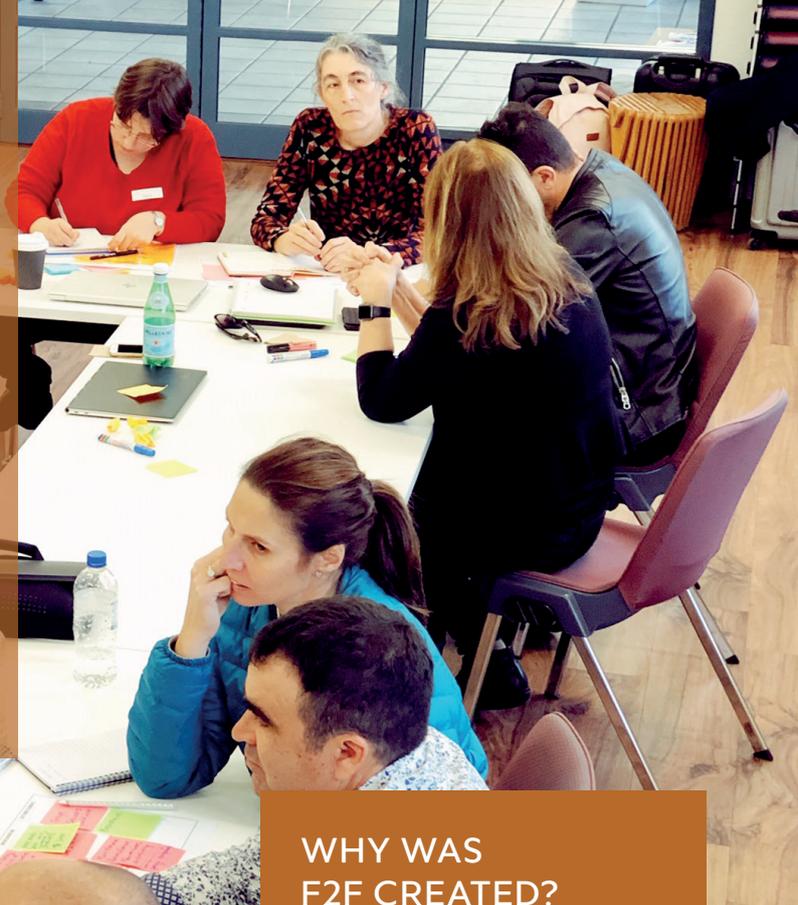


FARMERS KNOW BEST

A new program is encouraging farmers to help create solutions to industry problems by helping them to develop their ideas and take them to the market.



WHY WAS F2F CREATED?

Farmers with an idea for a new or improved product, technology or other venture are being encouraged to look into the Farmers2Founders (F2F) entrepreneurship program.

It was established by innovation specialists Sarah Nolet of AgThentic and Dr Christine Pitt of Food Futures Company as they saw too much emphasis in “agtech” on specific technologies, and not enough emphasis on users and the real problems they face.

“Our aim is to elevate the role of producers to solve real problems,” Sarah says. “Producers have hard-won expertise, insights, context, and networks. We must unlock this potential.

“If anyone is interested, if they’re not sure their idea is mature enough, or they don’t feel qualified, I’d say give us a call. We can have a chat, whether they apply or not.”

F2F kicked off with a series of workshops, with about 40 people attending one in Adelaide. “We’ll definitely have another SA workshop, if not two,” Sarah says.

Nationally they received 24 applications for an eight-week Ideas Program that began mid-July; they accepted 12 teams with backgrounds in mixed farming, vineyards, horticulture and emerging industries.

“There’s a range of ideas using technology as a core part of business; automation in pruning, apps to detect and monitor stock, new products,” Sarah says.

“The program fits in with being farmers, because we know that comes first. There’s a one day kick-off in person, we help them with travel to get to that. The rest is designed to be remote, six to 10 hours a week.”

The program delivers tools, resources, coaching and expert support to help producers participate directly in bringing new ideas and ventures to market with a platform primed for global exposure.

Sarah says participants maintain all intellectual property rights and equity in their venture.

“We simply want to support them in succeeding.”

The program has received federal funding through the Incubator Support initiative, and is supported by AgriFutures Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, Grains Research and Development Corporation, Meat & Livestock Australia, and Wine Australia.

Upcoming workshop dates are yet to be announced, but the next intake for an Ideas Program is expected to be in October. ❧

In many cases, ag innovation programs focus on helping entrepreneurs with technology skills to develop startups – even if they have little farming experience or exposure to the industry. F2F is flipping this model on its head by placing producers at the centre of innovation.

Changing global conditions and consumer demands mean new opportunities are opening in Australia’s food and fibre industry. Primary producers are experts who deeply understand their industry and its issues and are well-placed to come up with solutions on farm and along the value chain.

F2F helps them solve industry problems and unlock new value, as well as scale these new ventures across the industry. Consumers are also increasingly looking to gain an understanding of where their food is coming from and producers are best placed to meet this need.

F2F works with producers who are developing new products or value chains to help them capitalise on this opportunity.

See more at farmers2founders.com