



8th November 2011

Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Higher education and skills training to support future demand in agriculture and agribusiness in Australia

The gap between city and rural consumers is growing, with the Australian community having an increasingly lower understanding of agricultural production. NSW Farmers believes that empowering future generations to make informed decisions about these resources and appropriating a value to them supports the well being of all individuals. In the future, these students will be making decisions that must be aimed at ensuring this nation has the ability to feed itself and to contribute to the global population needs in a sustainable manner. NSW Farmers believes there is an imperative to ensure that students have the understanding of the resource requirements for the food and fibre production systems that support life.

In conjunction with the Primary Industries Education Foundation (PIEF), NSW Farmers has been pro-actively pursuing the inclusion of sustainable food and fibre messages into the national and state curriculums in order that future generations will understand how food and fibre is produced, and the resources required for its production. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has developed three Cross Curriculum Priorities that are aimed at integrating three broad messages across all learning areas of the National curriculum. One of which, the *Sustainability* cross curriculum priority, is a strong platform on which to base many teachings about the natural world and human dependence upon it. NSW Farmers and the PIEF both made submissions to ACARA's review of their Cross Curriculum Priorities and both believe that at the broad overarching level, the term *sustainable food and fibre production* should be included within one of the *Sustainability Organising Ideas*. This will then help to reflect the essential knowledge, understandings and skills surrounding sustainable food and fibre production within the *Sustainability Cross Curriculum Priority*.

At a more detailed level, NSW Farmers believes that sustainable food and fibre messages should be embedded across all years and priorities of the curriculum framework via the Content Elaborations, either as additional elaborations, or, a development of the existing ones.

NSW Farmers believes there is an imperative to ensure that future generations have the understanding of the resource needs for the productive systems that support life. It is vital that Australia continues to develop new technologies, utilise environmentally sustainable food and fibre production practices and improve efficiencies and competitiveness. Modern food and fibre production is essential to Australia's economic, environmental and social well-being. It is important to ensure Australia is self sufficient in meeting daily food needs and important to note

NSW Farmers' Association

ABN 31 000 004 851 GPO Box 1068 Sydney NSW 2001 Level 25 66 Goulburn Street Sydney NSW 2000
Member Service Centre 1300 794 000 T 02 8251 1700 F 02 8251 1750 W www.nswfarmers.org.au

that Australia is becoming an increasingly critical source for mounting world food needs.¹ As Australians we abrogate our responsibility to future generations if we do not provide them with mechanisms to understand and excite them so that they value the role of food and fibre production.

Yours Sincerely,

Fiona Simson
PRESIDENT

¹ National Farmers Federation – Farm Facts, 2009-10.