

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FARMER SUE MIDDLETON WINS RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD**

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Western Australian farmer Sue Middleton – a passionate advocate for turning piggery waste into usable energy – is the winner of the 2010 Australian RIRDC Rural Women's Award. Alana Johnson, a rural philanthropy advocate from Victoria, is the Award runner up.

The two rural leaders were presented with their awards at a gala dinner in Canberra tonight by Federal Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister, Tony Burke.

Chairperson of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, Professor Daniela Stehlik, congratulated Sue and Alana on the contributions they have made to their industries and to agriculture sector more broadly.

"Sue Middleton and Alana Johnson are shining examples of the enormous contribution rural women make to Australia's agricultural sector, and I congratulate them on being named winner and runner up of this prestigious national award," Professor Stehlik said.

Sue runs with her husband a diverse pork, citrus and grain farming operation at Wongan Hills two hours north east of Perth. She also plays a key role promoting and supporting the role of women on the land through her involvement in a number of state and national rural advisory bodies.

Sue's vision is to create a more sustainable pork industry by converting the waste produced at piggeries and converting it into biogas. She plans to use the award bursary to travel both domestically and overseas to investigate leading biogas production facilities.

"Sue's ambition to investigate the enormous potential of piggery waste to be converted into energy epitomises the efforts of a growing number of Australian farmers who are looking at ways to play a more positive environmental role on their farms," Professor Stehlik said.

Award runner up Alana Johnson is a fifth generation farmer, a rural consultant and a pioneer of the rural women's movement in Australia. She and her husband run a beef cattle enterprise outside Benalla.

For more than three decades she has contributed to the development of rural women's leadership having held leadership positions in a range of agriculture bodies, including the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women.

Alana is working to establish the Australian Agriculture Future Foundation – an independent philanthropic foundation – that will provide an avenue for people on the land to create a legacy to rural Australia by enabling them to invest their wealth back into agriculture.

The RIRDC Rural Women's Award provides a bursary of \$10,000 for all seven state and territory winners to help them achieve their vision for their industry and enhance their skills and capacity to contribute to agriculture, natural resource management and rural Australia.

RIRDC acknowledges the support of the Award's national sponsors: Westpac, ABC Radio and Rural Press Ltd and the Australian Women's Weekly for hosting the evening. The Awards are supported by the state and territory government departments of agriculture and primary industries, and the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

Further information on Sue and Alana, including photos, is on the [RIRDC website](#).