

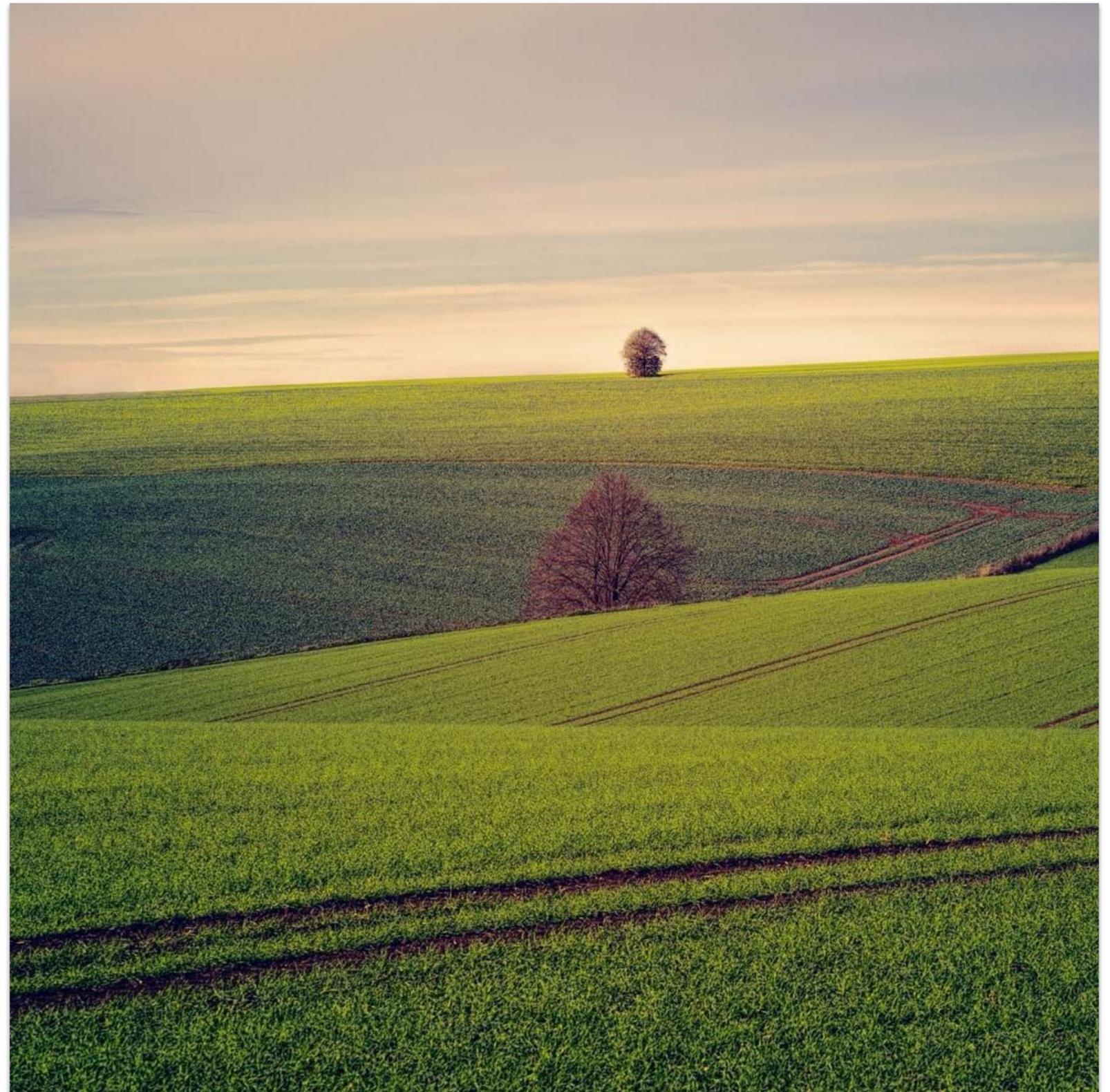
Farmers 2Founders

Supporting producers to lead industry innovation

2019-2020 Annual Report



Wine
Australia



We believe producers need to be at the centre of innovation

Agriculture is at a tipping point. The National Farmers Federation has an ambitious goal for Australian agriculture to reach \$100b by 2030, but climate variability, social license challenges, and plateauing productivity are all putting pressure on producers and our regional communities.

Technology has a key role to play in Australian agriculture accelerating towards this \$100b goal. The Precision2Decision report found that the adoption of digital agriculture could see more than \$20b added to the value of Australian production.¹

But adoption is slow, and we are at risk of failing to meet this goal. There are many reasons, but a key factor is that technology solutions often aren't solving real challenges for farmers. Solutions are being *pushed* into the sector, rather than being *pulled* in by users who see their potential to address specific challenges. This has led to frustration from farmers, who hear constantly about how technology can help them but have yet to see any benefit. **What if producers had a leading role in developing solutions, so the solutions would be fit for purpose?**

Value-adding also offers great opportunities for Australia's agricultural industries. However, these industries have traditionally relied on exporting to world commodity markets which has exposed them to declining terms of trade and massive shifts in consumer preferences.

Value adding can provide opportunities for farm diversification and employment, particularly in rural areas. But producers are often far removed from end consumers, and may lack the confidence and capability required to embark on the creation of new value-adding business ventures.



Sarah Nolet
Co-Founder

Dr Christine Pitt
Co-Founder

We created Farmers2Founders to change this



By empowering producers to more actively participate in the innovation process, we believe that we can get new solutions created and adopted that address the real industry challenges, and support producers to build new ventures that capture increased value and profitability.

This report demonstrates how **Farmers2Founders** are working with producers to target these gaps. Our pilot year, supported by Wine Australia, GRDC, MLA, AWI, and AgriFutures, as well as an Incubator Support Grant from Innovation and Science Australia, demonstrated strong demand from producers and industry.

We engaged directly with over **300 Australian primary producers** from across industries and from all states and territories, supported 25 producers to engage strategically with technology, and helped 32 producer-led ventures on their own technology and value-adding commercialization journey.

Thank you to our founding partners who backed the vision, and to the many other organisations who joined the journey, helping with outreach, venues, feedback, and more. Bringing the agrifood, and ag and foodtech ecosystem together in support of producer-led innovation has been a highlight of our work at Farmers2Founders, and we look forward to building on this in the coming years.

This report gives a glimpse into the program outcomes and learnings from the 2019-20 pilot year. In 2020-21, we plan to expand the reach of our programs, with the aim to directly support more than 100 producers in our programs over the course of the year.

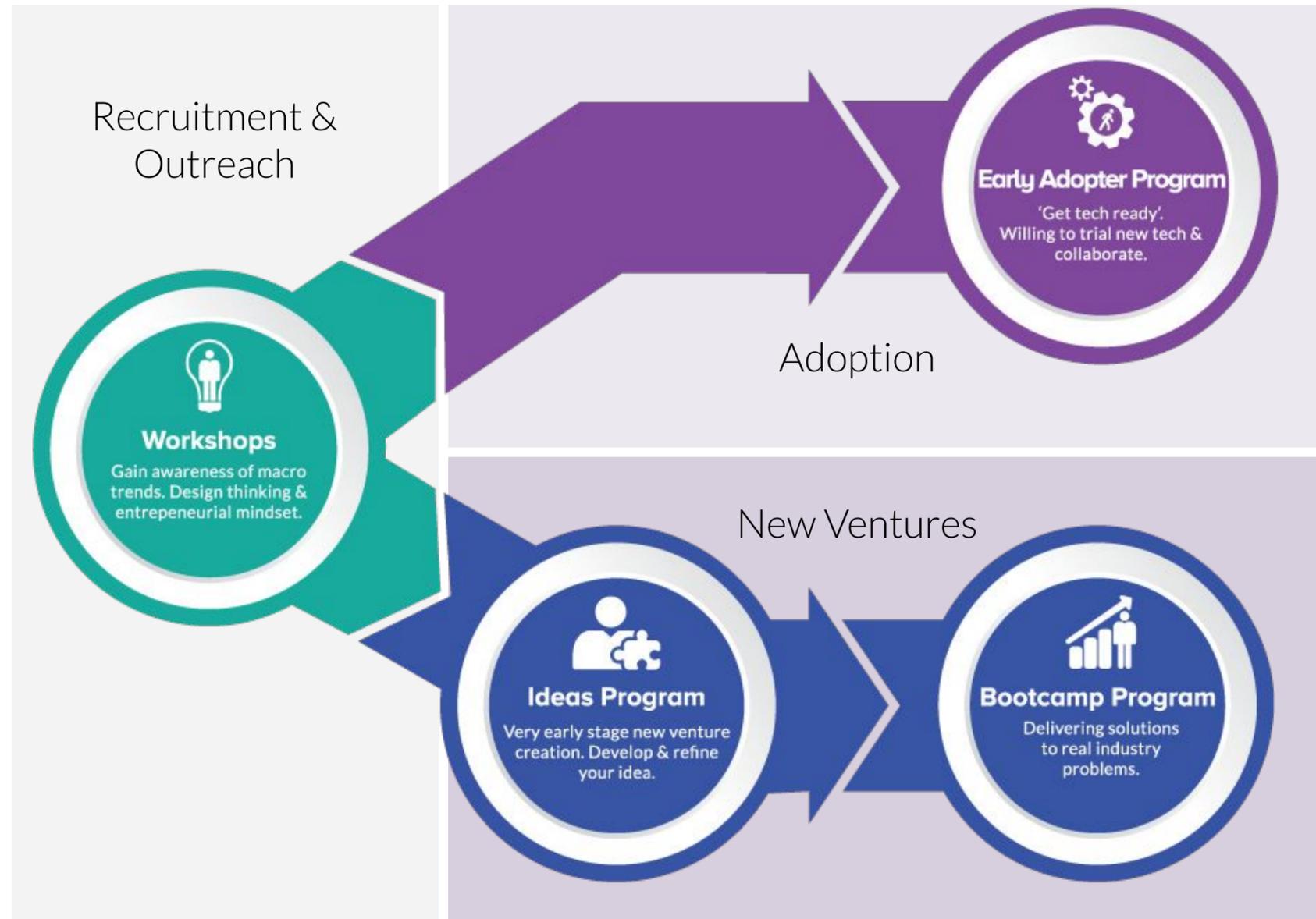
We are confident you will enjoy the stories inside, which showcase the breadth and depth of producer innovation happening all across Australia. We are thrilled to work everyday with so many innovative and resilient producers and are proud to share their stories with a broader audience.

-Sarah and Christine

Core Activities and Programs



Farmers2Founders supports primary producers across two pathways: the **Adoption** pathway for producers who want to be strategic, confident users of technology, and the **New Venture** pathway for emerging and established producer-led businesses.



In the pilot year, Farmers2Founders engaged with over 300 producers at workshops around the country.

The pilot Early Adopter Program supported 25 producer participants over a 3 month period to identify key technology goals and evaluate relevant technology tools.

Two pilot cohorts of the Ideas Program supporting a total of 25 producer teams with ideas for new ventures were delivered, as well as a Bootcamp Program supporting 8 established producer-led ventures to grow and serve new customers.

All activities and programs were cross-sectoral, with participating producers representing industries including wine, wool, broadacre, livestock, emerging industries, horticulture, sugar and more.

Snapshot of the year



Recruitment & Outreach

16
Workshops

400
Attendees

4.5m
Media
impressions

112
Eligible
applications
to programs

Adoption

Early Adopter Program

4
Challenge
areas

16
Hours of
workshops

65%
report being more
likely to engage with
technology

New Ventures

Ideas Program

350
Customer
interviews

24%
Average
increase in
confidence

Bootcamp Program

23
New jobs
created

50%
Average
revenue growth

Powered by our Foundational Partners



Wine Australia



With support from the Federal Government's
Incubator Support Initiative



02

Adoption Pathway

Early Adopter Program

Early Adopter Program Overview

The Early Adopter Program supports producers to search for and evaluate high potential technologies matched to the producer's unique needs and capabilities.

Producers identify their priority 'challenge area', and are guided through a process to find, filter, and pilot technologies which can help them solve on-farm problems.

Producers graduate the program feeling more confident, armed with the tools to be more strategic about finding, selecting, and engaging with agtech so that they can adopt technologies to improve their profitability and well-being.

They also gain experience interacting directly with agtech vendors, including startups, and exposure to new ways of engaging with the agtech community.



"The Early Adopter Program has really assisted me in identifying where I'm at in my agtech adoption journey. This program is empowering farmers to be more innovative with agtech in their businesses, and the advantages of being an early adopter are so widespread".

- **Belinda Lay**, WA grain and wool producer
Early Adopter Program #1

Program Framework & Activities



Over multiple workshops, producers identify their key challenges to be solved, review the available solutions, and develop personalised criteria to evaluate the solutions on. The image below illustrates the stages of the adoption process that the producer is guided through, with tailored tools and tactics for each stage shared in the challenge-based workshops.

In the post-pilot year, an additional “tech audit” step will be added as the introductory stage of the program.



Structure

- Remote learning program over 4 months with support from F2F coaches
- Structured, challenged-based workshops and peer-to-peer learning environment
- Tools, tips, and case studies of best practice tech adoption

Inclusions

- Curated technology vendor database
- Training to engage with tech companies to ensure solutions are 'fit for purpose'
- Tools to de-risk the process of searching for & filtering technologies
- Community of like-minded producers to share tips, stories & lessons.

Early Adopter Program Pilot Results



Outcomes

Producers graduate the program feeling more confident, armed with the tools to be more strategic about finding, selecting, and engaging with agtech so that they can adopt technologies to improve their profitability and well-being.

They gain experience interacting directly with agtech vendors including startups, and exposure to new ways of engaging with the agtech community.

Industries

- 10 wool growers
- 9 grain growers
- 10 livestock and dairy farmers
- 13 mixed cropping producers
- 2 grape growers
- 4 horticulture farmers
- 1 sugarcane farmer

**Some producers are involved in more than 1 industry*

Summary

Pilot program: 25 producers

Priority challenge areas covered in the pilot Early Adopter Program:

- Connectivity
- Remote water monitoring
- Livestock monitoring
- Lack of a centralised data management platform

State	Participants
NSW	8
VIC	5
QLD	5
SA	3
WA	4

"Since the connectivity workshop, I have already approached 2 startups and begun conversations - the framework has really helped to motivate and encourage me to get out there and begin discussions."

- Early Adopter Program #1 participant



03

New Ventures Pathway

Ideas Program & Bootcamp

Ideas Program Overview

The Ideas Program is a 3 month program for producers who have an idea for a new off-farm business, but aren't sure if it's worth pursuing or how to get started.

Over the 12 weeks, producers are introduced to lean startup principles and tools, supported to engage with potential customers, and ultimately given the tools to create a prototype they can show to customers.

Teams graduate with clarity on the viability of their proposed business idea, access to resources and support if they continue to pursue the business, and the skills & know-how to test new business ideas in future.

During the pilot year, Farmers2Founders ran two cohorts of the Ideas Program, supporting a total of 25 producer-led teams from around Australia.



“The program helped me to take a broader look at my business, and how my technology can help to solve an industry problem. I got good insights into what my next steps will be and was able to develop new business and marketing skills.”

- Marian McGann, NSW sheep farmer & creator of MyPocketMate Ideas Program #1

Program Framework & Activities



Over the Ideas Program, teams completed three phases of work as they tested and refined their idea.

In the first phase, customer research, teams interview up to 30 potential customers to understand how their proposed solution compares to existing alternatives. In the next phase solution design, teams refine their product or service from customer feedback. In the final phase, customer testing, teams prepare a mockup of their product and present it to customers to gage their response.

The three step process gets teams to successfully demonstrate demand for their proposed product and be ready to soft launch at the end of the program.

Structure

- 3 x full day workshop sessions
- Program #2 delivered virtually due to COVID restrictions
- Fortnightly individual coaching sessions with F2F coaches
- Fortnightly group content with expert mentors and coaches

Inclusions

- \$3,000 matched grant
- Travel stipend to attend in-person events
- Tools, resources, and access to a national community of progressive producers including the F2F alumni network

“We were attracted to the Farmers2Founders Ideas Program because it allowed us an opportunity to work with like-minded farmers with a similar vision, who were also on new venture creation journeys.”

- Jodie-Lee Lawless, QLD beef producer & creator of Lawless Beef Co Ideas Program #1

Ideas Program Pilot Year Results



Summary of programs:

- Two 12-week cohorts of 12 and 13 producer teams respectively
- Selected from 88 applications from 6 states

Participant summary:

- 14 agtech teams & 11 value-add/food innovation teams
- 14 male and 16 female participants
- 17 commodity farmers and 8 small-scale farmers

Top areas where producers reported gains from the program:

- Confidence in talking to customers to understand their pain points
- Learning new digital tools
- Confidence knowing how I am differentiated from competitors
- Engaging with other participants in the agtech ecosystem

Industries	Participants
MLA	1
GRDC	8
AWI	6
Wine	5
AgriFutures	3
Other	2

“Farmer2Founders really taught me the value of testing my assumptions and deeply understanding the customer.

For any producers who have a plan for a product, this program and the principles in it are a really valuable experience that will help you avoid common mistakes that are really easy to make, and improve your chance of creating a profitable business sooner.”

***- Margaret Wilson, Tea tree farmer at Bryn Hill
Ideas Program #1***

Ideas Program Case Study Phillipa Lawson



Phillipa Lawson and her husband Skeet are red lentil farmers in Pinnaroo, South Australia. Phillipa came into the Ideas Program with an idea for a high protein, gluten-free flour made from lentils.

Through research conducted during the program, Phillipa was able to pinpoint her customers and collect evidence of their problems. Through this, she gained the confidence and know-how to pursue the product and business.

Following the program, Phillipa now has her products stocked in a local shop and is about to launch her online shop selling 1kg bags of high protein, gluten-free lentil flour.

Phillipa Lawson, SA

Ideas Program #2: Value added stream
Supported by: GRDC



“My biggest takeaway from this course is that it's okay to pivot, to fail, reflect, evaluate and adjust. I feel much more confident to reach out when I don't know or understand a concept!”

Ideas Program Case Study Penny Schulz & Jo Williams



“Agents are often held up as the bad guy that everyone wants to disrupt. But a great agent is worth their weight in gold. We think that our product can be a ‘win win’, helping agents do their jobs better so they can help their client producers better.”

Penny and Jo are livestock producers in South Australia. They joined the Ideas Program with an idea to develop a meta-search engine for livestock sales. They quickly realised that they did not have a way to incentivise agents to participate.

After speaking to more than 30 agents, they shifted their idea to a product to help agents improve their workflow and manage their client relationships with greater ease. Now Penny & Jo are building a first version of the product, and testing it with a group of interested agents.

Penny Schulz & Jo Williams, SA

Ideas Program #1: Agtech stream
Supported by: MLA



“We wouldn’t be here without the guidance and coaching we received from Farmers2Founders. The expertise and level of support we received really blew us away.”

Ideas Program Case Study Terry Sim



Terry Sim, VIC

Ideas Program #2: Agtech Stream
Supported by: AWI



Terry Sim is a sheep producer in NSW. He joined the program with an idea for a modification to a sheep gate that could reduce the incidence of animal injury and death in sheep yards.

Over the course of the program, he tested his concept with a range of agents and producers, making changes to the design of the gate to match the feedback and requirements. At the end of the Ideas program, he commissioned a prototype from a local engineering firm to be trialled by a potential customer.

“The Ideas Program has a very different way of approaching the process of developing a new business. I found talking to customers about my product very valuable.”

Bootcamp Program Overview

The Bootcamp is an ‘accelerator’ program for producer-led agtech, foodtech, or value-adding businesses. The program helps existing businesses accelerate their growth through developing new channels and reaching new customers.

Teams learn from sales and marketing experts how to craft messaging, create strategies, and build processes to systematically gain new customers.

The program centred around two intensive in-person sessions (pre-COVID), or “bootcamps,” where the participants were taught growth tools and concepts, from digital marketing and pitching to product management and pricing.

The inaugural Bootcamp cohort ran from November 2019 to March 2020, with 8 producer-led teams selected from 23 applications.



“There are good ideas out there in agriculture, but farmers might not know how to take them forward or might not be achieving the things they could. Farmers2Founders helps uncover these ideas and support these farmers.”

- David Ricardo, grains farmer and creator of FarmServiceManager Bootcamp #1

Program Framework & Activities



The Bootcamp Program works with agtech, foodtech or new food businesses with an existing product and customers. The program focuses on helping these businesses expand from their existing customers and channels and increase their reach and revenue.

The program begins by having the companies identify their existing customer segments, value proposition and channels. The teams create hypotheses of new channels and/or customer segments to target. Coaches support the teams to test these hypotheses, and learn new tools and skills to scale up their sales and marketing efforts efficiently.

Teams graduate with a new set of skills for the next phase of their business growth and increased connection to the full breadth of the agrifood innovation ecosystem.

Pilot Bootcamp Structure

- 4 day in-person kickoff, featuring guest speakers and access to the agrifood innovation community (pre-COVID)
- 3 month curriculum of sales & marketing training
- Ongoing coaching support
- 2-day wrap-up workshop and evokeAG participation

Inclusions

- \$10k matched grant and travel stipend
- Pitch Night at evokeAG with an audience of 150+ industry representatives, experts and entrepreneurs
- Access to the F2F network of expert mentors, entrepreneurs and alumni
- Discounted access to key growth tools such as HubSpot, LawPath, and AWS

Bootcamp Program Pilot Year Results



Summary of activities:

- One cohort of 8 producer-led teams, selected from 23 applications from 6 states
- 8 days in person plus remote support over 3+ months
- evokeAG showcase & pitch night to 150+ attendees

Participant summary:

- 4 agtech teams & 4 value-add teams
- 7 males and 8 female participants
- 4 commodity farmers and 4 small-scale farmers

Notable results:

- Agtech teams on average doubled their monthly growth through the program
- Four companies have gone on to secure external investment totalling >\$500K
- One company secured a \$100,000 contract with a cornerstone client in their industry
- Value-add teams had on average revenue increase of 20%+ following the program
- 23 new jobs have been created by the companies in the 6 months following the program



Meet the cohort



Using white garlic that is cooked at a low temperature and low humidity for 30 days, [Garlicious Grown](#) produces award winning black garlic products such as salad dressings, aolis and paste.



BitWise Agronomy provides automated crop analysis for row horticulture using side-on cameras and computer vision.



[Raw Food Hub](#) brings together produce from certified and small local organic farms to sell direct to consumers in custom boxes.



Training Paddock helps employers track and standardise employee skills and qualifications, bringing transparency, compliance, and efficiency to skills-based employment.



[QCamel](#) is the world's first and only organic certified camel dairy company, producing a range of milk and skin care products.



[Farm Service Manager \(FSM\)](#) is a digital logbook that helps farmers manage their machinery service records.



[FarmSimple](#) is a cloud-based farm management system for broadacre farming operations, helping managers make better decisions and perform all record keeping activities in one place.



[Outback Lamb](#) produces single origin, pasture-raised lamb. Outback Lamb is developing value-add products to align with consumer demands, starting with a range of lamb sausage rolls.



Agtech 

Value Add 

Case Study: QCamel

Lauren and Peter Brisbane

Farm: Camels

Where: Queensland

Supported by  **AgriFutures**
Australia

QCamel is the world's first certified organic camel dairy farm, based in the Glasshouse Mountains in Queensland. QCamel produce award winning milk, cheese, yoghurt, chocolates and powdered milk products.

QCamel joined the Bootcamp for support to launch their new camel milk based skincare line, utilising the healing benefits of the milk blended with native Australian botanical extracts. Their key focus was getting the product into international markets, particularly Asia.

Over the course of the Bootcamp, QCamel developed their distribution strategy, finalized the packaging and pricing for the skincare line and continued to grow their local food and dairy sales. Following the program, QCamel successfully signed an agreement with Singapore's largest personal care distributor to market the product across ASEAN.

"F2F gave us the ability to break down our business into the key components and define each portion, ultimately allowing us to then build the plan and go forward. We now feel in a better position to meet the expectations of both investors and buyers. Being involved with highly motivated and driven personnel, who genuinely wanted us to succeed, was a huge highlight of the program."



Case Study: Bitwise Agronomy

Fiona Turner & Aran Elkington

Farm: Wine

Where: Tasmania

Supported by **Wine
Australia**

BitWise Agronomy's product Greenview uses side-on cameras and computer vision to make vineyard management easier, allowing managers to know what's happening without having to physically inspect every row.

Bitwise joined the Bootcamp program with their Greenview product in development. Over the course of the program, Fee and Aran worked with the coaches to refine their sales pitch and pricing model, and develop the launch strategy for the product.

Bitwise was successful in securing 6 pilot customers for the 2020 vintage, including a contract with a large global winemaker. Off the back of this success, Fiona & Aran moved to full-time on the business and raised more than \$150,000 in investment for the company.

"The biggest gain [for us] was in the confidence that we are on the right track in terms of our business model. Having access to a trusted mentor who can validate our thoughts was a huge benefit, and the way they pushed us to overcome obstacles was central to BitWise's progress during the three months. The program really helped to validate who our customers were, and help to build out our pitching skills in order to attract new customers and capital."



Case Study: Garlicious Grown

Cathy Owen & Jenny Daniher

Farm: Garlic

Where: Braidwood, NSW

Supported by **Farmers**
2Founders

Using white garlic that is cooked at a low temperature and low humidity for 30 days, Garlicious Grown produces a line of award winning, chemical free, gourmet black garlic products such as salad dressings, aoli's and pastes.

Cathy and Jenny came into the Bootcamp looking to grow their production capacity and enter new markets. A significant barrier for Garlicious Grown is the lack of public awareness and understanding of what black garlic was and how it can be used. Through the Bootcamp, Cathy and Jenny focused on getting black garlic onto more menus, and pursued a strategy to increase their reach into the food service industry.

Garlicious Grown has used the Bootcamp to expand their segments, including expanding into the meal kit market. At the conclusion of the program Garlicious secured an order for 35,000 units from meal kit company HelloFresh.

“The program really pushed us to go out and talk to customers- even though this is something we did quite frequently before the program, we were forced to focus on their pain points, rather than what they thought of the product. This helped to create more effective marketing position statements and allowed us to dial in on our value proposition.”



Case Study: Farm Service Manager

David Ricardo

Farm: Dryland cotton and grains

Where: Walgett, NSW

Supported by



Farm Service Manager (FSM) is a digital logbook that helps farmers manage their machinery service records. The app helps growers manage the service history for all makes and models of machinery, thereby increasing resale value, preventative maintenance, workplace health and safety, and ultimately boosting productivity across the farm.

David and Sue joined the program with around 650 customers, and a desire to expand the reach of the app and more aggressively acquire customers. Throughout the program, David and Sue started to use advertising platforms including Twitter, Facebook and Google Adwords to drive more traffic to FarmSimple. They also set up their internal marketing and relationship management system, HubSpot, to allow them to scale their customer engagement.

As a result, FarmServiceManager has doubled the number of new signups per month, and increased the number of customers to nearly 1000 farms.

“The F2F coaches were really outstanding.... They helped to brainstorm new ideas and bring to light different perspectives that I hadn’t considered before. They introduced smarter ways of handling planning and making decisions.”





03

**Partnerships
& Outreach**



Workshops and Recruitment

Farmers2Founders uses in-person and virtual workshops and webinars as a key strategy to build awareness of Farmers2Founders programs and recruit potential candidates.

In the pilot year Farmers2Founders ran 16 workshops and two 'roadshows' in regional areas, working with local partners to promote the events to producers. The workshops ranged from commercialisation-focused 'masterclasses' to interactive half-day tech adoption sessions.

These events attracted more than 400 attendees, including over 200 producers.

F2F also invested heavily in PR and social media, with more than 50 articles on Farmers2Founders and participants running over the year, and a total of 4.5m media impressions on Farmers2Founders content.



Partnering for industry impact

Farmers2Founders works with national and regional partners to offer training and support pathways for producers in their communities with new venture ideas or technology challenges.

Foundational Industry Partners

Farmers2Founders' foundational partners are rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs). These organisations exist to support innovation in agricultural production and are funded by levies on the value of production in their rural sector.

“Growers often devise practical solutions and we want to encourage them to think about developing their ideas, for the benefit of others across the industry. Working with Farmers2Founders allows us to create pathways for growers who can lead the way for the industry, and develop new solutions for others to adopt.”

GRDC

Foundational Industry Partners



Partnering for industry impact



For Industry Partners, Farmers2Founders is a way to target industry impact through capability development of producers, and accelerating the creation and adoption of new innovations.

Key outcomes Farmers2Founders delivers for Industry Partners

- Build the capacity of producers to engage with innovation through technology and entrepreneurship
- Develop a community for innovative producers to connect and share their knowledge
- Showcase the stories and insights of producers successfully innovating for the benefit of the industry
- Accelerate the adoption and commercialisation of solutions that solve industry problems



“The Early Adopter Program is an important initiative to us because we see that adoption of technology is still slow across the industry. The program is helping us to identify the barriers for our growers and address them. We can make it easier for wool growers to find technology that can help them, and support their development of skills to work with startups.”

AWI

FARMERS2FOUNDERS.COM

“We supported a company through the Bootcamp, Bitwise Agronomy, that is showing significant potential for impact in the wine sector. The progress of BitWise is exciting because they are already delivering results for the grape and wine community and their success creates a pathway for research findings to get adopted by industry.”

Wine Australia

Partnering for local impact

For regional partners, Farmers2Founders offers additional resources to support local innovators, building capacity for innovation and providing access to national programs and networks.

These partnerships are bespoke to the needs of the partner and the local community. Partnerships in the pilot year ranged from collaboration on recruitment and promotion through to highly customised workshops and integrating with existing conferences.

Key outcomes Farmers2Founders delivers for regional partners:

- Build the capacity of local producers to engage with innovation through technology and entrepreneurship
- Provide local innovators access to a national community and programs to connect, grow, and share their knowledge
- Create new career opportunities and pathways for job creation through supporting local entrepreneurship
- Gain access to a growing body of best practice technology engagement materials and adoption support



“Farmers2Founders programs are a fantastic addition to what we can offer our companies. Two local companies, FarmServiceManager and FarmSimple, were accepted into the Bootcamp after attending a Farmers2Founders workshop we helped to promote. The Bootcamp helped those companies really go to the next level and move the teams towards full time in the business. Best of all, those producers can now bring back those learnings and networks to help others locally.”

**University of New England SMART Region
Incubator**

Partnering for local impact



Some of our regional partners



“We collaborated with Farmers2Founders to deliver our Tackling Tough Times Together program, with a focus on encouraging innovation within our region. Sarah delivered three engaging workshops and our growers responded with positive reviews. It opened up opportunities to discuss new technology and entrepreneurial ideas which may alleviate constraints being faced within our farming communities.”

- **Laura Kaylock, Project Officer**
Western Murray Land Improvement Group



04

Upcoming Activities
2020-2021

2020-2021 Program calendar

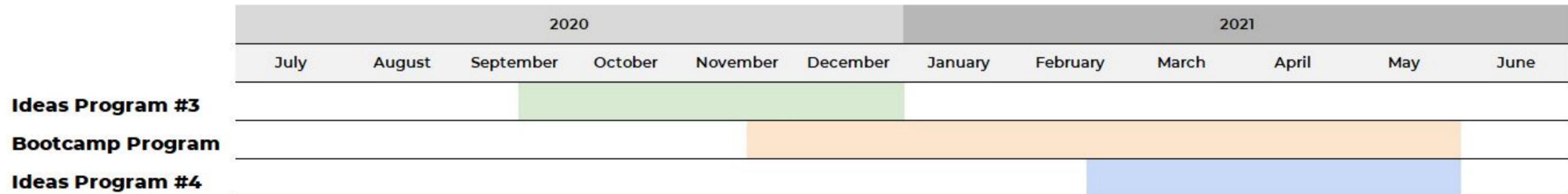


In 2020-21 F2F will run 2 cohorts of the Ideas Program, and updated versions of the Bootcamp and Early Adopter Programs.

The Bootcamp will extend to 6 months duration, with additional support and training delivered to participating teams.

The updated Early Adopter Program will include a tech-readiness audit phase, and remote support to take producers through a technology selection process targeted to their selected challenge area. The program will continue to develop challenge-specific adoption tools, and will pilot new formats of work with regional partners to offer tailored access to the program.

F2F 2020/21 Timeline Project Delivery



“Farmers2Founders changed our life. It was such a catalyst for us and came at a pivotal moment. We really needed that direction, the community and mentoring to help us pivot to the right direction.”

Thank You

*Fiona Turner, Bitwise Agronomy
Bootcamp #1*

FARMERS2FOUNDERS.COM