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*To all Ag teachers and other interested people: Exciting future in agricultural education*

Greetings all,

I am writing regarding what I see as a very exciting future for agricultural education and the looming critical shortage of agricultural scientists and other professionals. The opportunities have never been better for school leavers to pursue an exciting career in the diverse agricultural industries.

You are probably aware that Australia is facing a dire shortage of scientists, including agricultural scientists and other professionals. The shortfall has been put at around 25,000 over the next few years. Australia needs bright, committed people in agriculture-related careers to meet the challenges of the future. Some of these challenges include: developing agricultural production systems which will be able to produce increasing amounts of food and natural fibre to feed and clothe a rapidly increasing world population; developing new crops and ways of farming in a future with a changing climate and variable supplies of rainfall and irrigation water; developing a sustainable balance between environmental management and maximising production; and meeting the ever increasing demands by consumers for higher standards of food safety and quality.

Graduates are in strong demand and there are a range of programs (from federal government to industry) being put in place throughout Australia to address the problem.

Charles Sturt University is now one of the top 3 providers of Agricultural education in Australia and we look forward to a strong 2008 intake into our Agriculture degrees at Wagga and Orange. We are currently taking action to consolidate our position in agricultural education. We here at CSU and in conjunction with the NSW DPI (through the Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation) have been doing our bit to address the skills and graduates shortage by working with the Ag Teacher's Association in professional development programs for teachers, agricultural enrichment days for students, and things like science competitions for students. We would like to be doing more of this and are planning activities for 2008. Any suggestions you might have would be welcome.

As well as this we are reviewing how we teach agriculture at CSU and how we might do things better and more effectively to take us into the future. We need to make sure our graduates are prepared for the world of agriculture that is coming and future careers in such diverse areas as agronomy, livestock production, veterinary science, production horticulture, environmental horticulture, agribusiness management, farm management, ecological agriculture, equine science/business management, agricultural biotechnology, irrigation science and water management. We are looking to continue to strengthen the range of courses offered from our campuses at Wagga Wagga and Orange.

Agricultural education is a key focus of CSU. CSU is Australia's leading inland University with a clear mission to provide the courses and the graduates needed to ensure vibrant communities and profitable and sustainable industries. Much of the agricultural research undertaken by CSU staff and students is

in collaboration with the NSW Department of Primary Industry and other key industry organisations. The strong links with industry and our research focus ensure our courses are relevant and in line with the latest developments.

I would be pleased if you could pass on to your students and careers advisors the message that there are great careers and opportunities in agricultural science and related areas, and CSU welcomes enrolments in its range of agricultural courses. The PREP (Principal's Report Entry Pathway) is available for those good, motivated students recommended by Principals for consideration. Agriculture provides exciting career pathways that contribute to the wellbeing of the Australian and world communities.

Please let me know how we can assist you and your students in deciding to study an agriculture course at CSU. I am happy to answer any enquiries or further information is available at <http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/science/savs/> or our CSU Contact Centre 1300 135 435.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kent', written in a cursive style.

Assoc. Prof. John Kent  
Head, School of Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences