

# Jessica Lye



Jessica was not born into farming, but that has not stopped her from pursuing a career in agriculture.

In a previous life, as a research geneticist, Jessica developed an interest in science communication. How can we make sure that research at the lab bench does not stay at the lab bench?

“I enjoyed research, but I felt there was a big gap between the science and the practice. It frustrated me. I decided to start expanding my repertoire and develop my communication skills.”

Not long after leaving research

Jessica was offered a role working in horticulture with the peak vegetable industry body AUSVEG. In her role as biosecurity officer for vegetables Jessica was introduced to a world that had seemed far removed from her previous work. The tasks required of

the role required a mixture of scientific thinking, engagement and communication.

“My appreciation of ‘extension’ and the need for it in agriculture has grown over the years.”

From AUSVEG, Jessica moved to research group cesar, which has a strong sustainable agriculture focus. At cesar she now works in research extension on a number of projects across Integrated Pest Management and biosecurity.

“What I would like to see is extension treated less like a ‘tack on’ to research and instead respected as a necessary aspect of our research and development process. I think we need more people deciding on research extension as a career path.

*“I feel like I’m doing something of value and contributing to research being more cost-effective.”*



## Scientific Extension & Communications

| The Role   | Prerequisites   | Skills Needed  | Salary Guide  | Training options   | Resources needed  | Next career step   |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Develop extension plans</p> <p>Presenting research results</p> <p>Organise educational events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• masterclasses</li> <li>• seminars</li> </ul> <p>Write articles</p> <p>Translate research to key findings</p> <p>Project management</p> <p>Investigate new ways to communicate research findings</p> | <p>Communication skills</p> <p>A scientific background</p> <p>Experience in the agricultural sector</p> <p>Experience or qualifications in event management</p> <p>Skills in engagement</p> | <p>A growth mindset</p> <p>Identify and use new skills and information</p> <p>Adaptability</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Diplomacy and the ability to build relationships</p> <p>Confidence in crowds</p> <p>Straightforward attitude (tell it how it is)</p> <p>Great organisational skills</p> <p>Great communication skills</p> <p>Being a generalist (master of all trades is useful!)</p> | <p>\$76,000 - \$332, 000</p> <p>Depends on size of enterprise and level and reponsibilities</p> <p>(payscale Australia)</p> | <p>Diploma in Science or Agriculture</p> <p>Degree in Science or Agriculture</p> | <p>Car licence and transport a must</p> <p>Recording equipment, camera and laptop</p> <p>Access to scientific databases</p> | <p>Develop within current enterprise that you work for</p> <p>Move to a role for a larger company or one in a different sector</p> |