

Thoughts on Agriculture from a Future Influencer Emily Cummings, Winnipeg, Manitoba

The theme of the 2010 GrowCanada® conference was “Growing Solutions – Connecting for the Future”. Since young people are the future, several senior high school students from across Canada were invited to share their perspectives as “future influencers” and I was lucky enough to be one of them. In a world where youths’ ideas are not always respected, it was great that the conference organizers invited us to attend. Some of us were even invited to share our opinions with speakers on stage.

The conference included informative presentations from well known scientists, futurists, economists and industry leaders, and inspirational speeches about being Canadian from CBC news anchor Peter Mansbridge, and John Furlong, the CEO of the Vancouver Olympics Organizing Committee.

I am not from a farm, in fact I am a typical urban teenager who had no thoughts at all about agriculture as a career. But by attending all of the sessions of the conference, I learned so much about agriculture. It is one of the world’s biggest industries and since it affects everyone in so many ways, people should understand its importance and the career opportunities that it presents. The majority of people do not see the progressive side of agriculture or the advances in technology which are resulting in crops for more nutritious foods, environmental benefits and greater productivity to help solve predicted world shortages and adapt to climate change. I think the industry needs to tell the general public all about these great achievements, and it needs to advertise all of the aspects of this very diverse industry.

If every student was able to attend the GrowCanada® conference, interest in the industry and enrolment in agricultural programs would increase dramatically. Attending the conference made me want to play a part in the journey to educate the public and create a positive view of agriculture. I hope that I can help to grow solutions by helping the industry connect with the future.

- Emily