



21st Century  
Careers in  
Agriculture

THE   
AG SHED

  
North Central LLEN

## 'Why Ag' Event

NCLLEN annual meeting and stakeholder event at The Rex Theatre showcased young people in agriculture.



The key feature of the evening was the young farmers' panel. We were very fortunate to have three highly articulate and thoughtful farmers – Danielle Lang (Nareewillock), James Taylor (Tandarra) and Will Simpson (Berriwillock). The expertise of Angus Verley (ABC), who moderated the panel, drew out some interesting reflections from the panelists.

### Why Ag?

**Angus Verley** – "I love the variety and diversity in my job. I was at a dairy farm in Colac last week and the week before I was reporting on the state budget, and the week before that, I was reporting on the federal budget".

**Danielle Lang** – "I love it. Every day is different, things break and go wrong but you are always learning".

**James Taylor** – "I love that agriculture is full of people that are extremely passionate. There are so many emerging opportunities because we have the challenges of climate change and developing products for new markets".

**Will Simpson** – I love the open-endedness to ag. It's such an innovative and broad sector. There is no roof to its growth potential".

**Other observations**

**Danielle** – I would encourage young people interested in agriculture to go for it! You would be surprised about the opportunities and pathways”.

“During sowing and harvest you work crazy hours, but then there is down time in between”.

**Will** – When making decisions, you do your best to minimise risk and control what you can control but be flexible – you have to be able to deviate and change your course

I have to acknowledge that Dad has been on the farm for fifty years and has fifty years of data in his brain”.

**James** – “I was always curious about city life, I learnt from studying in Melbourne that city people are actually just like us! But I also came to realise that this is where I want to be”

“I love working with livestock and training my dogs, so we become a team”.

NCLLEN also presented a short film that presented just some of the many opportunities in agriculture. The film featured local young people working in the environmental, ag-tech, science & research, and agricultural machinery industries.

We thank Loddon Plains Landcare Network, Ag Cloud, Birchip Cropping Group and O’Connors (St Arnaud) for their participation in this project.

## Dates

### July

14th-16th Bendigo Sheep and Wool Show

30<sup>th</sup> Marcus Oldham Open Day

### August

6<sup>th</sup> Longerenong Agricultural College Open Day

6<sup>th</sup> Charles Sturt University Open Day - Agriculture

6<sup>th</sup> La Trobe University Open Day Melbourne - Agriculture

13<sup>th</sup> La Trobe University Open Day Albury Wodonga - Agriculture

20<sup>th</sup> University of Melbourne Open Day - Agriculture

27<sup>th</sup> La Trobe University Open Day Bendigo – Agribusiness

### September

13<sup>th</sup> Birchip Cropping Group Main Field Day including a student stream for North Central Cluster

# Survey Results

I am so grateful to the staff at our schools that enabled my agricultural careers survey to be rolled out in their classes. While it is certainly prudent to view these responses with a certain level of scepticism, there are some stand out areas to share.

## Question – What areas of agriculture would be of interest to you?

### Ranked Responses

1. Livestock Farming (broadacre sheep/cattle) **(most popular)**
2. Broadacre cropping
3. Shearing and Wool Handling
4. Mechanics
5. Trucking/Logistics and Ag Construction (equal)
6. Technology/Robotics
7. Intensive Livestock
8. Animal Care
9. Ag Service, merch, agronomy etc
10. Dairy
11. Marketing, grain selling etc
12. Business/finance
13. Science & Research
14. Environmental, Regen Ag
15. Horticulture **(least popular)**

### Observations

The most popular answers are the industries' most visible in our communities.  
*'Students can't be, what they don't see'*

The least popular answers are careers that are less visible and may require tertiary education.

## Question - From the list below, what would be the top three things that might encourage you to consider a career in agriculture?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High Pay Rates	62.79%	54
The opportunity to be outside and close to nature	20.93%	18
The opportunity to be "hands-on"	37.21%	32
Humanitarian - I would feel good, knowing I am helping to feed the world	5.81%	5
It would be a chance to be a scientist	4.65%	4
Ability to live in a rural area	20.93%	18
Using advanced technology and robotics	15.12%	13
Working with animals	36.05%	31
A chance to care for the natural environment	0.00%	0
Having strong role models and mentors to follow.	6.98%	6
Driving big machines/trucks	32.56%	28
Being my own boss	31.40%	27
There are lots of jobs available – easy to find a job	6.98%	6
Able to work with my family	15.12%	13
Nothing could convince me to work in agriculture	3.49%	3
Total Respondents: 86		

### RANKED

1. "Pay Rates" (**most popular**)
2. "Opportunity to work with my hands"
3. "Work with Animals"
4. "Drive big machines "
5. "Be my own boss"
6. "To work outside" and "To work with my family" (equal)
7. "There are lots of jobs available" and "Strong role models" (equal)
8. "Humanitarian – Feed the world"
9. "Become a scientist"
10. "A chance to care for the natural environment" (**least popular**)

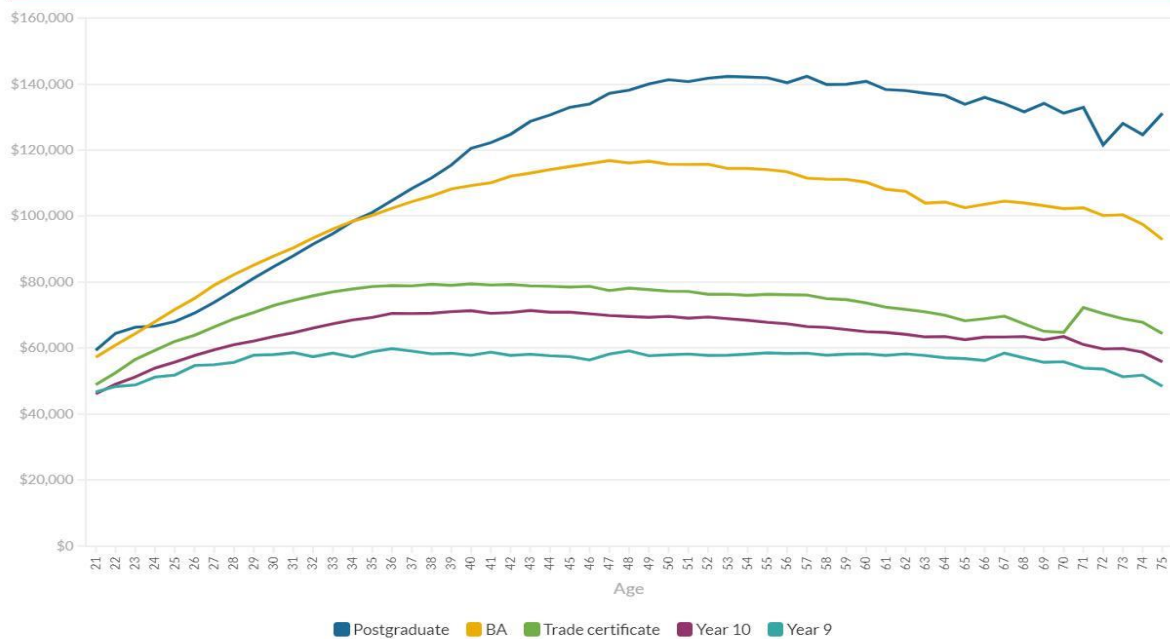
### Observations

1. Major universities are telling us that there is an increase in enrolments in agriculture because there is a growing interest from young people in forging a sustainable future. However, there seems to be little interest amongst our students in the humanitarian or environmental area.
2. Current students may be seduced by the high casual pay rates being paid locally to agricultural workers.
3. As agricultural careers advisers, we might keep in mind the statistics in the graph below. Consider encouraging students to **resist the fast buck and play the long game!**

## Education pays: degrees translate to higher incomes

Median income by highest level of education level

(Tap or hover to view data)



Source: ABS Census 2021

THE NEWSDAILY

## Question

Have you considered further study in agriculture through:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
University	3.49%	3
TAFE	19.77%	17
Apprenticeship/Traineeship	4.65%	4
School Based Apprenticeship	6.98%	6
I haven't considered any further study in agriculture	63.95%	55
Other (please specify)	1.16%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>86</b>

### Observations

- 64% of students have not considered further study in agriculture.
- Even if they are interested in agriculture, maybe they don't see agriculture as a career that requires further study.
- TAFE is a popular response which corresponds to the (mis)conception that agriculture is predominantly a hands-on career.



## In the Garden

Glorious rain. In Mysia we got 45mm. It certainly will be valuable moisture given the dry forecasts. I am rejoicing in the emerging crops and pasture, but quietly cursing the weeds choking my precious veggies. Weeding can be tedious, but like many parts of life it's the small unheralded tasks that can make the biggest difference.

This time of year, I find if I throw any weeded weeds back on to the garden beds their roots will find a way to regrow. Therefore, I try to either put them straight in the compost or make some weed tea. Costa has simple instructions-

<https://www.gardeningaustralia.com.au/brew-some-weed-tea/>

### Weed Tea

All you need is a 20L bucket and lid, a garden sieve and a bottle.

1. **Collect** a good few handfuls of weeds, kikuyu, and other running weeds such as sorrel. Avoid weeds that have mature seed, as they may survive the process and spread further. If you must use them, remove the seed heads first.
2. **Place** the weeds in a 20L bucket, then add enough water to thoroughly submerge them.
3. **Put** the lid on the bucket (to contain the smell) and leave the mixture to ferment for four to six weeks.
4. **Check** the contents of the bucket from time to time. When the weeds have become a slimy sludge, sieve the weed tea, and throw the remaining mixture in the compost so it continues to break down.
5. **Pour** the weed tea into a bottle. To use it to fertilise your plants, dilute with fresh water at a ratio of 1:10. You can store it for up to three weeks.



Interestingly, after taking this photo of all the weeds in my brassicas, I noticed that chook in the background eating an egg! Grrr!



**Sue Gould**  
**Project Officer**  
P: 0490 205 705  
Email: [s.gould@ncllen.org.au](mailto:s.gould@ncllen.org.au)

