



Rabobank

*Media Release
March 14, 2014*

Leading farmers tour New Zealand – knowledge-sharing the focus

Touring New Zealand's South Island last week, more than 80 of New Zealand and Australia's leading farmers gathered to share knowledge and innovative ideas around farm management and business development.

Rabobank hosted its Business Management Program alumni tour, allowing previous program participants to undertake a two-day cutting-edge expedition, visiting successful farm businesses in North Otago and South Canterbury owned by fellow alumni, to exchange ideas and practices across a range of farming enterprises and sectors. The tour included an alumni dinner at the famed Riverstone Kitchen showcasing local producers and an address from award-winning chef, Bevan Smith.

North Otago dairy farmer, Rogan Borrie, along with wife Michelle, hosted part of the alumni tour, visiting his four properties near Oamaru. Rogan, a fifth-generation farmer, completed Rabobank's Farm Managers Program in 2007 and says he remains passionate about the lessons learnt on the course seven years on.

"Since completing the Farm Managers Program, I have really seen a lot of transformation in my management abilities – especially in terms of people management – which has made a big difference in driving growth across the properties we run," Rogan says.

"It was an absolute eye-opener, reconnecting with some of the other Business Management Programs alumni on tour this week has been fantastic – you're mixing with some of the best operators in Australian and New Zealand farming.

"The experiences and sharing of business knowledge has been really positive, keeping us all informed about what else is out there, and that has a knock-on effect for all of us."

Rabobank offers two farm business management programs focused on developing the latest practices in business management, leadership, strategy, finance, human resources, value chain management and marketing, applied directly to farm businesses.

The **Rabobank Executive Development Program**, which gives leading farmers from across New Zealand and Australia the opportunity to enhance their



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business management skills and take their enterprises forward – is open for applications for its 2014 course, commencing in August.

The **Rabobank Farm Managers Program**, modelled on the highly-respected Executive Development Program is open to all progressive young farmers from across Australia and New Zealand from a range of agricultural commodities and is open for applications, commencing in June this year.

Rogan and Michelle oversee the four properties in their family business operation which consists of two dairy farms milking 950 cows, a 236 hectare irrigated run-off block plus a 60 hectare lease nearby, and a 477 hectare hill block that has been converted to dairy support. The run-off blocks are utilised for winter cow grazing, young stock grazing and supplementary feed. In addition, Rogan and Michelle share milk Rogan's parents dairy operation on a 50/50 arrangement milking 1050 cows.

Rogan says the operation has grown substantially since he completed the Farm Managers Program, where people management and business skills have really come into play with the growth of the farming enterprise.

"I learnt a lot about managing staff which was a big one for me – we were taking on more and more staff at the time, and the program helped me understand how to be a better manager," he says.

Rogan says it was a rewarding experience to host his fellow alumni on his property and share the developments and technology introduced on-farm.

"During the alumni tour, we went to four different farms including our own operation. The other farms visited were a deer operation, an intensive indoor robotic dairy operation and a mixed cropping and birdseed business, which was currently undertaking a dairy conversion, with each operation being owned by a past-participant of Rabobank's Business Management Programs," he says.

"We showed the tour our new computerised irrigation scheme with pivot and fixed grid sprinklers that we have recently installed in order to reduce labour time and energy and water efficiency.

"The plan is to grow more grass for feed because its more efficient than bringing in silage to feed stock."

Rogan says having the dairy run-off property allows for more 'self control'.

"We're not at the mercy of the market – we know exactly where everything is at



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the end of the year when it comes to our costs, feeding plans, and rotations of our cows,” he says.

Rogan says he also showed the tour the dairy platforms and the new effluent systems.

“For environmental reasons we have 60 day storage, so we don’t have to put the effluent on the paddocks when it’s wet which means we can minimise leaching,” he says.

“This is becoming more common-practice – it’s important to keep this environmental risks under control. You don’t want to get fined but more importantly, you don’t want to get your effluent into water ways so you need to manage this by putting it out in the right conditions which is overall more sustainable.”

Rogan has a positive outlook for the dairy sector and is keen to keep investing in his own capabilities when it comes to strategic decision making and on-farm management.

“I am going to do the Rabobank Executive Development Program this year so I can up-skill on business governance and go ‘the next step’,” he says.

“I will meet more people from different backgrounds which is great because it broadens your networks and gives you fresh ideas of what you could be doing back on your property and so forth.

“I highly recommend the Rabobank Business Programs – if you get the chance definitely go for it. The things you learn and the people you meet are all worth it. They are all people at the top of the industry and you can learn a tonne.”

Applications for Rabobank’s 2014 Executive Development Program are open until Friday 30 May 2014, 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 17 to 22 August 2014, with the second module taking place in July of next year. Applications are also open for the 2014 Farm Managers Program, which will be held in Victoria in June.

Producers interested in an application form or any further information on the Rabobank Business Management Programs should visit www.rabobank.co.nz/bmp or contact Rabobank Business Programs manager Nerida Sweetapple on +61 2 8115 4139 or email nerida.sweetapple@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 42 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 New Zealand's leading rural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to country's food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 32 branches throughout New Zealand. Rabobank also operates RaboDirect, New Zealand's first internet-only bank specialising in savings and deposits.

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