

Life after farming

The last ten years have seen significant and longlasting changes to the farming industry, with the long-term viability of many family farms being put in question.

At some stage most farming families have pondered the question of “What am I doing this for?” For most the answer is essentially the same, it is the love of the farming lifestyle that persuades farmers to keep on farming, and it is the difficulty of seeing past this sentimental attachment to the country way of life that makes the thought of a change in direction so daunting.

Trying to predict for others what would lie in store for them if they should choose to leave farming for some other enterprise is about as fruitful as trying to predict the next adverse weather system, but some observations may help to keep an open mind when looking at future options.

In most situations a change from farming will involve moving away from the farming community and all the ties and close friends that the rural environment is renowned for.

Remaining in contact after moving away is important, the friendships are lasting and keeping in touch helps to lessen the impact of a major change.

For those families with school age children a change in schools will bring new challenges, new friends, different class sizes, different cultural and sporting opportunities, all of which can be positive and stimulating.

For the parents, it is the question “But what would I do?” that is the greatest stumbling block when looking at making a change. A change presents a new range of opportunities and challenges. A chance to turn a hobby into a business, resume a past career, start or finish education opportunities. A move will entail making new friends, being involved with a new community, new schools and new sport and recreational pursuits.

Farmers and their families are resilient, adaptable and can turn their hand to any thing they choose, the future is about not dwelling in the past, but keeping your options open so that you make the choices that affect your families future in a positive way.

There is life after farming, you may not always be sure of where you will end up but the travelling is more important than the final destination.

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