

Farm trip beefs up kids' ag experience

BY ELLA SMITH

FARMERS co-existing with the natural environment was a focus at an inaugural Murrumbidgee Land Care (MLC) project involving 200 primary school students visiting a local farm.

Skye Bellamy and Tom Wilks, who run a 449-acre mixed farming property, Coombiana, hosted the On Farm Round Robin, which saw the students rotate through eight different stations to learn about life on a farm.

"As children are the consumers of the future they should know where their food comes from and how animals and the environment are cared for on local farms," Ms Bellamy said.

"It gives the kids an opportunity to appreciate the land and farming and how nature can co-exist with farming.

"It's to show how important it is to have a healthy environment so we can have a healthy life.

"We need to connect with nature so we can have a wonderful way of life.

Locals Max and Helen Chamberlain



HOLY COW: Angelica Temponera, 11, of South Wagga Public, with a bovine beauty in a cattle crush at the Murrumbidgee Land Care's On Farm Round Robin. Picture: Les Smith

offered their Landcare knowledge by planting trees with the kids, while Steve Condell gave sheep dog and drafting demonstrations, and Tom Wilks spoke about processing and drenching cattle.

David Hunter, a vulnerable species expert, educated the kids about frogs at one of the farm's dams, before

they rotated through bird and soil testing stations with other specialists.

"A really important goal is for the kids to learn that farmers produce our food and fibre, but they're also putting in a lot of effort to look after the environment as well," Murrumbidgee Landcare executive offi-

cer Marion Benjamin said. "Most farmers really value the natural environment because they live in it.

"If they don't look after it, they don't have a business.

"Educating the next generation of land carers is really important."

Frank Allen, a year 6 student at South Wagga Public School, had visit-

ed friend's farms previously but said the day was an eye-opener.

"It's really important (to learn about farming) because most surrounding areas of Wagga are farms and we get all our food from the farms," he said.

"It's been really fun. "I especially like the water bugs and planting the trees."