

Chalk it up as a big win

AGRICULTURE and other primary industries are finally gaining the recognition they deserve in the development of Australia's first national curriculum.

After months of lobbying, the Primary Industries Education Foundation has managed to convince the nation's educational bureaucrats that our children need to understand the process of getting food from paddock to plate.

Such knowledge is crucial to their future. It turns the endless view of green and brown paddocks outside the family car's window into a foundation of rich soils, crops and pastures that feed livestock, families and nations around the globe.

Without this knowledge the bulk of Australian children, growing up in our highly urbanised society, would continue to leave school without the tools they will need to survive this century.

It is these children who will have to confront and solve a rising tide of conflicts over limited resources in the face of a global population of nine billion by 2050.

They will need the skills to grow more food with less oil, less phosphate fertiliser and less water.

Until now the national curriculum has failed to lay the foundations to ensure children gain this knowledge.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's curriculum had emphasised issues surrounding sustainability and the environmental impacts of primary industries, without extending the debate into issues of global food security or protecting regional communities.

The debate about our resources and how we use them requires a depth of knowledge that PIEF and its supporters, such as the National Farmers' Federation, must bring to the development of the national curriculum.

Otherwise agriculture and other primary industries will be left on the outer, ignored until it's all too late.

Regional and urban Australians need children who understand the crucial role agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining play in our everyday lives and economy.

We need children who think twice about blindly supporting calls for water to be clawed back from regional communities, who understand how reliant Australia and the world is on our natural resources.

That understanding will ensure Australia maintains its competitive edge in delivering resources to the world.

It means children can aspire to be the next generation of resource managers, molecular biologists or soil scientists, who find solutions to the resource scarcities of this century.

Tick of approval

Agriculture added to national curriculum

By PETER HUNT

AGRICULTURE is to be taught in all Australian schools.

The authority overseeing the development of Australia's first national curriculum has bowed to pressure from the Primary Industries Education Foundation and other rural educators to ensure agriculture and other primary industries are taught from kindergarten to year eight. While there's still a long way

Should ag be taught in all Australian schools?
HAVE YOUR SAY
weeklytimesnow.com.au

Stockwin said the intergovernment Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority had also agreed to list primary industries as an optional stand-alone sub-

ACARA's decision is a major win for regional Australia, given *The Weekly Times* reported in July the authority had dismissed calls for agriculture's inclusion in the draft national curriculum. At the time ACARA curriculum manager Robert Randall told rural educators: "agriculture is not listed for development as a separate learning area."

But after weeks of lobbying by PIEF and other rural educators ACARA has slowly

This week, Mr Randall told *The Weekly Times* ACARA believed all students should, through the national curriculum, acquire knowledge, skills and understanding about the food they consumed and natural resources they used.

"That is why, to help guide the inclusion of this aspect of student learning into the Australian Curriculum, ACARA is collaborating with the PIEF to clarify desired learning about

Mr Stockwin said it was a fantastic step forward for all primary industries. "It also means students will be more aware of the huge range of careers available to them in primary industries," Mr Stockwin said.

The deputy principal of South Australia's Urtrape Agricultural High School, Dean Cresswell, said ACARA's new policy was a huge turnaround. "I think we have moved

where we were just a fortnight ago," Mr Cresswell said.

When *The Weekly Times* analysed the draft history curriculum in July it showed farmers' role in Australia's settlement got little mention, yet students were asked to look at farming in medieval Europe and Asia. Even the senior years' draft curriculum emphasised the sustainability of agriculture and conflicts over land and water rather than its benefits.