

Pronet Webinar Series

Returning to Work in the Family Business

Introduction

4 Panelists:

Jamie Taylor	Jo Williams
Jeremy Lush	Thomas Botterill

Facilitator: Lachlan Polkinghorne

- The aim of the Webinar was to focus on what is needed for people wishing to move into the Family Farm or agriculture.

Key Themes

The Decision to move to the Family Farm

- What needs to be put in place to cater for the new entrant
- Do the finances of the farm business provide capacity for another individual or family
- How will it affect the spouse or partner and their career of the individual moving into the farm?
- The theme of Family and a desire to work within family and agriculture was a common theme

Documented Roles & Responsibilities

- It would seem this is an obvious initiative, but not common amongst all panelists
- Mum & Dad have to change at times, and it can be particularly hard for them
- Initially working as a labour unit, and then moving into management is an ideal sequence
- Stereotyped roles for females can be a problem, as can be juggling young families

Interaction with Other Family Members

- Having the conversation takes some skill
- Formal structures are very helpful (Family Boards) but this was not common to all panelists
- Jo Williams mentioned one approach they found useful to sensitive issues – validate, investigate, and problem solve

Success Factors

- Put some structure into management, this is ultimately necessary
- Understanding each party and careful communication is required
- Trust – supporting an operational boss at the start makes it easier for everyone
- Where detailed planning is required, the family board is an excellent model
- Younger people can provide a lot more energy than their worn out parents!
- Extracting knowledge from the parents or older siblings is helpful and can save a lot of work