



# Diploma in Agriculture



Do you want to develop practical, hands on skills to give you a head start in your agriculture career?



## WHY COMPLETE A QUALIFICATION

The Diploma of Agriculture (course code RTE50103) is a qualification appropriate for people commencing a career in agriculture. The most important goal of the diploma in agriculture is to prepare participants with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude to become a good farmer in a changing economic, social and technological environment. The course will provide new skills and knowledge as well as recognising those you already have. Course participants have commented:

"I am better equipped to communicate with my father and introduce new ideas to our production systems."

"We are developing better succession plans so I know I have a secure career. This gives me the enthusiasm to work hard and plan for a long term future in agri-industries."

"I am developing a better understanding of how the production systems and business systems must work together to ensure a sustainable future. I am still not that keen on the book work but understand the importance of gaining skills in this area."

"Gaining formal recognition for my existing skills has enabled me to improve my off farm work opportunities in slow times to help support the business."

## MEETING COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course requires completion of 10 units selected to meet qualification packaging rules. Units are likely to be selected from those listed below or others to suit your specific needs and agreed by RST. During the delivery of this course it will transition to the Diploma of Agriculture (course code AHC50110). Training is provided in mixed mode delivery utilising open learning, on line and face to face workshops and on job logbooks. Any face to face workshops are negotiated at a time and place to suit the participants.

## COURSE CONTENT

### 1. FIELD CROP PRODUCTION

#### Develop production plans for crops

Production plans are the schedule or recipe of how crops and/or enterprises are managed. Learn how the variables and factors that go into generating these plans are managed. These include crop protection and monitoring techniques, diagnostic tools such as yield targets and WUE, and guides such as farm and crop rotation plans.

#### Manage integrated crop and pasture production

Whilst managing crops or enterprises, it is critical to ensure a sustainable method of operation that considers plant selection, soil conditions, moisture availability, grazing capacities, nutritional status, weed, pest and disease control. Infield case studies involve investigating the budgetary constraints for crop and pasture production and developing production targets for crop and pasture types.

#### Manage agricultural crop production

Develop a cropping program for an enterprise; plan for crop establishment; monitor growing crops; provide inputs and carry out cultural practices as required. Complete the production cycle by developing a plan for the crop harvest; monitoring crop yields and evaluating production performance.

#### Manage the harvest of agricultural crops

Discuss the process of planning for and implementing the harvest of agricultural and horticultural crops. Estimate crop yield and value and monitor for harvest readiness. You will plan for the resources and logistics that will be required for harvest, negotiate insurance and equipment supply contracts, develop risk management procedures for Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), climate and fire risk.

#### Enterprise data management-collect and manage data

Crucial to the successful management of an enterprise is the way we interpret, analyse and manage the data that is generated within the system including the process of identifying and collecting appropriate data for analysis.

### 2. MINIMISING RISK IN FARMING ENTERPRISES

#### Minimise risk in the use of chemicals

In this section we will explore all the procedures and requirements that influence chemical use and its management and evaluate and review the risks associated with their use. You also develop an understanding of chemical modes of action, IPM and pesticide resistance. Formal chemical accreditation is also achieved. RST will issue Spray Solutions accreditation to allow the purchase and use of S7 chemicals.

#### Plan and manage a stored grain program

Storing grain on farm has become a much more significant component of the traditional farm enterprise. Develop an understanding of the potential of the stored grain industry and the practicalities of storage as part of a farm enterprise.

#### Plan and manage long term weed pest and disease control

Plan and manage long-term weed, pest and/or disease control in crops. Interpret information on pest and weed numbers, density and control, establish processes/strategies, procedures and controls for long-term weed, pest and/or disease control.

#### Develop climate risk management strategies

Assess climate and weather and improve the sustainability of land under production. Apply a range of sustainable practices leading to the long-term economic viability of land under production. Develop an understanding of methods, procedures and technologies required to achieve sustainable outcomes within budgetary and climate constraints.

**LONG TERM GROWTH IN THE AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR  
REQUIRES INNOVATION, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND  
STRATEGIC PLANNING, COUPLED WITH SUSTAINABLE LAND  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.**



### 3. LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

#### Manage Livestock Production

In developing plans for livestock production, it is important to be environmentally aware, and mindful of the health and welfare of the livestock whilst maximising the production capacity of the farm. Develop and implement plans for livestock production using information from a broad range of sources which are designed to comply with all the legislative and regulatory requirements to operate a viable livestock enterprise.

### 4. SOILS – OUR KEY RESOURCE

#### Develop a soil use map for a property

There is huge variation in the quality of Australian soils, so to manage this variability soil maps are used to efficiently identify appropriate land use. Determine soil characteristics and develop maps to assist in making decisions about suitability of enterprises. Infield activities can include soil characterisation and landscape analysis.

#### Develop and implement sustainable land use strategies

Assess land requirements and improve sustainability of land under production. Apply a range of sustainable growing practices to the industry's code of practice and conduct, consistent with State and Territory legislation leading to long-term economic viability of land under production. Develop an understanding of methods, procedures and technologies required to achieve sustainable outcomes within budgetary constraints.

#### Monitor and manage soils for production

Understand the process of monitoring and managing soils in an agricultural or horticultural production environment and define the standard required to: interpret soil analytical data for the purposes of developing management or production plans, develop and conduct soil improvement programs, review and analyse ongoing soil monitoring programs and document the soil management plan or production plan.

### 5. WHOLE FARM PLANNING

#### Develop a whole farm plan

A farm usually consists of a series of competing enterprises and developing a whole farm plan will integrate the different enterprises to operate more efficiently. This will require knowledge of SWOT analysis, sustainable land management practices, property planning processes and approaches, land capabilities, conservation management strategies, legal requirements and risk management.

#### Plan production for the whole land / farm based business

A farming business consists not only of enterprises but encompasses all financial, human and land resources and assets that are associated with the venture. It includes the need to balance production and financial decisions with the organisation's goals and values. Planning production requires knowledge in areas such as sustainable land use principles and practices, and the application of analytical skills to a range of personal, financial and natural resources.

#### Implement a machinery management system

Implementing a machinery management system requires knowledge of seasonal operations, their associated costs, storage and maintenance requirements.

#### Manage machinery and equipment

Managing machinery and equipment allows the ability to: develop machinery and equipment operation and maintenance procedures in compliance with environmental Codes of Practice and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and hazardous substances legislation; schedule, supervise and record the service and maintenance of machinery and equipment; monitor machinery and equipment operations and maintenance and review risk assessments periodically to ensure a safe operating environment; assess staff capability in machinery maintenance and operation and provide training and mentoring; calculate the total running cost of machines.

### 6. UTILISE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

#### Develop and review a business plan

Develop and review a business plan for an agribusiness enterprise. Apply your knowledge and skills to determine the scope of the business plan, prepare the business plan, determine goals and document, monitor and review the business plan.

#### Market products and services

Understand the requirements to market products and services in a rural business. Plan and implement a marketing strategy, and monitor and improve market performance. Collect, analyse and use data to develop and monitor a marketing plan.

#### Negotiate and monitor contracts and commercial agreements

Understand the process of negotiating contracts and/or commercial agreements with clients and others. Develop the ability to establish agreements with sources external to the enterprise, complete contract documentation, and monitor the performance of contracts.

#### Develop a marketing plan

Learn how to research marketing options, apply skills and knowledge to analyse market conditions and access and evaluate advice related to your business commodities.

### 7. PEOPLE/STAFF MANAGEMENT AND OHS

#### Establish and maintain the enterprise OHS program

Source appropriate OHS information for the business, identify hazards and determine risk management processes. A range of OHS templates are provided to allow the development of OHS policies and work procedures as required by legislation and to develop an OHS program outlining OHS responsibilities and duties within the business.

#### Manage staff

Develop the processes of managing staff in an agricultural, horticultural or land management enterprise. Develop the ability to identify skill requirements, prepare task descriptions and person specifications, arrange employment of workforce members, and implement OHS priorities and procedures.

## THE DELIVERY METHOD

The course will use a variety of lecturers and support people. Each student is treated as an individual and RST work with you to establish your specific needs. This means that you only do what you want/need to do to complete the qualification.

After your initial phone call or email to express interest your training experience will start with a personal telephone call from the RST team to determine your existing skills and possibilities for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfer (this is recognition of other formal training you may have done). You will be guided in the requirements to upload evidence of your existing skills to an on line tracker which enables transparent management and monitoring of your progress. This process is completed at a time to suit you and from your own home/business.

The "gaps" that are identified from the RPL process will determine the training that you need to complete to achieve the qualification. Units selected for the gap training may be completed in a variety of ways such as:

- Open Learning. Student resources and assessments are provided. You have access to a personal tutor by phone/email as you complete the work at your own pace
- Go to Meeting. Students from any location in Australia who are completing the same unit "meet" on video via their computer using Go to Meeting. The lecturer conducts the sessions and case studies are completed to demonstrate competence. The Go to Meeting timetable is set with agreement from all students.
- Face to Face workshops. Dependant on student numbers and location, RST may conduct local workshops on topics to enhance your learning. RST works with your local group to select the best expert presenters to suit your needs.
- On job logbooks. Utilising logbooks provided by RST, students record their work activities, skills and achievements applicable to a unit of competence.

## AN EXAMPLE OF PRESENTERS

### AGRONOMY EXPERTS

Passionate and active participants in the rural sector, with a long term history with major companies such as Landmark. Our agronomists often have an academic research background in areas such as plant breeding. Formal qualifications will typically include a Bachelor in Agricultural Science / Graduate Diploma in Agricultural Business coupled with practical hands on skills. They will be familiar with products, pesticide application principles and general agricultural technology to be utilised in various production systems, mainly in the grains and mixed farming areas of Australia.

### AN EXPERIENCED FARMER/BUSINESS MANAGER

RST utilises highly skilled lecturers and communicators with appropriate formal qualifications as well as practical farming skills. Lecturers are owners/managers of farming or related rural businesses ensuring an outstanding ability and theoretical knowledge for agri-business, coupled with a practical ability to connect and communicate with the rural community.

### LENDING/FINANCE EXPERTS

Experienced lending managers with career experience in the agribusiness sector including hands-on farm management to research, extension, re-selling operations, rural banking, processing, packaging, logistics and marketing.

### LIVESTOCK EXPERTS

Experienced livestock nutrition and health experts who are passionate about improving livestock production sustainably and using best practice methods that are practical, achievable and cost efficient.

### GRAIN /LIVESTOCK MARKETING EXPERTS

Marketers with experience in financial management, marketing, grain marketing consulting and education who are able to explain in simple terms the intricacies of the volatile and ever changing marketing options in the agribusiness sectors.

### GRAIN STORAGE EXPERTS

Our lecturers specialise in the practicalities of grain storage, including the risks associated with storing grain for both on farm use and the domestic and export market. They are conversant in the risks, hazards, markets and costs associated with storing grain both on farm and in various commercial facilities.

### CLIMATE RISK EXPERTS

Senior Meteorologists with the Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology are conversant in all facets of the weather, climate and its forecasting. They are knowledgeable regarding the development and use of better facilities for forecasting weather and are passionate about our climate and its effect on our livelihoods.

## INVEST IN YOUR BUSINESS AND CAREER FUTURE

The Diploma of Agriculture requires an investment of \$9,000 for the full course which includes the full RPL process as well as all gap training, Go to Meeting, any local workshops, full support from RST tutors and all student materials. RST work closely with students on an individual basis, to determine available federal or state government grants or training subsidies that can subsidise and reduce training costs.

If training subsidies are available there is still a requirement for a student contribution. The contribution is based on a percentage of the total course cost and varies according to government requirements in the state of residence. At the moment the contribution varies from 10-30% of the total so \$900 to \$3000 is the usual fee range.

If subsidies are not available or a student requires their contribution to be spread throughout the course, RST will establish a time payment agreement to suit your needs.

## WHY DO THE TRAINING

Gaining a formal qualification is becoming increasingly important in today's agriculture industries. The formal qualification will improve your skills and credibility in developing sustainable risk managed production systems. You will improve your ability to manage climate change and commodity fluctuations as well as developing sound business and strategic capabilities. Your ability to secure off farm work in times of need is improved. Your ability to demonstrate sound succession planning supports the long term commitment of future generations to the farming business.

The course will take up to 18 months to complete depending on level of RPL and credit transfer.

## ABOUT RST

To find out about RST have a look at our web site on [www.regionalskillstraining.com](http://www.regionalskillstraining.com)

## CONTACT US

Please contact RST on 08 8835 1362 or [rstanthea@bigpond.com](mailto:rstanthea@bigpond.com). We will be pleased to answer any questions. We will advise you of available subsidies in your state and your personal contribution to course fees. Upon enrolment we will then introduce you to your personal coordinator who is your contact person throughout the course. This ensures you enjoy your experience, receive personal attention and achieve the best possible qualification outcome for your effort.

[www.regionalskillstraining.com](http://www.regionalskillstraining.com)

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