

SUBMISSION TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

FROM PAUL & MAREE JAMIESON, FARMWORKS.

FarmworkS Who are we?

Farmworks is a privately run company involved in agricultural education and does contract work for the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, the RSPCA, various Agricultural Societies and schools and kindergartens throughout Victoria.

We use qualified and experienced teachers to develop our information and deliver our programs. We have been operating in Victoria for about fifteen years. Farmworks also provides work-experience positions to students from various TAFE colleges and university Veterinary students. We are also farmers in country Victoria.

We feel we have a practical insight into the problem confronting agricultural institutions, not one viewed from the boardrooms or the ivory towers.

We wish to address the overall problem of involving the general public in the area of agriculture. Our society seems to have adequate capacity to deliver the courses required to develop skills to work in the agricultural industry. What we see as the problem is that the agricultural sector pays no attention to the actual starting point – when a person decides to become involved in agriculture – all the input is to the end product.

What does this mean?

There are not enough people interested in agriculture-based courses. This is because there are fewer and fewer people with any real knowledge of agriculture, the jobs available within this industry and its importance to the economy. Most people who do move into the agriculture sector come from an agricultural background. The majority of the population lives in cities and knows virtually nothing about agriculture and the many related jobs and careers. The industry keeps preaching to the converted: giving agricultural scholarships to agricultural colleges, promoting in country towns and to groups such as Year 10 and 11 students who have, in general, already made career decisions. The vast majority of the population is ignored.

We believe that the industry needs to look at:

- Its image within the general population. Dissolve forever the image of the old man in check shirt and gumboots sucking on a piece of straw. If this means advertising then do so. The armed forces use upbeat ads to attract members, why not agriculture, the cutting edge of science and technology?
- Developing a rapport with the general population. The only way to do this is through education, letting people know just how much their way of life is connected to agriculture.
- Tap into city populations. Engage young people before they have decided on a career path and show them the importance, vitality and many career opportunities within the whole agricultural industry. Help them to develop necessary values, empathy and knowledge of the world of agriculture.

## START AT THE START!

In conclusion

We feel that too much time, emphasis and money is being put into the wrong areas. The courses and institutions are not viable because they lack students. Students need to be attracted from the wider community therefore the wider community needs more knowledge about agriculture.

Best of luck with your enquiry!

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