



# Market and consumer insights to drive food value chain innovation and growth

Meat and Livestock Australia

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This summary is an excerpt from the [final report](#), with minor edits made to ensure it meets departmental style and accessibility requirements.

## Summary

Insights2Innovation is a first of its kind collaboration between Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), Dairy Australia, Horticulture Innovation, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (VIC), Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, Wine Australia, Austrade, Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia, CSIRO and Australian Pork Limited.

The project intended to address key objectives of the Rural Research and Development for Profit program by developing new knowledge and deep market insights that will inform more strategic innovation investment decisions, and ultimately, lead to increased value for primary products.

Specifically, this project focused on capturing market insights, identifying high-value opportunities in export markets and helping producers and their supply chain partners respond effectively to those opportunities. It also looked at building the capacity and capability of agri-food supply chains to innovate and collaborate for market advantage, by creating easy-to-access tools and strategies.

By collaborating with stakeholders across the agri-food sector, deep market insights were captured for the China, ASEAN and MENA regions. Crucial to the success of Insights2Innovation was the development of novel and practical approaches to translating these insights into innovation opportunities.

Using the participatory action research framework, the project explored and evaluated different models of how to achieve this – one at the enterprise level (Value Chain Flagship Demonstrations) and the other at the individual level (Young Food Innovators).

Value Chain Flagship Demonstrations involved producers and their value chain partners working together to convert market and consumer insights into tangible innovation and growth options. Foundation research outputs and the learnings were embedded in the design of specific strategies targeting identified market opportunities and in the development of pilot value chain designs.

Young Food Innovators was designed to help emerging industry leaders in the Australian agri-food sector develop a ‘whole-of-chain’ (plate-to-paddock) approach and build their strategic

value chain thinking and capability. Delivered through a series of residential workshops, this cohort-based program enabled participants to work with food value chains that were seeking to innovate in order to grow high value opportunities; in both domestic and export markets, drawing on market and consumer insights.

Through these two models, significant innovation opportunities were identified and contributed to agri-food organisations exploring new products, brands, value chains and business models.

For example, through participating in the Young Food Innovators, Yanalla Farms in Queensland have established a new 'PinksBlush' custard apple brand. Under the Value Chain Flagship Demonstrations model, processors Teys Australia undertook a project to employ design-led innovation in the creation of a sustainable, long-term business models focused on food solutions, not just the beef supply chain.

Importantly, the Insights2Innovation project has also provided a framework for the sector to develop the necessary innovation capabilities to be able to understand and respond to market insights and investment opportunities, enabling them to transform their organisations and drive growth.

Lessons from all of the activities undertaken as part of the Insights2Innovation project have and will be used to inform new programs of work. The creation of a Knowledge Portal will ensure that learnings and insights continue to be communicated and shared beyond the life of the project.

Meat & Livestock Australia has already employed the learnings from the Insights2Innovation project into two programs of work around innovation capability building - one designed to encourage producers to engage directly with the innovation agenda, and the other designed to attract and encourage food innovators to explore and develop new ideas.

The support of the collaborating organisations, the Young Food Innovators alumni and the Value Chain Flagship Demonstrations partners will also assist with the acceleration of adoption of innovation capabilities across the sector.

Assisting food value chain businesses and producers to engage effectively with new higher value markets is critical to the sustained growth of the Australian agri-food sector. The work undertaken to date is only the start for the sector in developing long-term capability to transform and respond to disruptive innovation and commercialisation opportunities.

Further work is needed and the sector needs to continue to invest in developing innovation and commercialisation skills and knowledge for market and export opportunities, in order to ensure long-term prosperity.

The Insights2Innovation project has attracted additional funding from partners MLA Donor Company, Fisheries RDC, Seafood CRC, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources- Victoria, Australian Pork Limited and Wine Australia, along with considerable in kind support from Fisheries RDC and Hort Innovation. The additional funding from the MLA Donor Company in particular, has totalled over \$10 million and has enabled many learnings and outcomes from the project to be adopted by industry.