



Skilled Occupation List (SOL) 2015-16

Tracking Code:
BJRLT4

Name

Individual *

Sarah McKinnon

Organisation

National Farmers' Federation

What are the industry/industries and ANZSCO occupation/s that you or your organisation represents for the purposes of this submission?

Industry

Agriculture

Occupation

The three dropdowns below accord with the ABS ANZSCO classification of occupations. Selections are required at the 'Occupation Group' 2-digit level and at the 'Occupation Unit (4-digit)' level, but can also be made down to the Occupation (6-digit) level depending on the occupation/s to which your submission relates.

Additional occupations can be selected by way of the 'Add item' button.

For each occupation selected, please indicate whether your advice is to Include, Exclude, or is Neutral (other) with respect to the 2015-16 SOL. The rest of the form can be used to provide evidence/reasons to support your recommendations. Attachments can also be added after clicking the 'Submit' button.

Item 1

Occupation Group *

Farmers and Farm Managers

Occupation Unit *

All

Occupation

Summary advice for 2015-16 SOL *

Include

Exclude

Neutral

Item 2

Occupation Group *

Skilled Animal and Horticultural Workers

Occupation Unit *

All

Occupation

Summary advice for 2015-16 SOL *

Include

Exclude

Neutral

Item 3

Occupation Group *

Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers

Occupation Unit *

All

Occupation

Summary advice for 2015-16 SOL *

- Include Exclude Neutral

Item 4

Occupation Group *

Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals

Occupation Unit *

Agricultural and Forestry Scientists

Occupation

All

Summary advice for 2015-16 SOL *

- Include Exclude Neutral

Item 5

Occupation Group *

Mobile Plant Operators

Occupation Unit *

Agricultural, Forestry and Horticultural Plant Operators

Occupation

Agricultural and Horticultural Mobile Plant Operator 721111

Summary advice for 2015-16 SOL *

- Include Exclude Neutral

Are there any occupations that you represent where there is evidence of imbalances in the demand for and supply of skills in the medium-to-long term? *

121111 Aquaculture Farmer
121211 Cotton Grower
121212 Flower Grower
121213 Fruit or Nut Grower
121214 Grain, Oilseed or Pasture Grower
121215 Grape Grower
121216 Mixed Crop Farmer
121217 Sugar Cane Grower
121218 Turf Grower
121221 Vegetable Grower
121299 Crop Farmers
121312 Beef Cattle Farmer
121313 Dairy Cattle Farmer
121314 Deer Farmer
121315 Goat Farmer
121316 Horse Breeder
121317 Mixed Livestock Farmer
121318 Pig Farmer
121321 Poultry Farmer
121322 Sheep Farmer
121399 Livestock Farmer nec
121411 Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmer
224511 Land Economist
231111 Aeroplane Pilot
231114 Helicopter Pilot
232112 Landscape Architect
234111 Agricultural Consultant
234112 Agricultural Scientist
234113 Forester
234399 Environmental Scientist
234511 Life Scientist (General)
249111 Education Adviser
311111 Agriculture Technician
321211 Motor Mechanic (General)
321212 Diesel Motor Mechanic
322111 Blacksmith
322113 Farrier
361112 Horse Trainer
361199 Animal Attendants
361211 Shearer
399917 Woolclasser
361311 Veterinary Nurse
399999 Irrigation Technician

Occupations Not Appearing under a defined ANZSCO Code (based on survey work conducted

by the National Education Skills Taskforce (NEST)).

- Animal Technician
- Aquaculture Technician
- Coxswain
- Fish Hatchery Technician
- Fisheries Compliance Officer
- Marine Engine Driver (ASCO 2542)
- Parks and Gardens Conservation Worker
- Piggery Technician
- Rural Technical Representative

It is recommended that the SOL be revised to include Farm Overseers and Senior Stockpersons.

Please also refer to Appendix C of the Agrifood Skills Australia Environmental Scan 2014 http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.agrifoodskills.net.au/resource/resmgr/Publications/ES14_Final.pdf .

Is there evidence of imbalances in the demand for and supply of skills in the medium-to-long term in non-metropolitan areas?

If so, can you indicate in what part of Australia and the number in the occupation in over or under-supply.

The seasonal nature of agriculture means that workforce needs fluctuate according to the harvest season. Needs are different in each industry and in each region. Broadly speaking, the sector has a persistent labour supply issue that has meant increasing focus on migration policy in recent years to supplant a shortage of local workers interested in working in agriculture in regional areas.

Are there any occupations which require formal licensing or registration arrangements in order to practice/perform in this occupation?

For example:

- Midwives are required to register with the nurses board in their state or territory
- Panelbeaters are required to be registered or certified with the state Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Authority

A number of occupations which require licensing or registration in order to work in agriculture. Often they are jurisdiction-specific. Sometimes they require a qualification of at least particular units of competency:

- Veterinarians

- Veterinary nurses
- Equine Dentists
- Pesticide applicators
- Machinery operations - e.g. forklifts
- Tree workers working around power lines
- Food quality and safety auditors
- Fisheries Inspector
- Product quality Controllers
- Food Technologists
- Truck drivers
- Mechanics
- Landscape gardeners
- Health and Hygiene Controllers (HSAP)

There are regulatory implications for chemical and pesticide and fertiliser application; irrigation; animal and plant biosecurity and quarantine; animal welfare; the care and use of animals for scientific purposes; the use, application and storage of therapeutic and controlled substances; as well as the pharmaceutical industry.

Firearm licenses are required by Animal Control and Regulation Officers where required to euthanise animals.

Is it expected that your employment sector will be impacted by any medium-to-long term trends which will impact upon demand and/or supply (*excluding* costs associated with training, labour hire, and international sponsorship)?

Please provide evidence (e.g. data source, policy document) which substantiates these claims.

For example:

- New benchmarks for childcare centres mandate increased staff-to-child ratios and higher qualification standards for childcare workers.

Increasing demand from Asian markets is expected to drive demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers in agriculture over the long term. Recent improvements in opening up overseas export markets including Japan and South Korea as well as increasing focus on trade with China will play a significant role in boosting demand among the agricultural workforce.

Changes to skilled migration programmes can significantly affect labour supply of seasonal harvest workers. The sector relies on backpackers to meet peak labour needs during harvest season and the second year return visa, which requires workers to work in agriculture or other select industries in regional areas, is a critical element of success in meeting these labour needs. Other sectors are now competing for access to the second year return. If return work rights were broadened beyond the current arrangements, there is a real prospect that the industry would return to the severe labour shortages experienced in the period leading up to 2005.

Other examples include a recent unexplained decision to exclude 'planting' from work covered by the Harvest Labour Service, which is a barrier to access for seasonal workers.

Plans to revise the 457 visa programme have the potential to ease skilled labour demand in the agriculture sector if they are implemented in a way that allows access to workers who have the skills that the sector needs, when they are needed.

More broadly, the sector is working to address the effects of an ageing workforce by promoting agriculture in schools and growing farm gate returns to ensure that working in agriculture is an attractive career choice. See for example the NFF's National Agriculture Workforce Development Plan 2014 (www.nff.org.au/get/submissions/4624.pdf) and recent efforts through the Agriculture in Education Program to change perceptions of the sector for the next generation.

Please provide any other information you consider relevant evidence to support your submission

For example, you may know of some independent studies about your occupation that supports your advice to us.

Would you like to make any additional comments on the SOL?

Please see the below input from NFF member, Australian Pork Limited.

Labour and skill shortages face many industries in Australia however this issue is likely to worsen in the agrifood industries relative to other industries. The skills and labour shortages which affect Australian agricultural sectors have acute and chronic elements (Ball and Cody, (2011).

The Australian pork industry faces long-standing difficulties attracting and retaining suitably qualified labour. This is heightened by perceptions of the industry being a relatively unattractive career choice and the diminishing labour supply in regional Australia. As a result there are long term critical shortages of skilled piggery stock persons in addition to personnel with slaughtering, boning, slicing and butchery skills resulting in labour deficiencies in the processing sector.

The Australian pork industry recognises the difficulty in attracting and retaining suitably qualified labour in all industry sectors. The high component of temporary labour employed within the industry (including backpackers and working holiday makers) presents challenges in training

staff, given the inherently itinerant nature of such employees.

The Australian pork industry has suffered from a lack of suitably qualified employees, affecting both productivity and animal welfare outcomes. The ability to source suitably skilled workers from overseas is vital for producers to appropriately manage and grow their operations.

A study by the Centre for Regional Development found that geography has little impact on the nature of skilled labour shortages, however some patterns exist:

- Most regions have difficulties attracting and retaining skilled labour and labour generally.
- In many regions, agricultural businesses have experienced decline, mainly due to drought forcing staff retrenchment and many unskilled and skilled workers to leave the region (www.crd.uwa.edu.au/research/economic/workforce#top).
- Aging population
- Technological advancement

While the Broader agricultural industry labour force is in decline labour shortages are particularly pronounced in the key mining States of Western Australia and Queensland, where agriculture faces significant labour attrition to the mining industry given pay rates which are uncompetitive compared to the high salaries on offer in the resources sector.

Because of the increasingly sophisticated and technological nature of production and processing systems the pork industry requires suitably qualified people to be responsible for the management of nutritionally balanced feeding operations, monitoring growth rates and animal performance, artificial insemination, animal health and welfare and behaviour.

It is recommended that stock people working in piggeries have a minimum Certificate III in Agriculture (Pig Production). Consultation between industry and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection has determined a specific duty statement for a Senior Stockperson (Piggery), equivalent to ANZSCO level 4, with an AQF Certificate III or equivalent, and at least three years recent and relevant experience, or at least five years' experience. Industry expects that the use of overseas skilled workers will result in a skills transfer back to the Australian agricultural workforce which will help to replace skills lost in the industry through attrition.

The industry continues to have difficulty recruiting staff at all levels but in particular those with skills to meet the competency requirements for the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Pigs (MCOP), the Animal Welfare Act 2002, Animal Welfare (Pig Industry) Regulations 2010, and the industry's quality assurance program, the Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program (APIQ). Pigs must be cared for by personnel skilled in animal husbandry and who are competent to maintain the health and welfare of animals in accordance with the standards of this code or be under the direct supervision of such personnel.

Modern pork production systems and biosecurity protocols have also seen an increasing demand for personnel with skills in biosecurity, emergency pest and disease response, technical roles and ability to operate high tech equipment.

Improved levels of skills and knowledge are also required to address increased national and international standards in meat safety, meat quality and specific customer requirements which are underpinned by improved processing and supply chain skills.

The need for improved availability of skilled personnel is crucial for the industry to function effectively. A lack of competent and suitably qualified staff has significant negative effects on both productivity and animal welfare, animal health food safety and biosecurity and could potentially compromise the ability of the industry to meet legislative requirements.

The Australian pork industry has suffered from a lack of suitably qualified employees, affecting both productivity and animal welfare outcomes. The ability to source suitably skilled workers from overseas is vital for our producers to appropriately manage and grow their operations. This involves evolving job roles which require higher, technically oriented skills. The agrifood industry is at risk of production contraction over the next five years if skill shortages are not addressed (Ball and Cody, 2011).

Sources;

Ball, R. and Cody, M. 2011. Skills supply and the ANZSCO Codes: Urgent concerns and implications for agrifood industry sustainability. Primary Industries Skills Council.

Luke Condon, 2012, Agriculture workforce: time for action, ACIL Allen Consulting, viewed 05 November 2014, <<http://apo.org.au/node/31913>>.

Please provide the name, position and contact details of a person within your organisation who is willing to be contacted if any further information or follow-up is required.

Name *

Sarah McKinnon

Position *

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All information, **including name and address details**, contained in submissions will be made available to the public on the Department of Industry website unless you indicate that you would like all or part of your submission to remain in confidence. Automatically generated confidentiality statements in emails do not suffice for this purpose. Respondents who would like all or part of their submission to remain in confidence should provide this information **in an email to SOL@industry.gov.au** . Legal requirements, such as those imposed by the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, may affect the confidentiality of your submission.