



Next Generation takes over

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South Australia's country shows launched a succession plan last week in the form of a new Next Generation group. It is designed to boost the involvement of young people in country shows and bridge the city-country divide.

Targeted at 16 to 40-year-olds, the group is focused on driving participation, education and innovation in the SA show movement and rural communities.

It is being heralded as the beginning of a new era and parallels are already being drawn to the former Rural Youth organisation responsible for linking young country people in the 1960s and 70s.

The key aims of the group are to:

- Increase awareness of opportunities for participation in country shows and the Royal Adelaide Show;
- Provide avenues for succession planning and leadership development in show associations;
- Develop networking opportunities for young rural South Australians;
- Educate and inform people of the importance of rural and agricultural enterprises, food production and security, natural resource management, and employment and career opportunities;
- Bring new ideas and encourage innovation.

The concept has been driven by a steering committee of past and present SA Young Rural Ambassadors and Rural Ambassadors.

Interim committee chairwoman Amanda Kroehn, winner of the 2010 Rural Ambassador, said that group was for all youth in rural communities, not only farmers.

"We are excited about creating a network and creating a group of people with really good ideas to keep things moving forward in country areas," she said. "There are plenty of youth in rural communities who want to be involved but are not sure how. The Next Generation committee will give them that opportunity."

In addition to the new group, a Young Farmer Challenge is being planned for country shows.

Committee member Andrew Hall, Clare, said the concept was similar to the challenge run in New South Wales.

The SA event was likely to have teams of five for people aged over 18 to complete a range of challenges such as pipe joining, moving hay bales by motorbike, sowing a patch on jeans while being worn, rolling a bale of wool or completing an obstacle course.

Shows likely to run the Young Farmer Challenge in 2011-12 include Keith, Naracoorte, Crystal Brook, Melrose, Jamestown, Kimba and Mundulla. Heats would be conducted at individual shows which would then compete at the Royal Adelaide.

He said the aim was to host the first grand final at the RAS in 2012 - the Australian Year of the Farmer.

Ag Societies Council chairman Grant Waterman said the Next Generation group would be a link between city and country people, with the potential for ideas to be shared and education provided.

"I'm really excited. It's one of the greatest things that has happened to the show movement during my involvement and it will continue to grow," he said.

Details: For membership or sponsorship, contact Next Gen, 8210 5231, email nextgen@sacountryshows.com or visit www.sacountryshows.com