

 A photograph of three children, two girls and one boy, looking at a tray of green leafy vegetables in a greenhouse. The image is partially covered by a green diagonal overlay.

NORTHERN TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

 An aerial photograph of a large agricultural field with rows of crops, a dirt road, and a cloudy sky. A green diagonal overlay is on the left side.

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INTRODUCTION

The Northern Territory Agricultural Education Framework will integrate agriculture into the education of students from Prep to Year 12. The Framework will introduce students to the world of food and fibre production through their everyday school curriculum. It will provide educators with engaging, curriculum-linked activities that are ready to implement straight into the classroom. Through the study of agriculture, students will develop and apply their knowledge and understanding of concepts from science, technology, economics, and marketing.

Students will consider the changes in agricultural practices over time. They will analyse different methods of agricultural production in relation to benefits, risks, and opportunities. They will deepen their understanding of sustainable management of the physical and biological environments and of how agriculture impacts on their lives, their communities, and the environment.

Students will develop skills in critical thinking that inspire them to explore strategies and possible solutions to address major challenges now and in the future related to the global food supply. They will explore and understand agricultural science as a human endeavour, and are encouraged to pursue future pathways, including in agriculture, horticulture, land management, agricultural business practice, natural resource management, veterinary science, food and marine sciences, biosecurity, and quarantine.

There will be a large focus on connecting students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to traditional foods and land management practices. This focus will foster links with current and emerging enterprise and activities such as forestry management, fishing and native conservation. These linkages will encourage partnerships and engagement with ranger groups, forestry businesses, bush food businesses and fishing operations in remote communities.

Similar concepts are already being used in other jurisdictions, such as the Tasmanian Agricultural Education Framework, and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Agriculture subjects.



CONTEXT

Nationally, the agricultural sector is targeting an annual farm gate value of production of \$100 billion by 2030. In the Territory, the value of the plant industries sector alone is expected to be worth \$1 billion by 2030. Agriculture is one of the five pillars of the Northern Territory economy and is referenced in the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission as an important component of the Territory's economic future.

However, by 2030 it is expected that agriculture will have a shortfall of 101,000 workers across the nation, including the fields of research, technology and innovation. Agriculture can provide rewarding and dynamic career pathways and employment opportunities for students in the Northern Territory. Agricultural jobs can be found locally, across Australia and internationally, and in many different fields of study and work, including science, economics and environmental conservation.

Improved agricultural productivity will be vital in the coming decades to help meet the global challenge of feeding the world's increasing population. Farmers need the knowledge and skills to manage agricultural production, businesses, and marketing at the local level, while scientists seek to develop new strategies and technologies to help farmers manage our resources for sustainable food and fibre production.



OUTCOMES

The key outcomes of the Framework will be:

- Provide agricultural engagement and learning for primary and secondary students.
- Allow teachers to become engaged with agriculture (not just agricultural teachers, teachers from all backgrounds).
- Promote a broad range of career pathways for students, both academic and vocational.
- Promote indigenous land management practices and pathways into agriculture.
- Allow students from all backgrounds to experience one of the 5 pillars of the Northern Territory's cultural and economic heritage.
- Provide opportunities for authentic learning through school farm experiences e.g. horticulture plots, excursions, incursions etc.
- Provide curriculum-linked agricultural education resources for teachers of all stages and subject areas.

METHODOLOGY

The Framework will be supported by activities and initiatives NT Farmers' established relationships that will link with the Framework are:

- NT Government and Dept. Education
- Centrefarm
- ISACNT
- Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA)
- NT Isolated Childrens and Parents Association
- Central Queensland University
- Cotton Australia
- Forestry Education Australia
- Regional Development Australia
- Agrifutures
- Meat and Livestock Australia
- Hort Innovation
- The EON Foundation
- Skills Impact
- Qwestacon
- ACARA
- Career Educators Association of the NT
- Science Teachers Association of the NT



Some of the Projects that NT Farmers are connected with that can be linked with the Framework are:

- Ag Inspirations
- AgCAREERSTART
- NT Young Farmers Network
- NT Farming School
- PIEFA and Primezone
- George the Farmer
- Garden Programs

The Framework will be delivered using the following actions:

- Outreach and relationship building to create mutual understanding between the agricultural industry and education department
- Communicating success stories from education into a NT agricultural career
- Building capacity of teachers in the Northern Territory through targeted professional development workshops
- Conduct regular audits to monitor improvements in participation
- Build NT depth of knowledge in agronomy/forestry/fisheries
- Land management and biosecurity capacity building

STRENGTHS

- Build on an existing and successful 'NT Farming School' program
- Strong existing partnerships and ability to expand and add new connections
- Demand for agri-skilled workforce
- Agriculture is a successful engagement tool at schools
- Offers local pathways for Indigenous Australians
- Develops a 'homegrown' solution for the critical agricultural labour shortage

WEAKNESSES

- Agriculture may not be a priority for NT Education Dept. or teachers

SWOT Analysis

OPPORTUNITIES

- Create a program with further reach into the NT, not just focused around Darwin and Katherine
- Increase in school and community understanding of agriculture
- Specific skills and pathways development
- Agriculture and horticulture driving positive social change in communities

THREATS

- This is a long term project requiring long term funding commitment



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