

**Kellogg Rural Leaders Programme 2013**  
**Mary Johnson**

*'Connecting with the conscientious consumer'*  
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Firstly I would like to acknowledge my sponsors, the Australian Beef Industry Foundation. ABIF are extremely committed to investing in young people, education and information to develop a sustainable, profitable and supportive beef industry. Their support was extremely valuable to me and I hope that they can continue to support skills development within the Australian beef industry.

I would also like to acknowledge my employers, the Cattle Council of Australia. I have been provided a number of opportunities that have influenced the progression of my Kellogg project, as well as enhancing my understanding of the industry throughout the course of 2013.

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#### **Abstract**

The following report has been completed as part of my participation in the 2013 Kellogg Rural Leaders Programme. The scope of this individual research project was to select a topic of interest to the participant and spend 'Phase Two' of the Kellogg Rural Leaders Programme completing the individual research project. Findings are then presented on return to Lincoln University during November 2013.

After a great deal of deliberation, the topic of research I developed was to investigate the different ways that producers were connecting with consumers, and vice versa. Of particular interest to me was the concept that producers were taking control of the messages that were being portrayed with regard to production. Thus I came up with the title "Connecting with the conscientious consumer."

Those involved in the food production industry are keenly aware that consumers are becoming increasingly discerning about the origins of their food. Of particular concern to consumers is the way 'meat is made'. This concept is reflected in a number of different signals and includes the consumers desire to understand the way their product was raised, what chemical and additives were used during the production process and the animal handling techniques employed during the lifespan. The purpose of my report was to investigate some of the different techniques being employed to connect our increasingly metropolitan and city-based population with the origins of their food. I was able to segregate the different themes of these techniques into three categories: education, food service and practical. As such this report is split into these three themes.

The major finding of this research and exploration is was that there are a huge number of innovative and energetic producers who are going above and beyond to connect with their consumers. These concepts will be explored through the report. Another major finding was that those buying from these producers are content with buying in this manner. The shoppers appreciate the integrity that can be attributed to this kind of purchase, particularly with regard to those producers who engage in direct marketing.

Due to the immense scale of people engaging in 'connecting with the conscientious consumer' this report is not all conclusive. Instead of simply listing all of those producers who are connecting with their consumers I decided to complete an investigative case study into some of the unique elements of their businesses. However, I can come to the conclusion that Australian consumers are becoming more discerning and cautious to know about the origins of their food. I see there is a great opportunity for people, particularly those from smaller, family based businesses, to employ tactics of direct marketing, selling the story of their exemplary land management and animal welfare techniques, along with the traditional protein (or fibre) product.

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With this in mind, my main recommendations are that there is a great deal of appetite in the marketplace for a product that has both a story and integrity. There are great opportunities for producers to engage in employing techniques, as detailed in the following discussion, to enhance their business model.

### **Introduction**

In preparing for my Kellogg Rural Leaders Programme Phase Two individual research project, I was initially plagued by the diversity of projects tackled in the past and the vast array of potential topics that struck my interest. The concept of an open-ended project, completed over eleven months was overwhelming and during this time I was inundated by a variety of fascinating and challenging ideas for my individual project.

Of particular interest to me was the debate that cycles regarding the future of agriculture, both to expand and sustain, with an outlook of global population growth and climate change. In Australia and New Zealand, Asia has been at the centre of this opportunity and challenge. Australian thinkers put forward the concept that Australia's current 'mining boom' will be succeeded by a 'dining boom' whereby the world will look to Australia to produce an increasing quantity of safe and sustainable food. However, ideas such as these are juxtaposed against discussion around what being 'food secure' really means, and the question of whether Australia is food secure.

Another point of interest to me is the question surrounding the viability of family farms. The marketing options provided to smaller producers have really come to the foreground over the last eighteen months or so with supermarket wars between Australia's supermarket duopoly. These battles have notoriously affected dairy producers but supermarkets are also putting pressure on beef producers to bring forward a product that is HGP free and brought into question the production mechanisms of pork producers. I have also been fortunate to have the opportunity to work with some friends of mine, who direct market pork and beef, and my involvement in this has provided me with a number of opportunities to connect with consumers, particularly those conscientious about the choices they make.

Through my work with the Cattle Council of Australia I have been managing the communications, as well as taking on some work in the marketing policy space, and have become increasingly aware of the importance of clear lines of communication between Australian beef producers and those who consume their product. A message that consistently rings true to me is the fact that these producers are actually producing beef for a domestic or international consumer, while a number of these producers still see themselves as cattle producers. The connection between the initial and concluding product is increasingly integral to this production chain.

In March 2013 the Cattle Council of Australia, through a policy put forward by cattle producers in Central Queensland, launched Australia's first grassfed

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certification program. The Pasturefed Cattle Assurance System (PCAS) is a certification scheme that allows for beef to be sold with the 'certified pasturefed' label, much in the same way that 'certified organic' is used. PCAS beef can also be certified antibiotic and HGP free. The concept was developed with the consumer in mind, particularly the consumer seeking a product that can be verified grassfed. Australia has long been famous for producing some of the world's best grassfed beef, and the new PCAS certification allows for these claims to be validated. While the PCAS program is still in its early stages, it has attracted a large amount of attention from a variety of different areas, including large producers, processors, direct marketers, the food service industry and consumers.

The concept of Australia becoming the 'food bowl' of Asia was an idea that has been spruiked by politicians and industry leaders, particularly in light of the Australian federal election in September 2013. However, while I understand the sentiment behind this concept, achievements in this area will not be attained without continued commitment in the research and developmental sectors, as well as continued on-farm work to ensure that the uptake of this research is achieved. Liberal party election policies included building a strong and prosperous Northern Australia; putting in place policies and plans to develop Northern Australia's potential with more investment, infrastructure, jobs and services. Of particular note to Agriculture, this policy aims at "developing a food bowl, including premium produce, which could help to double Australia's agricultural output."

This policy can be classified as high level discussion and this is a lingering concern for me. Due to the lack of connection that the 'average' Australian has to agriculture it is often skimmed over, debated at a higher level and the tangible, 'human' elements of agriculture and the community associated with it are overlooked. This allows for agriculture, at a lower level, to be demonised, with farmers being criticised for their practice, including land degradation, climate change and animal welfare concerns.

While these concepts may seem sparse and conceivably lacking in connection, what I have really learnt through this eleven month period is the importance of tangible relationships between producers and consumers. Gone are the days when the majority of civilisations lived an agrarian existence or even the days of the 'country cousin' phenomenon. In Australia 85% of the population lives in coastal, metropolitan areas and this number on a constant increase. The Primary Industries Education Foundation conducted a study that found that student and teacher knowledge of Australia's food and fibre sector is alarmingly low. The study found that 75 percent of students believe that cotton is an animal product and 65 percent do not associate farming with innovation.

Bafflingly, juxtaposed in the midst of the outrage is the continuing statistic regarding the trust of Australian farmers, seemingly regardless of the lessening connection towards people living in rural communities and those in metropolitan areas.

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The lack of connection and understanding to agricultural practice was exemplified with the shock banning of the Australian live export trade in 2011. There was no denying the cruel footage was abhorrent and keenly felt by those involved in the live export and animal production industries, but the sway held by powerful interest groups had previously been unmatched. The six-week ban of the live export of cattle to Indonesia is still having powerful repercussions in the Australian cattle industry today. This has been exemplified by a couple of good seasons, followed by one where the majority of Queensland has been declared drought stricken. This phenomenon has been described as the 'perfect storm' in northern Australia, though the effects of this ban have been felt further south, into NSW and SA. The power of social media and interest groups truly came to the fore on the live export issue, particularly in the lead up to the 2013 Federal Election, and has continued to influence the beliefs and actions of consumers. The banning of the trade was also unique due to the fact that pressure was coming from a group of people who had no direct interest in the industry; this aspect of the ban still baffles producers affected by the trade and is a key area of work towards gaining a social licence to operate in the industry.

At the crux of the issue is the concept that in the twenty-first century, very few Australian's have a genuine connection or understanding of the role that farmers and agriculture plays in everyday life. The evolution and domination of supermarkets means that it is no longer a requirement that people visit a greengrocer, butcher and baker; the accessibility and convenience of visiting one of Australia's two supermarkets is too great to overlook.

As the focus of my Kellogg project I am going to investigate the relationships that people have with farmers and agriculture, through a variety of mediums; farmers markets and direct marketing, educational programs such as field trips, practical farming such as community gardens and seeking knowledge through other mediums such as seminars and literature. Of particular interest to me are the relationships being forged by farmers, putting forward their production stories to people purchasing their product and sharing their paddock to plate journey.

By investigating these removed relationships I hope to discover the impetus behind such connections being formed. What drives a certain facet of a community to seek a greater connection with food and fibre? And what sociological gains are achieved through making this connection? Are there benefits for farmers in forging relationships with metropolitan communities?

### **Case Studies**

The concept behind these case studies was to investigate methods currently used by producers to create a connection with their customers. As evidenced below, these projects and initiatives are varied and all have different merits for bridging the urban/rural divide.

This list is not exhaustive; there are a larger number of exemplary programs available to connect metropolitan consumers with consumables. However, I feel that these case studies give a good example of the initiatives that are being developed to create a great 'paddock to plate' story.

Case studies have been split into categories of Education, Food Service and Practical but in some cases multiple categories are applicable.

Most of the following case studies are Australian but a couple are international projects that have the potential to be adopted by local communities.

#### **Education**

- **Target 100:** <http://www.target100.com.au/Home>

*Target 100 has a commitment to deliver sustainable cattle and sheep farming in Australia by 2020. It's a big goal. Here you can view the full list of initiatives we are behind, see which ones are already underway, and check back for regular updates and results. You can also meet some of the farmers involved and hear what they are doing to care for our environment.*

The Target 100 project is a program run by Meat and Livestock Australia, through levies collected from Australian sheep and cattle farmers, along with the broader industry, to deliver sustainable sheep and cattle farming by 2020.

Target 100 aims to connect with people from metropolitan backgrounds and awareness is raised through metropolitan media and advertising in cinemas, television, newspapers, magazines and specially organised events targeted at a specific audience.

Target 100 seeks to collect profiles of Australian beef and lamb producers and present their stories in an accessible and appealing manner. Target 100 also runs a number of community engagement days in Sydney and Melbourne, bringing producers to consumers to tell their stories of sustainability to metro-consumers.

Target 100 also provides a number of sustainability initiatives that can be adopted by anyone, including tips on water saving, recycling and other environmentally friendly concepts.

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- **Boorowa Environmental Excursion Project:**  
<http://stjboorowa.nsw.edu.au/curriculum/beep.html>

The Boorowa Environmental Excursion Project (BEEP) is an initiative run by St Joseph's Primary School in Boorowa. The program aims to develop relationships between city and country primary school students in an authentic agricultural environment.

The BEEP project was developed by a local Primary school teacher and has been running for well over fifteen years. In this time hundreds of twelve-year-old (predominantly) Sydney-based students have been exposed to the agricultural industry around Boorowa, NSW. Over the years this has included visits to a vast array of farm including beef producers, wool and lamb producers, honey, wine, horses (both thoroughbred and stock) and also looking at natural resource management.

The excursion typically lasts two or three days and involves travelling to many farms in the Boorowa district to meet with farmers in their work environment and learn about environmental and agricultural issues including production and processes of agricultural commodities, exports and benefits for Australia, historical and current farming practices, environmental issues, weather and reparation projects and interdependence of rural communities.

- **Booligal Placement:**  
<http://www.nrwc.com.au/Projects/ELeadersProgram.aspx>

I came across a similar project to the BEEP project earlier this year, when I met Sandra Ireson, from Booligal in Western NSW. Sandra has developed a program through her involvement in the National Rural Women's Coalition's E-Leaders Program. Booligal is a small town 800km west of Sydney, with a small school of approximately 7 students. Sandra's project, similar to the BEEP program, aims to connect students, in this case year 10 boys, with agricultural process, as well as developing knowledge and skills in Primary Industries.

The area around Booligal is predominantly grazing country for sheep and cattle. Through Sandra's program, boys are placed with local farmers for a week and have the opportunity to spend time both on farm and in a small agricultural community.

The timing for this placement is integral, at this stage in their schooling the boys have the opportunity to choose subjects that contribute to their later education, as well as the opportunity to complete work experience. Feedback from the boys, their family and school indicates that it is a great developmental experience, providing an opportunity for them to try new things, develop their independence, travel west and assess agriculture as a career option. It is an opportunity that only a small handful of kids would get the opportunity to experience, due to the widening divide. It will be interesting to see statistics of the uptake of agricultural science at these schools in future years.

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- **Allan Savory, Holistic Management International:**  
<http://www.savoryinstitute.com/>

I was fortunate to hear Allan Savory, founder of Holistic Management International, speak during his tour of Australia in 2013. Allan identifies that desertification is turning the world's vast grasslands into barren desert, that using Holistic Management principles results will involve ecologically regenerative, economically viable and socially sound management of the world's grasslands. Savory also believes in the empowering people to properly manage livestock to heal the land through providing skills and resources through community based learning.

In 2013 I had a number of opportunities to work with both Allan and some of his Australian educators. While I had previously been exposed to Holistic Management Principles through our family farming operation, I found it of fantastic developmental value. The principles of the holistic model are simple and yet so often overlooked; the relationship between the social, economic and environmental aspects of survival are integral to each other.

This year, for the first time in Australia, Allan has taken the opportunity to connect with the wider community, whereas in the past he has placed greater emphasis of time with producers. Allan presented a Ted Talk in March, 2013, entitled "How to fight desertification and reverse climate change." At the time of writing this report this video has received over 1.5 million views. His powerful messages, along with his unassuming speaking style make for thought provoking listening.

While travelling in Australia, Allan conducted a number of lectures on the east coast, including Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Allan also took the opportunity to engage with a number of mediums of media, particularly connecting with people of different demographics, including young people.

### **Food Service**

- **Mocan and Green Grout:** <http://mocanandgreengrout.com/>

Močan & Green Grout is one of many ethical cafés becoming popular with diners. Mocan is as much an art and design experience as a place to enjoy good coffee and food. They serve fair trade coffee, source produce from local farmers, and grow herbs in the planter at the front door.

The breakfast and lunch menu features seasonal, local produce – with eggs from a free range farm near Temora, sustainable seafood from the NSW south coast, bacon from woodland-grazed pigs near Young, fresh water trout from Tumut. The dinner menu is a collection of shared dishes inspired by diverse world cooking traditions that changes every week. As well as working with regional sustainable growers, the compostable kitchen waste is utilised on the neighbourhood's community garden.

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Močan & Green Grout has been conceived by Canberra-based developer Molonglo Group as a place that evokes the warmth and familiarity of eating in a good friend's kitchen. The café fosters Australian art and design; regularly inviting artists to reinterpret and redecorate the space and its surrounds. The feel is at once domestic and international, with reclaimed materials sitting alongside commissioned art, found objects next to design classics.

Mocan is incredibly popular with diners who seek ethical, local and seasonal produce. Most importantly the owners and staff are visibly passionate about their product.

- **Pig N Whistle & Signature Beef:**

<http://www.mantlegroup.com/2013/06/a-nose-to-tail-beef-appreciation-night/> & <http://www.signaturebeef.com.au/>

This year I was fortunate to work with iconic Brisbane Pub, 'Pig N Whistle', who have recently teamed up with award-winning beef producer Blair Angus, from Queensland's Signature Beef. This duo have developed a 'Nose to Tail' Beef Appreciation night where they have the opportunity to talk about a large number of quality cuts of fine Australian beef.

As suggested in the name, 'Nose to Tail', a whole beef carcass is broken down in front of guest's eyes. During the course of the evening Blair discusses each cut and explains a few ways to cook each particular cut. Following each demonstration, Pig 'N' Whistle Riverside chefs prepare a course creatively using the cut as part of the five-course degustation menu, which is also paired with selected wines.

Blair says the night is about educating Brisbane residents in a fun way about the many unknown cuts of beef and to promote the idea of enjoying beef sustainably. The 'nose to tail' concept is about providing an opportunity for consumers to gain an understanding of how beef is produced and enjoying the large variety of beef cuts, rather than the common few pieces that are traditionally reverted to. This is of course another aspect of beef sustainability.

The idea behind this concept is that there are many delicious cuts that are often ignored because consumers have never heard of them before or are just not sure how to prepare them appropriately. It also gives Blair, a large-scale beef producer, the opportunity to take consumers on a journey to his farm, explaining the way they look after their land and animals, to ensure its sustainability for his family and future generations.

Signature Beef is the culmination of four generations of the Angus Family's continual dedication to produce the world's best beef. Signature Beef is family owned and committed to the core values that have made the company one of Australia's most trusted breeders of quality beef. The Angus family, through their business, Signature Beef, is very passionate about taking their beef from paddock to plate and building relationships with their customers who share this philosophy. The 'Nose to Tail' night is about connecting diners with their food.

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The key to the evening is learning how and where the beef is produced and gaining a true appreciation of the beef at the centre of the plate.

- **Feather and Bone:**  
<http://www.featherandbone.com.au/aboutus.html>

Feather and Bone is a Sydney based distributor who have been building a network of local producers and clients who are passionate about quality and provenance. As well as domestic clients they also supply to restaurant customers including well renowned Rockpool group, Billy Kwong and Red Lantern restaurants.

At the crux of Feather and Bone's business are the following questions:

- Who is the producer?
- How do they grow, harvest and transport their produce?
- Does its journey to your plate enhance sustainability and genetic diversity as well as your taste buds?

Feather and Bone explores the concept that people are becoming increasingly aware of where food comes from, as well as the integral journey from 'paddock to plate' directly or indirectly affects the consumer. Feather and Bone seeks to provide their consumers with the opportunity to take the 'step from awareness to action' by choosing to eat food that improves their collective health at each step of the cycle.

Feather and Bone connects with almost six thousand recipients each week. Feather and Bone's producers/suppliers who share their ideas on sustainability and as such it is a continually developing business.

- **Box Gum Grazing:**  
<http://www.bluewrencottagefarmstay.com.au/home>

Boxgum Grazing is a family owned farming business that is passionate about producing high quality affordable food and creating a regenerative and productive rural landscape. Boxgum Grazing produces 100% grass fed beef and genuine free range pastured pork, which they market direct to customers in their local region. Boxgum Grazing is run by the farmer and their buyers have the opportunity to know comprehensively the provenance of their food and how it is produced.

The farm supports a diverse mix of perennial grasses and box gum woodlands and the Johnson's stewardship is focused on increasing the biodiversity and biological health of this landscape along with its productive capacity.

Sam and Claire are passionate about land management, regenerative agriculture, local employment and producing excellent food. Their mantra is that they see no reason that great outcomes for wildlife conservation and species diversity can't coexist with the production of healthy food.

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They have a vision to create a vibrant, diverse farm; a polyculture of complementary businesses that produce nutritious healthy food, real incomes and livelihoods and a landscape of diversity and beauty. They consider themselves gardeners of the landscape where the tools they use are the technology of water pipe and electric fencing, domesticated animals such as cattle and pigs and all the plants and biological life that can be encouraged. Through using these techniques they aim to produce fertile biologically active soils, a tapestry of wildlife and native species and healthy, nutritious food for people.

Through working with Sam and Claire I can see their frustration with the reality of commodity markets, in particular food production being dominated by large companies who strive to churn out a generic product. Boxgum Grazing aims to develop relationship marketing, where they provide a transparent line of sight from paddock to plate. Sam and Claire's clients have the opportunity to speak to the farmers weekly at the farmers market, and they have also had the opportunity on two occasions in 2013 to visit the farm, Windermere, where they can see the animals as they exist on a day-to-day basis. These on-farm opportunities allow for the integrity of the product to be retained, as there is ample opportunity for people to walk around, see animals and ask questions regarding the production process.

Through working with Sam and Claire, I have found that their consumers are extremely comfortable purchasing their product, and many seek out this product for a number of reasons, including ethical concerns, food allergies and other personal beliefs. Boxgum markets direct to people who seek out excellent food, are concerned with the consequences of 'industrial food' and understand the vital connection between healthy land and healthy food.

- **Moorlands Biodynamic Lamb:** <http://www.moorlandslamb.com.au/>

Similar to Boxgum Grazing, Moorlands Biodynamic Lamb is produced using sustainable farming techniques without using pesticides, antibiotics or growth promoting hormones. Biodynamics ensures that the full interrelationship of soil to plants to animals is considered in the care of the land and livestock. The result is farming that is ecologically friendly and produce that is organic and premium quality.

Moorlands Biodynamic Lamb also sells at Farmer's Markets, but on a less regular basis, with orders being taken for larger quantities of lamb (for example half lamb/full lamb). Moorlands claims affordability since it comes to the consumer directly from the farmer. Moorlands sells on the pretence that dealing directly with the farmer means the cost can be saved by as much as 40% over shop prices - and the fact that the consumer know its fresh and not treated just to look good in the supermarket freezer.

Biodynamics is an enhanced organic approach. Bio-Dynamic practices are focused on producing healthy, living, well-structured soil. Healthy plants and animals are a result.

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Biodynamic lamb produced on Moorlands is fully Demeter certified. None of their lambs are fed hay made from GM Canola, or exposed to fungicides or fed grain. This also includes the guarantee that no insecticide, artificial fertiliser [fabricated salts], weedicide, chemical drench, vaccine, chemical dips or pesticides are applied to the soil, the plants or the animals on Moorlands. The lambs have a smorgasbord of grass varieties on which to graze - pasture fed - nothing artificial or forced.

Moorlands Biodynamic are also fully trained in stress-free stock handling techniques. Ethical considerations are foremost in their minds – not only is this kind to their sheep but it results in tender meat.

Key to these market-selling producers is the personality of the farmers and their ability to communicate a strong message to their clients. Vince, from Moorlands Biodynamic Lamb, is incredibly personable and has the ability to build great relationships with his clients. A great example of this was when his farm was recently flooded, he lost a number of integral fences and was unable to keep up his usual supply. In response a number of his Sydney customers volunteered to come to help on his farm with the required fencing work, none of whom had any prior experience. A number of people enjoyed helping on the farm so much that now they come out yearly to volunteer to plant trees and help around the farm.

### **Practical**

- **Community Garden:** <http://www.cogs.asn.au/community-gardens/oconnor-garden/>

Another key area that I see expanding is the number of people engaging in local community gardens. In Canberra there are twelve community gardens, and all of these have their own character and use organic production methods. In particular this involves using no manufactured fertilisers, pesticides or herbicides. These policies indicate more of the messaging that is seen at Farmers Markets; that people value organic, naturally produced produce. In particular this indicates the desire to know the provenance of fruit and vegetables, and also the concept of creating a degree of self-sufficiency.

Plots at the community gardens in Canberra are highly sought after and people enjoy getting their hands dirty, grow their own fruit and vegetables for home consumption and learn from other growers about developing fruit and vegetable growing skills.

- **Woomargama Station**

Woomargama Station is a farm owned by the city based Cannon family, who are passionate about biodiversity development and land management on the station, which has been in the family for a number of generations. Woomargama is situated on the border of NSW and Victoria.

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The Woomargama Creek, which runs through the station, contains endangered pygmy perch, not found above or below the property. The Cannon's are keen to involve their local community in their work to protect this native species and also to encourage more endangered species to return to the region.

One of the methods of developing community engagement is through working with school children; throughout the year 150 school children took part in biodiversity mapping on the station, as well as volunteers from the community.

Woomargama Station is also flanked by the Woomargama National Park. Due to the management of the station there are a number of woodland endangered species that are not found in the national park, that are found on Woomargama Station. This is thought to be due to the nature of the rotational grazing on Woomargama Station. This is a good argument for the Cannon's to prevent parts of their property being taken over by national park, which is being suggested due to road works that are being completed in the region.

## **Conclusion**

I have gained a great deal of admiration for the producers behind the case studies investigated in this report. While from a vast array of backgrounds they are all committed to growing their businesses, and concurrently educating their consumers and developing their industry.

Producers taking the initiative to take time off farm to understand their customers and their needs is a powerful and successful tool, and one that results in benefits for both parties involved. Through my research I have seen good experiences reported on both sides; from producers having a greater understanding of who they are producing for, to customers having a greater appreciation of the work that is done on farm.

From a communications point of view the value of connecting with customers, telling the stories associated with food production, cannot be underestimated. The good, and often untold stories are invaluable and as demonstrated in the case studies there are often unexpected outcomes that come out of the relationships built.

With regard to the 'education' section: these initiatives are most often targeted at school-aged children, a technique that I think is clever, as this still has an influence over the decisions that parents make for their children. The Target 100 program is, as aforementioned, well funded and sophisticated, creating the ability to work with a vast number of people who are conscious of the environment and interested in the provenance of their food. Target 100 has the ability to travel around Australia, advertise in cinemas, major glossy newspaper magazines and gain significant media attention. Continued commitment to this program can only see engagement between producers and consumers grow, a positive step towards communicating the stories of beef and lamb producers to the wider Australian public.

With regard to 'food service': these roles can be taken on by either the producer, a distribution service with shared values or a restaurant/café that seeks to tell a powerful food provenance story. While it is a huge commitment from the producer, removing the middleman and selling direct from the farmer at point of purchase portray the strongest messages. This is one of the reasons that Moorlands Biodynamic Lamb sells on a whole lamb/half lamb basis, as opposed to a weekly commitment to farmers markets. Blair Angus, for example, is able to give his time flexibly to Pig N Whistle, dinners can be arranged around his schedule. The popularity of ethical food and food with a story continues to rise as people want reassurance as to the provenance of their food and being able to put a 'farm to a face' (as this case may be) sends powerful and reassuring messages to consumers.

With regard to 'practical' and 'community engagement': this approach allows for communities to gain ownership over native species, food production and, essentially, their future. It is an aspect that appeals to a certain demographic of people and the engagement of young people is important to ensure that future

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generations have the resources and knowledge required to engage with their natural environments.

The key issue that I see spanning across all of these stories is the issue of expense. The majority of people who engage in programs such as these are from affluent, middle class backgrounds and have the luxury of making decisions regarding the provenance of food. While in a number of cases the cost of directly sourced food is less expensive, there is also the issue of time, knowledge and commitment. Through educational and community based practical programs there will be greater opportunities for consumers to demand a product that is ethically and sustainably produced. It is clear that through the development of programs through large supermarkets, like the phasing out of sow-stalls, that the demand for food with provenance is desired, not just in the case of those seeking it through markets and direct marketing.

### **Evaluation**

I struggled initially to select an appropriate topic for research for Phase Two of the Kellogg Rural Leaders Programme. Not only was there an extremely vast array of interesting topics, I really struggled to narrow my criteria down to choose one topic that could be appropriately covered.

The ever-present countdown of time towards November was also an issue and the period between August and November was busier than I predicted. As a result, my lack of motivation in the earlier part of the year had real time-related consequences for my final project.

However, despite these hiccoughs I have gained a lot of pleasure out of working with the vast array of personalities and visions that I have combined to create my study of 'Connecting with the conscientious consumer'. Of particular influence were cold mornings at the Farmer's Market, being amazed at the dedication of shoppers who would brave icy conditions to complete their weekly shop.

With regard to my own involvement in our family business, this experience has been invaluable. The value-add that is associated with providing educational, food service or practical dimensions to family farms is one that should be seriously considered for the longevity of the family farm. In many cases it allows a greater number of bodies and variety of skills to be encompassed into a family operation.

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