

Empowering youth to pursue careers in agriculture: a public-private approach

#41

ORGANIZERS

Bayer CropScience

Future Farmers Network

4H

GFRAS

Australia

Abstract: The job of inspiring young people to pursue careers in agriculture must be shared between government, private sector and civil society groups. During the 20th century, the quantity of farmers has declined in every part of the world—from 35 to only 4% in developed nations between 1950 and 2010, and from 81 to 48% in developing countries. The average age of farmers is now in the range of late-50s to early 60s in parts of Africa, the United States, Europe and Australia. There have been decreases in agricultural careers among scientists, extension workers, and teachers. At the same time, the gap in awareness and understanding of modern agriculture is widening. A survey of the British Nutrition Foundation with about 27,500 children aged between five and 16 years found that children are increasingly alienated from agriculture. To address these emerging issues, Bayer, in conjunction with 4H Canada and Future Farmers Network Australia, have run two international conferences, the Youth Ag Summits, bringing together more than 200 delegates between the ages of 18-25 to share their ideas and develop a plan of action on how to feed a hungry planet. The Youth Ag Summit is a cornerstone of Bayer’s broader youth agricultural education program and can be a template for public/private partnership in youth ag education. This side event will look at different ways that public/private and civil society groups can collaborate to: increase societal understanding and awareness of the challenges facing modern agriculture and their respective roles in sustainably feeding a hungry planet, empowering youth to build networks and advocate on behalf of agriculture, and driving interest in agriculture as a career.

KEYWORDS: Talent Development , Food security , Youth , Agriculture

Languages: EN

Summary: Aim & main themes:

This side event looked at different ways that public/private and civil society groups can collaborate to:

- 1) increase societal understanding and awareness of the challenges facing modern agriculture and its role in sustainably feeding a hungry planet
- 2) empower youth to build networks and advocate on behalf of agriculture
- 3) drive interest in agriculture as a career

Summary of key points & outcomes:

- 1) The job of inspiring young people to pursue careers in agriculture must be shared between government, private sector and civil society groups.
- 2) The world’s youth are eager to have an impact. They are creative and fresh-minded and use new approaches to solve problems. But they need opportunities to contribute.
- 3) One of these opportunities is the Youth Ag-Summit which brings together young leaders from around the world to discuss and find solutions to the problem of feeding a hungry planet. The 100 delegates from 33 nations convened in Canberra, Australia in August and signed a pledge committing themselves to act as agricultural ambassadors in their communities. They created the Canberra Youth Ag-Declaration to drive change on a global and local level in five areas where they believe youth can have the most impact in addressing food insecurity. The Declaration shows how young people can help achieve the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development goal: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- 4) The Declaration provides a useful framework for empowering young people; it serves as a roadmap on how to tackle global food challenges. Moreover, it is a guidance document for companies and organisations that want to engage with young people.
- 5) The Summit forms part of the overarching program, called the “Agricultural Education Program”, which unites all Bayer CropScience youth programs. These programs provide touch points for young people interested in agriculture and sustainability and to enter into dialogue with private and public organisations.
- 6) 4-H, a global North American youth ag-organization was a partner of the 2013 Youth Ag-Summit in Calgary, Canada. The organization is uniquely positioned with youth and the agricultural community through its well-established programs and networks. 4-H as a movement is approaching 7 million strong and is found in more than 60 countries around the world. It employs a world class positive youth development approach, based on youth-adult partnerships which is fundamental in building assets in youth. This is the ideal environment for skills transfer, as adults share their

knowledge and skills through programs and projects, so that youth can look to them for mentorship as they learn to do by doing.