



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Junee agronomist learns the tricks of the trade from Woolworths**

**Local resident takes part in Woolworths / RAS of NSW training course**

**Wednesday 19 August 2009:** A young Junee agricultural worker is taking up the opportunity to get under the skin of Australia's largest supermarket chain this week.

Tim Stivens, who is a field marketing agronomist for AGnVET Services as well as being one of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW's 2009 Rural Achiever of the Year, is one of 30 students on the Woolworths Agricultural Business Scholarship Program being held in Sydney.

Now in its third year the program – which is run in conjunction with the RAS of NSW and in partnership with the University of Western Sydney - was oversubscribed with almost 200 applicants seeking places on the sought after scheme which costs nothing for course participants.

Those taking part in the 2009 program include a rhubarb farmer from Tasmania, a grain farmer from Western Australia and a sheep farmer from New Zealand.

Tim, who also has a long term goal to develop his contract spraying business, says he would like to gain valuable information about how products reach the shelves including the areas of logistics, marketing, consumer trends and supply and demand strategies, "The scholarship program is a unique chance to experience the ins and outs of how a business as large as Woolworths works."

During the course students will hear from senior Woolworths' staff and external experts, they will visit one of Woolworths' state of the art distribution centres, the Sydney national support office, a flagship supermarket and the famous Flemington Markets as well as undertaking group and course work.

– More over –

Greg Foran, Woolworths Director of Supermarkets said, “The vast majority of Woolworths fresh produce is farmed in Australia so it makes sense for tomorrow’s agricultural leaders to get an insight into what makes a supermarket tick so those successful partnerships continue long into the future.”

RAS General Manager of Agricultural Development Bernie O’Sullivan says the program provides an amazing opportunity for the country’s future agricultural leaders.

“Case studies and textbooks can only teach students so much, but getting out there and really learning what happens day to day at a company such as Woolworths provides invaluable real life experience.”

The Woolworths Agricultural Scholarship Program is just one part of Woolworths’ commitment to regional and rural Australia. The retailer’s Backing our Farmers Days, alone, have raised over \$18m to distribute to the Country Women’s Association and for families in need and community revitalisation projects and to Landcare for sustainable farming schemes.

The company also funds a Fresh Food Grant, which goes to fresh food producers that can demonstrate commercially viable and environmentally sustainable fresh food initiatives, as well as sponsoring some of the country’s biggest agricultural shows such as Sydney’s Royal Easter Show and Brisbane’s Ekka.

**For more information or to speak to any of the program’s participant’s contact:**

**Benedict Brook** Woolworths

**T 02 8885 1033**

**Philippa Lampe** Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

**T 02 9704 1453**

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