



ACTION4YOUTH CASE-STUDY:

FROM THE ARCHIBULL PRIZE TO YOUNG FARMING CHAMPION - HOW ACTION4AGRICULTURE WORKS FOR DANIELLE FORDHAM



Action4Agriculture offers a holistic suite of programs designed to inspire and empower agricultural advocates and leaders. We realise this is not a sprint but a marathon that requires long-term commitment from ourselves, our partners and, most of all, the young people we want to inspire and cultivate.

Danielle Fordham is the perfect example of how the programs and training come together. She was first exposed to Action4Agriculture through The Archibull Prize at Caroline Chisholm College and in 2022 became a Young Farming Champion sponsored by Hunter Local Land Services. As our new program, Action4Youth, readies for roll-out in 2023, Danielle has already been involved - sharing her agricultural journey with students as part of a pilot program at Lake Illawarra High School.

This is Danielle's Action4Agriculture story.

Danielle, you were part of the team from Caroline Chisholm College that was named Grand Champion Archibull in 2011 with the wonderful Rubick's Cube inspired creation "Moobix Cube". Can you tell us about your Archibull experience?

I was part of The Archibull Prize in 2011 and 2012 and the experience was incredible. It connected my learnings in the classroom to the real world. As a cohort, my friends and I loved participating, bonding and getting to meet like-minded people our own age who shared the same passions.

I enjoyed researching issues such as how to feed a growing population, learning more about cow by-products (did you know cow parts are used in cosmetics and medicine?) and showcasing the trophy-worthy dairy and red-meat industries. It was great to come up with creative ideas to communicate these issues and showcase agriculture in a new light to the wider public.

The experience opened my eyes to the endless opportunities in agriculture and it cemented my interest and career ambitions in the agricultural field. Most importantly The Archibull Prize connected me with the brilliant organisation that is Action4Agriculture (previously Art4Agriculture) and the opportunities it has provided me.



Since high school you've become a poster girl for the diversity of Australian agriculture, undertaking a business traineeship, attending Tocal Agricultural College (Double Dux!!), working in agribusiness, studying an environmental university degree and working as the Alumni Officer at Tocal. How did it feel to add Young Farming Champion (YFC) to your resume in 2022?

It was deeply empowering to be selected as a Young Farming Champion. I was struggling to find my connection back to the agricultural industry as I had moved into the environmental science sector and the YFC program provided the best opportunity to combine the two.

The experiences and workshops provided by Action4Agriculture as a YFC have strengthened my confidence and ability to stand as a clear, trusted voice in agriculture. I want to make a positive impact on agriculture and support the community, and YFC has enabled me to do this and more. YFC has broadened my horizons and I feel I can go further with my career than I ever imagined.

And, specifically, what skills has the YFC program given you?

The YFC program has taught me essential skills such as how to be an effective communicator, how to be an inspirational speaker and presenter and how to efficiently manage my time. The program



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has given me a network of peers and industry and community contacts.

Through YFC I have converted my passion for agriculture into a vehicle to empower other young people, such as my students at Tocal Agricultural College.



In 2023 we are launching Action4Youth, which aims to introduce disadvantaged young people to career pathways in agriculture. You participated in a pilot program at Lake Illawarra High School last year. What was that like?

It felt incredibly rewarding to be able to connect with students who were like me: interested in agriculture but who didn't grow up on a farm or have the money to study agriculture straight out of school.

I was able to share my story and empower the students to think outside the square. I could assure them there are plenty of opportunities out there after school and, as a living example, that you are not limited by your HSC or ATAR results. If you are passionate about a

career or lifestyle, there is nothing stopping you. You have just got to keep looking for your next step and embrace the skills and lessons you learn along the way.

Additionally, I was equally inspired by the Lake Illawarra students and their tenacity and enthusiasm. It was great to learn from each other and feel connected to the future of agriculture and our communities.

Overall, how do you feel the Action4Agriculture programs align with your aspirations for your own career?

The Action4Agriculture programs align with my aspirations of being a clear, trusted and influential leader in the sustainable agriculture field in two particular arenas: marrying agriculture and science, and promoting women.

The environmental world is in turmoil with global issues of climate change, ocean acidification, food and resource insecurity, habitat destruction, and contamination. These issues threaten all our livelihoods and existence; and this makes creating a future we all want to be part of a shared responsibility. Agriculture is a key industry in combating and controlling these issues with opportunities in technological innovation, sustainable and regenerative practices, environment restoration, carbon capture and rehabilitation integration. The opportunities for agriculture to be part of the solution are endless.

To create these solutions it is vital to strengthen the connection and relationship between agriculture and science and I plan to do this by promoting sustainable agriculture.

Championing women in agriculture and science is also a passion of mine and in 2022 I organised an event to recognise 50 years of female students at Tocal College. By telling my own story and connecting with like-minded women we can overcome social challenges and promote equality.

Action4Agriculture's ethos and opportunities to connect directly with the next generation and particularly the training and networking received as a Young Farming Champion enables me to effectively communicate these challenges and find the solutions we all need.

