



**Adrian Piccoli MP**  
Minister for Education  
**Katrina Hodgkinson MP**  
Minister for Primary Industries

---

**MEDIA RELEASE**

---

Thursday 26 July 2012

**PUTTING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING BACK ON THE AGENDA**

The NSW Government has appointed an independent expert to conduct a comprehensive study aimed at ensuring agricultural education and training efforts meet future industry needs, Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson and Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli announced today.

The study, which was recently announced by Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner, will be undertaken by the highly-respected Emeritus Professor Jim Pratley, the former Dean of Science and Agriculture at Charles Sturt University and the University's current Research Professor of Agriculture. Professor Pratley is also the secretary of the Australian Deans of Agriculture.

"When agriculture contributes around \$9 billion to the NSW economy every year, it is incumbent on us to ensure agricultural education and training in this State is second to none," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"The NSW Liberals and Nationals believe it is essential to put agricultural education and training firmly back on the agenda, and today's announcement reflects that commitment.

"Our agricultural industry in NSW provides food, fibre, raw materials and energy for Australia and the world.

"Agriculture impacts on all our lives – whether we live in the cities or in rural and regional NSW, a sustainable and innovative farm sector is critical."

Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli said the sector needs to be equipped with an appropriately educated, trained and qualified workforce.

"There is also a clearly identified need for our young students to gain an understanding of food and fibre production," Mr Piccoli said.

"Only recently, research revealed that three-quarters of Australian children in their final year of primary school believe cotton socks come from animals and alarmingly 27 per cent were convinced that yoghurt grows on trees.

“We also want to address the decline in enrolments for agriculture in the higher education sector.

“Once the review is completed the Minister for Primary Industries and I will take the necessary actions to ensure Government education and training institutions, research stations and other facilities are optimally positioned to respond to our agricultural industry’s needs.

“Promoting agriculture as a career path for our students is vitally important.

“Many students are not aware of the many opportunities available to them in the dynamic agricultural sector, from working on the land in traditional roles to working in exciting sectors such as winemaking, and even specialising in high tech, world class microbiology or nanotechnology.

“Skill shortages have been identified in the sector and if these are not addressed, both regional NSW and our overall State economy will be impacted.

“The review will consider how NSW government-owned agricultural teaching institutions can best be positioned to develop the State’s workforce capability.

“It will also examine the effectiveness of government-owned research facilities in identifying and supporting best-practice for the industry.”

A report is to be provided to the Minister for Education and Minister for Primary Industries by 30 June 2013.

The review Terms of Reference and further information about the review can be found at [www.det.nsw.edu.au/agricultural-review](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/agricultural-review).