



Niall Blair

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Lands and Water

Adrian Piccoli

Minister for Education

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 25 September 2015

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES TOP PRIORITY FOR NSW SCHOOLS

Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water Niall Blair and Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli today announced the NSW Government has established a school programs team to increase the profile of agriculture, biosecurity and careers in schools.

The new program will put agriculture and biosecurity on the learning agenda for the State's primary and secondary school students and is in response to a review into agricultural education and training by Professor Jim Pratley.

Mr Blair said it is important that students understand the primary industries sector, which contributes about \$12 billion to the NSW economy each year.

"Educating students about the whole food and fibre value chain, from the pre-farm gate supply sector to post-farm gate processing and marketing, is an important initiative to build for the future of the state's primary industries," Mr Blair said.

"Importantly, the schools program is also helping students consider a future career in agriculture; whether it be as a vet, a farm manager, a plant pathologist or marine biologist, the sector has so many opportunities on offer."

Mr Piccoli said three education officers have been appointed under this program and are all former school teachers, who bring with them a wealth of experience in education and primary industries.

"The schools program has adopted the theme that safe food starts in the paddock and ends on your plate. This is an important message that we need to deliver to our future generation," Mr Piccoli said.

"As part of this program, NSW school students will be able to participate in a range of competitions, to ensure students gain an understanding of biosecurity in NSW through the development of a school farm biosecurity plan and investigating fire ants."

The education officers, Michelle Fifield and Jess Fedorow based at Orange and Jo Hathway at Tocal, are developing high-quality teaching material and professional development opportunities for NSW teachers.

The 'Investigate – fire ants' competition is currently open to all stage three students and uses their science and technology skills to investigate whether Fire Ants are in their school. The pilot program for secondary school students on biosecurity planning in schools is being run in association with The Archibull Prize.

For more information about DPI school programs visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/education/resources-for-schools