

Farm Day succeeds in bridging the gap

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Research carried out following Farm Day has found that 90pc of city respondents now have a better understanding of the role of farming in their daily lives and 98pc are more likely to buy Australian produce.

Farm Day, which took place over the last weekend in May, has grown from a Victorian-only event in 2006 to a national event with more than 1000 families registering to take part this year.

Farm Day involves city-based families being hosted by farming families in a bid to bridge the city-country divide.

The survey carried out for Meat & Livestock Australia, the major supporter of Farm Day, asked city and farming participants a series of questions about their Farm Day experience and perceptions of farmers.

The survey found:

- * 86 percent of city participants agree that Australian farmers abide by the most stringent practices to produce the safest food in the world;
- * 84pc of city participants agree that farmers are committed to enhancing and protecting the environment;
- * 93pc of city participants agree that Australian farmers genuinely care for their animals' health and welfare; and
- * 99pc of city participants agree that farmers are important to Australian society.

"The responses demonstrate that Farm Day is imparting some important messages about modern farming practices," said David Palmer, managing director of Meat & Livestock Australia.

"When people see for themselves how a farmer operates it creates a much more memorable impression and this impression is important for the future of agriculture."

The survey also found that 95pc of city respondents enjoyed their Farm Day experience with 98pc of city participants saying they'll take part next year.

Some 82pc of farmers rated Farm Day as extremely or very enjoyable and 99pc said they will take part again in 2009.

Farm Day matches city and farming families based on factors such as ages of children, farming interest and the distance they're willing to travel.

This matching process appears to create strong friendships between the two families with 78pc of participants saying they are likely to stay in touch.

Deb Bain, Farm Day founder, said she is delighted with the positive results as they demonstrate that Farm Day is achieving its aim: to foster 'fun, friendship and understanding' between city and farming families.