

## Polsoni Pines, Wamuran

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.

In February 2022, Southeast Queensland experienced a severe weather phenomenon, high rainfall over a sustained period resulting in flooding, waterlogging of crops and major paddock erosion.

John Targett, Growcom Resilience Officer contacted Tony as a part of a general survey to enquire if he had experienced any damage to his pineapple plantation. The second part of the call was to determine if they were aware of the natural disaster recovery grant available through QRIDA. Over the course of the disaster recovery grant process, climatic changes and drought were talked about. John shared information about Farm Business Resilience Planning and associated QRIDA grants available to those with a farm business plan. John assisted Tony to complete the Farm based resilience planning module in Hort360.



The Polsoni's from Wamuran in Southeast Queensland have been pineapple growers for three generations. In 1984, Tony embarked on a significant change to his enterprise, changing from tobacco to pineapples, planting 12 hectares of pineapples. Today, they have 100+ hectares under pineapple production. In terms of land management Tony and his two sons Robert and Joe are responsible growers, looking after the land. Tony is innovative and hard working – using technology and advice from various sources over the years from ex-Golden Circle agronomist Doug Christiansen to

advise on technology and protecting the soil. Tony has a permanent staff of eight, with six casuals in the height of the season.

### THE PROJECT

After going through the Farm Business Resilience module, a couple of things stood out, 3.11 and 3.13 both were shown to be moderate to good, with room for improvement. These sections assessed enough water to meet peak crop water requirements and on farm water storage.

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After attending the DAF Queensland Drought Assistance Roadshows throughout Central Queensland, John was able to inform Tony that a new dam and irrigation system qualified under the criteria for funding under QRIDA Drought Preparedness grants and Drought Ready and Recovery Finance loans.

Tony explained that trying to sift through the information and identify which information is independent and not commercially based is challenging.

These areas, highlighted by completing the Farm Business Resilience module in Hort360, have been identified as priorities to work towards farm business resilience, to better prepare for drought and climatic variation, ensuring resilience over the longer term.

## PROJECT BENEFITS

“On-farm industry designed programs continue to drive productivity and profitable outcomes, as well as demonstrate environmental benefits and natural resource stewardship, and need to be embraced by primary producers. Best Management Practice programs, or BMP’s, are an effective mechanism to do this, by identifying on-farm management practice changes that lead to both environmental benefits and production gains,” Tony said.



Tony’s advice to others thinking about implementing this practice change, was: “If we keep doing what we’ve always done, we’re always going to get what we’ve always got. We need to think outside the box and look beyond conventional methods. Talking about ideas stimulates thought processes for current and future land management practice and adapting current technology and developing new or innovative technology.”

John reiterated that by accessing resources and information as well as Agtech from Growcom, DAFF, QRIDA and local drought hubs, we can encourage and increase local primary producer skills and knowledge as well as encourage businesses to engage in strategic business planning and risk assessment on a regular basis this will encourage practice change for the long term as well as the short term. The pineapple study group, and pineapple field days to be held in late July will showcase engagement and activities to improve grower business and resilience.

## IMPACT & OUTCOMES

After completing the farm business planning module, the conversation turned to what’s next? John stated that putting together a Farm Business resilience plan spanning 5 – 10 years would have long

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term benefits for the future and would be helpful working with financial planners and banking establishments, as well as being a requirement for accessing funding through Drought Preparedness grants and Drought Ready and Recovery Finance loans from QRIDA.

Tony and Irina are currently developing a business plan outlining their current operation, who is involved, how they would like to see their future, how they plan to get there and a whole of business risk assessment. The plan development has helped identify a couple of projects that they are seriously considering implementing in the near future.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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