

Farm Business Resilience Program

MacBeth Farms, South Burnett

Growcom's Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP) is assisting horticultural growers to identify gaps in their current farm management systems and develop plans that support growth and aid in mitigating the impacts of future droughts.

Using Growcom's best management practice platform, Hort360 growers can easily undertake a gap-analysis and develop their Resilient Plan using the inbuilt template. Financial assistance is also available through QRIDA.



Michael and Beth Crane, in the South Burnett region of Queensland have been growing avocado, garlic, and rhubarb since 2018. Theirs is a family operation with Michael, Beth and son Brandon involved in the business.

The MacBeths decided to increase the size of their operation and after an extensive search found the right place on the right soil. When they bought the property there was little to no money available for new machinery, so the MacBeths made do with what they had.

Finding advice, guidance, and trying to sift through available information to identify what is current and independent was difficult as there were not many speciality/niche growers in the region, however Michael had access to agronomist, Mark

Parkinson from the Lockyer Valley, whose advice on soils and irrigation has been paramount in business set up and operation.

"We have also attended various seminars and events such as Hort Connections. This gives us the opportunity to talk to pioneers and leaders, and share ideas as well as listen to industry professionals," Michael said.

THE PROJECT

After completing the Farm Business Resilience module a couple of things stood out. The need to increase water storage capacity and irrigation system, however an increased understanding of the soils and hydrology on the property, could indicate the new areas for planting future crops and optimising land use efficiencies.

"Growcom has provided a single place to access a whole lot of information with regards to advocacy, legislation, domestic and export marketing opportunities. Talking about ideas with their staff stimulates thought processes for current and future land management practice and adapting current technology and developing new or innovative technology."

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“By accessing resources and information as well as Agtech from Growcom, DAF, QRIDA and local drought hubs Growcom encourages and increases local primary producer skills and knowledge as well as encourages businesses to engage in strategic business planning and risk assessment on a regular basis. this change will encourage business practice change for the long term as well as the short term.”

PROJECT BENEFITS

“The implementation of a Farm business resilience plan incorporating all the modules of Hort360 will have benefits across the whole enterprise,” Michael said.

“For example, a well-developed, and evolving Business Resilience Plan designed with a five-to- ten year implementation timeline allows for projects to be adapted, stepped, funded and implemented which will increase productivity exponentially, as well as having the ability to include climatic change (drought) resilience into the construction of future infrastructure and water use efficient irrigation.

“All these have a benefit to the human side of the business, by ensuring employment for staff, time efficiencies by incorporating Agtech such as telemetry. Benefits to the environment by efficient use of water and increased water quality for irrigation, resulting in a higher quality product going to the marketplace.”

IMPACT & OUTCOMES

The Crane’s Farm Business Resilience Plan is continuously evolving, as are their projects, since they received funding from QRIDA for their dam and irrigation project. However, Michael stated that, “We expect we will have evidence of the benefits of planning and the Farm Business Resilience Program as more projects and planning comes to fruition.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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