

# Career Path to Agriculture

Survey  
Report  
August 2024



AGRICULTURAL  
APPOINTMENTS

WE KNOW PEOPLE

- Agribusiness
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## Career Path to Agriculture Survey Results

The education system is the bedrock of future talent in Australian agriculture. It plays a pivotal role in shaping career choices within the agriculture sector. It not only equips aspiring professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills but also influences their career trajectories by exposing them to a range of opportunities and pathways within the industry. Unfortunately, in Australia, education systems are falling short of attracting students and meeting skills required by industry. This led us to conduct a short survey on our candidates and clients to understand their career paths as agricultural professionals.

This recent survey, conducted over two months, garnered a total of 342 responses. Of these, 79% were male and 21% were female. Majority of participants are from the Baby Boomer and Gen X generations. The survey also revealed an equal distribution between those born on farms (50%) and those born in urban environments (50%). A significant portion of respondents have held management or supervisory roles (30%), followed by consultants (9.36%), Sales and Marketing professionals (9.06%), and those involved in farming (9.06%). Many participants have over 20 years of work experience.

Over half of the participants (57%) did not study agriculture during their secondary school years; only 16% did it up to Year 10 and 27% continued with the subject into Years 11 and 12 (see Figure 1).

### Did you study agriculture during your secondary school years?

Answered: 338 Skipped: 4

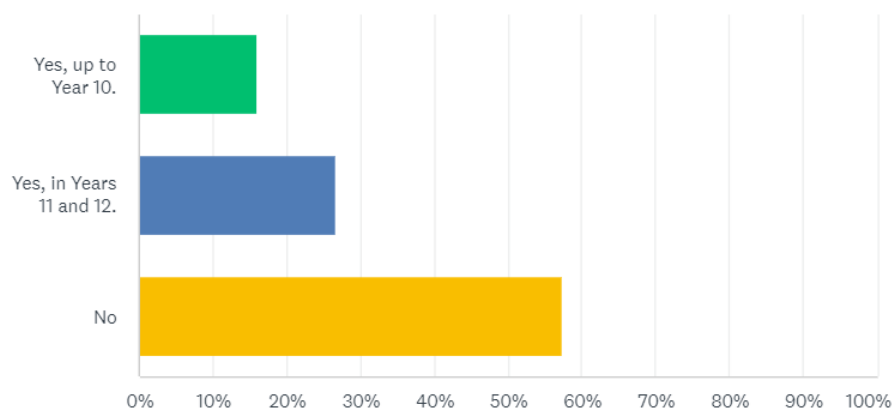


Figure 1. Percentage of survey participants who studied agriculture in secondary school.

Among those who studied agriculture during secondary school (33%), many were motivated to pursue agriculture-related tertiary studies. The primary factors influencing participants to pursue careers in the agriculture industry were having a family background in agriculture (32%), studying agriculture at university (22%), and possessing transferable skills applicable to agriculture (21%) (see Figure 2).

## What was the main reason for pursuing your career in the Ag industry?

Answered: 342 Skipped: 0

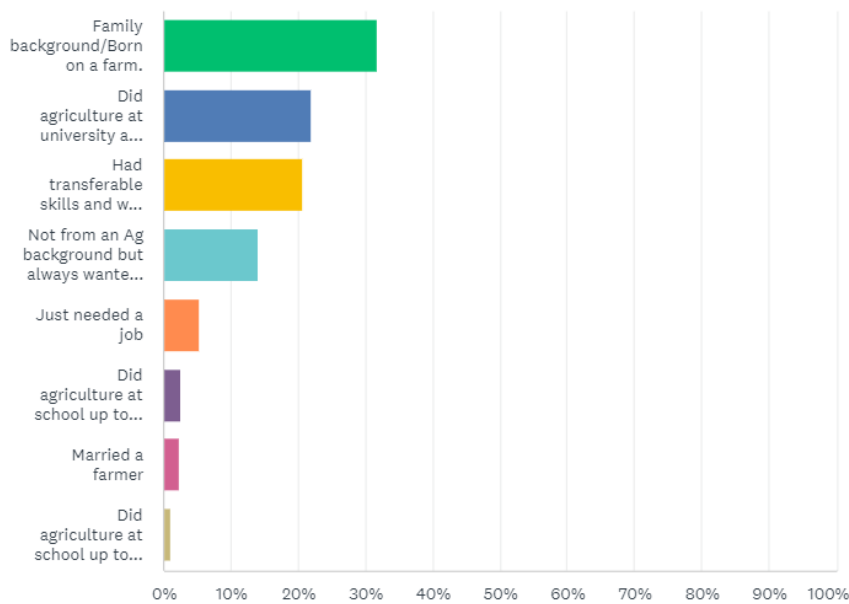


Figure 2. Top influences for the survey participants to pursue careers in the Ag industry.

Nearly half (46%) of the Millennials and Gen Zs did not study agriculture in secondary school (see Figure 3). For those that did the subject in school, they show a strong inclination towards pursuing agriculture-related tertiary education. Many of these younger individuals were drawn to careers in agriculture due to family farming backgrounds, with some feeling a sense of obligation. Conversely, those without farming backgrounds were primarily motivated by a genuine passion for the agricultural sector and rural communities.

## Did you study agriculture during your secondary school years?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 0

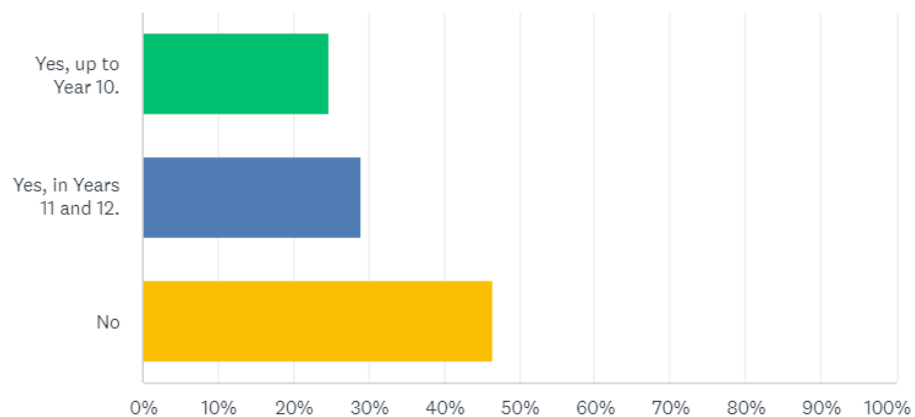


Figure 3. Percentage of Millennials and Gen Zs who studied agriculture in secondary school.

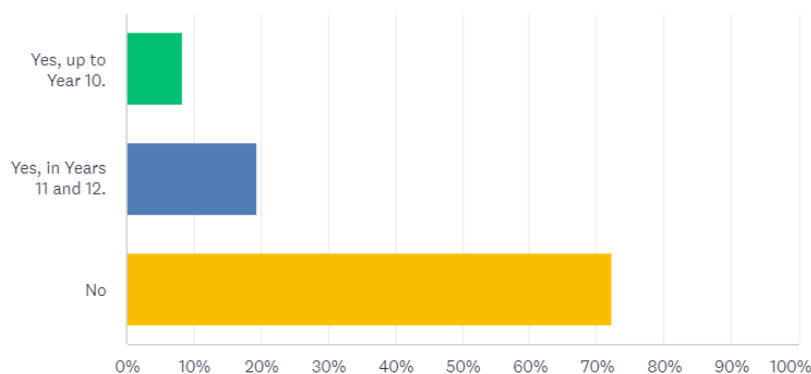
Older participants who did not study agriculture during their secondary education generally pursued careers in other fields. However, those who did it in school, went on to pursue

university studies in Ag. Majority of the older professionals chose a career in Ag because they were either born into a farming family or had transferable skills that they can apply in the agricultural sector.

Another notable finding is 67% of the female participants were brought up in an urban environment. Most of them have worked or are working in administrative roles such as HR and bookkeeping, or as educators. Many possess extensive work experience in the agricultural industry. Interestingly, 70% of female participants did not study agriculture in secondary school (see Figure 4). Despite this, they expressed a strong interest in pursuing further studies in agriculture-related courses if given the opportunity.

### Did you study agriculture during your secondary school years?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 0



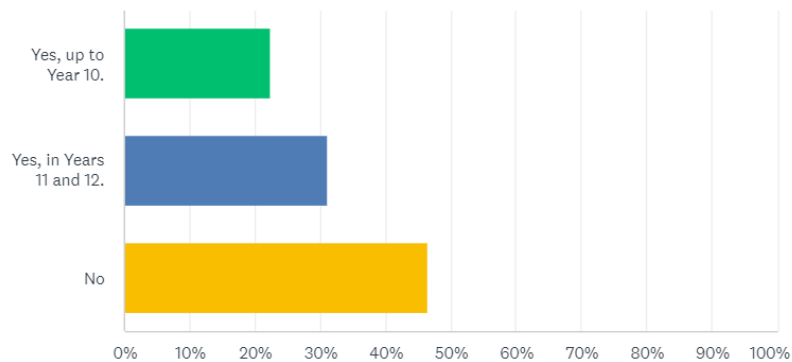
*Figure 4. Percentage of female participants who studied agriculture in secondary school.*

The primary reason female participants pursued careers in agriculture is that they had transferable skills. Other significant factors included having extended family involved in farming and having studied agriculture at university. Having a partner or being married to a farmer did not influence their decision to work in the agriculture industry. In contrast, male participants were primarily motivated by family connections to agriculture and the rural community, as well as a personal interest in the field.

It comes as no surprise that 68% of participants raised in urban areas did not study agriculture in school, compared to only 46% of those born on farms (see Figure 5). Individuals born on farms typically gravitate towards studying agriculture during their secondary school and university years. In contrast, participants from urban backgrounds, who often lack both farming experience and academic exposure to agriculture, apply transferable skills effectively within the agricultural sector. Additionally, some urban participants have pursued careers in agriculture due to a longstanding interest in the field.

## Did you study agriculture during your secondary school years?

Answered: 170 Skipped: 1



*Figure 5. Percentage of participants born on farm who studied agriculture in secondary school.*

In summary, our survey highlights the diverse influences shaping career choices within the Australian agriculture sector. Despite challenges in the education system's alignment with industry needs, findings reveal strong motivations among participants, driven by family backgrounds, transferable skills, and a genuine passion for rural life. The disparity between urban and rural origins emerges as a significant factor, with urban-raised individuals demonstrating a reliance on transferable skills and a latent interest in agriculture, while those born on farms typically follow more traditional educational pathways in agriculture. Addressing these insights is crucial to attract and support a new generation of skilled professionals essential for the future of Australian agriculture.

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