

## **Woolworths invests in rural supply chains**

**By [Rebecca Byfield](mailto:rebecca.byfield@aussieicon.com) | September 3, 2013**

This week, supermarket giant, Woolworths, is introducing 25 young people to its rural supply chain.

The scheme is part of its annual Woolworths Agricultural Business Scholarship, a \$150,000 program that offers agriculture's best and brightest an insider's view of the entire supply chain from farmer to customer.

Woolworths General Manager Fresh Food Ziggy Kwarcinski says the program aims to stop young people leaving agriculture by building careers in regional and rural Australia.

"The average age of the Aussie farmer is now more than 52 years. We have created this scholarship program to help attract and retain younger people in agriculture to help future-proof the industry," Kwarcinski says.

In its seventh year, the program has seen more than 150 people graduate, many who are now on their way to becoming future leaders of Australian agriculture.

"It was great to get the opportunity to step away from the farm and concentrate on supply chain management, as well as networking with other young farmers," 2012 Scholar Andrew Smith says.

David Wishaw, another 2012 Scholar of the program agrees. "I gained an improved understanding of the supply chain, in particular the process beyond the farm gate to the consumer."

The catalyst for Damien Donelan was the opportunity to learn the retail side of the supply chain. "It was an invaluable experience to learn more about the end consumer of the products I produce."

This year's intake is all under 35 and come from a range of backgrounds including agribusiness managers, bankers, farmers and agronomists.

Participants hear from a panel of experts from the National Farmers Federation, Deloitte, Elders, and the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW on subjects as varied as rural accounting, sustainability, marketing, and social media, and have the opportunity to meet with senior business leaders within Woolworths. They're also given guide tours of supermarkets, distribution centres, and Sydney's Flemington Markets.

“I welcome this year’s class of 2013 and look forward to the contribution they will make in years to come,” Kwarcinski says.