

## **Announcing five-year Agworkforce Strategy for Queensland Agriculture**

The total value of Queensland's primary industries is \$23.54 billion, with \$18.4 billion in gross value of production (GVP). This is a vital contribution to the Queensland economy.

Future growth and market opportunities for Queensland agriculture are dependent on a highly trained and skilled workforce. The sector currently employs more than 70,000 people but is experiencing difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled workers, with employment projected to increase by 11.3 per cent in 2024-25.

Through consultations around the state, both online and in person, QFF's workforce planning team heard about the current and emerging workforce issues experienced by industry. The findings of this consultation informed a strategic five-year strategy - the *Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Plan 2022-2027*. This plan was developed in partnership between the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) and Jobs Queensland (JQ), in collaboration with the Queensland Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA). RJSA has played a critical role in guiding this project on behalf of the sector.

The Plan was also informed by the *Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Environmental Scan*. The Scan highlighted four priority agriculture groups, based on gross value of production (GVP) and employment: grazing (beef cattle and grains), horticulture (fruit and nuts, vegetables, and nurseries), crops (sugar and

cotton) and aquaculture.

National forecasts project that there will be changes in the composition of the agricultural workforce in the future with greater emphasis on professional and technical roles.

QFF Chief Executive Officer, Jo Sheppard says future sustainability and growth for Queensland agriculture is dependent on being able to attract and retain a highly trained and skilled workforce.

“As the sector continues to modernise, a skilled and appropriately trained workforce, prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, is critical for industry to remain competitive.

“It is important that we work together closely to find effective ways forward in developing our future workforce,” Ms Sheppard said.

Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development Di Farmer launched the plan and acknowledged the focus of attracting, training and retaining workers in Queensland’s agriculture industry.

“In 2020-21, Queensland’s primary industries were estimated to contribute more than \$20 billion in total value to our state economy and we want to ensure the sector keeps growing and is ready to take advantage of emerging opportunities,” Minister Farmer said.

“The resilience and capability of this sector to survive long droughts, extensive flooding and COVID-19 disruptions, while continuing to deliver for local and international markets, has been truly impressive.

“This workforce plan and the ongoing collaboration between government, industry and other stakeholders will be a welcome sign for our farmers and food processors who have been working hard to find workforce solutions in a rapidly changing landscape.”

The delivery of the industry-led workforce plan will ensure there is a modern and skills workforce ready to meet the growth and opportunities in the agriculture industry.

Employment in agriculture is available in every region in Queensland across metropolitan, rural and remote regions, and includes a range of seasonal, technical and professional roles. The sector is underpinned by diverse food, fibre and foliage producers who provide domestic and export markets with a range of commodities.

The Plan envisions that *Queensland's agribusinesses aspire to be leaders in workforce planning and development; and that the state's sustainable, productive and fair agriculture employers and training providers collaborate, engage and develop a diverse and skilled workforce in Queensland's regions.*

To achieve this, four action areas are addressed:

- **Adaptability and business capability** – developing entrepreneurship and business capability for innovation and adaptation to change
- **Workforce attraction and diversity** – developing a diverse and inclusive future agriculture workforce
- **Workforce retention** – developing agriculture careers and opportunities and becoming employers of choice
- **Workforce skilling** – developing future workforce skills in agriculture

The actions that comprise the Plan seek to ensure that critical gaps and needs are addressed by strengthening agribusinesses, raising awareness of career and employment opportunities in a changing sector, embedding AgTech and innovation, and developing education, training and career pathways.

For further information on the Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Plan 2022-2027 visit [www.qff.org.au/projects/agriculture-workforce-plan](http://www.qff.org.au/projects/agriculture-workforce-plan).

**ENDS**

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- Quotes, Interviews, and Imagery available.

## ONLINE QFF STATEMENT

