

# Celebrating AgShows 2025

## Yarn Circle 3: Engaging Education at Agricultural Shows

### Session Leading Question

“How can agricultural shows better engage in education to foster greater understanding, involvement, and attendance among youth and school students, while promoting careers in agriculture?”

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### 1. Session Objectives

1. **Enhance Understanding** of agricultural shows as dynamic educational platforms.
  2. **Encourage Youth Involvement** by identifying and overcoming barriers to student and school participation.
  3. **Promote Agricultural Education** through hands-on, curriculum-linked activities.
  4. **Highlight Career Pathways** in agriculture—farming, agribusiness, sustainability, technology.
  5. **Strengthen Partnerships** with schools, educators and industry bodies.
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### 2. Challenges & Student Needs

- **Location of Events**  
Students in outlying areas often find travel to the showgrounds difficult; consider satellite hubs or transport shuttles.
  - **Timing Clashes**  
School terms, sport carnivals and public holidays can overlap with show-related activities; publish dates early and offer multiple sessions.
  - **Competition with Other Activities**  
Agriculture must vie against music festivals, weekend markets and digital entertainment; tailor programs to be uniquely hands-on and memorable.
  - **Awareness of AgShows Resources**  
Many teachers and students aren't familiar with online toolkits or curriculum guides; send targeted emails, hold briefings at regional education networks and include QR codes on promotional flyers.
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## **3. Programs & Educational Activities**

### **On-Site / Show-Based**

- **Careers Event**  
Invite local agribusiness sponsors and industry speakers to deliver short talks or Q&A panels, giving students a clear pathway into agriculture.
- **Food & Fibre Workshops**  
Interactive sessions on topics such as textile from sheep's wool or the journey of milk—from paddock to carton—complete with sample-making. Combine with syllabus outcomes.
- **Beef Education Camp**  
A standalone two-day camp where older students learn cattle handling, feedlot management and abattoir processes in small groups.
- **Youth Section**  
Core judging classes—stud beef, dairy, paraders, fleeces, meat sheep, merino sheep, grains, fruit and vegetables, with the possibility of adding poultry, soils, and alpacas.
- **Crossbred & Commercial Heifer Classes**  
Offer a more accessible entry point for schools without stud herds, judged on condition and handling rather than pedigree.
- **Schools' Section: Themed Entries**  
Creative exhibits linked to the show's annual theme (if there is one).
- **Interschool Competitions**  
Pit teams against each other, in friendly competition.
- **Year 12 Major Works Exhibition**  
Showcase HSC project work.
- **Cover-Design Competition**  
Run an art contest for the show's official programme cover; winning design and artist get featured publicity.
- **Duke of Edinburgh / New England Award**  
Encourage participants to log show committee volunteering hours as part of their leadership service requirement.
- **“Free Friday” Schools Day**  
Waive entry fees for school groups on opening day and schedule bite-sized tours or “show samplers”.
- **Hands-On Demos**  
Sheep-shearing, beekeeping “touch-a-hive,” wool-classing, and stock-handling demonstrations using safe, interactive setups.

### **Off-Site / Outreach**

- **Demos at Schools**  
Mobile displays and guided introduction sessions for primary classes.
- **Animal Nursery Visits**  
Bunny-petting or chick-rearing kits loaned to childcare centres and home-school co-ops for short-term animal care projects.
- **Home-School Pavilion Program**  
A dedicated section specifically aimed for home-school families, outside of the public/private/independent systems.

- **‘Companion/Assistant’ Program**  
Paired “work-alongside” experience, where students assist handlers, judges or stewards in real time.
  - **Scholarships/Camps**  
Promote these residential and on-farm school holiday camps as follow-on opportunities for deeper involvement and interests.
  - **School Ag Plots**  
Support classroom mini-farms—e.g. pig-rearing programs with on-site visits and kerb-side mentorship from local producers.
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## **4. Student Engagement Strategies**

### **Current Activities**

- **Colouring & Writing Competitions**  
Primary students interpret a show theme in drawings or short stories, with winning entries displayed.
- **Scavenger / Treasure Hunts**  
App-based or printed clue trails that lead students across different areas of the Showground, ending in a small prize or raffle ticket.
- **Junior Farmer Challenge / Kids’ Farm Olympics**  
Teams rotate through stations. Aimed at primary school students who aren’t old enough to enter a Junior Young Farmers Challenge.
- **Small Schools’ Displays**  
A “mini-district” section for schools, judged on creativity and local pride.
- **Teacher-Led Cooking Competitions**  
Primary classes cook simple tasks (e.g. butter-making, damper baking) with teachers entering the best dishes.
- **High-School Volunteering**  
Offer SLR accredited “working-bee” hours where senior students assist with show setup, marshalling or pack-down.

### **New Ideas**

- **District “Pallet” Exhibit**  
Students design and build a display on a shipping pallet, highlighting their local ag-innovation/history/theme.
  - **YJ Winner Mentoring**  
Last year’s Young Judging champions guide new competitors through set-up, ring etiquette and placings.
  - **Judge Mentoring Program**  
Pair aspiring judges with accredited judges for a behind-the-scenes learning day.
  - **Steward Training**  
Short workshop for student leaders on event logistics, risk management basics and volunteer coordination.
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## **5. Value & Skills Development – Importance of Ag Shows as an Education Platform**

- **Life Skills** - Students practice punctuality, task planning and personal presentation
  - **Public Speaking & Confidence**
  - **Networking Opportunities**
  - **Teamwork**
  - **Individual Responsibility**
  - **Conflict Resolution**
  - **Niche Areas of Interest**
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## **6. Building & Sustaining Relationships**

### **Stakeholder Groups**

- **Community Hubs**  
Libraries and shire halls can host pre-show information nights or “meet the show committee” drop-ins.
- **Schools & Universities**  
Collaborate on curriculum links, guest lectures or assignment topics tied to show themes.
- **Day-Care & Special-Ed Centres**  
Offer tailored mini-farm visits, story-time with animals and craft sessions.
- **Nursing Homes**  
Inter-generational animal-petting or horticulture therapy activities.
- **Home-School Networks**  
Quarterly newsletter insert and exclusive “school-only” excursion days.
- **Industry Experts & Sponsors**  
Develop advisory panels for program design, then recognise contributions in show programmes and announcements.

### **Tactics**

- **Face-to-Face Outreach**  
Personal visits to department heads or principal’s breakfasts to secure buy-in.
- **Meaningful Roles**  
Offer clear – not token – responsibilities (e.g. “you’ll pencil in Ring 1 from 10–11 am”).
- **Incentives**  
Certificates, badges, small cash bursaries or vouchers.
- **Early Start**  
Begin engagement in Term 1—send “save-the-date” packs and curriculum tie-in proposals.
- **Activity “Kits”**  
Pre-packaged resource boxes (lesson plans, judging sheets, etc) that teachers can borrow.

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## **7. Resources & Requirements**

### **Existing Tools**

- **Young Judges resources**
- **Event Calendars / Date Lists**
- **Horse Health Declarations & NVDs**
- **Participant Waivers**

### **Needed Items – AgShows NSW to investigate and develop (if needed).**

- **Judges’ Contact List**  
Up-to-date database with specialisations, availability windows and dietary requirements.
- **Communication Templates**  
Email/SMS scripts for reminders, site maps, parking instructions and last-minute changes.
- **Activity “Kits”**  
Pre-packaged resource boxes (lesson plans, judging sheets, etc) that teachers can borrow.
- **Schools’ “Show Checklist”**  
One-page guide listing required gear, uniform standards and arrival times for each cohort.
- **Mentorship Framework**  
Written guidelines—roles, expectations, feedback process—for student–judge or student–leader pairings.

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## **8. Miscellaneous**

- **Social Media**  
Use social media to ‘tell the story’ of your event. Utilise multi-platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube). Develop a website (if you don’t already have one), to allow youth access to information.
- **Accessibility**  
Assess your showground for wheelchair paths, quiet rooms, sensory breaks and easy-read signage for students who may require these.