



Rabobank

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March 26, 2013**

Every farm business needs a vision

'Every business needs a vision', and farms are no different, according to Australian crop farmer Hamish Millar, a recent graduate of the Rabobank Executive Development Program.

Mr Millar said the program, which he completed last year, gave him the inspiration to develop the vision for his farm business, a 1500 hectare cropping property, and the tools to help achieve it.

Applications have officially opened for the 2013 year intake of prestigious Rabobank Executive Development Program which gives leading Australian and New Zealand, farmers from a range of agricultural sectors, the opportunity to develop and enhance their business management skills.

Now in its fourteenth year, the program covers all aspects of rural enterprise management to help drive sustainable business growth, including strategic goal setting, negotiating and people management.

Mr Millar, whose property, 'Tandawanna', is located near Emerald in central Queensland, embarked on the Executive Development Program after receiving a referral from friends who had previously graduated from the program.

Mr Millar said that he felt motivated to take his business to the next level and the Executive Development Program provided him with the right tools to take action.

"I took a good look at our business and was working out how to 'professionalise' what we've been doing and, via the program, we did some strategic planning to help us get to where we want to be," he said.

"Every business needs a vision and we needed to put structure into what we're trying to achieve. We're still developing, but the program gave me the inspiration to look at our operation from the top down objectively and with more clarity."

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

Mr Millar has been part of a family partnership that is now taking on a new shape and form, while he is also looking at new opportunities, starting his own business ventures.

"The succession planning part of the program was highly valuable because we got some real-life examples of others who have gone through it," he said. "Now, we have implemented some of their strategies in our own business and while it doesn't happen overnight, we're almost there. We are now at the stage with young families and the



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family partnership couldn't last forever in its previous structure, but we've learnt how to manage it."

Mr Millar said it's important that, after completing the Executive Development Program, to continue with its implementation on-farm to apply what's been learnt.

"You can't go home and park it – you need to try and implement the skills that you've learnt and the course motivates you to want to really get stuck into it when you go home," he said.

Dealing with suppliers, staff and other stakeholders of the business, Mr Millar said the negotiation skills developed in the program were exceptionally helpful and he'd noticed the difference in his approach.

"There's no doubt that I am sharper with my negotiation skills," he said.

"I know in the past, I was a little reserved with regard to some aspects, but now I have a better understanding of how to get the best outcomes for our business."

The program brings together forward-thinking, like-minded primary producers from diverse agricultural backgrounds, selected from a high calibre of applicants.

Mr Millar said the program participants were excellent and the network of compatible people experiencing comparable challenges in their separate environments.

"Despite coming from different geographical backgrounds, we're all in this together with similar issues on the farm and you don't feel you're alone on these sorts of things and that gives you piece of mind," he said.

"I'd recommend it to any farmer or agricultural business manager who wants to enhance their business and growth – it's an incredible experience and opportunity to boost your business for more prosperity and profitability," he said.

Applications for Rabobank's 2013 Executive Development Program are open until Friday 31 May 2013, with applicants accepted from across a range of commodities and geographical locations in Australia and New Zealand. Held in Sydney, the first module runs from 18-23 August 2013, 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 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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