



Friday, August 21

## Shared values the key to better farmer and consumer relationship says Hart speaker



The key to breaking down barriers between farmers and consumers is not in education, but in opening up discussions and focussing on shared values, according to science communicator and senior research associate Dr Heather Bray.

Dr Bray from the University of Adelaide Department of History, Food Values Research Group, will be the lunchtime guest speaker at this year's Hart Field Day on Tuesday, September 15.

"I've come to realise that people's understanding of science in agriculture isn't just about knowledge and education," Dr Bray says.

"We think that if we give consumers information then they'll understand the decisions farmers are making and like it too, but that's not always the case.

"People can be given the same information and come up with different perceptions based on their background.

"We need to move away from focussing on educating the consumer, to being willing to engage in conversations about food production based on articulating shared values."

Dr Bray says food producers are under increasing public scrutiny, and improving engagement and dialogue is key to improving public perceptions of agriculture.

"Our research and other observations suggest that there is a perception that the values of producers and the broader community are becoming less aligned.

"While farmers might be worried about the urban consumer misunderstanding them, they need to be mindful that they're not misunderstanding the urban consumer.

"We need to start talking about the things we both care about."

Learn more about her research on public perceptions of agriculture and what influences consumer choice, when Dr Heather Bray speaks at the Hart Field Day on Tuesday, September 15. For details about the field day take a look at the website [www.hartfieldsite.org.au](http://www.hartfieldsite.org.au)

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