

# Farmers2Founders Pilot Year Final Report

Version for External Use

**Milestone Number:** Milestone - Final Report

**Prepared for:** Wine Australia

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## Executive Summary

Farmers2Founders (F2F) is designed to attract and develop proactive, innovative Australian primary producers looking to grow and transform their businesses through cutting edge innovation and adoption of new technologies. By helping producers develop entrepreneurship and technology capabilities, F2F builds industry champions that can solve critical challenges and successfully bring new agtech, foodtech, and food ventures to market.

During the pilot year of this program<sup>1</sup>, F2F engaged directly with over 300 Australian primary producers from across industries and from all states and territories. Key activities in the pilot year included: workshops, masterclasses, and online recruitment initiatives; two pre-accelerator “Ideas Programs;” an accelerator “Bootcamp” program; and an Early Adopter Program. The Ideas and Bootcamp programs were designed to help producers create and/or scale new ventures across agtech and value-added products. The Early Adopter Program was designed to support producers to become strategic adopters of agtech- and engage earlier and more confidently with technology vendors.

KPIs for the pilot year included participation, commercialisation, and ecosystem and capability building metrics. All targets were achieved, and qualitative feedback from participating producers in all programs was positive. Benefits cited by producers include helping them to think differently, work “on” (i.e. instead of “in”) the business, -build new skills, access new tools and networks, and advance their business ideas. Notably, producers cite benefits to both their new venture, as well as to their farming business as a result of participating in F2F programs.

Learnings from the pilot year program, which will be implemented in subsequent years, include: changes to the recruitment strategy, including reducing the focus on, and changing the purpose of, workshops; design changes to the Ideas, Bootcamp, and EAP programs to maximise each farmer’s experience; and insights about the role producers can play as champions of agrifood innovation.

Wine Australia, as a cornerstone pilot Industry Partner, supported the initial design and development of all programs, as well as directly supported 3 Ideas Program participants and 1 Bootcamp program participant.

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<sup>1</sup> This program is envisioned as a four-year program

F2F strongly believes that the pilot year successfully demonstrated that there is demand from primary producers for a farmer-centric innovation program that helps them engage proactively with agtech, both to create and scale agrifood ventures, as well as become more strategic, confident technology adopters. Further, F2F can point to evidence that emphasises the role of these producers in solving critical industry challenges, both as farmer-entrepreneurs and as innovation champions catalysing and inspiring others. As a cross-sectoral program, F2F has also been a vehicle to encourage increased producer-RDC and cross-RDC collaboration and interaction. Five specific recommendations have been made, which will be implemented in subsequent years of the F2F program to extend outcomes to a significantly wider group of producers and to leverage these outcomes to create industry impact across sectors.

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## Project Overview

### Purpose

The purpose of Farmers2Founders (F2F) is to deliver a new and unique support system designed to attract and develop proactive, innovative Australian primary producers looking to grow and transform their businesses through cutting edge innovation and adoption of new technologies. F2F was designed to develop producer entrepreneurship and technology capabilities so they can solve critical industry challenges and successfully bring new agtech, foodtech, and food ventures to market.

The F2F initiative was proposed as a four-year program with a pilot over year one. It is anticipated that during this first year, Industry Partners will agree to enter into a further 3-year program contract with F2F with annual “go/no go” review milestones. This project covers the initial 17 month period Jan 2019- June 2020 (“the pilot”), with evaluation in June 2020.

This Final Report details the outcomes of the pilot year with specific focus on participation by Wine Australia as an Industry Partner. The report includes reflections on lessons learned and recommendations for extending the impact of F2F programs more broadly across the agriculture industry, including the wine industry.

### Objectives

The overall objectives of the F2F four-year initiative are to:

- Deliver a program that attracts and supports proactive, innovative producers looking to grow and transform their farming businesses through the development and adoption of cutting edge agtech, foodtech and food innovation;
- Develop producer entrepreneurship and technology capabilities so they can solve critical industry challenges and successfully bring new agtech, food tech and food ventures to markets;
- Accelerate the delivery and adoption of new technologies and innovation concepts more broadly across the industry that will make producers more efficient, profitable and resilient;
- Increase collaboration between producers and the global agrifood tech ecosystem;
- Build and nurture a community of like minded producers;

- Increase collaboration between industry and the agrifood tech ecosystem, as well as for producers across industries (within sectors and across sectors);
- Address consumer demands for greater transparency, traceability and provenance while helping producers to directly capture increased value; and
- Raise awareness of new career pathways in agriculture to attract new talent and retain young producers.

During the pilot year, F2F provided the following:

- All program design, content, and materials customisation for ideation workshops, tech trial workshops, and pre-accelerator and accelerator programs;
- Facilitators, coaches and mentors;
- Coordination of all logistics including travel, venue and catering, ticketing and resourcing for each initiative;
- Outreach and promotional support in collaboration with Industry Partners;
- Regular reporting including provision of event summaries and attendee details;
- Coordination of three Industry partner Reference Group meetings; and
- Evaluation on conclusion of the pilot year.

## Pilot Year Activities

### Programs

#### Workshops

##### What we did

During the pilot, F2F delivered a total of 16 workshops around Australia with around 400 attendees including over 200 producers. The table below shows a summary of the workshop locations and attendees.

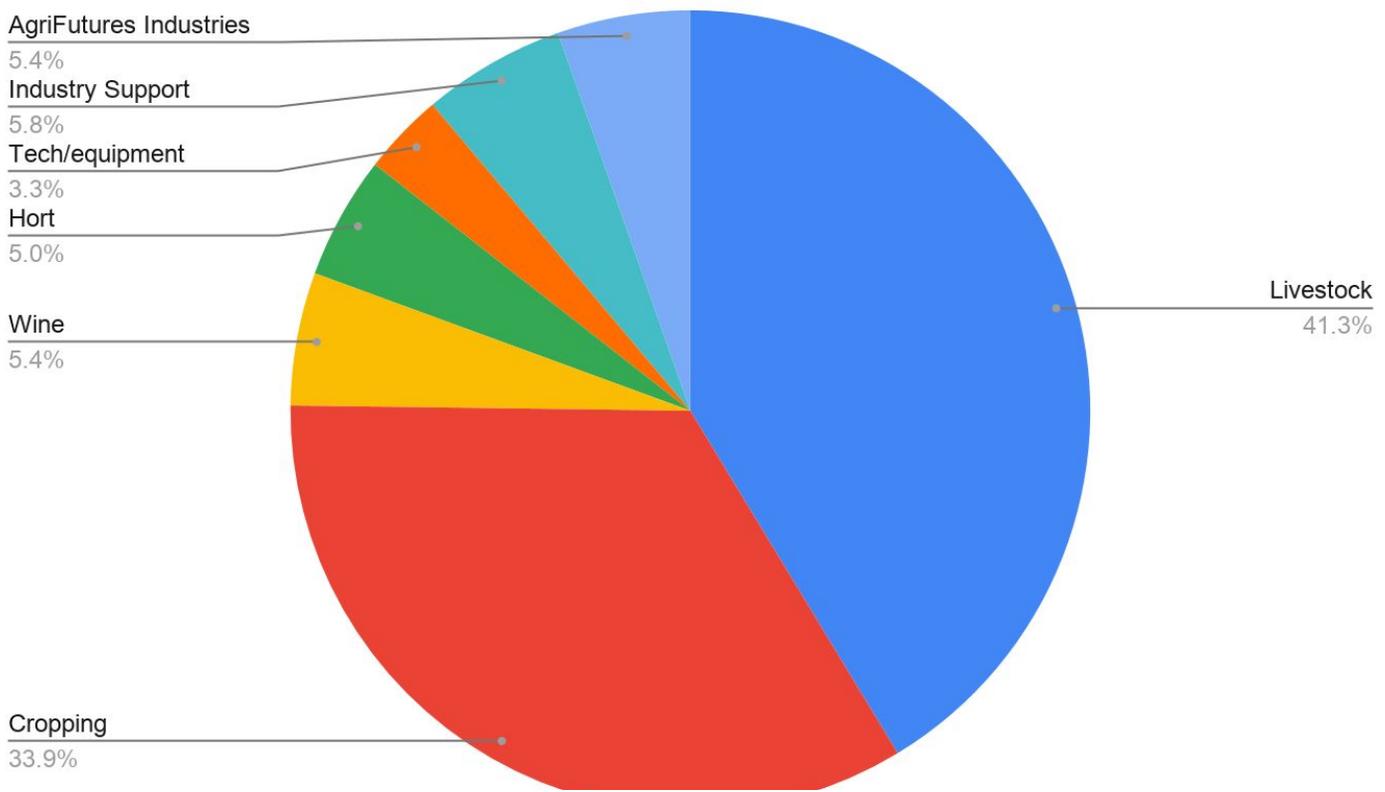
Location	Date	Theme	Producers	Non-producers /not stated
Atherton, QLD	09/04/2019	Cross sectoral	16	19
Bendigo VIC	18/06/2019	Cross sectoral	5	7
Adelaide SA	26/06/2019	Wine	16	18

Wagga NSW	23/07/2019	AgriFutures	5	19
Kandanga QLD	31/07/2019	Cross sectoral	25	12
Mingenew WA	05/09/2019	Grains/mixed	6	8
Tambellup WA	09/09/2019	Tech trials	11	3
Moree NSW	20/09/2019	Grains/mixed	5	9
Bowen QLD	24/09/2019	Custom	2	15
Swan Hill VIC	08/10/2019	Cross sectoral	30	34
Birchip VIC	29/10/2019	Grains/mixed	10	9
Emerald QLD	07/11/2019	Grains/mixed	7	11
Goondiwindi QLD	11/02/2020	Cross sectoral	40	12*
Dalby QLD	12/02/2020	Cross Sectoral	19	5*
Eyre Peninsula SA	2-5/03/2020	Grains/mixed	8	1
Marnoo VIC	13/03/2020	Cross Sectoral	9	3
Virtual Workshop	28/05/2020	Grains/mixed	9	2

\*Data were not captured regarding producer vs non-producer for this workshop, but estimates from the F2F team and host organisation suggest 80% were producers.

As a cross-sector program, the F2F workshops attracted participants from sectors across agriculture (see Chart One, below). F2F hosted one specific Wine workshop (Adelaide).

**Chart One: Workshop Attendees by Sector**



As this was a pilot year, F2F experimented with a variety of workshop formats. The workshops initially started with the 'Ideation and Innovation' branding, focusing on the future of agtech, foodtech, and food innovation. These workshops included generic content on new technologies and changing consumer demands. In the second half of the pilot year, the workshops shifted to take on a 'commercialisation' theme, to more clearly set expectations regarding the purpose of the workshops and to encourage producers with ideas for new ventures to attend. A series of Tech Engagement workshops were also conducted during which producers interested in being 'early adopters' were invited to discuss key challenges and share their experiences of trialling new technologies.

During the pilot year, F2F also experimented with the timing and format of workshops including: full-day workshops; shorter 'roadshow' versions in multiple locations within a region conducted over several days; and incorporation into larger events. Examples include:

- Three 'mini' 2-hour workshops in the Swan Hill region which took place over ~24 hours and proved to be an effective way to reach a large number of producers, spread out over a large geographical area; and
- Inclusion of masterclass sessions at the AgTECH 2019 (Emerald) and Building Resilience to Climate Change (Birchip) events.

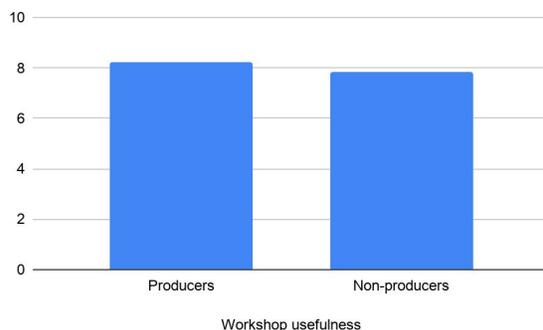
F2F delivered a 'custom' Wine workshop in Adelaide in June 2019. Content for this workshop was customised to include wine industry case studies and wine-specific trends. The workshop was well attended with 60 participants registering (and 34 attending). Feedback was positive with an average score of above 8 out of 10 for both "workshop usefulness" and participant NPS (i.e., would they recommend the workshop to others). All 16 producer attendees indicated that they would like further follow up with Farmers2Founders (which we have done). However, as discussed further below, F2F has not found workshops to be a particularly effective recruitment channel for F2F programs.

## Participant Feedback

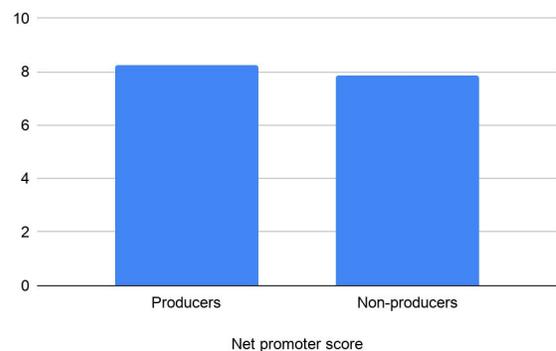
Detailed participant feedback has been provided to Wine Australia via Milestone Reports and Industry Partner Updates. As indicated in the following charts, overall feedback from workshop participants was very positive both in relation to workshop usefulness (average 8/10) and willingness to recommend F2F workshops to other producers (average 8/10).

In all workshops, participants indicated that the most useful aspect of the workshops was the opportunity to network with F2F experts and other participants from their region

**Chart Two: Workshop Usefulness**



**Chart Three: Recommend to Other Producers**



## Insights

The following key insights emerged from the workshops:

- **Producers across all sectors are interested** in the emerging trends in agtech, foodtech and food innovation, but are not always clear about how they should respond and what the relevance is to their own farming businesses.
- **Generic workshops are less useful** and there is a feeling of 'workshop fatigue' amongst many producers, especially in specific regions that have high levels of extension.
- **Jargon is not well understood** and producers respond better to clear messaging. It was particularly important to set clear expectations regarding the purpose of F2F workshops in order to attract producers who would find the content useful.

- **Producers are more likely to engage** in programs when they receive invitations or referrals from a ‘trusted source’ such as local consultants and other service providers in a region. This reinforces the value of regional partnerships for F2F.
- **Different workshop formats are well received** with emerging evidence that shorter ‘roadshow’ formats and F2F participation in other events are likely to provide better opportunities for F2F to reach a greater number of producers.
- **Workshops are not a strong recruitment pathway** to other F2F programs (11% of applications directly from workshops), although anecdotally we heard that applicants to F2F programs were sometimes referred by a producer that had attended one of the workshops, or workshops in their region were how they became aware of F2F, even if they did not attend.

The Conclusions and Recommendations section of this report details additional areas of change and improvement in relation to the purpose and value of workshops within the overall F2F program recruitment strategy.

## Ideas Program (Pre-Accelerator)

### What we did

During the pilot year, F2F designed and delivered two pre-accelerator programs, called the “Ideas Program”, with a total of 25 participants in these programs. The first Ideas Program was eight weeks in duration and commenced in July 2019. F2F received 25 applications and accepted 12 teams into this program, with recruitment primarily based on direct referrals and social media. Industry Partners (i.e., RDCs) and F2F regional partners also helped to promote the program. The application process included an online application form and an interview with the F2F team via phone. See Appendix 2 for a summary of selection criteria and successful teams.

The program commenced with an in-person workshop in Sydney on 11 July followed by a combination of group and individual virtual coaching and a second in-person workshop in Hahndorf, SA, on 23 August. A snapshot of the program content is shown in the table below.

Phase 1- Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kick off- Lean Canvas to document initial assumptions</li> <li>● Sprint 1- Customer Discovery- digging into problems</li> <li>● Sprint 2- Value Proposition 1: Jobs, Pains, and Gains</li> </ul>
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Phase 2 - Solution & Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional (in-person)- Value Proposition 2: products and services</li> <li>• Sprint 3- Prototyping</li> <li>• Sprint 4- Business Model Design</li> </ul>

The teams were eligible to receive a \$3K grant (which they matched with \$1K of their own cash) to invest in customer discovery and validation activities.

## Changes for Ideas Program #2

Design of the second Ideas Program, which commenced in March 2020 and concluded in June, took into account the insights and lessons from the first Ideas Program. The second program has also had to evolve due to COVID-19 restrictions. Key changes from Ideas Program #1 include:

- 12 week design, incorporating a recurring rhythm of small group, individual coaching, masterclasses, happy hours, and whole-cohort calls;
- Two-stage screening process, including an EOI and then phone interview and full application;
- Additional recruitment activities, including webinars, office hours, podcasts, and both direct and indirect (e.g., consultant, agronomist) outreach;
- Acceptance of 14 participants (vs. 12), given the high quality and volume of applicants (55 expressions of interest and 35 full applications); and
- A fully remote program due to COVID-19 restrictions, including a two-day online kickoff, two half day workshops, and a virtual graduation ceremony.

## Wine Australia-Sponsored Participants in Ideas Program 1

Steve van Sluyter & Oli Madgett

Steve's and Oli's original idea was an app to reformat grower data to be machine readable. The premise behind this idea was that most growers have large amounts of historical data, but as it is poorly formatted, they cannot gain much value from it. The business idea was that reformatting historical data would allow growers to use it in Excel (or other, easy to use off-the-shelf or custom apps), which they already use universally, and would accelerate the adoption of emerging data science technology.

Through the F2F Ideas Program, Steve completed substantial customer research to assess the interest level of growers in this product/service. A key discovery was that their customers (farmers) did not care about yield prediction through historical data as much as they originally thought. Instead, a problem that emerged through interviewing was a frustration with, and mistrust of, weather data.

Steve reflected that farmers “don’t care about yields as much as I thought. Of course they want big, profitable yields, but yields are a function of weather that’s largely out of their control, so they worry about weather instead because they can respond to that. Yields are the products of all those responses.”

At the end of the program, Steve was working on a prototype of a product that aggregates weather forecasts across different sources, and provides growers with a rating of the accuracy of the different sources, and an aggregated forecast using the most accurate sources.

One of the team's main learnings from the program was the importance of understanding customer problems, and how important it is to reach out to new contacts for customer interviews. As Steve explained, ‘I tested a few concepts in customer interviews and found that my previous discussions were skewed by me talking to a small, specialised group of producers’.

About six months later, when we checked in with the team, Steve had continued to undertake customer discovery, and ultimately decided that the weather problem was not a standalone business, but that the solution he envisioned might be useful to existing agtech companies. In fact, he contacted at least one, and provided them with his insights & initial prototyping. We have not been able to verify if this company has indeed built this, or any other, product based on Steve’s findings from the F2F program; however, we will continue to track progress.

Scott Messenger

Scott came into the program with the goal to build out and commercialise his idea of a zero drift vineyard spray attachment, with the aim of selling to vineyards locally and abroad. The attachment would recycle all unused spray, therefore maximising the use of expensive chemicals and minimising wastage.

Scott initially targeted three distinct customer segments:

- 1) Grape growers spraying vineyards in close proximity to urban areas or neighboring crops
- 2) Grape growers in premium regions (Coonawarra, Barossa Valley, Clare Valley etc.)
- 3) Medium to large grape growers in bulk regions (e.g. the Riverina).

Scott has launched multiple previous successful products and thus came into the program feeling he was at a more advanced level compared to some other teams. In particular, he expressed concerns a few weeks into the program about doing the customer discovery work, given his experience building businesses in the past, and his existing access to a distribution network that could get his product to customers. Instead, Scott expressed a desire for F2F to help him with:

- Conducting a patent search, perhaps with a new patent attorney who is more familiar with agricultural equipment
- Making a business model decision about whether to license the tool, patent it, or even 'tool up' to own more of the manufacturing supply chain
- Manufacturing support (e.g., CAD designer) to help him design the prototype
- Learnings from others who have gone down the hardware path, so that he can avoid their mistakes

F2F provided coaching to discuss all of the above with Scott. Over the course of the Ideas Program, Scott's engagement was more limited than expected due to his time constraints and having a number of other responsibilities (e.g., on-farm operations, family etc.), and thus wasn't able to commit as much time as would be required to get the most value out of the program. F2F's learning from this experience (explained further below), as implemented during Ideas Program 2, is to more clearly set expectations with growers early about the focus and activities of the program, as well as "qualify" producers for their "fit" with the program to ensure expectations are aligned.

## **Overview of additional F2F supported team relevant to Wine Australia**

Clint Ledgard

Clint's initial idea was to incorporate machine vision technology into pruning equipment by assisting operators to recognise posts and cordons. The goal was to use machine vision

to reduce the operator’s need to continually manually adjust height and the opening and closing of the machine around posts, reducing fatigue and OHS issues.

Over the course of the program, the F2F coaches encouraged Clint to dig further into customer validation of this problem and proposed solution. In particular, it was suggested that Clint do the interviewing required to identify and acquire a pilot customer, as well as to be open to a different product/MVP than the technology he was focused on.

Overall, Clint found most of the content and coaching really valuable. By the end of the program Clint had completed approx. 15 customer interviews and was more confident in talking to customers and understanding their pain points, along with defining and testing his hypotheses. As of the end of the program, Clint said he was going to keep moving forward with his business and would continue to develop it. Through the program Clint has a better understanding of who his competitors are, and now has the knowledge to protect his IP.

## Participant Feedback on Ideas Program 1

A key objective of the F2F Ideas Program was to build participant confidence to continue to explore their idea as the basis for a viable new business in the future, or alternatively to be able to make an informed decision that it was not worth pursuing. Exit interviews indicated that participants in Ideas Program #1 demonstrated a reasonably strong level of confidence (3 or above out of 5) in 17 out of 20 core competency areas, with ‘talking to customers to understand their needs and pain points’ rated the highest (average of 4/5). It is worth noting that it was not possible to accurately rate participant confidence in these competencies prior to the program, as much of the terminology was unfamiliar.

Competency	Average confidence level x/5 post-program
Developing customer personas	3.0
Talking to customers to understand their needs and pain points.	4.0
Differentiating between problems and value propositions	3.4
Creating and using lean & business model canvases	3.5
Defining and testing hypotheses	3.5

Pitching your business	3.4
Taking on feedback (e.g., from coaches and mentors)	3.5
Making new connections with people to seek advice/resources	3.8
Learning new digital tools	3.7
Creating a cost/revenue structure	2.7
Navigating the broader agtech/food ecosystem	3.0
Engaging with other participants in the agtech ecosystem	3.7
I have/can build the right team	3.1
I know who our key competitors are	3.7
I know how we are differentiated from our competitors	3.7
I know what it will cost to start my company	2.8
I know what it will cost to make my product/service	2.8
I know how I will make money	3.7
I know the size of my potential market	3.0
I know how to access capital and/or finance for my business	3.1

In addition to the post-program survey, qualitative feedback was captured from each team. Feedback included:

- Many participants commented that the time off-farm to think about, and work on, their project was the most valuable outcome of the program;
- Most participants found the tools and processes valuable and useful not only for application to their current idea, but also for other ideas and to their primary farming business; and
- The main challenges the teams faced were the availability of time to work on their business idea (a significant barrier for most teams), and the amount of new content and the fast pace of the program was difficult.

As discussed above, this feedback has been incorporated into the design of Ideas Program #2.

## Wine Australia-Sponsored Participants in Ideas Program 2

Jason O'Dea

Jason is a wine grape and bottled wine producer in Canowindra, NSW. Jason came into the Ideas Program with an idea for an organic wine-based, low-alcohol beverage, using the grapes deemed unsuitable for traditional table wine making. The usage of this leftover produce represents extra revenue at no extra grape cost.

Before the program, Jason had already had discussions with his existing distributors and other retailers to discern interest in the product, which they believed would be high. Having completed 3 months of research prior to F2F, Jason came into the program with the goal of proceeding to the next stage of product development for the organic wine 'Ready to Drink' product.

In the program, Jason focused on identifying his customer segments and drinking preferences which he did through extensive customer interviews (20+). Initially, Jason was targeting 25-35 year olds, but through the interview and research process, realised that this segment was not the right fit for the ready-to-drink product. After a few pivots, Jason identified that there was more interest and alignment for Jason's solution from the 32-45yo age group. Going through the steps of customer interviewing and 'insight downloading' allowed him to pivot quickly without any financial loss. Similarly, he was able to develop a much more targeted approach whereby the solution he was building actually fit with the right customer segment. The tools and methodologies that Jason employed in the program allowed him to make the right decisions on his solution (such as packaging, branding, ingredients and channel strategy) and build a solution that met their specific needs.

*"Learning the importance of doing interviews was one of the most valuable aspects of the program. I kept thinking along the way that I wish I had done this 20 years ago - it would have saved some serious dud products from being developed".*

Through the process of customer interviewing Jason was able to pinpoint the exact moments that his customers make decisions; who influences their purchase choices and where they source their information from. These important insights will allow Jason to

develop a strong marketing strategy to effectively communicate the key benefits of his solution to them.

*“Everything that I have learnt in this program has been amazing, and there is a lot that I can apply not just to the new business idea but also my existing business”.*

Jason is now working on new branding, a website, and prototypes of the product.

## Insights

The following insights have emerged as a result of Ideas Program #1 and #2:

### **1. The value proposition of the Ideas Program for producers**

There were many aspects of the Ideas Program that producers found to be valuable, and each producer varied in what they got out of the program. Overall, though, there are two outcomes that F2F targets for producers in the Ideas Program, and a core value proposition that is present in either case.

The first outcome is to progress the idea to a new venture. At the end of the Ideas Program this includes having successfully:

- Found a problem that resonates with customers;
- Proposed a prototype solution;
- Acquired a pilot customer(s); and
- Decided to pursue the idea or new venture further.

However, while some producers will achieve this, we have found that others will realize during the Ideas Program that their idea is not viable, and/or that they do not want to build a business to pursue the idea. In this latter case, they may want to connect with others who do want to progress the idea, or they may want to just use the technology or idea on their farm (but not build a business). Though this may seem like a “failure” of the idea, F2F believes this is actually a successful outcome in that the producer has developed the capability to make a strategic evaluation about both the viability of their idea, and their own ability and willingness to pursue the venture. They have likely saved themselves time, money, and frustration by learning this early.

Further, no matter the outcome for their idea, most participants find the tools and processes of the Ideas Program valuable not only for their venture, but also for other ideas and for their primary farming business. This is the second outcome, and core value proposition, of the Ideas Program: building capacity within producers to think strategically about new venture creation and utilise startup best practices in all areas of their operation.

Examples of Ideas Program participants using the tools and tactics to unlock value in areas beyond their initial idea include:

- One participant is rebranding their livestock business, and used the process of talking to customers to identify customer needs and the value proposition their operation can provide
- Through interviews, one participant built a better relationship with their livestock agent, specifically around the pain points that growers face. The agent has since come back with better rates, and the participant has increased farm turnover and profit as a result.
- One participant is already using the tools they learned in the program to test the viability of another value-add product they want to sell.
- One participant has used the lean startup framework to evaluate problems on-farm, and prioritise which ones are truly pain points that warrant spending money to solve

## **2. Build trust, community, and commitment early**

Ideas Program participants rated the networking opportunities and access to coaches as highly valuable aspects of the Ideas Program. Bringing together participants to spend time off farm and with people they might not otherwise meet, during the kickoff and mid-session workshop, is a highly valuable experience for the teams. The kickoff event in particular was key to helping the teams build trust in the program, including with the coaches and the tools and methodologies used. While in-person is our preferred way to deliver this experience, the online Ideas Program 2 kickoff is evidence that with the right framing and facilitation tactics, an online experience is also viable. Keys to success for the online kickoff included:

- Technology onboarding, to ensure the producers were comfortable using the video conferencing and messaging technologies
- A mix of small group and large group sessions, to give teams time to work on their ideas with the coaches, as well as to keep energy high in the remote environment
- Social time in smaller groups to get to know the other participants

### **3. Filtering applicants, especially for mindset**

A key learning from the first Ideas Program was the importance of filtering applicants not only for the quality of their idea, but also for their mindset and goals. Given that a core value proposition of the program is learning new tools and ways of thinking that can be applied to the farm as well as to a new venture, having participants who are open-minded and eager to learn is critical. To filter for participants in Ideas Program #2 with the right mindset, F2F implemented a two-step screening process that included a short interview with an F2F coach for all applicants to progress beyond an Expression of Interest (EOI).

### **4. Extended support for some teams to build a pipeline for F2F**

Given the fast pace of the program and the existing commitments that producers have, the original eight week program design was not long enough for many participants to achieve the progress they hoped to make. The teams that did make the most progress, though, also rated their experience, and the value they received, highest. To maximise the value for participants, and increase the likelihood that Ideas Program graduates will be ready for the Bootcamp (accelerator) program, extended support is necessary. Design for this extended support will be a focus of Farmers2Founders in subsequent years, but may include a longer Ideas Program (noting that Ideas Program #2 has already been extended to 12 weeks), ongoing coaching for select teams with high potential, and/or an interim program to support high-potential teams to get ready for the Bootcamp program.

## Business Growth Bootcamp Program (Accelerator)

### What we did

During the pilot year, F2F designed and delivered an accelerator program for eight producer-led teams that were ready to grow and potentially scale their agtech, foodtech or value-added food business. The program was designed as a 12-week program which included: an initial 4-day face-to-face workshop; fortnightly coaching and mentoring;

fortnightly group training sessions; opportunities for teams to pitch at other relevant events (eg. the [‘Sow Many Ideas’ AgTech Meetup](#) on 27 November); a two-day closeout workshop; attendance at evokeAG; and a dedicated Pitch Night that attracted more than 150 attendees from across the agrifood tech and investor community.

While the methodologies and tools incorporated into the Bootcamp Program are well known in the delivery of accelerator programs, F2F has adapted these methodologies for the agrifood context and to ensure relevance for producer-led teams. A strong emphasis in the program was training teams in the use of various digital collaboration tools such as: Slack; Zoom; and the Google Suite. Teams were also exposed to digital marketing tools, use of social media, and Hubspot (a CRM program).

F2F received 23 applications for the accelerator and accepted eight teams from several sectors. The focus of the successful teams was equally divided between developing agtech (four teams) and value-adding (four teams). F2F received 2 full applications from the wine industry, and Wine Australia decided to support one team.

Recruitment tactics used and augmented what was successful for the Ideas Program, including: workshop attendees; direct invitation; referrals from producers who had participated in other F2F programs and workshops; outreach by Industry and Regional Partners; distribution of brochures at events; media; and social media.

The application process involved the following steps:

1. Applicants completed and submitted an application form containing information about their personal background, team members, business idea, unique value proposition, revenue streams, and 5-year plan;
2. Eligible applicants progressed to a telephone interview with the F2F team;
3. Feedback was received from the RDCs; and
4. Final evaluation was undertaken by the F2F team, and successful applicants were notified (see Appendix 2).

Participants were eligible to receive a \$10K grant, which they had to match with \$2,500 of their own cash. Participants could use the grant funds to cover approved expenses directly related to building and scaling their business. All teams participating in the Bootcamp Program made progress towards their growth goals which included: engaging new distribution channels; increasing sales and revenue; exploring export markets; and

finding new customers to trial new products and prototypes. F2F is currently preparing detailed case studies of all participants for publication.

## Wine Australia-Sponsored Participant: BitWise Agronomy

Bitwise Agronomy is developing a machine learning product, Greenview, that allows vineyards to easily capture and analyse images of their vineyard rows. By applying machine learning models to the images, Greenview is able to provide growers insights on attributes like growth rate, bunch count, disease and more.

Bitwise entered the program in the development phase of their MVP. Cofounders Fiona Turner and Aran Elkington had been working on the business for some time following their experience building a similar product for road maintenance in a prior business. Over the course of the Bootcamp, the F2F team supported Bitwise to refine their sales and marketing approach, with a view to securing a pilot customer, early revenue, and preparing to raise investment.

Bitwise was subsequently successful in securing a contract with an international wine company to roll out the product on their vineyards and co-develop a machine learning model. This contract has allowed Bitwise to bring on a number of new employees and suppliers to accelerate growth. Bitwise has also been successful in attracting interest in their product domestically and internationally, with active conversations with large growers in table grapes, citrus and berries.

Other highlights of Bitwise's work during the program include establishing back end sales processes including the Hubspot CRM software, and initiating investment conversations to fund further company growth.

*"The biggest gain [for us] was in the confidence that we are on the right track in terms of our business model. Having access to a trusted mentor who can validate our thoughts was a huge benefit, and the way they pushed us to overcome obstacles was central to BitWise's progress during the three months. The program really helped to validate who our customers were, and help to build out our pitching skills in order to attract new customers and capital."*

## Participant Feedback

F2F undertook a benchmarking survey of the Bootcamp participants to determine the impact of the program on participants' confidence and self-assessment regarding capabilities deemed to be essential for entrepreneurial success. As demonstrated in the

table below, the confidence of participants with entrepreneurship tools and techniques significantly improved over the course of the program across the majority of capability areas.

Capability Area	Before	After	Increase
Developing customer personas for the customer segments that are relevant to my business	2.12	2.25	6%
Talking to customers to understand their needs and pain points.	2.25	4.5	100%
Creating and using canvases (e.g., business model canvas, lean canvas)	1.87	4.25	127%
Creating marketing positioning statements that are compelling to my customer	2	3.75	88%
Defining and testing hypotheses	2.25	4	78%
Pitching your business	2	4	100%
Taking on feedback (e.g., from coaches and mentors) and applying it	2.75	4.37	59%
Making new connections with people to seek advice or resources	2.75	4.62	68%
Learning new digital tools and programs	2.62	4.37	67%
Setting a revenue model (pricing structure) and business model for my product	2.12	4.12	94%
Navigating the broader agtech/food ecosystem	2.37	3.87	63%
Engaging with other participants in the agtech ecosystem (e.g., forming partnerships, making connections)	3	4.12	37%
I can concisely explain my product/service offering	2.37	4.37	84%
I know who my customers are	2.62	4	57%
I have a strong value proposition for all customer segments	2.37	4.25	79%
I know what, if any, partners I will need to make this business successful	2.37	4.12	74%
I have identified the channels to reach my target customers	2.12	3.87	83%

I have the right team, or know how to build the right team	2.25	4.12	83%
I know how we are different from, and better than, our competitors, and can articulate this	3	4.37	46%
I know what it will cost to make my product/deliver my service	2.62	4.25	62%
I know how to access capital and/or finance for my business	2	3.5	75%

Qualitative feedback indicated that the most valuable element within the program was the quality of coaching (100% rated this as ‘incredibly valuable’) with reasons including: access to people with such high levels of expertise; being held accountable; looking at things differently; and genuine support. When asked to rate ‘this program helped me to advance the viability of my business,’ 75% responded 5 out of 5 and the remaining 25% rated 4 out of 5. When asked if they would recommend this program to another producer wanting to scale their business, 100% rated 8 out of 10 or higher (75% rated 10 out of 10).

It was encouraging to note that participants reported significant benefit from their participation in evokeAG related to networking; great speakers; and forming new contacts. Participants indicated they would like to stay connected with F2F and each other and would like to have a reunion in 6-12 months to share progress and celebrate achievements.

## Insights

Many of the insights that were derived from our first pilot of the Ideas Program were also found to apply to the Bootcamp Program. In particular:

- **Producer-led agtech, foodtech and value-adding businesses experience a strong value proposition** related to their involvement in customised accelerator programs such as the F2F initiative. This is evidenced by the fact that all eight teams achieved or exceeded their growth goals set during the program and there were improvements (some very significant) across all 21 entrepreneurship competencies.
- **Building trust, community and commitment early** in the program is crucial - both between founders and the F2F facilitators and coaches; and between participating teams. This was achieved via the 4-day in person kickoff which included group activities and opportunities for more relaxed social interactions. In addition, the

use of digital collaboration platforms throughout as well as ‘peer coaching’ during group calls also served to reinforce the supportive nature of the cohort. This was further evidenced during the final pitch coaching workshop (leading into Pitch Night) where teams provided constructive feedback and strong encouragement to each other. The current COVID-19 constraints will pose challenges in achieving this level of trust and F2F is working hard to ensure that new programs (to be delivered virtually) do the best job possible in this regard.

- **Filtering applicants for ‘coachability’ and mindset** is essential, and possibly of greater importance than the quality of the idea or potential of the business plan. The more extensive application process deployed for screening applicants prior to entry to the Bootcamp was deemed a worthwhile investment.
- **Producer-led teams require considerable support** both during and after participation in an accelerator program. F2F’s experience suggests that this is an extremely important design consideration, as more than other ‘traditional’ tech entrepreneurs, producers are (at least initially) less confident with startups tools and jargon; are often less digitally savvy; and typically have far more competing priorities associated with the complexities of managing farming businesses. F2F has ensured that the design of our programs incorporates a high degree of flexibility and agility to ensure we accommodate the unique needs of producer-led new ventures. We have also extended our period of engagement with Bootcamp participants to maintain coaching support for a further 3 months while they look to implement growth plans but also to pivot during the current difficult global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic crisis.
- **Strong connections between teams and with the wider agrifood ecosystem** was specifically noted as a benefit to participants in the Bootcamp Program. It was very encouraging to see the positivity of the interaction between the producer teams and the wider agrifood ecosystem during evokeAG and the Bootcamp Pitch Night. For many, this was their first exposure to such a diverse group, and for ecosystem players such as investors, startups, and value chain customers, this was likely their first experience of producer agtech and foodtech founder- entrepreneurs. Feedback was extremely positive and reinforced the importance of encouraging these types of interactions.
- **Cross-sectoral program design** was noted by participants as a benefit, as they were able to meet and connect with producers they would otherwise not meet, who are on a similar journey and facing similar challenges. The personal relationships formed during the Bootcamp were incredibly strong, and as a result

the teams were able to support each other directly, as well as getting support from the coaches and broader F2F mentor network.

## Early Adopter Program (EAP)

### What we did

The pilot year EAP, which Wine Australia did not explicitly support during the pilot, was completed in June 2020.

The EAP was designed for producers across sectors who want:

- To de-risk the process of searching for and trialling new technologies;
- Support to engage with tech companies to gain early access and provide feedback so that more solutions are 'fit for purpose'; and
- To be part of a community of like-minded early adopter producers.

The goals of the program included:

- Farmers gain access to a community of like-minded early agtech adopters that they can leverage both throughout the program and in the future;
- Farmers feel more confident about finding, selecting and engaging with agtech, and feel like they are more likely to succeed with agtech startup engagements;
- The farmers gain confidence as local and industry champions around engaging in agtech, as they improved their ability to make strategic decisions about bringing agtech into their businesses;
- Farmers have increased knowledge about the agtech startup ecosystem and trends in agtech;
- A few of the farmers progress engagements with the startups identified on the program (either individually, or as/with a group); and
- Farmers meet other farmers from across Australia and hear about different technology being used and challenges and opportunities in different industries.

Program stages include the following, noting that changes had to be made to manage for the impacts of COVID-19 (i.e. no in-person workshops).

- Applications open
- Expressions of Interest and screening
- Acceptance and participants formed into groups (see Appendix 3)

- Kickoff calls and problem refinement
- Finalise problems
- Tech training call
- Tech scouting phase
- Workshops to build tech filtering and selection capabilities, and identify startups
- Engagement with selected agtech startups/vendors.

There are a total of 24 active producers in the program, including 2 wine grape producers.

EAP involved the following elements:

- Seven challenge areas were identified by the growers, and the top four challenges were identified;
- Technology training calls, introducing our early-adopter framework and best practices for technology adoption, were conducted;
- An online platform was set up to encourage and support information sharing and discussions; and
- Four virtual workshops around each of the high priority challenges were held. In each, farmers were introduced to tools to filter and assess solutions in the challenge area, as well as provided with a curated shortlist of relevant vendors. Workshops were held on the following challenge areas: connectivity; water monitoring; livestock monitoring; and centralised platforms.

## Participant Feedback

A full survey has been completed at the conclusion of the program, including qualitative feedback, areas for improvement, and data on the degree to which participating producers are increasing their engagement with, and uptake of, agtech.

The below quotes are from participating producers, and additional feedback is included below.

Belinda Lay

“The tools developed by F2F for agtech selection helps farmers with taking the jump into agtech adoption. I think these EAP tech selection tools are fabulous- they help farmers work through tech selection strategically, rather than getting lost and confused about finding agtech to help. I wish I saw these EAP selection tools before going through the process of finding and selecting tech blind and on my own”.

## Anonymous Livestock Producer Participant

"Since the connectivity workshop, I have already approached 2 startups (Origo and MarchNet) and begun conversations - the framework has really helped to motivate and encourage me to get out there and begin discussions"

## Charlie Perrottet

"It has been a really valuable experience participating in the F2F Early Adopter Program. The workshop on connectivity technology filtering and selection was very helpful and has helped to refine my process of searching for technology, not just for connectivity but all areas of my farming operation."

It is worth noting that in some cases, producers rated the usefulness of the program much lower. In most cases, these are producers who did not come to the final four sessions where the challenge-specific tools, and selected vendors, were introduced. There are several reasons producers varied in their levels of engagement/participation. First, producers were able to pick and choose which sessions were relevant to them, so not all producers attended all sessions. Second, given a strong focus on the wool industry, participants in other industries may have found examples to be less useful or relevant. Finally, and most importantly, given the impact of COVID and the need to significantly change the program design, as well as the fact that this was a pilot program, the original concept for the program differed from what was actually delivered (e.g., focus shifted to challenge-specific tools and vendor lists, and helping growers be more strategic about tech filtering vs. the original concept of engaging directly with vendors and other early adopters through in-person workshops). As a result, any growers who came to the first workshop, and possibly the second workshop focused on "tech adoption 101," truly an intro for those less experienced, and didn't perceive value, might have decided not to participate in subsequent workshops. In follow up conversations about the program's ultimate design, some of these growers expressed interest in future participation, and F2F will follow up with them directly.

## Insights

Insights from the EAP include the following:

- **Focus on capability building and confidence:** The original plan was to match tech companies with producers in a 1:1 format, and help them work together in a supported "early adopter" model. The challenge with this is that, though "early

adopters” are needed, the “market size” is small given: (a) there are only so many tech companies ready and qualified for this; and (b) each tech company only really needs 1-2 early adopters, not many, as they quickly need to scale their solution to meet broader market needs. Further, it may be that the best tech companies already have early adopters and don’t need this service.

- **Refined understanding of two key producer personas:** F2F thought that the producers who would apply would be inundated with agtech solutions but would lack the engagement model to work with solution providers in mutually beneficial ways. Our value proposition would therefore be to filter to find the “good” ones (i.e., who want to work with producers and have the right mindset to take on feedback, etc.), and perform a match-making process to help them work together. However, we have found that there are actually two main producer personas in the EAP. First, savvy operators who are already early adopters. And second, strong operators who are keen to get involved with agtech, but are not yet early adopters. For the first group, the EAP has helped to connect early adopters with each other, as well as support them to think more strategically about filtering and adopting agtech. The second group, which comprises the majority of the participants, is in fact not at all inundated with agtech solutions; rather, these producers are struggling to find agtech at all. Though they know that tech is out there- and can help them, the second group is not sure where to look or how to find it, and lack the tools and strategies to filter it or adopt solutions.
- **The value proposition of the EAP** is to give the producers tools to think about tech adoption more systematically, thereby building capabilities and confidence around filtering and evaluating technologies, especially in crowded spaces and where the offerings can be hard and/or confusing to differentiate. In other words, EAP has helped growers to work “on” vs. “in” their businesses, and in relation to technology adoption.. For both personas, access to each other and curating a community of like-minded producers keen on agtech is also an important benefit.
- **Unintended, but beneficial, uses of the EAP tools:** participating producers are using the EAP tools in somewhat unexpected, yet beneficial, ways. For example, one producer has approached F2F with an idea to co-apply for grant funding to bring more EAP challenged-based workshops to their region. Another has used the EAP tools to engage with both government extension and tech vendors, providing them with a more holistic and producer-centric view of a producer’s needs, and using it to provide feedback on their tech solutions.

## Promotion, Media, and Outreach

During the pilot, F2F conducted extensive outreach and promotional support via: monthly F2F newsletters; offline and digital media channels; industry publications; regional partner initiatives; and large events such as evokeAG. The goals of this outreach included:

- Increasing awareness of F2F initiatives and the F2F brand;
- Supporting recruitment into F2F initiatives and programs;
- Acting as thought leaders in the agrifood ecosystem with a particular focus on the importance and capacity of producers as frontline innovators;
- Promoting the successes of producer participants in F2F programs; and
- Supporting Industry Partners to create greater impact from their investments in F2F initiatives.

The F2F outreach strategy includes three levels of influence:

1. **Community** - working with local media outlets in small regional centres to increase awareness of upcoming F2F programs and local workshops.
2. **Regional** - securing media coverage in specific regional outlets (e.g., Channel 9, ABC Radio, etc.), across both print and radio formats. Testimonials and case studies of previous participants were used to encourage further applications to the programs.
3. **National** - using national media outlets (e.g., The Land, ABC Country Hour, Stock and Land) to build a stronger profile for F2F across metro and regional areas. This focused on positive outcomes from the different programs, along with the highlights of the Bootcamp Program, including the kickoff in Sydney and Pitch Night in Melbourne during evokeAG.

During the course of the pilot year, F2F featured in 145 articles and over 2.5 million views of online articles.

## Industry Reference Group

F2F formed an Industry Reference Group comprising representatives from the five Industry Partners (RDCs) that have invested in the pilot year activities. The Reference Group has met face-to-face and virtually on several occasions, assisting F2F to:

- Promote the F2F initiatives across their industry sectors;
- Review initiatives and participant applications;
- Monitor KPIs and deliverables;
- Identify need for modification of program design as appropriate; and
- Support the pilot year evaluation.

In addition to the coordination of meetings, F2F provides regular briefing notes to Reference Group members.

## Achievement of Pilot Year KPIs

The following table summarises progress against KPIs which were established at commencement of the pilot year and endorsed by the Industry Reference Group at the kickoff at the end of January 2019.

### Participation metrics

Metric	Achievement
150-200 producers participate in ideation workshops	Approximately 400 attendees at the 16 workshops completed thus far with 167 being producers <b>ACHIEVED</b>
24+ producers participate in tech trials workshops;	90+ producers participated in tech trials workshops <b>ACHIEVED</b>
20 producers participate in tech trials program	24 producers are participating in the tech trials program (Early Adopter Program) <b>ACHIEVED</b>
24 producer-led teams participate in pre-accelerator cohorts	12 producer-led teams participated in Ideas Program #1; and 14 teams are currently participating in Ideas Program #2 (1 team withdrew from IP2 due to COVID19) <b>ACHIEVED</b>

6 producer-led teams participate in accelerator program	Eight producer-led teams participated in the Accelerator Bootcamp Program <b>ACHIEVED</b>
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A full summary of participants in all programs is included in Appendix 3.

## Commercialisation metrics

Metric	Achievement
At least 2 producer-led teams completing the accelerator program demonstrate investment readiness and/or revenue generation	[specifics redacted] <b>ACHIEVED</b>
At least 3 producer-led teams completing the accelerator program demonstrate the development of new solutions that solve significant industry problems (e.g., as evidenced by customer feedback and willingness to participate in field trials)	[specifics redacted] <b>ACHIEVED</b>

## Ecosystem and capability metrics

Metric	Achievement
Increased collaboration between the producer-led new ventures and the broader agtech/foodtech ecosystem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 50% of participants in pre-accelerator and accelerator programs engage with broader ecosystem participants</li> </ul>	<b>Pre-Accelerator Participants:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All teams interacted with guest speakers, representing agrifood tech experts and entrepreneurs</li> <li>All participants were exposed to other agtech accelerator programs (e.g., Cicada GrowLab, where the Kickoff was held)</li> <li>Two teams participated in evokeAG where they interacted with 1200 delegates</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 75% of participants in tech trials program develop engagements with agtech providers/developers</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p> <p><b>Accelerator participants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four teams pitched at Sydney AgTech Meetup “Sow many ideas”</li> <li>All teams interacted with guest speakers and the cohort of other agtech accelerator programs (e.g., Cicada GrowLab, where the Kickoff was held)</li> <li>Seven teams participated in evokeAG where they interacted with 1200 delegates</li> <li>F2F Pitch Night (in collaboration with Sprout X and Melbourne Agtech Meetup) where seven teams pitched to 150+ delegates from across ecosystem</li> </ul> <p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p> <p><b>Early Adopter Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75% of survey respondents in targeted sectors are "doing or planning on doing a trial with tech companies"</li> <li>25% of survey respondents in targeted sectors have already engaged at least one 1 tech company as a result of being in the program</li> </ul> <p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p>
<p>All participants demonstrate significant increase in understanding of entrepreneurship, new venture formation, design thinking, lean startup and business model methodologies (measureable- pre- and post- program capability benchmarking surveys)</p>	<p>See benchmarking results for Ideas Program and Bootcamp Program in Appendices.</p> <p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p>

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Demand for F2F Programs

A key objective of the pilot year was to attract and support innovative producers looking to grow and transform their farming businesses through the development and adaptation of cutting edge agtech, foodtech and food innovation. It was therefore important to demonstrate that there is sufficient demand from within the producer community for programs such as those offered by F2F.

During the pilot year there was evidence of increasing interest from producers as awareness of the F2F initiative became more widespread (e.g., see jump from 21 expressions of interest in Ideas Program #1 to 55 for Ideas Program #2). An important learning during the pilot year was the importance of clear and jargon-free messaging regarding program objectives to ensure producers for whom the programs were most relevant were those attracted to apply.

#### **Recommendation #1**

Maintain extensive, clear communications of F2F programs via multiple channels to ensure widespread awareness for producers keen to participate is achieved.

### Recruitment strategies continue to evolve

To ensure achievement of broader industry impact objectives, it is essential that recruitment strategies effectively uncover a breadth of high quality applications. During the pilot year, F2F experimented with a variety of recruitment strategies including:

- Different workshop formats;
- Extensive social media and PR;
- Outreach in publications, including feature stories of participants;
- F2F and partner websites;
- Webinars and 'office hours' with F2F coaches;
- Participation in events both in-person and via inserts to programs;
- Direct contact with producers known to F2F or RDC and regional partners;
- Contact lists of key influencers (e.g., consultants); and

- Referrals by F2F alumni.

Data that F2F have started to collect from applicants indicates that all recruitment strategies are working to some degree, with direct personal contact to individual producers by a trusted source (e.g., F2F; regional innovation hub; consultant; RDC manager) being the most effective, albeit the most resource intensive.

During the pilot year it also became apparent that recruitment processes based on filtering applicants for mindset and 'coachability' is an important determinant of ultimate participant success, both in achieving program objectives, as well as perceived value of the program to producers.

## **Recommendation #2**

Deploy and experiment with multiple targeted recruitment strategies with the aim to significantly expand the breadth of high quality candidates and applications (10X). This is likely to include development of many more 'intimate' online events that enable F2F to significantly expand our reach, both directly with producers as well as with 'intermediaries' who will be strong F2F champions within their local producer networks.

## **Producers as champions of industry change**

F2F programs are aimed at creating impact at both the individual producer level and the broader industry. For individual producers, depending on which F2F program they participate in, the benefits relate to building capabilities that translate into: revenue and business growth for new agtech, foodtech and food innovation ventures; ability to scale businesses and become investor-ready (Bootcamp); confidence to transform ideas into new business opportunities (Ideas Program); accelerated adoption of new technologies (Early Adopter Program); greater access to knowledge and networks (all programs); and application of new methodologies to improve existing on-farm businesses (all programs). In the pilot year, F2F has focused on demonstrating that producers have the willingness and capacity to embrace new ways of thinking and to deploy new skills and methodologies to achieve their specific objectives (as relevant to each program).

At an industry level, F2F sees impact being achieved via a variety of mechanisms including, but not limited to, the following:

- Accelerating the development of new technologies that will be more likely to be adopted by other producers - as producer-led teams are more likely to develop solutions that are worth adopting and can be easily understood by other producers. This is starting to be demonstrated by the uptake of technologies from a number of Bootcamp participants. It will be important to measure the ROI of levels of adoption across a wider producer community.
- Rapid commercialisation of revenue-generating concepts across a wider group of producers. An example from the initial Bootcamp program is Synchronicity who are already developing training programs and 'turn-key' solutions for other producers.
- As more producer-led ventures reach a level of business maturity, enabling them to attract new capital into their business (e.g., from the tech investor community), it could be anticipated that there will be a reduced expectation that RDCs should fund all of these developments.
- Promoting success stories inspires other producers to 'imagine' new opportunities for themselves and to have the confidence to try new ideas, concepts and technologies. This is already becoming apparent with Bootcamp participants receiving regular contact from other producers wanting to learn more, as well as EAP participants sharing their learnings and the tools in their communities and with tech vendors. This will ultimately become a 'virtuous cycle' which we anticipate will result in a significant increase in the number of producers who engage with F2F programs.

### **Recommendation #3**

F2F will develop a range of new and expanded initiatives for implementation in future years that will leverage impact from program outcomes across a much wider industry footprint. This will include: leveraging the key influencer role of the growing F2F alumni; supporting F2F graduates to rapidly commercialise their technologies across the sector; and utilizing virtual technologies to engage a much wider number of producers.

## **Benefits of cross-sectoral initiatives**

The majority of F2F programs are cross-sectoral with participation from a number of agrifood and fibre sectors (not limited to the five sectors represented by RDC partners). The cross-sectoral approach was a deliberate design element as it was considered this would provide a number of benefits including:

- Exposure for participants to different ideas and ways of thinking;
- Uncover the potential for technologies being developed in one sector to be more quickly adapted to others; and
- Enable RDC partners to share and cross-fertilise new concepts.

While participant feedback has reinforced that being exposed to a diversity of thinking and experience is extremely beneficial, this may not as yet have been fully realised at the RDC/sector level.

#### **Recommendation #4**

F2F and RDC partners work together to identify additional mechanisms to reinforce the cross-sectoral benefits. This could include, but is not limited to: greater visibility of applications across all sectors to all RDCs; increased engagement of RDC representatives in targeted F2F initiatives to uncover 'cross-sectoral' applications; case studies that demonstrate the benefit of cross-sectoral collaboration; and cross-sectoral benefits more deliberately highlighted in F2F communications.

## Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

While the emergence and global impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic was clearly not anticipated at commencement of the F2F pilot year, it is considered important that we now take into consideration how we can support Australia's agrifood and fibre sector through -and following- this extreme event. The agrifood sector is clearly critical to Australia's ability to withstand the severe impact that this will have on our economy and the health of our population. Australians more than ever will need the security of being able to access healthy food that they can rely on and which will be delivered to them via many new and innovative value chain models.

F2F has already pivoted our program model to be delivered 100% virtually and the delivery of the second half of the EAP and the second Ideas Program has been fully remote. Our experience of what has worked well in a virtual format is now being rolled-out across all other programs. F2F coaches are also working closely with program participants (current and past) to assist them to pivot their businesses to meet the new challenges (and opportunities).

#### **Recommendation #5:**

We see a clear need for accelerating innovations in technology and business model designs that we believe can be spear-headed by Australian producers. F2F is committed to stepping-up during this crisis and we are calling on our Industry; Government; Regional; and Corporate partners to work closely with us to ensure that our producers emerge stronger and more resilient in the future.

## Appendices

[redacted]