



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

HOW TO RUN A YOUNG FARMER CHALLENGE



**An information package on how to run a
Young Farmer Challenge in NSW**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thank you for your interest in the Young Farmer Challenge.

The Young Farmer Challenge (YFC) is an engaging, entertaining and fast paced competition for young farmers. It showcases the breadth of technical skills and knowledge required in farming today, promoting excellence in farming and the proactive involvement of young people in our industry. It is also a great way to engage young people from your community. It is an easy to run, low input and highly entertaining entertainment option and can showcase and educate audiences about agricultural principles, especially those important to your local community.

The Young Farmer Challenge is inspired by the successful Young Farmer Contest held in New Zealand since 1969. Each year up to 400 young people from across NZ battle it out for the top spot right through from club level to the Grand Final.

The Australian Young Farmer Challenge has enormous potential to become a cornerstone agricultural youth event in Australia. Its equivalent in New Zealand has been so successful that it now attracts over \$300,000 in prizes annually and the conclusion of the Grand Final is broadcast on national television.

This is a preliminary information package compiled to give you information on 'How to run a Young Farmer Challenge' at your local show. Our advice is to be creative, use local products and equipment, think up new challenges specific to farming in your area to test your young farmers and entertain your audience, build local enthusiasm and have fun.

Teams compete through a series of qualifying heats with the winners progressing through a series of finals to an annual national grand final. Each consists of a series of skills-based challenges related to farming with a strong emphasis on technique and safety. Competitors from across Australia have the opportunity to come together and compete in front of bumper crowds from both rural and metropolitan backgrounds each year at a different Show.

To qualify to enter the NSW Young Farmer Challenge State Final teams must be nominated by a Country Show. If the winning regional team is not available to compete at the State or Regional Final/s, the runner up of their regional show may be eligible to act as a substitute.

We look forward to hearing about your Young Farmer Challenge endeavours.

VISION

A strong, vibrant and supported Australian agricultural industry cultivating youth engagement and development

MISSION

“To develop a national, high calibre competition that both recognises and demonstrates the skill, diversity and innovation of young people in Australian agriculture with a focus on technique and safety”

GOALS

- Build a robust competition that highlights the skills, techniques and innovation required in modern farming
- Foster participation and engagement of youth from rural and regional communities
- Engage, entertain and educate local and a broader, urban based audience about these factors of modern Australian agriculture

TARGET AUDIENCE

Rural youth (aged 18-35 years) and those with an interest in agriculture

THE COMPETITION

COMPETITORS

The Young Farmer Challenge is open to teams of 4 people.

Competitors in each team must include both male and female competitors. All female or all male teams are not eligible to enter.

- Hold a current drivers licence recognised by an Australian State or Territory.
- Be capable of hitching a trailer to a car and backing the trailer
- Be competent at driving a tractor
- Have experience in driving an all-terrain vehicle (ATV)
- Be competent at handling livestock, including horses, sheep and cattle

RULES & REGULATIONS

The Young Farmer Challenge NSW State Final, held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, is run in accordance with the RAS of NSW General Regulations and RAS Young Farmer Challenge Special Regulations. A copy of the Young Farmer Challenge Special Regulations, along with copies of this document, is available online. Important rules of the competition highlighted to competitors prior to the competition include:

- The winning team will be the team that completes all the challenges correctly, in a safe manner and in the fastest time.
- Every challenge must be completed correctly to move onto the next challenge.
- Each team will have a dedicated judge that watches every challenge you complete and will determine when it has been completed correctly and safely. The Judge's decision is final.
- You must complete every challenge safely and using the correct Personal Protective Equipment.
- Any errors made will result in competitors having to re-do the challenge to complete it correctly, or receiving a time penalty, based on the nature of the challenge. Teams can incur a time penalty for safety breaches, and disqualified in the event of a multiple safety breaches and/or dangerous activity that may have affected Competitors, Officials or spectators
- Team work is encouraged to complete challenges.

ANIMAL WELFARE

The State and Regional Finals will adhere to the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Young Farmer Challenge Guidelines for use of live animals in challenges, as per below:

The RAS recognizes that animals are used for human purposes, such as food, fibre, companionship, recreation and research conducted for the benefit of both humans and animals. In designing and running agricultural competitions involving animals, it is the responsibility of the organisers, entrants, exhibitors and suppliers of animals to consider the welfare of animals in such use, which encompasses:

- Appropriate housing
- Management
- Nutrition
- Humane handling
- Veterinary treatment

- a) Housing
 - i) Provide your animals with adequate shelter when they are to remain in one position for more than 10-15 minutes within a challenge, as necessary, depending on the weather. This may mean providing shade or shelter from wind or rain. If conditions are mild, shelter may not be necessary. Animals should be provided with appropriate shelter when not directly involved in a challenge.
- b) Nutrition
 - i) Provide your animals with adequate food and fresh water when not directly involved in a challenge task. Dispose of waste feed appropriately.
- c) Challenge design and animal handling
 - i) Challenges should not cause physical pain to animals.
 - ii) Use appropriate animal handling techniques to reduce stress on your animals. Animals that are not trained to lead should be held in secure yards during challenges. For any challenge involving animal restraint, the use of halters is only appropriate for animals that are halter trained.
- d) Transport
 - i) Transport animals to and from the event site in a utility, trailer, van or truck with a fixed crate, or on a lead with the aid of a secure halter. If animals are to be moved within a challenge they are to be quietly drafted (for example sheep) or lead with the aid of a secure halter. Animals should not be picked up and carried, unless this is a part of normal husbandry practices for that species, for example poultry.
- e) Animal selection
 - i) Fit and healthy animals should only be selected for use in challenges.
 - ii) Adult or mature animals should only be selected for use in challenges; however, gestating or geriatric animals should not be selected. This is to avoid unnecessary stress to immature animals that are not used to handling and husbandry procedures.
- f) Veterinary supervision
 - i) It is recommended that a Veterinarian is available to provide Veterinary treatment if required as a result of the use of animals in challenges.

*Written by Dr B Sharpe, Dr M Westwood & Dr A Wright-Hands for the RAS Youth Group February 2014
Approved by the Veterinary Committee of the RAS 2015*

The RAS of NSW promotes high standards of animal care and also promotes the safety of people involved with animal handling. If you would like further information or advice regarding challenge design and the use of animals you can contact the RAS Youth Group ayfc@rasnsw.com.au

If hosting a YFC event, be aware of and adhere to the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines, notably but not restricted to the Land Transportation of Livestock and Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals.

OFFICIALS

Judges

A judge is responsible for monitoring each team's progress through the challenges. The judge will determine if each challenge was completed in accordance with the competition rules. Each team must be assigned a judge. Judges must oversee a maximum of one team at any time.

Judges must be provided a list of challenges prior to the event and attend a full briefing (including safety briefing) prior to the competition. Judges should also be encouraged to attend the competitor briefings where possible.

Steward

A steward is responsible for a variety of tasks, including monitoring team progress (assisting judges), timing the competition, setting up of challenges and resetting equipment where necessary. Stewards must attend a full briefing (including safety briefing) prior to the competition.

Safety Steward

At least one Safety Steward must be nominated for each young Farmer Challenge competition. The Safety Steward must be in attendance for the entirety of the competition and oversee all safety aspects of the competition.

CHALLENGES

Competitors are provided with a list of challenges for the event when they present for competitor registration or undergo safety briefing.

A competitor brief should be scheduled with all challenges explained to all team members.

All challenges must be performed using the correct Personal Protective Equipment (eg. helmet on the motorbike, gloves for the drench etc).

Advice for establishing challenges:

- Use materials, equipment and livestock that are easily accessible and can be borrowed or donated.
- Challenges can be simple and do not require large machinery or animals if these are not available.
- Ensure the challenges can be easily and quickly set-up and packed up
- Ensure the challenges are challenging – if you want real farmers to compete there must be substance to the competition. This will ensure that the competition grows with integrity to become a well-respected and established event.
- Ensure challenges are entertaining for the audience. Small challenges that are hard to see are less engaging.
- Challenges are encouraged to test both physical skill and theoretical knowledge of agricultural and farming practices.
- Be creative about your challenges – make them fun but remember to include; education, new technology, safety, entertainment.
- Watch the timing of the event: 15-30 minutes is acceptable, remembering that you don't want to exhaust the farmers – or the audience.

QUALIFYING PROCESS

As well as being a highly engaging and entreeing event to run at your local show, the Young Farmer Challenge is a national competition. Winners of every local show competitions are eligible to compete at Regional Finals held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show each year. Winners of these finals then progress to State and National levels. All teams that compete at this level must have qualified through a local show competition. Teams may substitute one team member between levels of the competition if required. All competitors for the regional and state finals must reside in NSW.

Local Competition

- Held at local shows by show societies and community groups

Regional Final

- Winning teams from local show competitions compete in regional finals, held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, March-April each year

State Final

- 4 fastest teams from regional finals go on to compete for the title of NSW champions, in the afternoon of the regional finals.

National Final

- NSW champions compete against winners from other states. This final moves between the state Royal Shows each year.

DOCUMENTATION

Conditions of Participant Form

Competitors are required to read and sign a Conditions of Participants Form before the start of the competition. An example of the 'Conditions of Participant Form' used by the RAS has been provided with this document. Event organisers are encouraged to use this document as a guide only and seek advice from their own legal advisors as to the most suitable waiver form for their individual competition.

Risk Assessment

Event organisers are encouraged to complete a risk assessment for each challenge to be tested in the competition. An example of a risk assessment used for the Young Farmer Challenge held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show has been provided at the end of this document.

YOUNG FARMER CHALLENGE CONTACTS

If you require more information about running a Young Farmer Challenge at your event, please contact:

RAS Young Farmer Challenge Coordinator

t. 02 9704 1160

e. ayfc@rasnsw.com.au