



Rabobank

*Media Release
March 1, 2011*

Business management skills ‘essential ingredient’ in turning positive agricultural outlook into profit – agricultural banker

Strong business management skills are the essential ingredient needed to turn the current strong positive outlook for agriculture into profit, a leading agricultural banker has told Australian and New Zealand farmers.

Speaking at the opening of applications for this year’s Rabobank **Executive Development Program**, Rabobank group executive country banking Neil Dobbin said the bank saw a strong positive outlook for Australian and New Zealand agriculture in 2011 and beyond, with overall robust global prices supported by tight supply in most commodity markets. However, this outlook came with its challenges – including increasing price volatility, a high currency and market access issues.

“A key ingredient in farmers being able to manage these challenges and turn the positive signs into profit will be their ability to cleverly and effectively run their businesses. And this requires strong business management skills,” he said.

“Now, more than ever before, sound business management will be what sets successful producers apart from the rest.”

Mr Dobbin said a core focus for this year’s Executive Development Program (EDP) was to provide primary producers with a range of commercial management tools to help them handle the increasingly changeable and challenging agricultural environment.

Now in its twelfth year, the prestigious Rabobank program gives leading farmers from across Australia and New Zealand and a range of agricultural sectors, the opportunity to develop and enhance their business management skills.

The program introduces participants to the latest practices in business management, leadership, strategy, finance, human resources, value chain management and marketing, and how these can be directly applied to their farm businesses.

“As a specialist agribusiness bank, Rabobank fully understands the variable nature of agriculture and that it is a long-term business. We believe developing sound management and sustainable farming business practices will be the key to success for the long-haul,” Mr Dobbin said.

Mr Dobbin said strong business management skills were also important in equipping farmers to deal with challenges presented by the recent major weather events and natural disasters that had confronted the agricultural sector.

Rabobank business management programs manager Nerida Sweetapple said the Executive Development Program teaches farmers how to make good management decisions about their businesses.



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“The most important resource is the person who drives the business so it makes sense to invest in developing this resource,” she said.

Applications for Rabobank’s 2011 Executive Development Program are open until 27 May 2011, with only 36 applicants accepted from across a range of commodities and geographical locations in Australia and New Zealand. Held in Sydney, the first module runs from 21-26 August, with the second module taking place in July of next year.

Producers interested in an application form or any further information on the Rabobank Executive Development Program should contact Nerida Sweetapple on 02 8115 4139 or email bmp@rabobank.com.

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Rabobank Australia & New Zealand is a part of the international Rabobank Group, the world’s leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking. Rabobank has more than 110 years’ experience providing customised banking and finance solutions to businesses involved in all aspects of food and agribusiness. Rabobank is structured as a cooperative and operates in 48 countries, servicing the needs of more than nine million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1600 offices and branches. Rabobank Australia & New Zealand is one of Australasia’s leading rural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the region’s food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 83 branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.

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