

## INTERNATIONAL FARM MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION PROMOTES

### Video Series – “Towards a Successful Future for Farm Families”

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All businesses have to adjust to the forces of change and family farms are no exception. In recent times agriculture has become much more market-driven, globalised, industrialised and subject to consumer and community demands. At the same time, there has been relentless technological change and there is much more to come. The response to the drivers of change by many successful farm businesses has been to increase farm size or pursue high value niche markets.

The pressures of change have been most keenly felt by medium-sized farm businesses especially those producing undifferentiated commodities. As farm numbers have declined, it is this ‘disappearing middle’ where most adjustment has taken place.

There is considerable evidence that progressive family farm businesses are able to out-perform non-family corporate farm organisations. We are not about to see the demise of family farms. Instead we are seeing emergence of dynamic and profitable family farm businesses responding successfully to the challenges of change.

The skills required for success in farming are now much greater than in times when the focus was largely on production. Agriculture is now an integrated industry both vertically through supply chains and horizontally with other industries. This requires broad generic skills such as marketing, communication, information management and people management as well as excellence in production.

My passion throughout 50 years in agricultural extension, education, consulting and as a practicing farmer has been to seek a successful future for farm families. I believe that family businesses are vital for our economies, employment, our communities and for long term sustainability of our environment.

In pursuit of my passion I have travelled the world and worked with some of the best farmers, especially those participating in high-level executive learning programs.

As I move towards the end of my career, I decided to capture some of my learning about the future of family farming in a series of free videos that farm families around the world can access on-line at any time and in any place. This was made possible by a partnership with **Farm Management Canada\***; an organisation dedicated to provide learning resources for farmers.

The topics of the videos include –

- ‘What Leading Farmers Do’ – a check list for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the current farm business.
- ‘Global Opportunities and Risks’ – a review of strategic issues facing farm businesses.
- ‘Environmental Management Messages from the World’ – a discussion of lessons learnt from observations of water, soil, air pollution, radiation and renewable energy challenges in many countries.
- Four videos concerned with people issues in family farming – communication, succession, learning plans and time management.
- ‘What I would do if Contemplating a Career in Agriculture’ – an audio discussion aimed at young people.
- ‘Farming for Success: Lessons Learnt across 60 countries in 50 years’ – a discussion of the changes that are occurring in agriculture and the skills, attitudes and actions required for successful farm management.
- ‘Seeking Opportunities and Building on Knowledge’ – a short interview discussing how top farmers learn and the role of travel as a stimulus for new ideas.

The link to the video series is –

[www.fmc-gac.com/content/rob-napier-learning-series-towards-successful-family-farm-future](http://www.fmc-gac.com/content/rob-napier-learning-series-towards-successful-family-farm-future)

The underlying theme of all the videos is the need to encourage family farm businesses to be learning organisations, embracing opportunities from change and continually developing capabilities for success.

I hope that the availability of the videos can be made known through the networks of members and friends of **The International Farm Management Association**. These videos are also accompanied by / available in audio and presentation formats.

I hope also that the videos might stimulate production of more learning resources as an important part of IFMA’s role.

\* “Farm Management Canada - Gestion agricole du Canada” is a sister organisation of IFMA – see the **Links** section of the IFMA website [www.ifmaonline.org](http://www.ifmaonline.org).