



## 2015 SALARY & TREND REPORT



Agribusiness  
in Australia:  
**salary snapshot**

Generation Y:  
**the future of  
employment**

Tips for  
**attracting  
top talent**

# Contents

## 4 Agribusiness in Australia: salary snapshot

For over 35 years Agricultural Appointments has helped businesses of all types meet the hardest challenge: recruiting the right people. For this trend report, we've dipped into our archives to produce a 20-year review of salaries and how they've kept pace (or not) with other important indices. We also look into the crystal ball, and what's happening with salaries in the future.

## 12 Generation Y: the future of employment

While older Australians dominate many farm and agricultural businesses, this most certainly won't be the case in the future. Learn how two Australian agribusinesses have engaged with Gen Y to their benefit, and how you can apply those insights to your enterprise.

## 20 Attracting top talent to small or regional agribusinesses

Attracting – and retaining – top talent is one of the common challenges small or regional agribusinesses face. We share an inspiring and innovative approach as well as top lessons learnt from 35 years in agribusiness recruitment.

## 23 How we help



As the world economy shifts towards Asia over the first half of this century, demand on Australia's food and agricultural sector will rise significantly. Asia's middle class will be the biggest and most powerful group globally by 2050, making up 64% of the world's middle class, up from just 28% currently. Increased demand for food will follow, doubling by 2050, compared to 2007. China will lead the way, accounting for 43% of the total increase in demand for food globally, including for beef, wheat, dairy products, sheep meat and sugar.

This shifting economic power represents both a major opportunity and a major challenge for Australia's agribusinesses. While profitability growth is a welcome prospect, attracting and retaining talented employees will become more challenging and competitive than ever. And, in an industry that currently lags others in remuneration growth, agribusinesses will have to modernise, and in some cases restructure, their approach to human resources.

Embracing Generation Y will be a key part of this; by 2020 they will make up 42% of the workforce, up from 34% today.

These under 35s are the children of the internet; they are multi-tasking, social-media savvy workers who want more from their employers than any generation before. That means work-life balance, ongoing training and an employer that inspires them. Gen Ys will have roughly 17 jobs in their career – retaining them will mean offering perks and a modern workplace.

Gen Ys are less inclined to move away from urban hubs so employers will also need to think outside the box to attract top talent to remote and small regional areas.

This means looking beyond the traditional agribusiness workforce, to migrants and skilled workers from overseas. It means offering attractive super packages, flexible workplaces and ongoing training.

This report sets out the key challenges for agribusinesses as Australia moves through a major shift in agricultural demand. It also sets out how and where agribusinesses should implement human resources solutions to attract and retain staff, in what will be an unprecedented growth period ahead.

**Dr Ray Johnson**, B.Sc.Ag., Ph.D. (Rural Science)  
Managing Director, Agricultural Appointments

# Agribusiness in Australia: **salary snapshot**

Increased demand for agricultural products from Asia over the next 25 years means Australian agribusinesses will face skills shortages. As a result, younger workers must be encouraged to enter the sector and remuneration will become a key battleground in the fight to attract and retain top talent.



The worst performing salaries are for

**FARM MANAGERS,**

WHICH HAVE GROWN AT JUST

**29%**

OF AVERAGE SALARIES



### Sector growth

Agribusiness has been a key growth sector for Australia and the industry is expected to continue to perform well for the foreseeable future. The roughly 125,000 businesses in the sector generate revenue of \$207 billion per year and have experienced strong growth (3-4% per year) in the past five years. Exports now exceed \$40 billion per year.

Over the next 15 years the Asian middle class will grow rapidly from 28% of the global total now to 64%<sup>1</sup>. It's a change that will dramatically increase the demand for food products. Given Australia's clean image, good record of food quality and safety, coupled with close proximity to these growth markets, it has been estimated that Australia's agrifood producers could achieve an additional \$1.7 trillion in revenues from agricultural exports through to the year 2050.

These changes and opportunities are in our immediate future and will severely test the ability of the agribusiness sector to supply the required human resource skills and experience. As such, there will be significant growth in employment opportunities across agricultural industries.

### Remuneration: slow and uncompetitive growth

Growth in the agribusiness sector will drive competition to attract and retain the best employees and competitive remuneration is likely to play an important role. A review of agribusiness salaries from 1995 through to 2015, using Agricultural Appointments' own internal records and industry data, shows that growth in salaries in a number of key areas has been substantially slower than average salaries in other industries.

The worst performing salaries are for farm managers, which have grown at just 29% of average salary growth across Australia over the 20-year period. Product managers are not much better

Taxable Base Salary									
POSITION	1995			2015			% Increase	% /Annum	Indexed against a CPI of 2.6% <sup>9</sup>
	\$ Average	Range		\$ Average	Range				
Sales Rep /TM <sup>1</sup>	43,000	40,500 - 45,500		70,000	65,000 - 75,000		62.8	3.14	120.8
Technical Sales Rep <sup>2</sup>	42,000	40,000 - 45,500		85,000	75,000 - 95,000		102.4	5.12	196.9
Product Manager <sup>3</sup>	56,000	52,000 - 60,000		80,000	70,000 - 90,000		42.9	2.14	82.4
Technical Manager <sup>4</sup>	67,000	58,500 - 76,000		110,000	105,000 - 130,000		64.2	3.21	123.4
Agronomist - Sales <sup>5</sup>	42,000	36,000 - 43,000		105,000	80,000 - 125,000		150.0	7.50	288.5
Quality Assurance Manager <sup>6</sup>	46,000	42,000 - 46,000		95,000	80,000 - 110,000		106.5	5.33	204.8
Farm Manager <sup>7</sup>	55,000	50,000 - 56,000		75,000	65,000 - 85,000		36.4	1.82	69.9
Australian Average Wage <sup>8</sup>	34,018			76,768			125.7	5.63	216.5

1. Tertiary qualifications, more than 5 years experience
2. Mid-level position, tertiary qualifications with industry-specific skills and more than 5 years experience
3. Tertiary qualifications, more than 5 years experience
4. Tertiary qualifications plus post-graduate qualifications, more than 5 years experience
5. Agronomy or similar degree, core specialist knowledge and more than 5-7 years experience
6. Medium to large company, tertiary qualifications, more than 5 years experience
7. Tertiary degree or diploma, more than 5 years experience specific to farm type (eg, irrigation)
8. Average Full time Australia wage (ABS 1995 and 2014)
9. Average annual inflation (consumer price index) of 2.6%/annum from 1995 to 2014 (ABS, 2015)

off: their salaries have grown at 34% of average salary growth in the same period. This underperformance is probably due to a range of factors, in particular the highly variable nature of agricultural production and the more recent strong Australian dollar.

Droughts were also prevalent over the period from 1995 to 2009 and these placed severe strains on all agribusiness operations

The remuneration data shows two-tiers within the agribusiness sector, with more

Product managers are not much better off: their wages have grown at **34%** OF AVERAGE SALARY GROWTH IN THE SAME PERIOD.

rapid salary growth in the higher technical areas such as agronomists, technical sales, technical manager and quality assurance managers. These are becoming more highly valued as agribusiness and agrifood industries strive to present strong technical arguments and services to their increasingly sophisticated customer base.

Farm production now utilises far more technology and complex machinery to drive productivity growth, and these changes have placed a higher value on technical skills

Our data shows agronomists have recorded the strongest salary growth since 1995 – nearly 20% greater than the average salary. This reflects both the increased technical requirements for these roles and also the substantial skills shortages relative

to the number of available roles. This is due to the ongoing decline in the number of agricultural science graduates from Australian universities.

Salary growth for farm managers has lagged behind other positions and is even below the rate of inflation. These roles have probably borne the brunt of the strong prevalence of drought over most of the period, but this is an area of tightening skills supply, which will change this situation rapidly in the near future.

There has been some shift to additional forms of remuneration, in particular performance-based incentive schemes. The more recent 2015 figures on taxable salary base will be skewed slightly to the low side because of these changes.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/middle-class-infographic>

### Skills shortages in agricultural and agribusiness

Australia faces critical skills shortages in the agricultural and agribusiness sector. This threatens the ability of the agricultural sector to continue to grow and meet increasing global demand for food and fibre, according to published reports and a 2012 Senate enquiry into higher education and skills training to support agriculture and agribusiness in Australia<sup>1</sup>.

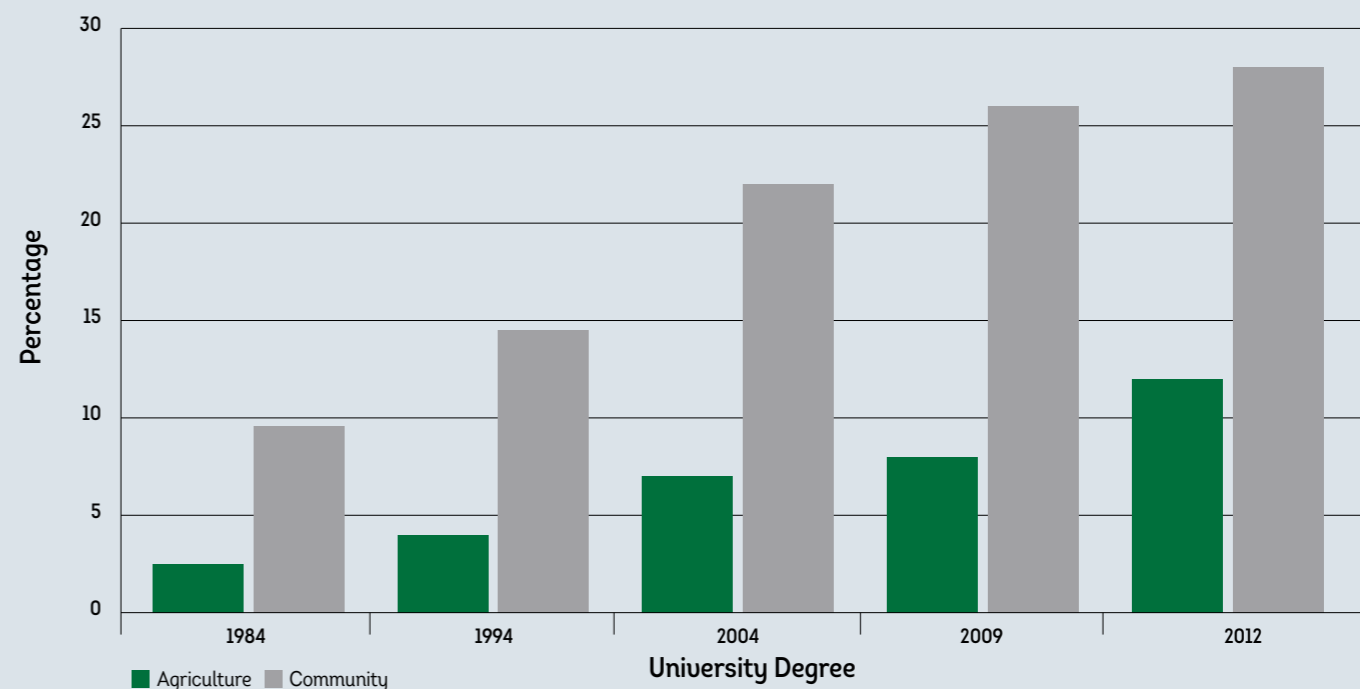
While skills shortages are difficult to quantify across sectors as diverse and fragmented as agriculture and agribusiness, the Senate inquiry found that many sectors are facing severe shortages.

For example, Grain Producers Australia (GPA) – the national body representing the grains

industry – estimated there are 10 jobs for every graduate in their industry<sup>2</sup>.

Elders – one of Australia’s oldest agribusinesses – told the enquiry that in 2010, only 40% of advertised positions for agricultural scientists were filled, and there were 1.1 applications per job. This was down from 65% of vacancies filled and 1.4 applicants per job in 2009<sup>3</sup>.

The Senate enquiry heard that some jobs advertised in isolated areas had no applicants at all. Other submissions argued that the true extent of the skills shortage has been masked by the recent prolonged drought and is now only becoming fully apparent, as agricultural enterprises move back to full production<sup>4</sup>.



Trends in degree attainment in agriculture relative to the Australian workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue No. 6227.0 and previous iterations)



## Remuneration – Employers’ role

**Employers need to get on the front foot with market-savvy remuneration says Dr Ray Johnson, Managing Director, Agricultural Appointments.**

“With the emerging skills shortage in Australian agriculture it is imperative that companies have a method for attracting and retaining new graduates. This takes a significant amount of thought and preparation, and a lot of groundwork in attending university career events to showcase your company.

### Skills shortages in agricultural and agribusiness

One factor of the skills shortage is that tertiary qualifications have fallen far behind industry demand (see graph on p9). A comprehensive analysis of the professional supply and demand situation in the Australian agricultural sector by Emeritus Professor of Research in Agriculture at Charles Sturt University, Jim Pratley<sup>5</sup>, also revealed a large gap between vacancies and candidates. His report concluded that there are now only around 300 agricultural graduates produced each year, and about 700 when related courses are considered. But the agricultural job market requires more than 4,000 per year.

As a result of this shortage, many companies are now employing diploma-level graduates for jobs that were previously filled by university graduates. This has implications for the productivity of the industry and

the sustainability of agricultural research and education<sup>6</sup>.

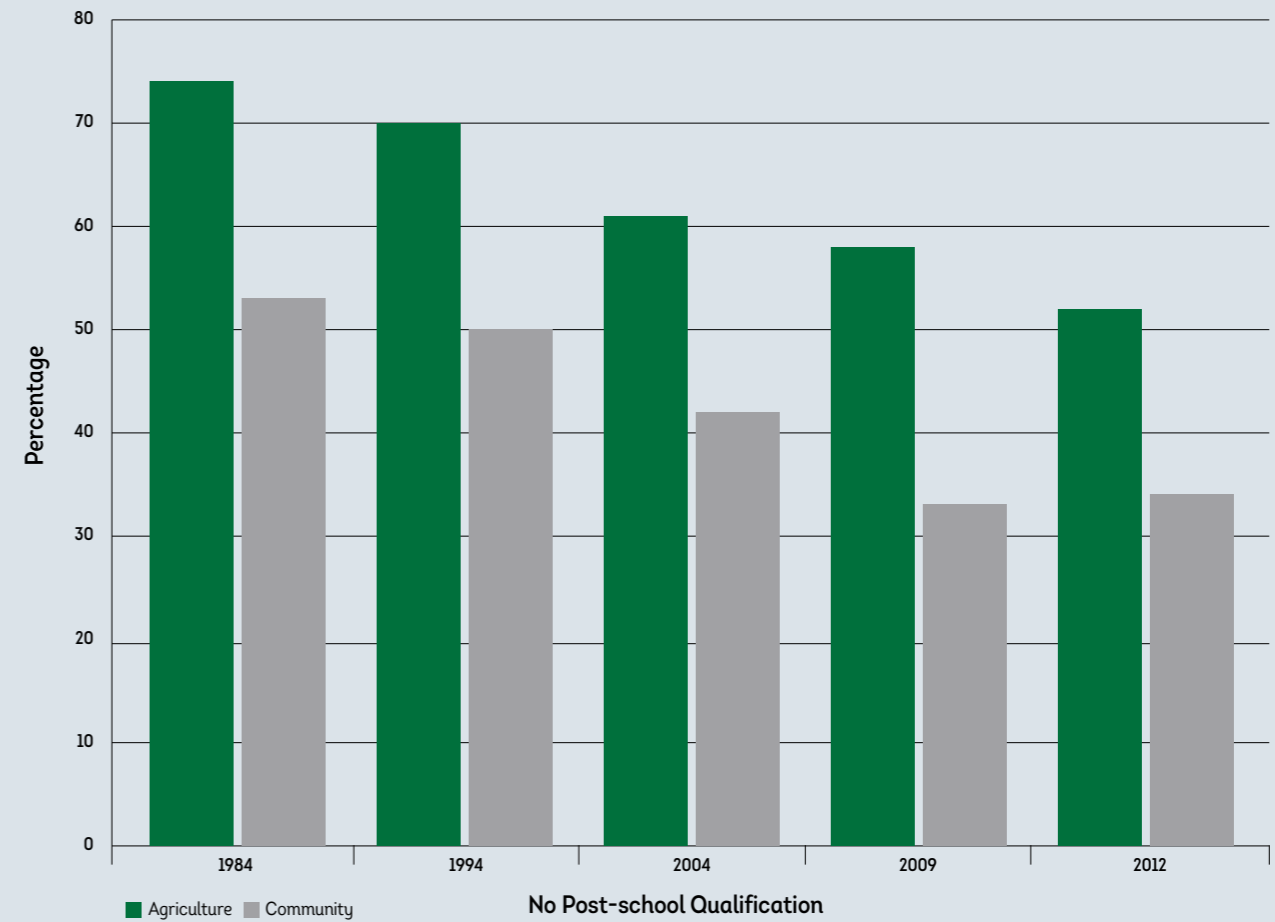
Professor Pratley concluded that universities would need to produce about 2,300 graduates just to maintain the current (7-8%) graduate level of education qualifications.

The Senate committee concluded that the significant skills shortage in both agricultural production and agribusiness in Australia would not be resolved through market forces. The committee said the ageing workforce would exacerbate it in the medium term and the competition for labour from the mining sector for the foreseeable<sup>7</sup> future.

Starting remuneration must be market-competitive but training and mentoring young graduates is the key to both making them productive and to retaining them in the long term.

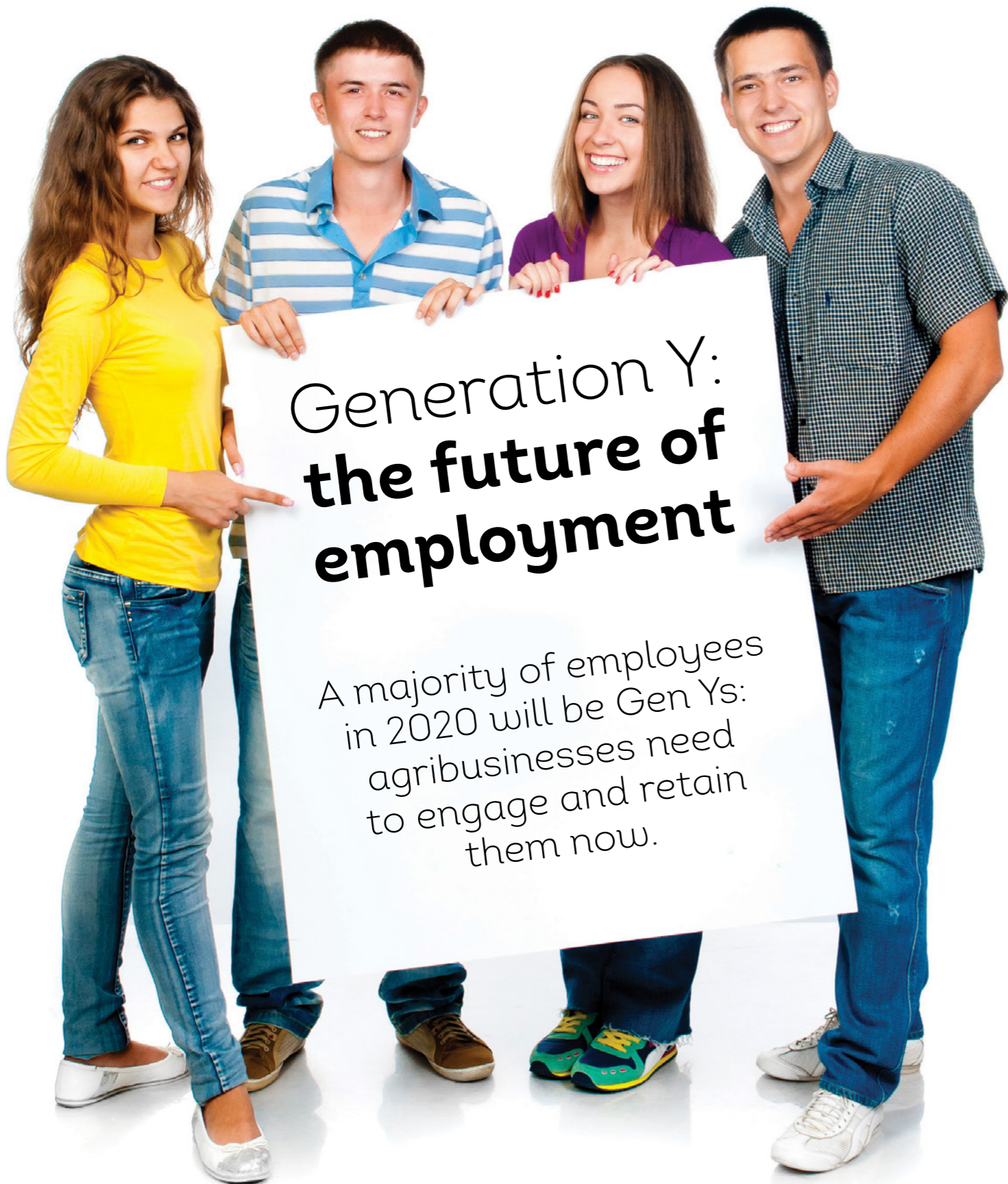
In our experience very few companies have a strategic HR plan around this area. CEO’s, General Managers and farm business owners will have to increasingly understand the remuneration benchmarks for their particular area of interest. It will be necessary to structure both short- and long-term incentive plans to attract skilled people in the future. This may be a challenge, given Agribusiness has historically lagged behind the non-agri sector in implementing effective incentive plans.”

**With the emerging skills shortage in Australian agriculture it is imperative that companies have a method for attracting and retaining new graduates.**



Trends in no post-school qualifications relative to the Australian workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue No. 6227.0 and previous iterations)

<sup>5</sup> J.E. Pratley (2012) "Professional Agriculture – A Case of Supply and Demand", Australian Farm Institute Occasional Paper 12.01.  
<sup>6</sup> Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture, Submission 36 (to Senate Enquiry), p. [1]  
<sup>7</sup> [http://www.ruralskills.com.au/uploads/file/http\\_\\_\\_wopared\\_aph\\_gov\\_au\\_senate\\_committee\\_eet\\_ctte\\_agribuisness\\_report\\_report.pdf](http://www.ruralskills.com.au/uploads/file/http___wopared_aph_gov_au_senate_committee_eet_ctte_agribuisness_report_report.pdf)



# Generation Y: the future of employment

A majority of employees  
in 2020 will be Gen Ys:  
agribusinesses need  
to engage and retain  
them now.

**G**eneration Y currently makes up just over a third of the workforce. But as the Baby Boomers retire, Gen Y will become the biggest proportion of workers in just five years, growing from 34% of the workforce now, to 42% by 2020<sup>1</sup>.

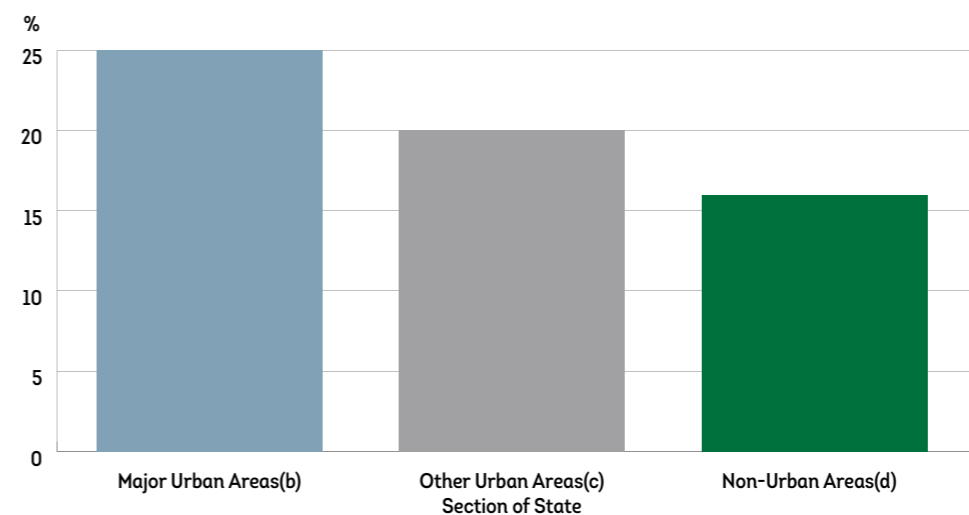
They are society's future leaders and managers and if businesses want to stay relevant and profitable, they need to attract and retain Gen Ys as a matter of urgency. Agribusinesses face a bigger challenge than most, since only 16% of Gen Y (18-34-year-olds) currently choose to live in non-urban areas<sup>2</sup>. Drawing them to regional businesses is competitive, especially in remote rural areas.

In addition, older Australians dominate many farm and agricultural businesses.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>3</sup>, the median age of farmers increased by nine years between 1981 and 2011, to 53. Nearly half of the industry is aged 55 or older, up from 26% in 1981.

According to the  
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**THE MEDIAN AGE  
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AND 2011, TO**  
**53**

**Proportion of young adults(a) across section of state - 2011**



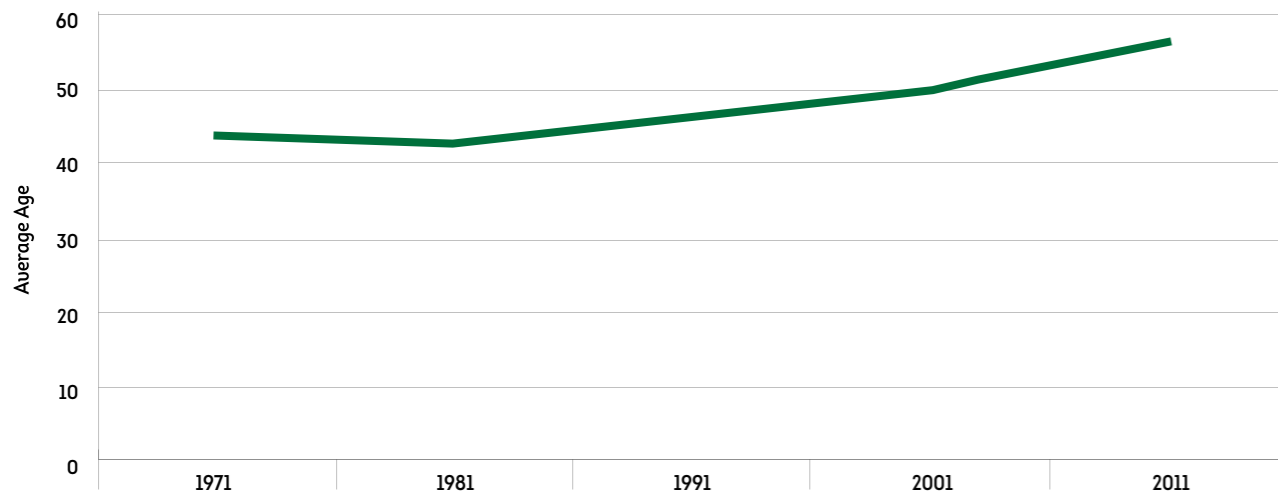
- (a) Aged 18-34 years
- (b) Population clusters of 100,000 or more people
- (c) Population clusters of between 1,000 to 99,999 people
- (d) Population clusters of less than 1000 people

Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mccrindle.com.au/Default.aspx?PageID=5282293&A=SearchResult&SearchID=8224535&ObjectID=5282293&ObjectType=1>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features40April+2013>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features10Dec+2012>



Trend in average age of Australian farmers from 1971 to 2011 (NFF 2012 and ABS)



This raises significant challenges about how to attract and retain younger workers.

So who is Generation Y? What do they want? And how can agribusinesses get them on board?

**Gen Y: who are they?**

Gen Ys are those born roughly between 1980 and the early-mid 1990s. They are the children and grandchildren of the Baby Boomers and the best-educated and most materially endowed generation ever<sup>4</sup>.

At work they are a multi-tasking, multi-channeling group that want organisations to inspire and motivate them. They want a great work-life balance, an inclusive employment culture and a varied professional role.

They seek out businesses that make a positive contribution to society, foster innovative thinking and develop their employees' skills<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mccrindle.com.au/Default.aspx?PageID=52822938A=SearchResult&SearchID=82245358ObjectID=52822938ObjectType=1>  
<sup>5</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-dttl-2014-millennial-survey-report.pdf>

Gen Ys are rewriting the rules of employment, according to Australian social research firm, McCrindle<sup>1</sup> they:

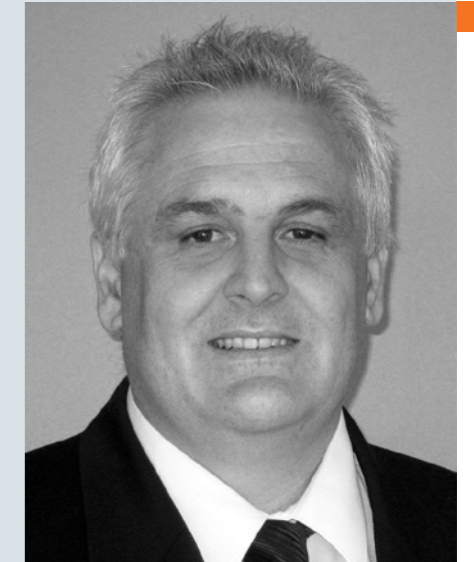
- AVERAGE MORE THAN **4** CAREERS IN THEIR LIFETIME
- STAY AN AVERAGE OF **2** YEARS IN A ROLE
- WORK FOR **17** EMPLOYERS IN THEIR LIFETIME
- HAVE A VOLUNTARY TURNOVER RATE IN EXCESS OF **15%**
- ONE IN THREE** WORK CASUALLY OR PART TIME

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mccrindle.com.au/Default.aspx?PageID=52822938A=SearchResult&SearchID=82245358ObjectID=52822938ObjectType=1>



## Engaging Gen Y: Peracto

**Ian Macleod is the managing director of Peracto, one of Australia's largest private agricultural research companies. It provides independent research, development and related scientific and technical services to private and corporate clients.**



“It's very important for the whole agribusiness industry to attract young people. They bring energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas in the way they think. They also ask a lot of questions and challenge us in what we're doing. We know that younger employees are focused on social interactions with their colleagues and peers so we want to provide opportunities for our people to have fun in the work place. They are not comfortable to sit and plod away. They are hungry for knowledge and want the opportunity to train and learn new skills.

To appeal to younger workers we applied to become an employer of choice in Tasmania<sup>9</sup>, where we are based. We won that award in 2011. It means we are recognized as an employer that offers a good company culture and the opportunity to learn in different ways, including ongoing training.

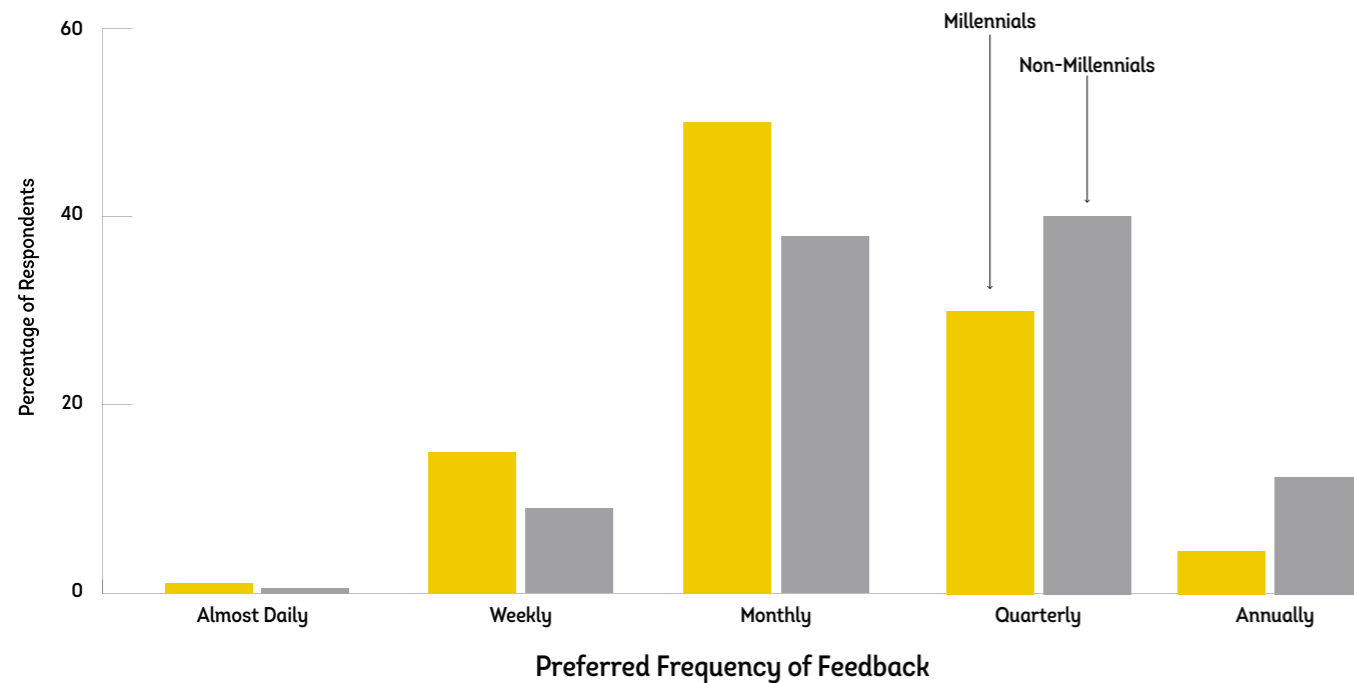
Peracto provides learning opportunities for staff in 14 locations across Australia. This gives staff the chance to learn new things outside their immediate working environment. We also have an international network, so we offer the opportunity for some of our staff to work with organisations similar to ourselves in Europe and North America. We also have people working with us from Argentina, USA, Canada and Italy, so we are attracting people to come and share information and culture with our people too. This helps broaden our employees' experiences and gives them a better outlook. I think younger people enjoy that.

It's also important to implement formal programs that support young people in their transition from education to working life. That includes structured programs that speed up the move from education to a career. Over the years we've been working with schools and universities and other groups to try to get the message out that we want more people to be interested in agriculture. There's a whole range of marketing and technical jobs in the industry and we need to make young people aware of that.

We run a graduate training program over an employee's first 12 months. People in the program come together as a group in different locations around Australia and New Zealand. This includes week-long sessions on technical training, business skills, presentation skills, insect identification, report writing and statistical analysis. Graduates are also given the opportunity to work beside experienced scientists and managers and attend both job training based at one of several locations throughout Australasia.”

### How often employees want feedback from managers

Most millennials prefer monthly.



Source: SAP

A great relationship with their employer is at the top of many Gen Ys work wish-lists. A 2014 global survey by HR company Success Factors<sup>7</sup> and Oxford Economics found that Gen Ys – or Millennials as they are sometimes known – want more feedback from their managers each month than other workers (see graph above).

Unlike the generations before them, Gen Ys work to live rather than live to work. A social research white paper by McCrindle<sup>8</sup> on attracting and retaining Gen Ys suggests they place a 'relationships with peers' as one of the top three reasons for getting or keeping a job. The environment where they can interact socially and work collaboratively is also highly regarded.

The same report noted that 38% of Gen Ys said 'opportunity for advancement' was one of their three top 'must-haves' in a job. 79% said additional training was 'very important' and that regular training would motivate 90% to stay with an employee longer.

One of the barriers to attracting younger staff has been the perception that salaries are not great in agricultural industries. It's something statistics back up: seven out of seven agricultural business jobs assessed by Agricultural Appointments for this report, have not kept up with CPI over the past 20 years (see page 7).

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.successfactors.com/en\\_us/lp/workforce-2020-insights.html](http://www.successfactors.com/en_us/lp/workforce-2020-insights.html)

<sup>8</sup> <http://mccrindle.com.au/resources/whitepapers/McCrindle-Research-New-Generations-At-Work-attracting-recruiting-retaining-training-generation-y.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Employer of Choice is a Tasmanian government award that recognizes businesses that attract and retain skilled staff by creating a great place to work as well as offer professional development. Fifty-six businesses have won the award since it began in 2006.

The Generations defined sociologically			
	BABY BOOMERS Born 1946-1964 Aged 40's & 50's	GENERATION X Born 1965-1979 Aged 20's & 30's	GENERATION Y Born 1980-mid 1990s Aged 18-34
Prime Ministers	William McMahon Gough Whitlam Malcolm Fraser	Bob Hawke Paul Keating	John Howard
Iconic Technology	TV 1956 Audio Cassette 1962 Colour TV 1975	VCR 1976 Walkman 1979 IBM PC 1981	Internet, Email SMSing DVD, 1995 Play Station/X-Box
Social Markers/ Landmark Events	Decimal Currency 1966 Neil Armstrong 1969 Vietnam War 1965-1973 Cyclone Tracy 1974 Advance Australia Fair 1974	Challenger Disaster 1986 Haley's Comet 1986 Stock Market Crash 1987 Fall of the Berlin Wall 1989 Newcastle Earthquake 1989	Threadbo Disaster 1997 Columbine Shootings 1999 New Millennium 2000 September 11, 2001 Bali Bombing 2002
Influencers	Evidential Experts	Pragmatic Practitioners	Experiential Peers
Training Focus	Technical Data/Evidence	Practical Case Studies/Applications	Emotional Stories/Participative
Learning Format	Formal Structured	Relaxed Interactive	Spontaneous Multi-sensory
Learning Environment	Classroom Style Quiet Atmosphere	Round-table Relaxed Ambience	Café Style Music and Mult-modal
Sales & Marketing	Mass/Traditional Media Above the line	Direct/Targeted Media Below the line	Viral/Electronic Media Through friends
Purchase Influence	Brand-loyal Authorities	Brand-switchers Experts	No Brand Loyalty Friends
Financial Values	Long-term Needs Cash and Credit	Medium-term Goals Credit-savvy	Short-term Wants Credit-dependent
Ideal Leaders	Command & Control Thinkers	Coordination & Cooperation Doers	Consensus & Collaborative Feelers

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The two worst performing job salaries were for farm managers, which grew at 32% of CPI; and for product managers, which grew at 37% of CPI. Sales reps grew at 55% of CPI and Technical Managers grew at 57% of CPI.

## Engaging Gen Y: Ausveg

**Richard Mulcahy is the CEO of Ausveg, the national body that represents Australia's vegetable and potato farmers.**



“Attracting younger workers is vital for business and salaries are important. You need to provide reasonable remuneration, which is as good as or better than their friends and peers earn. But above that, you need to give them a sense of responsibility and authority. CEOs who hog all the perks and the travel will not keep dynamic people on their teams.

It's important to keep younger workers engaged and to create a stimulating environment. It's also about trusting the talent you hire and rewarding them.

We give people a high level of responsibility at a young age. Generally, younger recruits are more willing to learn and don't have set ideas. They are energised, mobile and, if they are bright enough, are capable of doing amazing jobs.

It also helps to create a sense of excitement in the business. Most people won't be excited at getting out of bed to cut lettuce at 6.00am, but when you tell them about new technologies, GPS features in tractors or the robots we are developing, you remove the 'boring' tag from farming and people start to take it seriously as a career.

Employers also have to be prepared to live with higher turnover with younger team members. I try to encourage the 'leaders' to stay on longer but I don't become distressed if people move on. That's life.

It's important that the company culture acknowledges staff and listens to their ideas – all these elements help make a dynamic business. Working successfully with younger people is also about letting go of control. They often challenge me with new ideas and approaches. Sometimes I raise my eyebrows at their ideas but invariably they work.

One scientist on my team wants to offer 'edible insects' on his stand at our Convention. I could think of nothing worse but apparently this is something 'new and cool' and those who have heard about his idea are excited. Not for me but I said 'go for it'.

I think (this approach) could work for any business. I've applied this approach in a range of businesses I have managed and all have enjoyed outstanding success on multiple fronts.”

**“When you tell them about new technologies, GPS features in tractors or the robots we are developing, you remove the 'boring' tag from farming”**

**RICHARD MULCAHY, CEO, AUSVEG**

# Attracting top talent to small or regional agribusinesses

With regional centres bearing the brunt of some of Australia's largest population declines in recent years, how can agribusinesses outside the big smoke attract top talent?

**Brett Price**, B.Sc.Ag., MBA  
Sales & Marketing Director,  
Agricultural Appointments

Nearly two thirds of Australia's population resides in one of our greater capital cities, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>1</sup>. While the country's population as a whole is growing, numbers in many regional areas are declining. It means attracting and retaining staff – particularly in remote areas – can be a substantial challenge.

"There are many businesses located in small towns in the central west (of NSW) or the outer west of the state, where there are not many facilities and it may be necessary to drive a long way to town or school," says Agricultural Appointments' Sales and Marketing Director, Brett Price.

"There are a lot of perceived negatives associated with going to those regional centres," he says.

"As recruiters, it is a real challenge – if someone wants a skilled farm manager in an isolated regional area, they must compete with businesses in bigger regional cities."

Price says agribusinesses need to find innovative ways to overcome these challenges, as the Melbourne-based duck meat business, Luv-a-Duck, did in 2010.

The company, which controls about 40% of the duck meat market in Australia, sells approximately 80,000 ducks per week. It considered closing of one of its regional processing plants in Victoria five years ago, due to staff shortages.

The plant, in the town of Nhill (about half way between Melbourne and Adelaide) was a major local employer. With a population of just 2,200, closing the operation would have been a blow to the community.

But, by thinking outside the box, Luv-a-Duck manager, John Millington, attracted workers and kept the business running. Millington contacted the Adult Migrant English Service and asked them if they knew of any refugees who'd be willing to relocate for work. As a result, a group of Karen refugees from Myanmar, who had been living in the outer Melbourne



**"As recruiters it is a real challenge – if someone wants a skilled farm manager in an isolated regional area, they must compete with businesses in bigger regional cities."**



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suburb of Werribee, visited the Luv-a-duck plant and four were hired.

Within two years Nhill had 100 Karen residents living in town.

“Initially, we took on four workers at Luv-a-Duck and we made sure they were good representatives of their community. Then they asked: ‘Can we bring another friend?’ It went on from there,” says Millington.

This achievement didn’t slip past the government. Luv-a-Duck was awarded the 2013 Migration and Settlement Award, which acknowledged its work in training and employing Karen refugees. Through engagement with the Nhill community, Adult Migrant English Service and local service providers, they ensured the new workers were connected with their neighbours and settled in to a welcoming environment.

“They are part of our community’s history now. It’s about us accepting other people. They are not a burden, they are a blessing,” says Millington.

Luv-a-Duck remains the major employer in Nhill.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/3218.0~2012-13~Main+Features~Main+Features?OpenDocument>

## How to attract and retain and talent in regional areas

Agricultural Appointments works exclusively in the agribusiness, viticulture and food manufacture and retail sectors – and has done for 35 years. Based on this experience, Sales and Marketing Director Brett Price gives this advice to regional businesses looking to attract and retain top talent.

### Selection

- ▲ Loosen the selection criteria and concentrate on training
- ▲ Look for skills that are transferable
- ▲ Look at new migrants who are keen to gain work skills
- ▲ Use 457 visas to bring a skilled workers from overseas (regional 457 visas are often fast-tracked)
- ▲ Include childcare/school fees/tutoring in the package
- ▲ Offer longer annual leave
- ▲ Consider flexible working arrangements
- ▲ Offer generous super
- ▲ Financial/business incentives for time spent at the business
- ▲ Attendance at national and international conferences
- ▲ Offer tuition reimbursement and professional development benefits
- ▲ Look into employment opportunities for the spouse/partner

### Remuneration and benefits

- ▲ Provide housing (an onsite manager’s residence is a big draw card)
- ▲ Include housing in work packages or subsidise it

## WE FIND PEOPLE OTHERS CAN'T

For over 35 years Agricultural Appointments has helped businesses of all types meet the hardest challenge: employing the right people.

From CEOs to managers, sales agronomists to graduates, we recruit for roles right across the food supply chain.

From paddock to plate, we know people: how to find them and make sure they’re right for your role and culture.

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