience as an education officer and is passionate about promoting the science behind food and fibre production. A qualified teacher, Sarah has not only worked in the classroom but has held a range of education officer positions where she has worked with school students to make primary industries science more engaging. Her work with the University of Adelaide and the former Primary Industries Centre for Science Education has seen her developing a range of innovative resources, teacher professional development events and run science camps. She has worked with teachers to provide resources which link to the Australian curriculum, enabling them to be used in-class. Sarah has created a network extending through the school community, industry and tertiary institutes. She has managed science competitions which have attracted over 800 students and delivered science camps nationally.