



Friday, August 30, 2019

## Building trust in the Australian grains industry, we all have a role to play

Building community trust in the Australian grains industry is one of the key issues facing the sector, and everyone involved in agriculture has a role to play.

That is the word from strategic communication specialist and Churchill fellow Deanna Lush, co-founder and director of AgCommunicators, who will headline the Hart Field Day lunchtime address on Tuesday, September 17.

Deanna is a former journalist, editor and media adviser, 2019 South Australian AgriFutures Rural Women's Award winner, member of the Murray Plains Farmers group, board member of Foodbank SA, and come Saturdays in winter you will find her on the court at the Mannum Roos netball club.

She farms with husband Steen Paech near Palmer, on SA's Murray Plains.

Deanna is passionate about the future of Australian agriculture, and her Churchill Fellowship study tour of the United Kingdom, United States and Canada has cemented her strong advocacy for building trust in agriculture so farmers can have freedom to operate in the future.

"There has to be an awareness of the need to build community trust, but also an awareness of the risk we face if we don't plan ahead and be proactive about this," she said.

"Farmers in the US and Canada, and the organisations which support them, have a deep understanding of the need to build trust and are actively funding and supporting work which builds trust.

"For Australia, the Australian Meat Industry Strategic Plan puts the risk into perspective when it highlights that the red meat industry stands to lose \$4 billion without the support of consumers and the community – that is huge but is just for one commodity.

"When you consider all the commodities, including grain, collectively, trust is a very big risk to our agricultural industry and we have to get this right."

Deanna said key to building trust was first establishing shared values with the community, and then being able to tell the story of Australian agriculture not by focussing on research, but by sharing the stories of the people in the industry.

"Research by the US Center for Food Integrity has found shared values are three to five times more important to building trust than sharing facts or demonstrating technical skills or expertise," she said.

“When it comes to the provision of information in Australia, the ‘science first’ approach is not opening the door for us.

“We have to demonstrate that we care about the issues that are important to our community and that we are committed to transparency, sustainability and continuous improvements in all aspects of our farming systems.

“Where in the past we might have relied on research findings to get the message across, the shared values approach is demanding us to establish that shared value first, making a point of connection and opening the door to establish the relationship and then talking about the science behind what we do.”

Deanna believes everyone involved in agriculture has a part in gaining consumer and community trust in the industry.

“We all have a role to play,” she said.

“We can’t leave it up to a few organisations, there is no silver bullet, it really is every shoulder to the wheel and a commitment to doing the right thing that will build up that trust in our industry.”

Hear more from Deanna during the lunchtime break at the Hart Field Day on Tuesday, September 17.

To register for the Hart Field Day, or for more information, take a look at the Hart Field-Site Group website [www.hartfieldsite.org.au](http://www.hartfieldsite.org.au) or contact Sandy Kimber on 0427 423 154 or email [admin@hartfieldsite.org.au](mailto:admin@hartfieldsite.org.au)

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*Photo: Hart Field Day 2019 keynote guest speaker, Deanna Lush, AgCommunicators.*