

Former teacher Narelle Zanker wins top SA dairy farmer award

South Australia's newest young dairy farmer of the year is bridging the gap between agriculture and education. This is her story.

Working in the classroom and toil in the countryside may appear to be chalk and cheese, but Narelle Zanker has managed to churn two career paths into the perfect dairy blend.

Recently named as [South Australia's young dairy farmer of the year](#), Narelle spent four years as an agricultural teacher but wanted to switch to something more hands on.

So three years ago she founded Dairy Adventures, an agritourism initiative bringing school groups, aged care residents and corporate visitors onto her Mannum farm, 90km east of Adelaide.



"I loved teaching but when I was working as a teacher, I wanted to be out on the farm. When I was working on the farm, I knew there was an opportunity for practical teaching. So I've found the right balance between the two," Narelle said.

Working alongside husband Joel and parents Geoff and Heather Simons, the family are one of the few remaining dairy farms in the Mannum

region.

Narelle said in the social media age, she wanted to give the next generation of South Australians a clearer idea of how their milk, butter and cheese is produced – and perhaps inspire some fledgling farmers.

"It's a real eye-opener not just for kids, but for adults as well, getting an understanding of how a dairy farm operates day-to-day.

"There are so many elements to running a dairy business, people just think of milking time or animal care, and that's an important part, but there's also financial planning, pasture planning, working with staff, the list goes on."



[South Australian Dairyfarmers Association president Robert Brokenshire](#) said Narelle was a worthy recipient of his organisation's top young farmer award.

"Narelle is a great ambassador for the next dairy generation. Our awards are about celebrating the best of the best and Narelle has achieved a lot in only a few short years," he said.