



Your Levy at Work

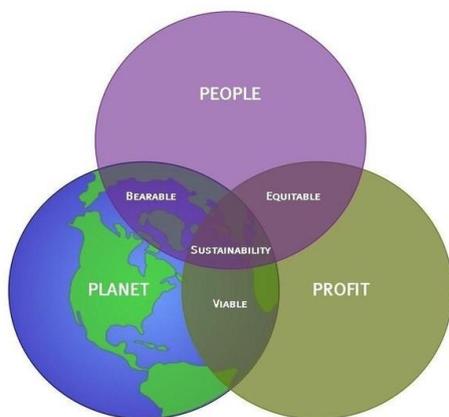
Barrington Focus Farm: 'Raelands' – Chris, James & Lauren McRae

Media release – Open Field Day 11th August 2015

This week the Barrington Focus Farm held a very successful and well attended first Open Field Day. More than sixty people attended and we were rewarded with a beautiful sunny winter's day in this picturesque location.

The Field Day was an opportunity for the wider community to learn about the Focus Farm Program and to be introduced to the McRae family and their farm business as well as meeting members of the Support Group.

Discussions included the situation at the beginning of the Focus Farm program, the SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats) analysis and goals identified for the two year program period around the triple bottom line of people, production and environment.



One of the highlights of the day was a discussion panel of farmers around how they had handled:

- **High input/high risk investment such as expanding in a high land value area. What were the issues you faced and what were the outcomes?**
 - Need to consider the potential return – always need to make sufficient return to justify the investment
 - Some have expanded by leasing when return was insufficient to justify purchase in their particular high value area
 - The advantage of working together as a family to provide equity for further land purchase.
 - All of the larger farms started as small farms and grew
- **How did you go about building relationships with financiers?**
 - Communication – Important to have a financier who will visit their farm, who understands the industry and understands that business cycles occur. Good to see so many financiers at the Field Day.
- **How have you managed lifestyle and relationships under pressure?**
 - Communication – has been difficult at times. Drought, financial pressures and business transition difficulties had caused relationship problems for some but understanding this and putting energy into the personal/spousal relationship in turn gave the strength to handle the difficulties.
 - Important to make time for friends – eventually they stop inviting you if you are always too busy – some have lost friends.
- **What decisions did you face when considering farm transition?**
 - Some have used a professional succession planner, some handled transition with advisors such as accountant and solicitor.
 - Knowing there is another generation is a great motivator to keep going and growing

How has the Focus Farm been performing?

Kerry Kempton led a session reviewing two years of DFMP (Dairy Farm Monitor Project) data noting improvements in 2014/15 over 2013/14.

Farm Summary McRae family – Chris, James and Lauren

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 ?
Physical data			
Milking area ha	32	32	
Cows	71	72	
Stocking rate	2.2	2.2	
Support area ha	112	112	
Production kgs MS	34166	36326	
Litres	438028	514025	
Production per cow litres	7155	7303	
Kgs MS	506	517	
Grain fed / cow	2.4	2.3	
Fodder purchased	43t hay @\$260/t	nil	
Pasture consumption	6.3 tDM/ha	10.4 t DM/ha	
Tonnes DM/ha	5.3 grazed +1.0 cons	8.4 grazed + 2.0 cons	
Tonnes DM/cow	2.5 t	3.8 t	

Key points between years:

- In 2015, more milk was produced from same number of cows, with less grain/cow and at a lower cost.
- More pasture in the diet per cow, and more grown and eaten per hectare.
- Fertiliser increased considerably, but feed costs per cow and per KG MS dropped.
- Farm Working Expenses reduced from \$5.34 to \$5.08 per KG MS. This is a good number, and compares well with DFMP result of \$6.29. But this does not include any wages for James or Chris.

Cost of Production reduced from \$8.41 to \$7.98. COP includes Imputed labour, which has been valued at \$96000 for James & Chris, plus depreciation

Further discussion and the farm walk related to what the Support Group have been discussing over the last few months and decisions in action:

Focus on pastures

At each meeting the Support Group reviews the pasture condition and management, offering suggestions which have resulted in changes to the rotation and fertiliser use with improved outcomes.

Focus on farm expansion

Goal - Increase cow numbers to maximum carrying capacity of farm in 24 months

- Constructed lane way to access furthest milking area paddock, reducing pressure on existing pastures
- Fenced extra 4 Ha in the hill paddock. This area can now be utilised for rotating the heifers more efficiently freeing up more milking area. 100kg/ha urea was applied June
- The Angus bull has been replaced with a dairy bull. Last year there were 20 beef calves. By using a dairy bull this increases the chance of another 10 dairy heifers.
- James and Lauren purchased 11 springing Aussie Red heifers from Nowra.



Focus on fertility

- Goal - AI all Heifers (Consider sexed semen) at the correct target weight (Month X 20 + 40kg).
- Scratchy technique extended to include every cow after every A.I and milk preg testing continued. Outcome – picked up repeats that would have been missed befo

See the NBN news interview at the Field Day

<http://www.nbnnews.com.au/2015/08/11/barrington-dairy-farm-bought-into-focus/>

Visit Raelands Farm

<https://www.facebook.com/raelandsfarm>



A future focus on Fertsmart and a new effluent management system design will be the main subjects of our next Field Day later this year.