



21st Century
Careers in
Agriculture

THE AG SHED

North Central LLEN

Dates

11th September Birchip Cropping Group Main Field Day, Nullawil

15th –16th October Senior School Teacher's Professional Development CSU Wagga Wagga

CSU Wagga Wagga

NCLLEN recently coordinated eighteen senior students from our region to attend the CSU Explore Day to discover more about Agriculture and Animal Studies courses.

The students from East Loddon, Boort, Birchip, Donald, Wycheproof and Chalton, were fortunate to have current CSU students - Tadhg Lowry (Birchip), Zoe Lister (East Loddon), Erica Payne (Birchip), available to give them a tour of the accommodation and provide them with an insight into the CSU student experience.



Many of the students attending the event, felt that the campus had a very friendly and rural atmosphere. There is a large farm attached to the campus that gives students practical experiences alongside their academic studies. There is also a large equine centre that allows students to bring their own horses.

It was also interesting to note that many local casual farm jobs are regularly circulated on the student Facebook site. Zoe had worked on a nearby dairy farm to support her studies.

I think the Explore Day is at a great time of year and its format gives students a genuine sense of university life. CSU give a generous bus subsidy for this event, and I would hope the NCLLEN can offer this trip again in future years.

Soils

Last week I attended the North Central CMA launch of its [Soil Health Guide](#) in Pyramid Hill. This guide is available online or free as a hard copy. It would be perfect for use in a senior classroom.

The resources provide information to help identify possible soil health issues using nine simple visual tests conducted in the paddock.

The tests are cheap and easy and can be undertaken using home-made equipment such as wire quadrants. There are also videos to accompany this guidebook.

These soil tests are best done in autumn – so right now! To assist you to use this guide book in your classroom, the enthusiastic CMA staff are happy to offer a local teacher demonstration of this soil guide – stay tuned for details.

Did You Know

In one teaspoon of soil there are more organisms than there are people in the world, and one gram of soil contains more than 100,000 different species. That's a whole lot of life under our feet.



Agriculture Scholarships Awarded

Bendigo Rotary awards two agricultural scholarships

Siale Pitson from Bagshot and Bridie Casey from Birchip have been awarded Agricultural Scholarships by the Rotary Club of Bendigo. Because of the high standard of applications, two scholarships were awarded this year.

Siale will study for an Advanced Diploma of Agribusiness Management and a Diploma of Applied Agronomy at Longerenong Agricultural College while Bridie will take Agribusiness Management at La Trobe, Bendigo.

Siale studied Agriculture Certificate IV at Bendigo TAFE in 2023 after completing her HSC and Certificate III Agriculture at Bendigo Senior Secondary College and Catherine McCauley College. Siale lives on a farm at Bagshot and has done considerable off farm work at sale yards in Bendigo, Echuca and Kyneton.

Siale's farming interests include livestock, crops and pastures and through an agreement between Longerenong and Bendigo TAFE she has been able to complete some units of the Agronomy Diploma before taking up residence at Longerenong.

Bridie completed VCE at Birchip P12 in 2023 where she was dux of the school. Bridie has a strong interest in farm management and marketing and will study Agribusiness at La Trobe University Bendigo. She has previously worked with livestock and cereal production on farms in the Birchip area and also for agricultural supply firms in Birchip and Bendigo

Each student will receive \$2,000 for the first year of study with a further \$2,000 in second year subject to satisfactory progress. The Rotary Club has previously awarded the scholarship to students who attended Bendigo La Trobe, Charles Sturt, Wagga and Melbourne Universities and Muresk College in Western Australia.

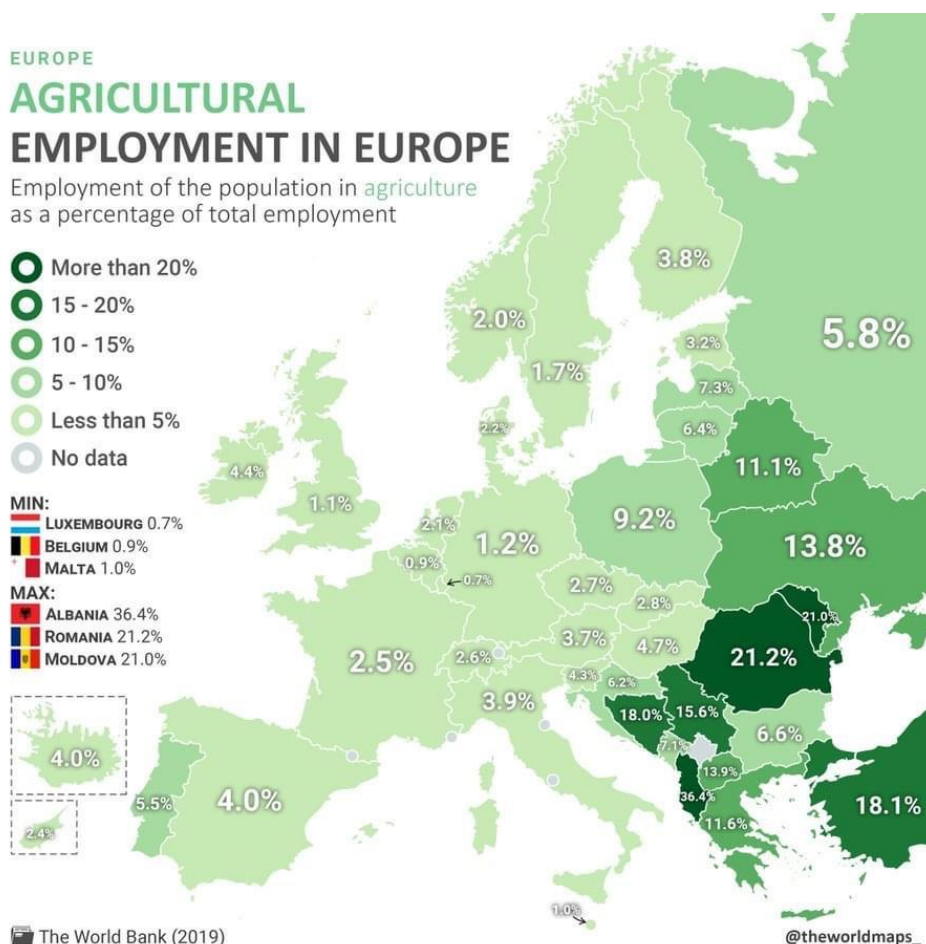
Bob Edgar Rotary Club of Bendigo Mobile 0408 531 594

Agricultural Employment

The map below comes from one of my favourite social media sites – [‘Simon shows you Maps’](#)
 I first came across Simon, via a Birchip Cropping Group investigating common challenges facing small rural communities. His presentation to BCG (Dec 2019) on the ‘Demographic trends shaping the Mallee and Wimmera’ is available on YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6FwO09_PB8

Simon makes this comment about the map below

“Agriculture is the most important industry out there. It keeps us alive after allAs a share of the workforce, agriculture becomes increasingly less important though as an economy develops. Therefore, it’s always easy in rich nations to be completely oblivious to the sector”



Australia

Agriculture’s share of the total Australian workforce has gradually declined. In the early 1950s, 10%-20% of the workforce was involved in agriculture.

In June 1998, agriculture accounted for 4.4% of the Australian employed population. In 2013, it was under 2.5% and in 2023, the number of people employed in agriculture had dropped to under 2%. (Source: ABS)

Just a Farmer

A new film from our region (Tatyoan) is now showing in selected cinemas.

The aim of the film is to help push a conversation about wellbeing and suicide in rural communities. The film features extras from the Tatyoon community including the football club and a local shearing team.

This film may contribute to classes where you are investigating farmer health and safety. But clearly, it would only be appropriate for older students (Rated M) and would have to be accompanied by warnings and support contact details.

There are also some [educational resources](#) available for class use.



In the Garden

Now is a major transition time in the garden. It takes a hard-heart to rip out the tomatoes when you know it's going to be eight long months before you'll have the pleasure of another home-grown tomato! But in my mind, it's got to be done because I want to get the winter vegetables in while the soil is still warm. I also aim to give my garden beds time to take a metaphorical breath before I put them to work again.

To be honest, I'm not very physically able, so digging over a bed is not going to happen. Over recent weeks, I have sprinkled them with lime, gypsum, old chook pooh, and added a layer of compost. I followed this lovely concoction, with a layer of straw to maintain the moisture and to offer shade to the worms and microbes so they can go to work and save my back!

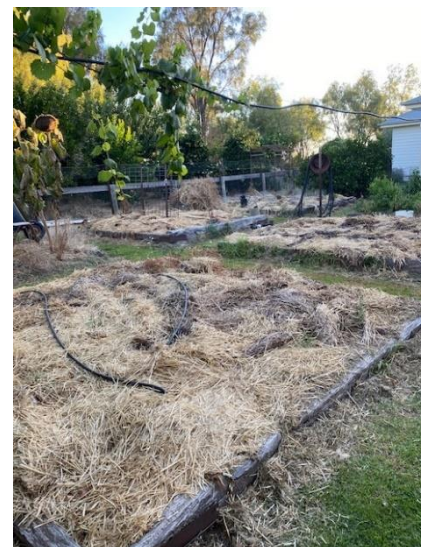
This week I am planting some garlic, cauliflower, broccoli, coriander, beetroot and snow peas.



Sweet potato going berserk



I soaked the beetroot seed in a Seasol mix overnight. I had a quick and robust response.



Straw keeping the beds cool in the autumn heat



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