

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1732
Asked on 11 November 2009

MR RYAN asked the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (MR MULHERIN)–

QUESTION:

What primary and high school competitions do Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries support in order to promote a career in primary industries?

ANSWER:

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, through Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries (QPIF), facilitates a number of world class competitions in order to promote a career in primary industries including the following two competitions:

1. World's Poultry Science Association Competition

Students from 28 Queensland, New South Wales and South Australian schools took part in this year's World Poultry Science Association competition, which concluded with an 'awards day' at the department's Redlands Research Station in Brisbane on 30 October 2009.

The project, now in its tenth year is run jointly by QPIF, the World's Poultry Science Association Queensland sub branch and the poultry industry.

The competition provides a wonderful opportunity to encourage students to consider the poultry industry as a career opportunity.

The Australian poultry industry is a technically advanced, multi-million dollar agribusiness offering a wide selection of careers, including management, veterinary science, nutrition and research.

There are also many opportunities within the industry for school-leavers to gain industry experience and hands-on skills.

We are in the privileged position of employing some of the State's best researchers - researchers that would provide ideal mentors for all those budding scientists who want to make a real difference to the \$360 million poultry industry.

2. Hermitage Research Station Schools' Plant Science Competition

The department's Hermitage Research Station Schools' Plant Science competition has been running since 1997.

Each year an organising committee chooses a competition topic relevant to the research carried out at Hermitage Research Station, and a hands-on experiment is designed for students to carry out in the classroom.

Queensland Education staff in Warwick work with the organising committee to ensure the competition's suitability for students in Years Prep to 12 and check that the competition topic and experiment is relevant to the school science syllabus.

The aims of this competition are to:

- stimulate an interest in science and agriculture in young people and help them realise science is a great, long-term career choice
- encourage children to think about issues affecting the environment around them
- familiarise students with the concept and interpretation of scientific experiments
- foster an awareness of the department, industry and the community working together.

A unique and well-accepted part of the competition involves visits to participating schools. Upon request staff visit schools to offer help with competition experiments, provide further information on the topic and answer any questions that may arise. These visits give children the opportunity to meet scientists, experimentalists, technicians, agronomists and other staff and learn more about the research being undertaken to help provide a sustainable future for all Queenslanders.

This year more than 1000 experiment kits were sent to 105 schools in five states, which is the largest and most geographically diverse distribution in the competition's 13-year history.

This year's competition featured a range of activities, such as identifying different grains, a germination experiment, designing a new breakfast cereal pack and turning grain into food. The competition has a strong role in stimulating interest in science, agriculture and future career paths.