



New group kickstarts the next generation of country shows

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with Amanda Kroehn & Andrew Hall on behalf of the SA Agricultural Shows Next Generation Group

THE South Australian Agricultural Shows Next Generation Group has come alive, and is already revitalising country shows across the State.

The new group, launched in July, is made up of young people with a passion for agriculture and rural living. It was possible to form the group because of the support and mentoring of the Agricultural Societies Council of SA and the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA.

We are keen to promote the value of youth in country shows and communities and increase the opportunities available for them to become more involved with planning and running events.

The Next Generation Group is open to anyone aged between 16 and 40 years and who is passionate about rural life and country shows. Our aim is to drive participation, education and innovation in the South Australian show movement and local rural communities for young people involved in or with an interest in SA rural enterprises, activities and lifestyles. The Next Generation committee is keen to see the group spread to all rural areas and to get the Next Generation philosophy into country shows.

It's hard when a show gets to a point where the organisers become uninspired - our group tries to pick it up, get it to continue and have a bright future.

We believe the group will help generate ideas and come up with different ways of getting young people involved. We'd like to provide support to struggling shows. If there's anything we can do, such as run a competition or help out on show day, we will.

Next Generation hopes to encourage our target audience to not only stay in rural areas but bring others in as well. With the world's population expanding and fears of a world food shortage, agriculture is going to be an exciting place with plenty of career prospects.

Our aim is to open urban dwellers up to this concept and give them the opportunity to become involved.

Educating the general public about food production and security, rural activities, lifestyles and career opportunities in the rural sector are the group's definite aims.

One of our first initiatives- the Young Farmer Challenge - was showcased at Crystal Brook Show on August 13. The feature event, aimed at highlighting the many skills of today's young farmers, was a show-stopping, action-packed competition aimed at our target market.

Teams were under pressure to test swag rolling skills and their ability to thread a needle under stress.

Accuracy won when it came to shooting cans with a fire extinguisher, and it took brute force for the teams to move a dozen bales of hay to a stack, only to complete one more challenge - sculling Farmers Union Ice Coffee 'boat-race' style.

We suspect the Young Farmer Challenge will be a big drawcard at local shows everywhere. We've already got more interest than we can handle so interested shows and communities should get in quick. The event will expand in the coming year, and its long-term aim is to debut at the Royal Adelaide Show in 2012, the Year of the Farmer.

The committee would love to catch up with you at the Royal Adelaide Show. Join us on Sunday, September 4, for the Next Generation breakfast next to the Alpaca Shed from 7am to 8.30am. Meals will be cooked by group members for a gold coin donation.

Otherwise, we'll be at the SA Country Show's stand everyday in the Taste SA tent to answer your questions and accept membership.

It is an exciting time for country shows and Next Generation group will continue to raise its profile in the upcoming spring and autumn show season.

Membership to the group is priced at \$25 (GST inclusive) and application forms are available online.

* Details: To register for breakfast, contact Rural Services on 08 8210 5231 or www.sacountryshows.com