Sandra Moon:

I guess, now, I love this idea, Agriculture Victoria has a new mentoring program for young farmers. There's going to be 10 available places in the 2021 program, let's find out more about it. Agriculture Victoria young farmer coordinator, Sarah Wallis, hello?

Sarah Wallis:

Hello, how're you going?

Sandra Moon:

Good, thanks. Now, this program, this matches, I guess, young farmers with farmers that have been farming for a long time.

Sarah Wallis:

Yeah, that's correct. We're also, I guess what's new or different about this is that we're going to use the farm business consultant to help support that relationship. So we've got the mentee, that new, young, inexperienced farmer matched up with the mentor who's the more experienced, but they may not have had that mentoring experience before. So we're using a farm business consultant who's got all those great skills to help support that relationship going forward.

Sandra Moon:

And it's such a good idea to actually put it in a bit of a sort of formal structure as well, so that, these young farmers can really learn from the experienced, from their mentor.

Sarah Wallis:

Yeah, that's right, and were going for 12 months and those meetings will be, both online and face-to-face hopefully by then, that's the 12 month program.

Sandra Moon:

And what about the young farmers? Are they, in a specific field? Or can they be, dairy farmers and grain farmers? Is there any sort of stipulation?

Sarah Wallis:

Yeah, so the program is open to all young farmers in Victoria so we've got lots of. So everyone from the Victoria.

Sandra Moon:

And what about the mentors? Who are they, have they been selected yet?

Sarah Wallis:

Yeah, so I guess, the focus of this is getting those expressions of interest from them mentees. so we want to know who are those really bright, enthusiastic, young farmers that want to be involved in this program. And then if I they can get their applications in next week, then we can start to work through that process of selecting the mentor.

Sandra Moon:

Yeah, because I guess that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? You do need to have, the young farmer so that you know who to match them up with.

Sarah Wallis:

That's right and we’ve got a range of industries, who are trying to do our best to match them up as best we can so that they can get the most from the program.

Sandra Moon:

Now applications need to be in by Thursday of next week. That's the 5th of November, and so what does the application entail?

Sarah Wallis:

Yeah, so I look it’s just an online application that people can access through the website. There’s a few selection criteria or questions that they need to answer, its really so that we can get a feel for who they are, and what industry they're involved in and what they really want to get out of the program. So we just need to know that they're keen and willing to commit to the 12 months.

Sandra Moon:

It is a pilot program. So does that mean that, the outcome will then be looked at and it could go further?

Sarah Wallis:

Absolutely, yes, so we’re really positive about this pilot in the view that we can get it to go beyond the end next year.

Sandra Moon:

Wonderful, and certainly, as you say, I think I did have a little bit of a chuckle when you mentioned, hopefully, that people can be sort of one-on-one and face-to-face at some point next year, that would be helpful too.

Sarah Wallis:

Yeah, absolutely, but look, I think our young farmers are pre tech-savvy and they're happy to jump online and do things remotely. So I don't think there'll be too much of a barrier for them.

Sandra Moon:

No, I think they'll know what they're doing, in terms of that being able to sort of, I guess really harness the farming experience and all of the knowledge of these older presumably older farmers will be just invaluable.

Sarah Wallis:

Yeah, that's right, look we're really wanting them to see those farm business skills, learn about identifying risks and really support them through that business development. So helping support them to plan that their business going forward. So, where do they want to be the next 5, 10, 15, 20 years in their career in agriculture.

Sandra Moon:

Mm, terrific, all right. The website is www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/youngfarmermentoringprogram. You've only got until Thursday, so jump on, and yeah, if you know a young farmer out there that you think could benefit, then Sarah, really, they need to jump onto this, there's only 10 spots.

Sarah Wallis:

That's right, and look we are getting applications rolling in. So we would really love to hear from you, if your keen, any questions, please get in touch. Happy to help.

Sandra Moon:

Fantastic, Sarah Wallis from Agriculture Victoria, good to speak with you. Thank you.

Sarah Wallis:

Oh, thanks so much. Have a great day.