

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



Monday, 17 August 2020

YOUNG FARMERS ADVISORY COUNCIL PASSES THE BATON

A cohort of diverse and highly skilled young Victorians will guide the future of the state's agriculture sector as the newest members of the Young Farmers Advisory Council.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes welcomed the nine council members when they met virtually for the first time, whilst acknowledging the commitment and contributions of the outgoing Council.

The Young Farmers Advisory Council provides strategic advice to government on issues that impact young people working in agriculture. Members represent industries and regions across Victoria and act as young ambassadors to attract new entrants to the agricultural sector.

Western District beef farmer Dr Sarah McLean will lead the Council as Chair for the next three years, joined by Mallee grain grower and farm manager Clay Gowers as Deputy Chair.

Other members include East Gippsland meat and wool producer Nicholas Blandford; Central Victorian organic dairy goat milker and cheesemaker Sophia Christoe; Wimmera pork, wool and lamb producer James Hawkins; Gippsland dairy farmer Jessica Knight; Northern Victorian orchard manager Mitchell McNab; Sunraysia table grape grower Jennifer Zappia; and Sale-based agribusiness professional Joseph Boyle.

At their first official meeting held via video conference, the new Council members were joined by the five outgoing members.

The outgoing Council chaired by dairy industry specialist Sarah Thompson has delivered important advice to government on key issues such as workplace and farm safety, mental health, pathways for young people in agriculture and climate change.

The challenges experienced by agricultural industries and regions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic was the main topic discussed today, particularly focusing on the impacts on the agricultural workforce and supply chains.

For more information about the Council visit vic.gov.au/youngfarmers or contact the Young Farmer Coordinator at Agriculture Victoria at youngfarmer.coordinator@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"I'm excited to be welcoming the new members of our Young Farmers Advisory Council. Victoria's agriculture sector is in safe hands with such skilled and highly accomplished young people willing to make a difference to the future of their industry."

"I commend our outgoing Council members on the excellent contribution they have made to Victoria's agriculture industries. They have provided me with valuable insights and advice over their term on the Council."

Quote attributable to Young Farmers Advisory Council Chair Dr Sarah McLean

"I am excited to represent young people in agriculture and look forward to working alongside the new members of the Council."

Media contact: Casey Lodge 0410 964 928 | casey.lodge@minstaff.vic.gov.au