

Case Study Examination of Farm Problems and Perceived Solutions on the Eastern Darling Downs, Queensland, Australia

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This research explores perceived business management problems on Darling Downs farms and examines farmers' perceived solutions as well as whether an integrated management system can improve the business management on these farms. A phone survey of 50 respondents was completed within the Darling Downs to establish farm problems and solutions, preferred training, management systems being used, extent of benchmarking and the interest in an integrated management system. The major problems identified consist of the weather, rising input costs affecting 98% of farmers, low commodity prices, difficult finding labour and the government legislation and regulations. Farmers' solutions for improving their situations were limited, but some involved rain, government support and recognition, improving planning and efficiency and marketing. Extra help/training/discussion in business management was found to be only moderately important in improving the current situation of farmers. Farmers identified that greater training is required in computers and book-keeping. Forty-three percent of farmers perceived themselves to be above average in receptiveness to change. Farmers use different management systems such as accounting, production, GIS, spreadsheets, best practice and EMS. These were all found to be very important in managing the farm business with 97% of respondents using accounting systems and over 61% of farmers using production systems (paddock and livestock).

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