

Cows Create Careers



Cows Create Careers is a Dairy Australia program designed to promote dairy industry careers and industry education to students in Years 7 to 11 by:

- introducing students to the education opportunities for both vocational and university pathways
- involving dairy farmers and industry advocates who have vision and dairy industry knowledge to encourage and support students with the project
- supporting students in making their career decisions by providing and creating linkages to the education and employment sectors
- rewarding successful students and schools

Project Framework

- Dairy farmers deliver two calves for a 3 week period to school
- Supplies and curriculum materials are provided to school at no cost
- An industry advocate visits the school and talks to students about their career pathway
- Students work in teams of 2-5 to complete assignments and assessment tasks
- All participants (students, teachers, dairy farmers and industry advocates) attend a Dairy Day for your Dairy
- Media coverage throughout the project

Community and Regional Benefits

The Cows Create Careers project:

- Increases the profile of dairy to the local region by providing a framework that can showcase to students, teachers and parents the array of career and education opportunities, personal skills/knowledge development, and importance of dairy to the local community
- Dairy farmers and industry advocates increase their industry participation and skills e.g. communication, understanding of the dairy education sector, mentorship and confidence in taking on other roles in the industry
- Teachers and students have a better knowledge about the dairy industry and teachers, students, parents and careers advisors are more aware about career and education pathways in the dairy industry (farming, service sector and manufacturing)
- Students consider a dairy industry career. An increased number of people entering dairy industry employment and careers
- Stakeholders are confident of the value of their investment in the process
- Community has a positive perception of careers and education opportunities in the dairy industry

Case Study – Eli Silvonon-Walsh

Eli is currently completing a Sustainable Agriculture/Agribusiness degree at Gatton University. He also works as a farmhand at Minash Holsteins dairy, where he helps to milk, works in the calf shed, and does odd jobs on the farm.

Eli was introduced to the dairy industry through Cows Create Careers as a primary student at Highfields State School. With no previous agriculture experience, the project sparked his interest to learn more about the industry.

“My Grade 6 teacher organised to have Cows Create Careers at school, so it was my class’ job to feed and look after the calves,” he said. “It was great having calves to play with at lunch times and they were a great study break. But it was also good to speak with farmers and get first hand insight into their daily lives and to learn about the industry.”

Eli’s passion for dairy drove him to get more involved in the industry. In Year 7 he was involved in a Guernsey Youth Camp, which was partly organised by Gianna Kelly, a local farmer who supplied calves to Eli’s school. The experience opened new opportunities for Eli and helped him to grow a positive relationship with the wider



dairy industry. He also continued to participate in Cows Create Careers throughout high school, where it formed part of his agricultural science studies.

Part of the success of Cows Create Careers is the many ways it actively builds positive engagement between local farming communities and students. And it was Eli's connection with Gianna that helped him to gain his current position of farmhand at Minash Holsteins, a job that he relishes.

As for deciding to pursue a career in agriculture: "That's due to Cows Create Careers and a very good agricultural science and rural operations program at school," Eli said. "It gave me firsthand experience into agricultural industries and showed me that this is where I want to work."

Now eighteen years old, Eli is considering different job opportunities in the industry - from managing a dairy farm, to working in the reproduction side of dairying which would give him the opportunity to work with dairy farmers across Australia. And while Eli is focused on finishing his degree, gaining hands-on experience as a farmhand has inspired him to consider completing a Masters of Agribusiness in the future.

"I believe Cows Create Careers is very beneficial to have in schools. As a student, having the opportunity to talk with dairy farmers gave me - someone who had very little idea about the industry - a chance to understand the industry."

