



The National Bank
of New Zealand

Media Release

8 July 2010

National Bank helps farmers take management to next level

The National Bank is rolling out a series of new workshops aimed at helping farmers step up to the next level of growth, the bank announced at The National Bank Young Farmer Contest Grand Final in Gore today.

The National Bank managing director of rural banking Charlie Graham said the bank was very pleased to announce the roll-out of "Tools for Business Growth" - a new programme run in conjunction with Massey University.

"The new programme is part of the National Bank's wide-ranging support for farmers at different stages of their career and business development.

"Our investment in The National Bank Young Farmer Contest is aimed at helping support the up-and-coming future leaders of the rural sector, while Tools for Business Growth targets leading farmers already running successful businesses and who are looking to grow further."

The workshops are run by Massey University's Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Executive Education) Dr James Lockhart and provide expert advice, incorporating governance and management, strategic planning and implementation. The workshops were piloted in Palmerston North and Christchurch. Feedback from farmers who participated was encouraging, so it was decided to roll them out to 11 other regions between now and end of the year.

"Farms have become larger and more complex and there is a widely recognised need to develop governance to complement farm management skills. It is really important that farmers take a step back from time to time and work on their business as opposed to in it. These workshops give customers the tools to establish the right business structures, making sure they have the appropriate financial and other systems in place that will enable them to seize opportunities. If our rural businesses can grow, this in turn helps drive the agricultural industry forward," Mr Graham said.

As well as helping farmers with management and business expertise, the bank continues to support quality business farming proposals with competitive pricing – having lent more than \$2 billion to the rural sector over the last year.

Mr Graham on Thursday was part of the panel judging the Market Innovation Challenge in the Grand Final – where finalists had to come up with a farming innovation and present it for judging.

"Going by the standard of this year's finalists, New Zealand farming has a fantastic future ahead. These outstanding young farmers also go through a gruelling practical test, and are tested on theory, business and agri-science knowledge, and general knowledge. Congratulations to all the finalists, who have done incredibly well to get to this stage," Mr Graham said.

The next stage of support for young farmers is the Future Farmers seminars to help young farmers set goals and financially plan for the future. These are run in partnership with NZ Young Farmers.

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