



MEDIA RELEASE

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Learning - from the classroom to the paddock

For students who want to learn, school is an absorbing experience - a new adventure and a fulfilling reality.

Such is the case for 13 enthusiastic Dalby State High School students enrolled at the Australian Agricultural College Corporation (AACC) Dalby Campus who have shown when it comes to learning, they wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

AACC advanced skills instructor Mr Rick Cronin said the students, enrolled in a Certificate I in Rural Operations, spend one day a week at the campus experiencing best practice standards and assisting them to get a handle on seasonal factors.

"This is their first step into the workplace," Mr Cronin said. "They've accepted the challenge in learning about agriculture and are now able to apply a lot of their schooling knowledge in practical applications."

"They might have to apply ratios learnt in maths for mixing fuels or calculate a volume such as how much grain is in a silo or a bin. It puts a practical spin on their current schooling."

Mr Cronin said language, literacy and numeracy skills are all still vitally important in the agricultural industry especially with the increasing use of technology and exposure to AACC courses was the perfect addition to the Dalby State High School curriculum.

He said campus instructors like Greg Crawford (machinery operation and environmental studies) and Paul Kuhn (livestock and property maintenance) offered the students a grass roots grounding on occupational health and safety issues regarding safe handling of livestock.

"Often they haven't been exposed to the types of machinery or potential risks that are on a farm, so we show them a better and safer way of doing things from day one," Mr Cronin said.

"The students also learn legislative and reporting requirements and the importance of working closely with the environment through Landcare groups."

But, in the end, it all comes back to attitude and Mr Cronin said the AACC instructors were taken with the enthusiasm and the willingness of the students to explore new career paths.

Dalby State High School Alternate Program co-ordinator Mr Graham Solomon couldn't agree more.

"As the push now is for students 15 years and older to be learning or earning, certificates such as this allow for students to demonstrate their abilities and skills in a more practical manner," he said.

"As Dalby is a rural centre, the school recognises the need to develop closer links with training organisations that provide rural training for the young.

"The Ag College is an awesome facility that can cater for the diverse industries that are operating in and around Dalby and - as there is a major labour shortage in this area - the College needs to be utilised more."

Photo Caption:

[Dalby State High School students learn practical agricultural skills for the future: a group of enthusiastic year 10 and 11 students from the Dalby State High School are developing skills for the rural workplace as part of their Certificate I in Rural Operations course at the AACC Dalby Campus]

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