

Judges name 2018 Growth Awards winners

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- **Six Australians and two Kiwis named best in agriculture**
- **Leaders in their field produce more with less, while caring for the planet**
- **Rural champions fight for better physical and mental health among their peers**

Highly productive, environmentally focused and there to help when times are tough; the winners of the Syngenta 2018 Growth Awards prove that consumers can have more pride than ever before in how their nation's food and fibre are produced.

Judges from across agriculture and the recruitment, media and environmental industries named eight winners as their pick of Australian and New Zealand agriculture on Wednesday night. This included a 'Judges' Choice' in recognition of efforts to improve the mental health of isolated farmers.

"Times have rarely been harder than they are now for farmers and their advisers who are dedicated to growing the food and fibre that helps feed and clothe us all in Australia and New Zealand," Syngenta Australasia Territory Head Paul Luxton said.

"Growing seasons are less reliable than ever and the rural hubs they call home continue to shrink, contributing to feelings of isolation and even depression, yet our winners demonstrate a tremendous capacity to do more with less as real innovators, while caring for the land and each other.

"This is our fifth year of running the awards and such is the quality of nominees that it is only getting

harder to narrow down our winners.”

Chosen from a field of [26 regional winners](#), in the categories of Productivity, Sustainability, and Community and People, this year’s winners are:

PRODUCTIVITY - GROWER (joint winner)

Murray Turley, Turley Farms, Temuka, NZ

Murray heads Turley Farms, a 2,930ha operation on NZ’s South Island growing cereals, potatoes, and hybrid vegetable seeds.

Turley Farms has been one-hectare grid soil testing for a decade and applying variable rate fertiliser to ensure no nutrients are lost, improving profitability and enhancing the environment.

Turley Farms is one of the founding shareholders of Southern Packers – an onion and potato packhouse – which has the capacity to process 40,000 tonnes of onions a year.

PRODUCTIVITY - GROWER (joint winner)

Lynley Anderson, Kojonup, WA

Lynley uses the latest technologies and research in her mixed farming operation.

Conscious of the ecological responsibility she has to her farm, Lynley makes strategic decisions to maintain ground cover on the gravel, loam and clay soils and manages risk by utilising synergies between cropping and sheep.

PRODUCTIVITY - ADVISER

Noel Jansz, Elders Ltd, Agronomist, Bairnsdale, VIC

Noel provides advice to help maximise returns for his growers.

This includes insights on the amount of irrigation required, and the right fertilisers and chemicals to maximise crop output.

Noel adopts the strategies of the Integrated Crop Management system, a holistic approach to running farms.

SUSTAINABILITY - GROWER

Jack Russo, Bundaberg, QLD

Predominantly a sugarcane grower, Jack has included macadamias and peanuts in his 500ha enterprise to produce a more sustainable farming operation and aid diversification.

As a fourth generation grower, he has designed his own fertiliser applicator to deliver nutrients to the root zone. With the environment in mind due to the proximity of his farm to the Great Barrier Reef, the applicator also decreases run off.

SUSTAINABILITY - RESEARCHER

Jim Walker, NZ Institute for Plant and Food Research, Hawkes Bay, NZ

As a researcher Jim has demonstrated a lifelong passion for safe fruit production through his work on pesticide applications.

Jim led a team which introduced Integrated Fruit Production and has helped growers adopt practices that decrease pesticide residues. Jim’s advice is regularly sought by NZ government officials.

COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE - GROWER

Scott Samwell, Eastbrook Vegetable Farms, Mount Barker, SA

Scott is part of a family operation producing Brussels sprouts and kalettes at two farms at Mount Barker and Langhorne Creek.

Scott spends up to two days a month providing input into future research and development through his involvement with industry groups. He also hosts field days and school visits to his farms.

COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE - ADVISER

Tony Lockrey, AMPS Agribusiness agronomist, Moree, NSW

Tony works with about 20 large clients providing on-farm advice. He has a strong involvement in research and development and holds positions on many industry bodies.

Tony organises a "Men's Campfire Dinner" once a month, which has attracted up to 70 men who are encouraged to talk about anything they like.

JUDGES CHOICE - ADVISER

Ginny Stevens, Active Farmers Ltd, Mangoplah, NSW

Ginny left a career in banking to follow an idea to use physical fitness to improve mental health in rural communities.

That idea became Active Farmers, a network of farmer boot camps across 30 communities with 250 farming families now involved in the program and another 100 communities interested.

The awards, presented by an independent panel of judges, were announced at a gala dinner at Pier One, Sydney, On December 5.

This year's winners will have the opportunity to participate in a week-long study tour of the UK and Europe in 2019.

The tour has in recent years included a day at [Royal Farms, Berkshire, and Syngenta's R&D facilities at Jealott's Hill](#).

This opportunity not only enables the winners to see another side of agriculture, it helps foster stronger working relationships within the industry, helping make better use of resources to help feed the world under Syngenta's [Good Growth Plan](#).