

# DOW AGROSCIENCES JOINS FORCES WITH PICSE TO ATTRACT YOUNG STUDENTS TO SCIENCE

Dow AgroSciences has joined forces with PICSE (Primary Industry Centre for Science Education) to help attract Australia's future scientists to careers in agribusiness and research.

The sponsorship, which will see Dow AgroSciences provide funds to help PICSE educate students and teachers about the opportunities for careers in science, is an ideal match, according to Dow AgroSciences' Research and Development Leader for Australia and New Zealand, Dr Matt Cahill.

"Today's emerging issues – such as food production, climate change, and sustainable use of natural resources – will be solved by the scientists of tomorrow," he said. "We need to help students choose science by Year 10 of high school to develop the skills to address these challenges."

Dow AgroSciences Developmental Biologist, Nick Willey, knew from Year 10 onwards that he wanted to be involved in agricultural research. Based at Dow AgroSciences' field station in Breeza, Nick, now 30 years old, is now living out his ambition.

"I did a week of work experience in Year 10 at the University of Sydney's Plant Breeding Institute and I knew then that's what I wanted to do," said Nick. "I studied environmental biology at The University of Technology, Sydney, and I can't imagine doing anything else with my professional career. I love my job because I get the best of both worlds – being able to use my knowledge of the chemistry and biology of plant systems to conduct field research in order to see how these interact in the environment.

"Being able to do research in an area where you can see tangible results is the best part of being a scientist. You can see the benefits of the research rather than working in a vacuum. These benefits directly assist the rural community that I live in, helping to provide an environmentally sustainable and financially profitable rural sector."

Fellow scientist, Tara Biffin, aged 25, agrees.

"I function a lot better doing a job that I am passionate about. To be able to see the end product and knowing I was a part of the research process is very rewarding," said Tara. "I always wanted to do something scientific so I studied animal science at the University of Western Sydney with a major in equine studies and a sub-major in agronomy. There is a broad range of career opportunities in agricultural science out there at the moment and having a science degree has given me a lot of options. Knowing that there is a suitable career path available to me is exciting.

"It's the passion that keeps people going in any line of work and it's the same for me. I would advise anyone considering a career in science to go for it."

Nick agrees and adds that high school students considering a career in science should do some volunteer work or work placements to see how richly varied and interesting a career in science could be.

"At the moment there is a real shortage of young people for science jobs, so your career prospects once you leave uni are actually very good," he said.

PICSE, an independent organisation funded in part by the Federal Government, runs various programs including science class activities, teacher professional development, teaching resources, student camps and student industry placement programs. By immersing young high school students in the world of science, PICSE hopes to show them what exciting and varied careers are open to them. According to PICSE, approximately 30 per cent of students who were previously unsure about choosing science go on to commit to studying science at a tertiary level after taking part in the program.

"By working directly with teachers and students, PICSE is able to illustrate very clearly the benefits of a scientific career," said Dr Cahill. "By becoming part of the program, we can show students that scientific work – such as researching and developing crop protection solutions – can be very rewarding and exciting. And, of course, it gives us an opportunity to showcase our company to these future scientists, hopefully giving us an inside track on recruiting the best minds of the next generation."

Dow AgroSciences recently launched a new brand campaign to help customers understand the high level of expertise that goes into the development of each product.

"We make a huge investment in developing products – from the initial idea through development, testing, manufacturing and trialling a new product," said Dr Cahill. "This commitment is what gives our customers 'Confidence in a Drum'. We need to attract the very best scientists both now and into the future to be able to continue providing that commitment."

The initial sponsorship agreement covers activities in New South Wales where Dow AgroSciences Australia is headquartered and has a field station at Breeza on the Liverpool Plains. Following the successful completion of the initial phase, Dow AgroSciences will consider a further, more comprehensive sponsorship arrangement.

"As in any sponsorship it's important to ensure that we're working as a team to achieve our shared goal, which is to get more kids interested in careers in science," said Dr Cahill. "We plan to support this program to the best of our ability and look forward to a long and rewarding association with PICSE."

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As an organisation, we rely heavily on sponsors to enable us to conduct a program of activities that will attract this country's brightest minds to careers in science, so we're thrilled to partner with a company like Dow AgroSciences," said PICSE's National Director, Associate Professor David Russell. "Dow AgroSciences' national role in the agricultural chemical and biotechnology industries makes it a particularly attractive potential employer for future science graduates and this program will help put the company in touch with those future scientists with, hopefully, positive outcomes for both."

## **Contacts**

Sue Hardman  
02 9748 1002  
mailto: [sue@hc.net.au](mailto:sue@hc.net.au)