



Boosting connections with growers at the EKKA Rural Discovery Days - 2024

Inspiring students to learn about, taste and grow veggies

Nearly 1,500 students had a fun day at the EKKA Rural Discovery Days in May 2024. They visited the Brisbane Showgrounds to participate in a range of activities and learnt about how food and fibre get to our shops and homes.



This year, for the first time, Pick of the Crop was involved in the [EKKA Rural Discovery Days](#).

EKKA Rural Discovery Days

Held over five days in May 2024, these ag-ucational days are all about bringing the country to the city, providing students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in agricultural activities linked to the curriculum.

Each day, a new cohort of students participated in 6 x 30 minute sessions: Dairy, Grain, Animal Nursery, Sheep and Fleece, First Nations Agriculture and Farming and Horticulture.

This year, it was all about activating students' senses, and what better way than to showcase the colourful and fresh veggies and fruit grown in Queensland.

It's a packed but fun and exciting day.

A short video on the Ekka Rural Discovery Days 2024 can be found on their [YouTube](#) page.



How was Pick of the Crop part of the day?

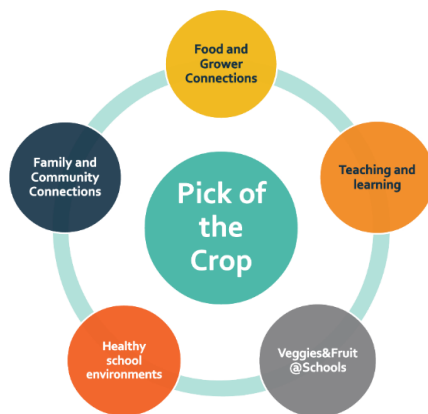
Health and Wellbeing Queensland's [Pick of the Crop](#) initiative is all about inspiring the future generation of Queenslanders to learn about, see, taste and eat more veggies and fruit every day.

Pick of the Crop led the EKKA Rural Discovery Day *Farming and Horticulture* session, which taught students about the paddock to plate concept, with an activity for them to grow their own veggies.

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By taking a multi-strategic approach, Pick of the Crop is reaching thousands of students through school-led actions. Connecting with growers is one of Pick of the Crop's five components:



The growers.

In collaboration with [Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers](#), growers from the Scenic Rim, Lockyer Valley and South East Queensland participated each day to talk to the students about:

- what they grow
- who works with them
- how long it takes to grow their veggies and fruit
- the journey from harvesting to our plates.



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The planting.

Each session followed the same plan and after learning from the growers, the students participated in a small group activity: planting green beans seeds which they then took home or back to school.



continued conversations and learning in the classroom.



Students were supported in this hands on activity by a Pick of the Crop team member or grower, who discussed veggies and answered any questions. The activity aligns with various parts of school curriculum including Science across year levels, and teachers were provided with a take home flyer to support



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Impact

Over 20 schools and home schooling units attended the Pick of the Crop session, reaching nearly 1,500 students during the 30 sessions over the five days. 31 teachers and 71 students completed a quick survey, after the session.

Results from the teacher surveys:

- 97% (n=30) teachers felt the session was very impactful or very impactful.
- 94% (n=29) teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the activity completed during the session was engaging.
- 100% (n=31) teachers felt that the activity was easy or very easy to replicate.
- 87% (n=27) teachers reported that the activity met Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum. Those that said no were home school teachers and reported that the question was irrelevant to them.

Results from the student surveys:

- 68% (n=48) students enjoyed the activity a lot.
- 92% (n=65) students found the activity to be very easy or easy.
- 83% (n=50) students said they would likely or very likely want to do the activity again.



Minimal changes to the session were recommended by teachers, although feedback did include adapting it to different ages and incorporating a sensory exploration component for future events.

When asked for feedback, students said:

- 'I learnt about the time required for vegetables and fruit to grow'.
- 'Beans grow in soil and need water and sun'.
- 'More than one type of pumpkin'.
- 'What broccoli looks like as a seedling'.
- 'Learnt about watermelons'.
- 'What you can eat a bean raw'.
- 'Green beans taste good'.
- 'That vegetables are special'.

All schools were provided with a 'goodie bag' of seeds, activity information and recipe cards to distribute to students following the event.



[One week after the event]

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Acknowledgements: Health and Wellbeing Queensland would like to thank QFVG and the growers for their collaboration and participation in the 5 days, and for their donations of fruit and vegetables which were provided to schools and students attending the sessions.

Thanks to three Griffith University students who led activities with students, answered questions, kept students engaged and supported the evaluation process.



Thanks to the Pick of the Crop regional coordinators who assisted in the planning and development, and delivery of the sessions. Your input was invaluable.

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