

Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program Guidelines 2022

Program Overview

The Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program provides young farmers and new entrants the opportunity to be paired with an experienced farmer or 'mentor' to assist them in:

- developing skills to better manage their farm businesses
- identifying risks, and
- developing strategies to build resilience and achieve their business goals.

The program will be facilitated by a farm business consultant who will pair the young farmer or 'mentee' with a mentor whose experience aligns with the mentee's enterprise and personal development goals.

The program will run until November 2022. During this period the mentor and mentee will work together overseen by their facilitator. All parties will work together to arrange regular catch ups to track the progress of the mentee.

The purpose of the program is to assist the mentee in building professional networks, utilising trusted sources of advice and information, and developing competency in setting business goals and assessing risks.

A minimum of eight mentorships will be awarded.

The application period opens on **Tuesday 21 September until midnight Sunday 24 October 2021.**

The program is managed by Agriculture Victoria.

Requirements of Mentorship Participants

On successful application for a 2022 Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program, participants are required to fulfil the following over the period of the program:

- Maintain regular contact with both their mentor and farm business consultant facilitator, and keep both parties informed of any changes in circumstance relevant to the program.
- To meet formally with both their mentor and facilitator present approximately 6 to 10 times in the 12 -month period. This may be in person or virtually. Any meetings without the facilitator present will fall outside of the program.
- Demonstrate evidence of goal setting and actions taken because of mentoring sessions. In addition, mentorship participants are expected to do the following:
 - Share learnings and experiences with other young farmers as part of the mentorship program (i.e., share with local community or farming groups, write articles, present at events, mentor future scholarship recipients)
 - Provide feedback as part of the program evaluation process

Proposed Timeframe for 2022 Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program

- Mentees selected by 12 November 2021
- Mentees matched with mentor by 10 December 2021
- First mentoring meetings to occur by 30 January 2022
- Young Farmer and New Entrant Mentoring Program participants gathering February 2022
- At least three mentoring meetings undertaken by 30 June 2022
- Mid program feedback collected by 30 July 2022
- Conclusion of program 30 November 2022

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- be aged between 18 and 35 years at the time of the application close date
- be working in a food and fibre farm business in Victoria at least three days per week for the past three months
- have at least two years of total experience on-farm
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident currently residing in Victoria.

Selection Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate the following to successfully address the selection criteria:

- an interest in building skills and boosting your food and fibre agricultural career prospects
- a desire to commit to working with the mentor and facilitator to build the relationship and achieve desired program outcomes
- willingness to develop and maintain professional networks
- an outline of how being paired with a mentor will help you to manage your farm business, identify risks and build resilience to achieve your business goals.

Application, Assessment and Award Process

Stage 1 – Expression of interest (EOI) process

The Young Farmer Coordinator is available to assist applicants to develop their application. For assistance, please email Youngfarmer.Coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au

All applicants are required to read and accept the Program Guidelines before applying. By submitting an application, applicants are deemed to have accepted the Program Guidelines and agreed to be bound by them.

Applicants may submit an application form online at www.vic.gov.au/youngfarmers. A hardcopy application form may also be submitted. A PDF application form is available to be downloaded from the website. You may then scan and return the completed hardcopy form to: Youngfarmer.Coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Receipt of applications will be confirmed via email.

Stage 2 – Shortlisting process

The Program Selection Committee (the Committee) assesses all applications and shortlists suitable applicants for interview.

Those who are not shortlisted will be notified by email.

The decision of the Committee as to which applicants will be interviewed will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Note: The Department considers diversity criteria when assessing applications to ensure that each year's cohort includes a diverse range of scholarship recipients, including by geographic location, industry, gender, cultural background, and professional experience.

Stage 3 – Interview process

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to an interview with the Committee (either in person or by phone). Successful applicants will be offered a mentee position.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their interview by email or phone.

The decision of the Committee as to which applicants will receive a mentorship will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Stage 4 – Award of mentorship

Successful applications will be required to sign a Letter of Agreement with the Department to accept their position as a mentee. The Letter of Agreement will identify:

- name and contact details of mentor
- name and contact details of mentee
- name and contact details of facilitator
- planned start date/end date
- agreement of privacy policy.

Mentees will be matched to facilitators by Agriculture Victoria. Mentees will then be paired with mentors at the discretion of their facilitator.

If a mentee wishes to raise an issue with their mentor, they must first bring it to the attention of their facilitator. If a mentee wishes to raise an issue relating to their facilitator, they must first contact the Young Farmer Project Coordinator at Youngfarmer.Coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Stage 5 – Progress updates

Participants will be asked to provide regular updates detailing their experience with the Program to the Department.

They may also be asked to take part in promotional activities, social media activities and events (online and/or live) associated with the program and other Victorian Government Young Farmer initiatives.

Stage 6 – Evaluation/ Completion of the Young Farmer Mentoring Program

On completion of the 12-month mentoring program, each participant will be required to complete a short written, or video report on their experience and learnings. A template and questions will be provided at the appropriate time.

Assessment of Expression of Interest

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility and selection criteria set out in the program guidelines.

Assessment of applications is based on merit taking into consideration diversity.

The Department aims to ensure the program includes a diversity of mentorship recipients, including by geographic location, industry, gender, cultural background, and farming experience. An objective scoring process is used to assist in assessing applications to represent diversity across mentorship recipients.

Individuals who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are encouraged to apply.

Selection Committee

Members of the Committee are appointed by the Department.

Complaints Process

Complaints, enquiries, and feedback in relation to the processing of applications should be sent to Youngfarmer.Coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

If an applicant, or any other person, continues to be dissatisfied with the administration of the Program they may raise their concerns with the Victorian Ombudsman.

The Victorian Ombudsman may be contacted by telephone on 03 9613 6222.

Responsibility of Mentees

Mentees are expected to manage all communications with their facilitators and mentors independently.

You must notify your facilitator of any changes to contact details or circumstances effecting your ability to complete the program as soon as possible.

Special Considerations

If you are experiencing financial hardship or there are special circumstances which may impact your ability to accept your place in this mentorship program as per the Program Guidelines, please contact the Department.

Review and Amendments

The Department in its absolute discretion may review and amend the Young Farmer and New Entrants Mentoring Program Guidelines.

Contact

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