

RAS Ag Innovation in Schools Award

"Honouring Innovation, Igniting New Ideas"



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

OBJECTIVES

- The updated 'RAS Ag Innovation in Schools Award' will continue to recognise outstanding agricultural innovation already taking place through the RAS Ag Innovator Award, while also supporting and rewarding NSW schools looking to establish new agricultural innovation programs via the RAS Ag Innovator Pathways Award. We are also pleased to announce that **Agricultural Innovation Australia (AIA)** has agreed to partner with us on this prestigious initiative and will judge the final shortlisted submissions.
- As of 2026, in response to the amount and quality of previous submissions, we now have two different categories for the 'RAS Ag Innovation in Schools Award':
 - I. **RAS Ag Innovator Award:** The successful school—already demonstrating strong agricultural innovation but seeking support to expand—will receive \$10,000, thanks to the RAS Foundation, to further develop and enhance their agricultural innovation program.
 - II. **RAS Ag Innovator Pathways Award:** The successful school—eager to begin its agricultural innovation journey—will receive \$20,000, thanks to the RAS Foundation, to establish and launch a new agricultural innovation program at their school.
- This focus will be facilitated and rewarded through an innovation award where schools need to make an application. The submission needs to showcase the essential knowledge, skills and solutions-based/innovative thinking being actioned by their school in Agriculture.
- The selected winner will be celebrated at the RAS Foundation Morning Tea at the Sydney Royal Easter Show on an annual basis.

IMPORTANCE

Agriculture has, for many years, been linked to the Australian identity and prosperity. Australian agricultural innovation is world-leading; however, our agriculture sector faces unprecedented change. Changing global markets, increasing international competition, technological disruption, changing industry structures, and climate and water-related risks present many opportunities and challenges for Australian agriculture. Through the 'RAS Ag Innovation in Schools Award', a vision for the future of agricultural innovation will be at the forefront. Enabling opportunities for our youth and a vibrant agricultural sector

IMPACT

- I. Establishing the next-generation innovation platform for our data, physical infrastructure, and regulatory environment.
2. Contributing to a world-class agricultural innovation system will help Australia reach the National Farmers Federation's target for a \$100 billion sector by 2030.

CRITERIA

The finalist and the eventual overall winners are selected using the success criteria below for your selected award. This criterion is in line with the recommendations from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2019 report 'Agricultural Innovation—A National Approach to Grow Australia's Future'.

- I. Evidence of thought leadership and strategic direction.
2. Depth of exploring innovative practices and thinking in Agriculture.
3. Introduction, Growth or Expansion of an Agricultural Education Program.

HOW AND WHEN: Applications outlining the school's current or proposed innovation in Agriculture, under the Success Criteria headings below, are to be sent to education@rasnsw.com.au by no later than 5 pm Wednesday, 4 March 2026. No more than 800 words and graphs, images and videos can also be supplementary additions if required.

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'RAS Ag Innovator Award' Success Criteria	No evidence that innovation meets this criterion	Insufficient/Slight evidence that innovation meets this criterion	Sufficient evidence that innovation meets this criterion	Ample evidence that innovation meets/exceeds this criterion
Quality - It is evident that innovation has increased the "quality" of the course, product, program, subject, or industry.				
Scale - The proposed innovation can be scaled out to additional courses, programs, schools, or industries in Agriculture.				
Cost Efficiency - There is evidence that the innovation adds value to the course, program, subject, or industry whilst containing or reducing costs.				
Innovative - The innovation should be as original as possible, or the adaptation should be Innovative.				
Timeliness - The innovation should not be more than two years old in the institution, but it must have been around long enough to be tested so that it meets most of the criteria.				
Learning - The results of the innovation could be shared with others for the benefit of Agriculture.				
Collaboration - The innovation successfully demonstrates collaboration, teamwork, and cooperation to ensure continuous process improvement efforts on behalf of Agriculture.				
Efficiency - There is evidence that innovation offers a more efficient way of completing/achieving things.				

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'RAS Ag Innovator Pathways Award' Success Criteria	No evidence that innovation meets this criterion	Insufficient/Slight evidence that innovation meets this criterion	Sufficient evidence that innovation meets this criterion	Ample evidence that innovation meets/exceeds this criterion
Vision & Intent - Clear understanding of the need for innovation and a compelling vision.				
Thoughtful Planning - Evidence of structured goals, steps, and timelines.				
System Design - Consideration or establishment of systems to support innovation.				
Potential for Quality Improvement - Likely to enhance learning or outcomes.				
Scalability - Plan includes potential for expansion or adaptation.				
Cost Awareness - Awareness of costs and plan for efficient impact.				
Originality & Creativity - Shows originality or creative adaptation.				
Timeliness & Readiness - Relevant and ready to begin or recently started.				
Efficiency Potential - Identifies ways to improve processes or learning efficiency.				