

Next generation precision agriculture technologies for agricultural education

SMARTfarm Ma Learning Hub Na

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Background

The industry demands on higher education of agricultural students are rapidly changing.

New precision agriculture technologies are revolutionizing the farming industry but the education sector is failing to keep pace (RRDC 2011).

The SMARTfarm Learning Hub is intended to increase the skill base of students using a range of new agricultural technologies & innovations (Cosby & Trotter 2014).

The Hub is a world first; it links real industry technologies with educator resources & student learning packages.

Higher education providers & their student's will have online access to data & systems from commercial scale smart-farms across Australia & the world.

Aims & methodology

The SMARTfarm Learning Hub project will integrate infrastructure (web site & industry tools) with the development of case study learning modules, methodologies & templates to enable project communication.

Learning packages are being designed to engage students in secondary & tertiary study.

An action research context will be used to provide both research outcomes & critical feedback to improve the learning modules, educator & student experience.

A further study will be undertaken which determines employer perceptions of the value of certain skills gained by students through participation in SMARTfarm Learning Hub modules.



Conclusions

Utilization of the SMARTfarm Learning Hub is tracked using the Square Space metrics tools. SMARTfarm Learning Hub web site was launched in mid-December 2015 & since this time has reached 890 unique visitors an average of 127 per month.

When fully developed, we expect the SMARTfarm Learning Hub will maximize transitions from secondary to tertiary study as it will become a point of commonality between different AQF levels with student familiarity providing confidence to move to the next level.

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References

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Rural Research & Development Council. (2011). National Strategic Rural Research & Development Investment Plan. Canberra.