23rd July 2013

Dear Rural Youth Parents and Carers,

It has been great to have the opportunity to catch up with so many of you in the past few weeks – at the Easter Show dinner, parent teacher interviews, the NSW Ayrshire Society Meeting and in the boarding school. Thank you all for your ongoing support of our ever-growing Rural Youth group.

Those of you I have spoken with recently have shown great support for our show plans for the next 12 months, but I felt that it is important to let all of our parents know what we have planned.

**Country Fair and Farm Open Day – 31st August**

This year, all of our Rural Youth activities will take place on North Farm – we will combine the activities we have previously run at Country Fair – Farmyard Nursery, guessing competitions, cake stall etc with our Farm Day activities – tours, BBQ, piglet races etc. Many of you have already told me you will be available to help on the day with the BBQ, drink stall etc and I know there have been some families busy in the holidays making things we can sell on that day. All money we make on the day goes directly to supporting your children in their Rural Youth activities – attending shows, dinners and BBQ’s, and the purchasing of equipment essential for the showing of our animals.

Can you please email me at [sandra.hackett2@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:sandra.hackett2@det.nsw.edu.au) to let me know if you are available to help on the day, or if you can provide goods for us to sell. We will have a cake stall – cupcakes, toffees etc (NOT big cakes), as well as a craft stall selling homemade soaps and anything else people create!

**Ayrshire Calf Day – 14th September**

This year is the 30th anniversary of the annual Ayrshire Calf Day held at Hurlstone. It is expected that there will be more than 100 animals entered by breeders from all over NSW. This is a fantastic day out and I expect a record number of Hurlstone entries (both calf and student) this year. The NSW Ayrshire Society will also be drawing its raffle on this day – tickets are $5 each and the prize is an Ayrshire calf, kindly donated by the Biffin family of Camden. There is an alternative prize of $200 cash if you don’t have room for a cow! I have tickets for our students to sell to help support this society that provides so much support for our students.

In the weeks leading up to calf day, students will be working in teams to prepare their animals. More experienced students will gain valuable leadership skills while teaching our new students how to wash, clip and parade our calves.

If you are available to help out on this day, please let me know by email [sandra.hackett2@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:sandra.hackett2@det.nsw.edu.au).

**Junior Judging**

There are a number of junior judging competitions coming up this semester, as well as a dairy judging workshop being run by the Ayrshire Society. This will be on the weekend of 11-12th October, held at HAHS. This will involve theoretical workshops as well the opportunity for our more experienced students to visit other dairy farms and compete to become a registered judge. We have also been invited to the Illawarra Society’s Spring Fair at Berry on 17th October which includes junior judging competitions and educational seminars and the Group 5 Dairy Judging Competition on August 29th.
Year 7 Workshops

Most of our more experienced students have been planning a series of workshops to introduce our year 7 students to different aspects of agriculture, including farm safety as well as showing and judging of beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, poultry and grains. There have been numerous disruptions that have prevented these from getting started, but we are hoping that these will run on Monday and Friday lunchtimes this term. I have been very impressed with the way the workshops have been planned and researched – testament to the developing leadership and communication skills of the students in our Rural Youth Group.

Beef Showing

Our steers for next year’s Royal Easter Show competition have been sourced and are now at the school. Students have commenced working with these animals, preparing them for Kangaroo Valley Show (14-15th February 2014) and Sydney Royal (April 2014). Before these shows, students will receive training in fitting these animals and preparing them for the showing, giving our students the skills to fully prepare our animals themselves. Increasing the skill level of our students will make them more employable after they leave school and develop an all round knowledge of beef showing.

We have also decided that the Hurlstone beef herd will be gradually changed to include 12 Limousin cows and one Limousin bull, with the aim of producing quality Limousin heifers for showing. This would mean that in the future, Hurlstone will show our own purebred Limousins as well as steers, giving students further opportunities to develop their skills and experience the purebred aspects of showing. As with the dairy herd, students will be able to follow the development of the herd, and they are excited about the prospect of bringing beef cattle back from shows, rather than loading them on a truck and saying goodbye.

Sheep Showing

After a great experience showing our Black Suffolks at this year’s Sydney Royal, we have decided to develop this aspect of our farm, and we plan to show the sheep at both Canberra Show (21-23rd Feb) and Sydney Royal next year. The sheep are easier than cattle for our younger students to handle and their showing will provide another agricultural showing experience for our students.

Dairy Showing

We will be competing in two more dairy shows this year – Berry All Breeds Heifer Classic (early November) and Jersey State Show (30-31st October). Students will receive further information, and the teams for these will be selected early in term 4. Dairy shows start early next year with Robertson (7th-8th March), then Camden (4th-5th April) and Sydney Royal (April). Several students have also secured work experience with breeders at International Dairy Week in Victoria in January next year.

Many thanks for your ongoing support. If you have any suggestions or concerns about the Rural Youth group, please contact me on 9829 9222 or by email at sandra.hackett2@det.nsw.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Hackett
Rural Youth Coordinator

Robert Schippers
Head Teacher Agriculture (rel)

Kerrie Wratten
Principal