

Ag shows winners announced at NSW conference today

Behind the scenes leaders and ingenuity recognised

The most dedicated, resilient, innovative and excellent agricultural shows and their volunteers were recognised today at the NSW state conference themed “Adapt, Sustain, Grow”.

Members of the 192 Shows in NSW joined in digitally from nine regional locations today including Armidale, Bathurst, Bomaderry, Dubbo, Goulburn, Narrandera, North Ryde, Port Macquarie and Singleton to hear from the likes of NSW Resilience commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, experts on a variety of topics and case studies of success from within the show network.

President of the Agricultural Societies Council of New South Wales, Tim Capp of Gresford, says these awards recognise people and show societies who have shown devotion, creativity and determination over the last year.

“Millions of people go to our agricultural shows every year, and they’re almost entirely run by wonderful volunteers,” Mr Capp said.

“These volunteers coordinate hundreds of competitions across vast categories from horses to alpacas, beef to bees, sheep to sewing as well as delivering education and entertainment. They orchestrate the largest local event in most towns, and have been bringing the entire community together whether it’s for one day or three for well over a century in many areas.”

Winner of the 2021 Dedication Award is Ross Matheson of Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association.

“Ross is the president and has been a member of the association for over 40 years. His commitment is 365 days a year as the showground is an all-year business, hosting a range of events throughout the year,” Mr Capp said.

“His contribution to the development of the showground from a bare tract of land in 1986 to one of the premier showground and event facilities in the Greater Western Region is noteworthy.”

“Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association had an enormously successful comeback from covid cancellations, with record crowd numbers streaming through the gates.”

Winner of the Excellence Award is Phillip Nankivell of Blayney Agricultural and Pastoral Association.

“Phillip has been president of the show society since 1983 and does an outstanding job leading, encouraging, and guiding the committee. After covid lockdowns and show cancellations in 2020, Phillip was determined that there would be a show this year,” Mr Capp said.

“Phillip has been central to improvements to the showground, the collaboration of different user groups and a fruitful relationship with the local council.”

“He too has a vision around the inclusion of younger members, placing the show society in a good position for the future. Young stewards are shadowing senior stewards so they will gain the knowledge to continue staging successful shows in Blayney in years to come.”

Mr Nankivell’s show society at Blayney alongside Mungindi Show won the President’s Innovation Award, sharing in \$3500 as part of their win.

Blayney Agricultural and Pastoral Association Inc has been recognised for their young judging student workshops and competition day. These are workshops run for students who learn about appraising and judging beef cattle, meat sheep, fleeces, grain judging, public speaking/judging talk formulation. The education section is followed by a young judges competition in the afternoon.

“Blayney Show is a one day show. Over the years the beef cattle competition has grown so big that the cattle judging as well as the young paraders and beef judging competitions could not all be held on that day. So, for four years beef cattle competitions could not be held at the show, leaving a big gap for student education through the popular young judges competitions,” Mr Capp explained.

“To bridge the gap and provide a learning event where students could develop skills, knowledge, and confidence to become engaged in young judges competitions, the show society partnered with the NSW DPI Schools Program to develop a young judging education day for local students.”

“The first young judging student workshops and competition day was so successful it is now an annual event.” Mungindi Show Society has been recognised for their header and cotton picker demolition derby.

“The demolition derby is an event like no other in NSW! A cotton picker and combine harvester duke it out at a demolition derby that was part of the annual Mungindi Show,” Mr Capp said.

“The show society wanted to give the community an enjoyable event to lift spirits while also promoting local cotton and crop growers who provide their machinery and time to support the annual show. They invented the header and cotton picker demolition derby and it was a huge attraction, generating increased gate takings.”

“It provided interaction and entertainment featuring the region’s considerable cotton industry.”

The winner of the Resilience Award is Woodstock Memorial Show, winning \$2,000.

The Woodstock Memorial Show was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, but a group of volunteers investigated alternative options for events to be run virtually to keep the community connected.

“The Show Society remained connected by maintaining their presence, connecting with their patrons, promoting their sponsors, and engaging with a new audience for very little cost,” President of the state’s peak ag show body, Tim Capp, said.

“To help sponsors struggling during lockdown, the show society created a digital market stall on their website and promoted it on social media.”

Show sections were also digitised. Surprisingly, a record number of entries were received.

“A Father’s Day photographic competition, online best dressed pets - many of which were purchased during lockdown, and a trail of scarecrows on the showground for people to drive by and admire proved successful initiatives.”

Today, 300 members of show societies across NSW joined in to the state conference.

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Contacts

Lyndsey Douglas
0424203935
mailto: editor@writerswho.com
Lyndsey Douglas

mailto: editor@writerswho.com