



Rabobank

*Media Release
March 15, 2012*

Increased commercial focus the way forward for farm businesses – Rabobank

The increasing commercial focus required in farming today means farmers need to adopt a more strategic approach in running their businesses, which is the emphasis of a leading farm business management program designed by Rabobank.

Now in its thirteenth year, the prestigious Rabobank Executive Development Program gives leading New Zealand and Australian farmers from a range of agricultural sectors the opportunity to develop and enhance their business management skills.

Announcing the opening of applications for the 2012 intake of the Executive Development Program, Rabobank group executive Neil Dobbin said the essence of the program has always been to focus more on the increasingly important commercial and strategic issues that are relevant to farmers today.

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.

“We need to invest in those capabilities to manage an inevitably difficult and volatile business – that’s what successful agribusiness management is about,” Mr Dobbin said.

“When thinking seriously about the future success of farm businesses, it’s important to invest in the most important resource of the business – the management itself.”

Rabobank has appointed Angus Taylor as program director of the bank’s Executive Development Program. Mr Taylor on the directorship role after Dr John Morris who is retiring after 13 successful years as program director since its inception in 1999.

Mr Taylor said the reality is that farming has been changing to take on a much more commercial focus than ever before, requiring today’s farmers to think more strategically about how they run their businesses.

“Farm operations are getting bigger, more commercial and business-focused, with more employees and contractors working for them than ever before. The focus is moving beyond just land and water, to people skills and business capabilities and this changes the nature of the game,” Mr Taylor said.

What has always defined the program from the start, Mr Taylor said, is the way in which Rabobank brings together a group of farm business leaders and helps them think through how to lead their businesses into the next decade and beyond.

“Additionally, teaching and learning techniques have changed and we’ve started to understand how powerful experiential learning can be. Increasingly, we are focusing on simulating a farming environment for our participants – they learn respond to with the right management strategies,” he said.



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Mr Taylor is a respected business strategist in the resources, infrastructure and agricultural industries and is a director with Port Jackson Partners, a strategy consultancy firm working extensively with senior management and boards throughout Australasia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Before taking the directorship of the Executive Development Program, he led Rabobank's highly-regarded Farm Managers Program from its beginning in 2006.

Originating from a sheep and cattle property near Nimmitabel, in southern New South Wales, he continues to work closely with his family farming business, focusing on the expansion of operations through establishing leasing and management contracts for non-farming land owners.

Applications for Rabobank's 2012 Executive Development Program are open until Friday 1 June 2012, with only 36 applicants accepted from across a range of commodities and geographical locations in New Zealand and Australia. Held in Sydney, the first module runs from 19-24 August, 2012 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.co.nz or contact Rabobank business programs manager Nerida Sweetapple on +61 2 8115 4139 or email bmp@rabobank.com.

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Rabobank 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 approximately 10 million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1600 offices and branches. Rabobank New Zealand is one of the country's leading rural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the New Zealand food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 31 branches throughout New Zealand.

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