



Award recognises farm biosecurity excellence

Are you a farmer who is passionate about fending off pests and eliminating disease? Or do you know a farmer who is at the forefront of keeping Australia pest- and disease-free?

Then you can nominate for the 2011 *Biosecurity Farmer of the Year*, but you'll need to be quick; nominations close on Monday July 18, 2011.

The *Biosecurity Farmer of the Year Awards* are part of the *Australian Farmer of the Year Awards* co-hosted by Kondinin Group and ABC Rural, with separate awards up for grabs in the categories of plant biosecurity and animal biosecurity.

Supported by Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia, the *Australian Farmer of the Year Awards* showcase the professional, innovative and sustainable approach of today's agricultural producers and, in particular, recognise farmers demonstrating best-practice on-farm biosecurity management.

With biosecurity vital to the profitability, sustainability and trading future of Australia's agricultural industries, we want to celebrate the key role being played by Australian farmers in preserving a disease- and pest-free environment.

The 2010 plant *Biosecurity Farmer of the Year*, Kununurra fruit and vegetable grower Lachlan Dobson, said winning the award had helped him increase awareness about the importance of biosecurity.

"The accolade opened up new doors of opportunity to not only continue improving biosecurity practices within my own operation but also to keep spreading the biosecurity message."

Mr Dobson's rigorous on-farm biosecurity practices include ensuring all farm entrants, including staff, abide by the highest farm hygiene standards. Over more than a decade he has mobilised community support for biosecurity across the Ord River Irrigation Area and was a leader in the development of the *Western Australian Banana Industry Biosecurity Plan*.

"Keeping Australia free of further pest and disease incursions is crucial to the longevity of Australian agriculture – we cannot afford to be complacent when it comes to biosecurity," Mr Dobson said.

2010 animal *Biosecurity Farmer of the Year* and *Wool Producer of the Year* Michael Blake, from Victoria, said he entered the competition when he was nominated by a local agriculture officer.

"It is a great feeling to be recognised by your peers for your efforts," Mr Blake said.

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Australian Farmer of the Year



Diversification Farmer of the Year



Biosecurity Farmer of the Year



Livestock Producer of the Year



Young Farmer of the Year



Farm-industry Leader of the Year



Wool Producer of the Year



Grain Grower of the Year





Mr Blake, whose external parasite control program means he no longer uses chemicals on his flock, said the prize had enabled him to share his biosecurity experience.

“Over the years I have been dedicated to trying new and innovative ideas and processes – and it’s something I enjoy sharing with others for the overall benefit of the Australian agricultural industry.”

Both 2010 winners urged farmers to put modesty aside and enter the *Biosecurity Farmer of the Year* awards.

“The award process is very worthwhile. It allowed me to meet with like-minded people and to expand my networks within the industry,” Mr Dobson said.

“And most importantly, the awards are ensuring biosecurity remains a priority issue on the industry’s agenda.”

Mr Blake said demonstrating successful biosecurity practices were not only part of responsible farming – it could also be great for business.

“Awards such as these are invaluable tools for marketing your products.”

The awards promote a positive image of Australian farmers, encouraging people to take on agriculture as a career choice.

Nominations opened on Wednesday, June 1 and close on Monday, July 18.

To nominate or find out more information, visit www.kondinigroup.com.au or contact Kondinin Group on 1800 677 761.

- Biosecurity Farmer of the Year** — Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia
- Farmer of the Year** — Kondinin Group and ABC Rural
- Young Farmer of the Year** — Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Diversification Farmer of the Year** — RIRDC
- Farm Industry Leader of the Year** — Rabobank
- Wool Producer of the Year** — AWI
- Livestock Producer of the Year** — Elders
- Grain Grower of the Year** — GRDC

The awards dinner will be held on Wednesday September 7, 2011 at the Westin Hotel, Sydney. Finalists will be invited to attend the event, with associated costs covered.

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