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QUEENSLAND INNOVATOR TAKES OUT NATIONAL AWARD

The Agricultural Shows Australia (ASA) Rural Ambassador Award was last night awarded to Queenslander, Justin Matthews, at a ceremony hosted by Victorian Agricultural Shows, in Melbourne.

The national Rural Ambassador Competition aims to discover the next generation of rural leaders who have the desire to represent and promote their community, their region and their State. The award provides a great opportunity to give young people a forum to express their views through education and experience and develop closer links with like-minded representatives from around the State and across Australia.

Selected from a pool of passionate and talented finalists, representing all Australian States and New Zealand, Justin's contribution to agriculture is outstanding. Working across both pork and dairy industries, Justin's particular interests include natural and artificial breeding techniques and genetic material selection for optimum production. Justin is interested in agricultural media and communications and has contributed extensively through volunteer work for his local Nanango Show in the South Burnett region.

The Rural Ambassador award includes a cash prize, sponsored by the ASA, of \$6000 for the winner and \$4000 for the runner up (this year awarded to Emily Ryan from Coonamble in NSW). As the national Rural Ambassador for 2017/18, Justin will also receive unrivalled opportunities to build his networks, expand his learning and develop his career. ASA Chair, Dr Rob Wilson said, at the ceremony "The Rural Ambassador program and award are the premier opportunities for young professionals working in agriculture and agricultural shows to grow and develop their careers. Their importance in fostering a pool of talented and committed rural advocates for the future of our industry cannot be under-estimated. We congratulate Justin for his outstanding achievements to date and wish him well for the exciting year-long program ahead of him as our Rural Ambassador."

Agricultural Shows Australia is a newly-formed body, established to represent and promote the role and significance of Australian Agricultural Shows to the broader community. The ASA represents the 580+ agricultural shows held annually around Australia, collectively contributing over \$950m to the Australian economy.

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