



Rabobank

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Bringing business back into agriculture

The integration of good business management skills into running a farm is crucial in agriculture today, according to young farm manager from Blayney, New South Wales, James Millner.

As an up-and-coming leader in farm business management, James took the opportunity to enrol in **Rabobank's Farm Managers Program** and – as a result of the course – said his approach to running a farm has changed to encompass key business skills into his daily routine.

"I loved the business focus of the program – it really allowed me to step back and look at our enterprise as a business, rather than just a family farm," James said.

"I went in with an open mind to learn as much as I could from the presenters and other participants in the course. It's such a good all-round program which delves into the business side of things a lot more than other agricultural courses seem to."

The Farm Managers Program, which is now in its seventh year, is modelled on Rabobank's highly-respected Executive Development Program and aims to strengthen the operational and strategic skills of tomorrow's farm managers. It is open to all progressive young farmers from across Australia and New Zealand from a range of agricultural commodities and covers topics around leadership, business planning, financial and economic management, and succession planning.

Applications for the 2012 Farm Managers Program are now open.

Together with another farm at Dubbo, James is responsible for the management of his family's farming business, 'Rosedale' Charolais Stud, as well as the 450-cow commercial herd and 450 hectares of cropping land.

Having graduated with a Business degree from the University of Technology Sydney before returning to manage the farm, James said he was able to "drill down" into some of those learnings from the Farm Managers Program and apply the same principles in an agricultural context.

"I manage a few staff on our farms and I learnt how to communicate more effectively and to be more organised as their manager," he said.

James said the presenters on the Farm Managers Program were inspiring. "I think the course highlights that there are really good opportunities in agriculture if you are prepared to look out for them and remain flexible and patient," he said.

Succession planning is another core component of the Farm Managers Program, which was also important to James.



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“We want to continue to grow our operation – my brother will be moving home at some point so it was good to understand how to plan for the long-term with regard to succession. We’ve become more aware of what sort of scenarios we might need to address as a family,” James said.

Announcing the opening of applications for the 2012 Farm Managers Program, Rabobank group executive Neil Dobbin said strong business management and leadership skills are becoming increasingly essential in order for primary producers to succeed and grow their enterprises.

“This is why Rabobank’s farm business management programs fulfil such an important role in supporting the development of Australian and New Zealand agricultural businesses,” Mr Dobbin said.

“These highly-regarded programs provide a unique opportunity for progressive farmers and primary producers to enhance their commercial management skills, develop market driven production strategies and explore options for sustained business growth.”

Applications for the 2012 Rabobank Farm Managers Program are open until 27 April. Only 36 applicants will be offered places on the program which will be held at Clear Mountain Lodge in Brisbane 18- 22 June.

Producers interested in an application form or any further information on the Rabobank Farm Managers Program should visit www.rabobank.com.au or contact Rabobank business programs manager Nerida Sweetapple on 02 8115 4139 or email bmp@rabobank.com.

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