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It's an Open Gate Conversation: Ask a Farmer Your Question

Farmers have thrown open their farm gates to invite Victorians to ask questions about how food and fibre is produced in our great state.

Open Gate Conversations – www.opengateconversations.org.au – is a digital campaign that was launched in Melbourne today by Victoria's Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas MP, President of the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) Emma Germano and Campaign Ambassador, Gorgi Coghlan.

The campaign aims to provide transparency on how Victoria's food and fibre is produced. Through the *Open Gate Conversations* website, consumers can ask questions that will be answered by real farmers.

Research commissioned to inform the campaign found 61% of Victorians felt they had low knowledge about farming practices in Victoria.

In the same study, 70% of farmers surveyed considered it extremely important to farm in a way that met community expectations.

Emma Germano said it represents an important opportunity for farmers to listen to community concerns and be transparent about how farming is changing.

"Our customers rightly want to know how our food and fibre is grown and raised. This is our opportunity to openly share what we do with the community," Ms Germano said.

The research highlighted three key issues that raised concern amongst consumers; climate change, food quality and animal welfare.

Minister Thomas said the VFF *Open Gate Conversations* campaign would encourage discussion about the issues that matter to all Victorians; climate change, sustainability, use of chemicals and other technology, animal welfare and managing landscapes.

"Victorian farmers are innovators and leaders in their fields – we know they will jump at this chance to make new connections with the people who buy their products," Minister Thomas said.

Campaign Ambassador Gorgi Coghlan has lent her voice to the campaign to encourage Victorians to stop and think about how their food is produced.

“Whether your interests are sustainability, food quality or animal welfare, Open Gate Conversations will put you in touch with a farmer who can answer your questions,” Ms Coghlan said.

To find out more about *Open Gate Conversations*, visit www.opengateconversations.org.au

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