

BLUEPRINT 2011

NSW FARMERS ASSOCIATION

YOUNG FARMERS' COUNCIL

VISION

**Representing young farmers within the NSW Farmers' Association.
A resource for young farmers' to educate, listen, advocate and interact**



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YoungFarmers



To whom it may concern,

It is with pleasure that we present to you a Blueprint for the NSW Young Farmers' Council of the NSW Farmers' Association.

This Blueprint signals a new phase of evolution for the Young Farmers division of the NSW Farmers' Association. It incorporates feedback from members of the Association, and our committee thanks all those who have contributed to development of this plan.

The plan takes into account the changing nature of, and challenges facing the farming sector into the future, and highlights strategies to take the Young Farmers movement forward and capitalise on opportunities raised on this path.

The NSW Farmers' Association has noted the importance for a young farmer focused 'think tank', which can devise, communicate and implement strategies which revolve around issues, concerns, awareness and opportunities affecting our state's farmers in the 18 – 35 age bracket.

Through development and recognition of this Blueprint within both the Association and its member base, the Young Farmers' Council will be well placed to assume these responsibilities and drive change, advocacy and communication.

The implementation of this Blueprint provides a means of ensuring that the Association and the Council is accountable and focused on delivering value for members. A key outcome of this Blueprint is the establishment of young farmer regional contacts who will create stronger links with the grassroots members in each region and will help build an active and involved membership.

The Young Farmers' Council has an enormous opportunity to make a difference in our Association, and this Blueprint provides the guiding framework for your current and future Councils to deliver real benefits.

Again, the Council thanks all those who contributed to the Blueprint, both members, past Young Farmer Council representatives and staff of the NSW Farmers' Association, and looks forward to working with you to build farming into the future.



HOLLIE BAILLIEU
Chair - Young Farmer Council

THE BLUEPRINT IN A SNAPSHOT

It is without conjecture that the average age of the NSW farmer is increasing and the percentage of rural youth returning to the land is declining. Whilst many of the factors which govern this trend, i.e. the declining terms of trade, are out of one's control, many other issues are not, and require active involvement, leadership and passion by a collective base to generate positive change.

The NSW Farmers' Association is well aware of the challenges facing young farmers and agribusiness professionals. The development of the Association's young farmers Council several years ago was testimony to the association's perception of the need to get young farmers involved in the direction of farming moving forward. Young Farmer representation is vitally important to make sure that the changes facing our state's young farmers are shaped in a way which optimises the members' position and ensures ongoing sustainability.

Several years on, the Young Farmers' Council remains alive and kicking, however the challenges faced continue to evolve. Unless clear directions are set on mechanisms to accommodate this change, capturing opportunities by young farmers will be made progressively more difficult.

This Blueprint has been produced for several reasons, none more important than to provide clarity and consistency for the NSW Farmers' Association Young Farmers members on the goals, targets and resources of the association's Young Farmers' Council. This Blueprint will formulate a base for the development of annual operating plans, which provide an outline of annual events and targets which are of benefit to you, our members.

The philosophy of the Young Farmers' Council, as you will see, is to educate, listen, advocate and interact in an environment which is 'fun'. The young farmers Council serves the purpose of not only organising and implementing events of value to young members of the NSW Farmers' Association, but also to provide a platform of access to information and networks which are of benefit to either personal, professional or business development.

Five focus areas are described in this Blueprint which the Young Farmers' Council endeavours to address moving forward. These focus areas, we believe, encapsulate all which will drive continuity, sustainability and value, and are in direct line with the Vision of the Council.





KEY FOCUS AREAS

OBJECTIVES

MEMBERSHIP BASE

- Develop a membership base of active young farmers and agribusiness professionals across NSW

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

- Provide real value to our members in personal, professional and business development, as well as greater representation within the Association

COMMUNICATION

- Drive two-way information flow between the YFC and the wider industry (Members, NSW Farmers' Association and government)

RESOURCES

- Have the necessary means to achieve our goal – both capital, people and intellect through the Association and abroad

COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT

- Provide skills to committee members which set members in good stead to drive positive and effective industry change within the Association and the broader community in the years ahead.

MEMBERSHIP BASE

Increasing the membership base

A driving force of the Association is to increase its membership base, with particular emphasis on younger members and student networks. Of these members, there is strong support to encourage more active participation from the grassroots level, and develop members' capabilities to take on community, regional and industry leadership and representation positions.

The YFC will achieve this through programs and activities which are seen as valuable for personal, professional or business development, with particular emphasis on networking functions and young farmer advocacy.

A regional associate, in linkage with the Regional Service Manager (RSM), will have a key role to play in developing involvement and membership within each region.



Strategies

1. Segregate and expand a young farmer and agribusiness professional membership category within the Association, with membership services specified and targeted accordingly.
2. Establish regional leader positions which have direct accountability to the Young Farmers' Council and Regional Service Manager who devises, supports and plans regional events which are relevant to members within their region.
3. Develop an information package to disseminate information regarding the benefits of joining as a young farmer and agribusiness professional member.
4. Develop linkages with key agricultural/agribusiness companies to promote membership to young members within their respective organisations.
5. Develop an annual operating plan following an annual general meeting which sets aside an action of events and activities which are seen as valuable and promote member growth and involvement.

This annual operating plan will be made available to members each year through electronic communication vehicles.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The delivery of services to members will be based on a number of guiding principles. These have been developed to best utilise the strengths and resources of the NSW Farmers' Association, and take into account the role of other young farmer groups in the farming and agribusiness landscape.

The guiding principles are:

1. The Young Farmers' Council will **work with others** where there are established and superior paths to goal. A key facet of this principle is the use of resources and partnerships already developed by the Association, including access to, and participation from, peak industry bodies. In particular, the young farmer Council will develop stronger linkages with other young farmer Councils, including the National Council of Young Farmers, and educational facilities, i.e. Universities, TAFE institutions.
2. The Young Farmers' Council will seek to bring innovative ideas to the Association and its members, in particular where these are beyond current time horizons.
3. Several of the Young Farmers' activities will be focused around encouraging integration and supporting the activities of others to avoid duplication of services.
4. The Young Farmers' Council, together with the NSW Farmers' Association, will leverage its resources for young farmer activities. Where activities can be better done in partnership with or better by others, the Young Farmers' Council will facilitate, but not deliver, this service.
5. The Young Farmers' Council will provide a direct vehicle of communication to the NSW Farmers' Association executive team, and act as a reference group for policy.



Capacity Building

Objective 1 Support young farmer and agribusiness professional participation in professional development, and nurture future leaders and enhance leadership capability.

YFC Role	Strategies
<i>Facilitate access for growers to personal, professional and business development programs</i>	<p>Develop the YFC as a reference point to the rural skills development division of the Association</p> <p>Facilitate development programs in conjunction with the Rural Skills Development Division which address new and young farmers' needs. Develop a pathway for young farmers to gain access to the YFC</p> <p>Provide awareness of, and direction to, training programs</p> <p>Encourage member participation in industry leadership bodies to build linkages</p>
<i>Ensure that training programs are relevant to issues faced by young farmers, both now and into the future.</i>	



Advocacy

Objective 2 – Establish the YFC as a credible vehicle to the NSW Farmers' Executive team and NSW Farmers' Association's industry committee groups on behalf of young farmer members.

YFC Role	Strategies
<i>Contribute to and influence debate on industry specific and non-specific issues through provision of credible and sound information which represents the views of young farmers and agribusiness professionals</i>	<p>Establish the YFC as a direct reference group for Association's industry committees, which provides insight into issues based from a young farmer perspective</p> <p>Leverage the information capacity of the YF network within the Association and industry as an effective tool to raising support for lobbying power.</p> <p>Develop processes and systems to enable more meaningful member input, in particular through the branch system.</p>



COMMUNICATION

Communication is seen as the key ingredient in forming a successful Young Farmer and Agribusiness Professional network. All effort will be made to modernise communication channels and to provide effective two-way interaction between members, the Young Farmers' Council and the NSW Farmers' Association. This will enable young farmer members' involvement in the activities within the Association, with minimal time delays in information dissemination.

The establishment of regional contacts will provide the conduit for grassroots membership and interaction, and provide a bridge between the growing membership of the young farmer movement and the Council. YFC and regional members will be actively involved in regional branch and district council meetings to ensure the two-way flow of information.

Improved Communication – Members

The Young Farmers' Council aims to significantly improve communication with The NSW Farmers' Association's young farmer and student members by:

1. Developing bi-monthly newsletters, to be circulated electronically, outlining the activities of the Council, what's on, key information for personal, professional or business development etc.
2. Develop a website exclusive for members of the young farmer network which is informative and interactive. A key aspect of this vehicle will be the ability for members to openly discuss issues on-line through a blog scenario. This will allow for effective collection of information by the YFC and Association in broader endeavours.
3. Develop linkages with other Young Farmer groups to improve the value of information and exposure.
4. Establish the chairman of the YFC as a point of reference for communication feedback, who takes accountability for actions regarding the communication

Improved Communication – Association

There is a need to increase face to face contact with the YFC, the Executive Council (EC) and the Board of the NSW Farmers' Association. Key updates to EC should transpire every second EC meeting, with an annual face to face presentation to the Board of the annual operating plan.

The YFC will also improve its reporting through the development of an annual report which will be aligned to this Blueprint. It will outline to the Association and its members the value of the YFC, and how it has contributed to the overall success of the NSW Farmers' Association.

COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT

An integral chain to the success of the Association into the future is the development of effective leaders who have the skills and passion to step into leadership roles. It is envisaged that the keen young farmers and agribusiness professionals who take the responsibility to assume a role on the Young Farmer Council should be provided with skills which enable members to successfully assume these roles if elected.

Objective 1

The Council itself aims to provide its members with leadership skills, networking skills, policy skills, lobbying skills and meeting skills.

Strategies

1. Establish guidelines which requires members to attend a set number of YFC meetings, branch meetings and district council meetings over the duration of their term in office;
2. In partnership with the Association, develop an avenue whereby Council members are eligible to attend a nominated industry or policy Council meeting at least once a year.
3. Members should endeavour to attend the NSW Farmers' Association AGM through their branch structure.
4. Through organisation, implementation and reflection of forum events, communication vehicles and sponsorship negotiations, networking and leadership skills will be developed.
5. The YFC should encourage and steer the association to develop a policy paper annually, capable of being lobbied to relevant stakeholders, on an issue of interest and supported by young farmer members.

Objective 2

The composition, roles and responsibilities of Council members are documented and communicated to Association members annually, so that contact with, and continuity of, the Council is sustainable into the future.

Strategies

1. That a formalised strategy which outlines the structure of the YFC be developed by the Association which outlines the members, selection process, term of membership, meetings, responsibilities, coordinator, reporting and administrative support of the YFC.
2. That a profile of the YFC be communicated annually to members of the Young Farmer network and the Association in general.



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