

Bringing Agriculture to the classroom

Home Hill High celebrates National AgDay

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STEPPING onto the dirt in a unique learning experience has been a success for students at Home Hill State High School this year.

The agricultural program's introduction has seen the DigINN Plot established on school grounds, funded by a federal government grant.

It allows students to grow, cultivate, and harvest fresh fruits and vegetables, which have been used in hospitality classes and to take home.

The school celebrated AgDay on Wednesday, 18 November, a celebration of the agriculture program's growth so far, and partnership with Primary Industry Education Foundation as an Agribusiness Gateway School.

Year 11 student and Ag-Studies ambassador Dayna Linton said the day was an opportunity for all students to come together and get involved.

"We had a long table



Students, staff and guests of Home Hill State High School celebrating AgDay

luncheon for our whole school to enjoy. We used produce from our plot, tomatoes for tomato relish, mangoes for mango chutney and ice cream, eggplant. It was good to be able to use our produce."

The plot has been a community-minded project, creating a hands-on learning experience for students.

"We had a lot of help from the community, the Patane family, Barbagallo family,

Billy from Pharmacist. We had to dig up the whole plot from the start, then we got the tea tape down and the irrigation all sorted by Greens. We had Alex Patane help us with putting up the tomato stakes. So there's been a lot of community involvement in it, as well as school involvement," Dayna said.

"Because we're a farming community, it's really good to have that agriculture subject at school. To be able

to have a plot, get hands-on experience, and get different kids involved is a good initiative for the school."

Students in years 7, 11, and 12 have been working the plot this year, with further involvement from the community in harvesting and selling the produce.

Agricultural Science teacher Louise Nicholas said the day was a perfect way to embrace agriculture at the school.

and we've pretty well encompassed all the school in this venture," Mrs. Nicholas said.

The school has engaged in the Farmers for the Future Program to allow students to learn about sustainable agriculture and how to maintain a healthy environment.

Guest Steven Pilla from Canegrowers Burdekin spoke on behalf of the Farmer Time Program, delivering real-world experience in agriculture.

"To see a group of students in the school connecting with the land is absolutely brilliant, and I look forward to being part of this in the future. To have a connection with students on what we're doing in the paddock probably gives us a chance to explain our side on what's happening in the field of farming."

Student engagement not only educates but can further develop an interest in agriculture moving forward.

"It's really important the younger generation understand what's going on in farming, with technology changes and what we're embracing as farmers," Mr. Pilla said.

"Over the year, students have grown crops, produced the fruit and vegetables, and taken it to the kitchen and basically learned that whole paddock to plate process."

The studies cover many aspects of the industry, including business.

"They've also marketed their produce, whether it be the fresh or the preserved, and learned all about the agribusiness side of it as well. It's been a big journey, —