

Member Profile

Future Farmers Network (FFN) would like to thank all its members for their support and membership. Recognising and showcasing its members is important to FFN and each month a member will be profiled in the FFN Newsletter.

FFN member: Ngaire Roughley, QLD

Job/Role: Development Extension Officer (Cotton)

Company/Organisation: Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry

Location: Emerald, Queensland

What is your involvement in the agriculture industry? I currently work in the cotton industry, delivering research and extension based around crop protection. I've previously worked in cotton production and grew up on a cotton and horticulture farm near Bourke, NSW.



Describe a typical day in your job/role.

My days can be very varied! Some days I'm doing field work, maintaining trial sites or surveying for insect pests around Emerald. I also spend a lot of time (particularly in the winter) putting together extension content for various industry publications. Another great part of my job is travelling around Queensland for various crop protection research or extension events.

What is the best part of your job/role?

I really enjoy getting out and travelling around Queensland – as part of my work I've been to cotton farms from the Central Highlands all the way down to the border and everywhere in between. I find it really interesting to see how growers are managing the various challenges affecting their regions. Other than this, my favorite part of the job is re-packaging technical research content into interesting and easy to read information – this is the extension component of my work. Oh, and I love having the opportunity to act as an advocate for the cotton industry at local events such as the 'teach the teacher – cotton style' day, where we take primary and secondary teachers on a fun and informative afternoon to showcase the local cotton industry and promote careers in agriculture.

In your opinion, what is Australian agriculture currently doing right and why?

Given that most of my experience in Australian agriculture has been within the cotton industry, my opinions might be a bit biased, but I'm pretty proud to work in an industry which not only produces world record yields, but does so in one of the harshest natural environments on Earth. Australia's cotton farmers are leaders in the uptake of emerging technologies – from transgenic varieties which have seen a 90% reduction in chemical use over the past decade, to innovative new cotton pickers which have revolutionised labour and machinery requirements.



Identify three (3) key challenges facing young Australian farmers:

1. Consumer ignorance
2. Access to essential services in regional and remote areas, which feeds into...
3. Supporting and maintaining agriculture's scarcest resource – people

In your opinion, what is Australian agriculture doing wrong? And what can be done about it?

Ensuring that Australian agriculture tells its own story is something we all need to take ownership of. Instead of bemoaning the wider public for their ignorance and lack of understanding, it's imperative that our farmers and agricultural advocates have the knowledge and skill sets to engage with the wider community in a way that resonates with them. It's the average Woolworths shopper in Campbelltown that votes and makes decisions which affect our industry, so they need to have the facts, not just a warped version from activists and lobbyists.

Name three (3) things you can't function without: Sleep, tea and a good book...wow, doesn't that make me sound like the life of the party!

What's one (1) thing people don't know about you? I nearly decided to study journalism at uni, but the job security of an agricultural degree convinced me otherwise. Best decision I ever made!

If you had three (3) pieces of advice for young people considering a career in agriculture what would they be?

1. Give it a go. Whether you're thinking about studying ag at school or uni, or taking up a traineeship – just try it out. It's pretty incredible just how many opportunities there are for people who are willing to throw their hat in the ring.
2. Be open minded. I thought I wanted a career in animal nutrition when I was at uni. Turns out I'm not a huge fan of biochemistry...
3. Ask lots of questions – something I'm still learning to do!

Why are you an FFN member?

Having only recently joined, I was drawn to the FFN by the opportunities it offers through job and career information, networking opportunities, training and professional skill development.