

Navigating School to Farm Partnerships

Engaging with the NT agricultural industry provides many positive benefits to schools, local communities and producers. Benefits include creating paddock to plate connections between growers and school students, increasing awareness around the challenges of food and fibre production in the NT, and showcasing agriculture as an innovative and technical sector with a range of diverse career opportunities. Below is some advice on how schools and industry members can create and foster these connections.



Schools

- Distances are large in the Northern Territory! For any farm or agricultural excursion, consider the time needed to travel to and from farms
- Consider the time of year, especially in the wet season and key activity or harvest times. Visiting mango farms might not be possible during harvest months (usually from September-November)
- Remember biosecurity is very important and must be observed by everyone on farm, this includes teachers, students and transport companies. Don't forget to ask the farmer how you can ensure compliance (you may be asked to organise vehicle washdowns or ensure the students not to bring certain foods on farm, etc)
- Don't assume farms will have mobile phone reception or internet connectivity. Check first, offline activities may be best to be run on farm
- Farms are busy places, with machinery and potential hazards. Always adhere to WHS and safety guidelines
- Industry guest speakers should not be expected to run classes on their own. Facilitation may be needed and offer some topics of discussion
- Utilise social media – there are lots of opportunities that arise through these networks
- The NT Farmers Association website has many free, ready to use resources on food and fibre available to guide your lesson planning

FAST FACTS



Industry

- Initiate contact with schools by approaching them directly or contacting the NT Farmers Association to facilitate a meeting
- Be mindful of school deadlines and times. Most NT school hours are between 8.30am and 3.00pm
- Not all teachers have a background in agriculture or science. Find out what they do and don't know and help build their knowledge and confidence
- High school teachers will want to focus on one subject area for an individual resource, but this doesn't mean agriculture doesn't have an application to other disciplines within a school
- Presentations can be more engaging when they include videos, interactive activities and games
- School farms are not commercial operations, and their farms and gardens are generally small (if they have one at all)
- Budget can be limited for agricultural programs and excursions. An incursion (where you visit the school) might work better
- Don't assume all schools have reliable internet coverage or access to devices such as iPads and laptops



For more advice and classroom learning resources, visit the NT Farmers Association website: <https://ntfarmers.org.au/>

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