

# **BUILDING A NATIONAL FARM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR CANADA**

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## **Abstract:**

*Farm Management Canada (FMC) held a National Farm Business Management Roundtable in 2015 in conjunction with its annual Agricultural Excellence Conference. The Roundtable was titled 'Towards a National Farm Management Strategy', focusing on how to build a culture of farm business management in Canada, and whether a national strategy could help.*

*Participants represented a wide diversity of industry stakeholders from across Canada including farmers, advisors, academia, organizations, private industry, and government.*

*Table Topics were assigned and participants were asked to move through the roundtables every 20 minutes to take part in various conversations related to different components of building a National Farm Business Management Strategy.*

### **Table Topics included:**

- *Establishing Fundamental Strategy Principles*
- *Using the Strategy to Promote Farm Business Management*
- *Challenges in Changing Farm Business Management Behaviour*
- *Increasing Adoption of Business Management Practices on the Farm*
- *Meeting the Needs of Today's Farmers*
- *Meeting the Needs of our Future Farmers*
- *The Role of Industry Stakeholders*
- *Opportunities for Policy & Program Integration*
- *Best Practices Strategy Implementation*
- *Best Practices for Measuring Success*
- *Arguments Against a National Strategy*

### **At each table, participants were asked to consider:**

- *What challenges do we face?*
- *What are some possible solutions?*
- *What needs to happen?*

*Roundtable results reveal, in general, there is consensus among participants that the success of any farm enterprise, regardless of size, geography, or commodity is directly related to the farm business management skills and practices of the farm manager.*

*Where production dominates the agricultural sector, and much confusion surrounds the concept of farm business management and link to productivity, Canada needs to improve its efforts to promote the value and benefits of farm business management practices as a vital component of ongoing success for Canada's agricultural sector. A national strategy could help industry stakeholders work together to determine and get behind a common vision for the agricultural sector, and the role that farm business management can play in supporting a world-leading agricultural industry for Canada.*

### **Common themes that emerged from the Roundtable included:**

- *The industry must have a shared vision for Canada's agricultural sector and the role of farm business management in supporting desired outcomes*
- *The industry must work better together to promote farm business management; the values and benefits*
- *The industry must work better together to coordinate learning and education opportunities for farmers*
- *Communication is key*

*Considerable work is required to promote the value and benefits of farm business management practices. The solutions are out there. What's needed is a strategy to bring industry stakeholders together to achieve the common vision. The timing is right to look towards a national farm business management strategy to strengthen the culture of farm business management in Canada.*

**Keywords:** *farm; business; management; Canada; agriculture; strategy*