

Wool classer wins Young Rural Ambassador Award

This year's Young Rural Ambassador Award winner is a professional wool classer, representing the Mount Pleasant Show and Central Association, and aims to have her own property producing fine Merino wool and stud cattle.

Caitlin Heppner was announced the winner of the coveted award on Friday 13 July by the Agricultural Societies Council of SA.

She works for EP Shearing contractors in SA and is the current National Champion Merino Fleece Young Judge, and has been involved in SA shows on all levels since 2010.

Caitlin was thrilled to win the award.

"I am extremely excited as well as honoured to have won the title on Friday night –I had some great young people in the competition and I am proud of them all," she said.

"Getting to meet so many new likeminded people was definitely the highlight – I am stoked to have won but I think anyone would have been a worthy winner.

"I am really excited to spend my next 12 months as the South Australian Young Rural Ambassador, travelling to as many new shows and hopefully passing on my passion for agriculture to many new people."

The runner up was Franke Agenbag, from the Gawler Show and Northern Association.

Franke is currently studying a Bachelor of Electrical and Mechatronic Engineering, with hopes to one day improve upon the massive solar power potential which rural Australia beholds.

She volunteers with her local Zonta club, along with multiple youth committees. She has been actively involved with show committees for as long as she can remember and lives with her family on a viticulture property in Marananga in the Barossa.

Franke was excited to be runner up of the award.

"I am so humbled to have received this title on Friday night," she said.

"My fellow ambassadors were all nothing short of amazing and I feel so privileged to have shared the stage with them today.

"I will continue to pursue my passion within our rural communities and will forever be tied to my country roots.

"Thank you so much to everyone who made today possible and I hope to make you all proud in the future."

State Rural Ambassador Award Coordinator Peter Angus said all the finalists were exceptional.

"It was a real pleasure to meet the 2018 Young Rural Ambassador State finalists," he said.

“They were a terrific group of young people with lots of positive ideas about the future of country shows in their regions and had a passion for primary industries and community involvement.

“Each of them was a credit to themselves, their families, shows and communities.”

The other 2018 state finalists were:

Murray Lands	Pinnaroo Show	William Venning
Southern	Coonalpyn Show	Aidan Marshall
Northern	Jamestown Show	George Seppelt
South East & Border	Penola Show	Bentley Galpin
South East & Border	Mundulla Show	Micaela Lock
Yorke Peninsula	Kadina Show	Mackenzie (Kenz) Weltman

The Young Rural Ambassador Award highlights the importance of youth in rural South Australia and the agricultural show movement and is aimed at 16 to 19-year-olds

Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) is the main sponsor of the Young Rural Ambassador Award. The other sponsors of the award are The Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of SA Education Foundation, The Stock Journal, RM Williams, The Showmen’s Guild of SA and JLT Insurance.