

SALRC LIVESTOCK 2026 CONFERENCE
FROM DATA TO DOLLARS: TURNING AI INTO
REAL FARM VALUE



AGTECH STUDENT INNOVATION COMPETITION

**Outline, Rules and
Entry Guidelines**

SALRC LIVESTOCK 2026 CONFERENCE

AGTECH STUDENT INNOVATION COMPETITION

COMPETITION OVERVIEW

The SALRC AgTech Student Innovation Competition aims to showcase innovative postgraduate research that has the potential to deliver practical outcomes for southern Australian livestock enterprises.

The competition is open to Masters and PhD students undertaking research at Australian universities in areas aligned with emerging agricultural technologies and their application within southern Australia's grassfed beef and sheep production systems. The initiative is designed to strengthen engagement between researchers, livestock producers, advisors and industry stakeholders while supporting the development of the next generation of agri-innovation researchers.

Finalists will receive a travel bursary to support their participation in the SALRC Livestock 2026 Conference and present their research to an audience of producers, consultants, researchers and industry representatives.

COMPETITION OBJECTIVES

The competition aims to:

- Increase the visibility of applied AgTech research relevant to southern Australian livestock industries.
- Strengthen connections between emerging researchers and industry stakeholders.
- Encourage research that addresses real-world livestock production challenges.
- Develop participants' ability to communicate research outcomes to producer audiences.
- Promote innovation that improves productivity, profitability, sustainability and labour efficiency within livestock enterprises.

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ELIGIBLE RESEARCH THEMES

Entries must align with one or more of the SALRC Livestock 2026 Conference themes:

1. Livestock Productivity and Labour Efficiency

Research relating to technologies that improve livestock management efficiency, including:

- Virtual fencing
- Automated livestock management systems
- Labour-saving technologies
- Precision livestock management

2. Animal Health, Wellbeing and Monitoring

Research focusing on:

- Remote sensing technologies
- Animal behaviour monitoring
- Predictive health indicators
- Welfare monitoring systems
- Early intervention technologies

3. Feedbase and Grazing Management

Research involving:

- Satellite monitoring
- Drone-based applications
- In-paddock sensing technologies
- Feed forecasting
- Grazing decision-support tools

4. AI-Supported Whole-of-Enterprise Decision Making

Research addressing:

- Artificial intelligence applications
- Data integration platforms
- Predictive analytics
- Decision-support systems
- Whole-farm digital technologies and automation.

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ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must:

- Be currently enrolled in a Masters or PhD program at an Australian university.
- Be undertaking research relevant to one or more conference themes.
- Be available to attend and present at the SALRC Livestock 2026 Conference.
- Have approval from their supervisor to participate.

Students from all agricultural, engineering, computer science, data science, animal science and related disciplines are encouraged to apply.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must submit:

1. Research Abstract

A maximum one-page abstract outlining:

- Research objectives
- Methodology
- Key findings (if available)
- Expected industry benefits

The research abstract must clearly describe:

- The livestock industry problem being addressed
- Practical applications of the research
- Potential producer benefits
- Pathways to adoption

2. Student Profile

Including:

- Name and university
- Degree and stage of study
- Supervisor details
- Contact information

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ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Entries will be assessed by a panel comprising SALRC representatives and industry experts. Assessment will be based on:

Criteria	Weighting
Relevance to conference themes	30%
Practical industry application	30%
Innovation and originality	20%
Potential scalability and adoption	20%

Research with a clear pathway to producer adoption and measurable industry benefit will be viewed favourably.

FINALIST SELECTION

Up to nine finalists may be selected to participate in the SALRC Livestock 2026 Conference. Finalists will:

- Receive a travel bursary.
- Participate in an online pre-conference communication and presentation workshop.
- Present their research during conference sessions aligned with their topic area.
- Network with producers, advisors, researchers and industry leaders.

The travel bursary will cover full conference registration (including the conference dinner) and reasonable approved domestic travel and accommodation expenses.

Presentation Requirements

Finalists will be required to:

- Attend an online pre-conference communication and presentation workshop.
- Prepare a producer-focused presentation focused on the practical outcomes, adoption opportunities and industry value of their research.
- Present within their allocated conference session and answer audience questions and discussion.

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COMPETITION RULES

- All submitted work must be the applicant's own research.
- Research may be ongoing and does not need to be fully complete.
- Joint research projects are eligible; however, only one student may be the nominated presenter.
- Applicants must ensure any confidential or commercial information has appropriate approval for public presentation.
- The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Finalists who are unable to attend the conference may forfeit their place.
- SALRC reserves the right not to award travel bursaries if the standard of entries is considered insufficient.
- By submitting an entry, applicants grant SALRC permission to use submitted abstracts, biographies and presentation titles for conference promotion and reporting purposes.

INDICATIVE TIMELINE

Activity	Weighting
Applications Open	20 July 2026
Applications Close	24 August 2026
Finalists Notified	31 August 2026
Online Communication and Presentation Workshop	mid-September 2026
SALRC Livestock 2026 Conference	21 & 22 October 2026

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions should be sent to SALRC Chair Dr Sue Hatcher by CoB Monday 24 August 2026 via email at chair@salrc.com.au

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KEY CONFERENCE THEME

The SALRC AgTech Student Innovation Competition is focused on the following overarching question:

How can emerging technologies, artificial intelligence and digital agriculture research deliver measurable value for livestock producers and accelerate adoption across southern Australian farming systems?

CONTACT

For further information, please contact:

Dr Sue Hatcher

SALRC Chair

E: chair@salrc.com.au

M: 0407 006 454

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