

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 12:01AM WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2026

MEET THE NEXT GEN FARMER: AGRI STUDY AND A NATIONAL ROADSHOW SIGNAL A SHIFT IN AG MARKETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026 - A new generation of Australian farmers is reshaping the future of agriculture and Australian Community Media (ACM) and Australian Regional Insights is taking those insights directly to market through a national briefing series aimed at agencies and marketers.

Research from the regionally-focused Heartbeat of Australia study, developed with Australian Regional Insights (ARI) and the University of Canberra, reveals Millennial and Gen Z farmers are more educated, run more diversified operations and are more entrepreneurial than previous generations, with major implications for how brands engage the sector.

ARI Research & Insights Director Laura Allen said the findings point to a fundamental shift in the structure of farm businesses.

“This is the rise of the agri-entrepreneur,” Ms Allen said.

“Next gen farmers are building more diversified, resilient operations and approaching decision-making with a much stronger commercial lens.”

Key stats: Next Gen Farmers

- More diversified: 2.6 farm categories managed vs 1.7 for older farmers
- New revenue streams alongside primary production: 1 in 5 supply equipment/products; 16% offer consulting/services
- More educated: 40% hold tertiary degrees
- Future-focused: 72% feel positive about the future
- High intent to spend: 44% planning tech purchases; 20% considering switching banks
- Modern media mix: 69% use ag news weekly; 34% podcasts; 32% AI tools
- Knowledge-driven: 68% say being informed boosts their influence

To help agencies and brands better understand and respond to this shift, ACM is rolling out a Next Gen Farmer Briefing series across key agency and industry hubs.

The first of the events was held in Sydney, with the next briefing taking place in Brisbane on Wednesday 29 April at EVRA Restaurant, Newstead, followed by Melbourne on Thursday 28 May at Butler Lane, Richmond, bringing together marketers, media buyers and industry leaders for a deep dive into understanding the next gen agricultural decision maker.

The Brisbane session will feature:

- A presentation of the Next Gen Farmer findings

- A live panel discussion with producers and industry experts, including:
 - Penelope Arthur, ACM Agri Editorial Director (Moderator)
 - Sophie Curtis, Bellevue Dorper & White Dorper Stud
 - Lucy Kinbacher, ACM Agri General Manager, Livestock
 - Andrew Whitelaw, Co-Founder, Episode 3
- Practical insights into how brands can better connect with this evolving audience

Additional briefings will continue in major markets to reach broader agency teams.

Ms Allen said the roadshow is designed to move beyond data and into practical application.

“We’re not just releasing research, we’re working directly with industry to unpack what it means,” she said.

“These sessions are about helping marketers understand how the next generation thinks, how they make decisions, and how to engage this exciting audience more effectively.”

The research highlights a step change in how younger farmers consume information and make decisions.

Around 40% hold tertiary qualifications, and many view knowledge as a form of influence within their communities.

“This is an audience that actively seeks out information and expects brands to add value to their lives and operations,” Ms Allen said.

“They want insight, evidence and relevance, so connecting with this audience requires a broader outlook than many brands may currently be used to.”

While trusted agricultural media remains central, next gen farmers are also adopting newer channels, including AI tools (32%) and podcasts (34%), creating a more complex media environment.

Episode 3 Co-Founder Andrew Whitelaw said this shift is changing how decisions are made.

“Younger farmers are validating information across multiple sources, from trusted media through to digital platforms,” Mr Whitelaw said.

“They’re approaching decisions with a business-first mindset, weighing up performance, value and long-term return.”

Despite financial pressures, the cohort shows strong commercial intent:

- 44% plan to invest in new technology in the next 12 months
- 20% are considering switching financial providers

“There’s a clear willingness to invest, but also a greater openness to change,” Mr Whitelaw said.

“This generation is less tied to legacy brands and more focused on outcomes.”

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For more information, interview requests, or to attend the Brisbane event, please contact:

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About Australian Regional Insights (ARI)

Australian Regional Insights is a bespoke research and consulting agency dedicated to the voices of regional, rural, and agricultural Australia. As a division of ACM, it operates independently to bridge the gap between brands and these important audiences. ARI offers brands and organisations unparalleled access to rural and agri-consumers through their dedicated panel, *The Australian Regional Insights Community*. From complex quantitative modeling to deep-dive qualitative insights, ARI provides the end-to-end expertise needed to navigate the unique landscape of non-metropolitan Australia.

australianregionalinsights.com.au

About Heartbeat of Australia

Heartbeat of Australia is ACM’s annual national sentiment study exploring how Australians, particularly those in regional and rural areas, connect with their communities, engage with local news and feel about the future. Now in its fourth year, the research is conducted by Australian Regional Insights in partnership with the University of Canberra, independently weighted to represent regional and capital city populations by age, gender and geography. Fieldwork for the 2025 edition took place between May 12 and June 19, 2025, capturing insights from 7,358 respondents nationwide.

About Australian Community Media (ACM)

ACM is Australia’s largest independent media company, collectively reaching over 5.2 million* people each month. The ACM network comprises close to 100 brands, including leading regional news mastheads such as the Newcastle Herald, The Canberra Times, Illawarra Mercury, The Examiner, The Border Mail and The Courier. The agricultural division, ACM Agri, reaches 85%^ of Australian farmers each month, with a national footprint spanning specialist agricultural brands (The Land and Queensland Country Life), marketplaces (Farmbuy and AgTrader), and events (AgQuip and FarmFest). ACM is committed to keeping communities strong, informed and connected. Source: *Roy Morgan Single Source, Jan-Dec 25, P14+, Roy Morgan iris, ACM Cross Platform Audience. ^ACM Heartbeat of Australia, June 2025.