

The Quest for Opportunities and Answers

By Annabelle Coppin

When not working with cattle in the Pilbara, Annabelle is pursuing industry best practice around the world, most recently in the snows of Colorado and the dust of the Middle East.

I'm always had a passion for rural and regional Australia, particularly within the agribusiness and production sector in northern Australia.

We are food producers and, with Australia's social and geographical advantages, I'm excited to be part of a family business created by my parents which now runs approximately 5000 breeder cattle on Yarrie Station in Western Australia's Pilbara region.

The station is also integrated with two southern finishing properties in the Badgingarra region. The majority of all our cattle sales are sold live to parts of South East Asia and the Middle East region.

I also recently spent some time working in the Live Export Program with Meat and Livestock Australia and Live Corp in the Middle East region.

In 2008 I completed an Australian Nuffield Farming Scholarship studying global agricultural trends and the future direction of the livestock export trade beyond the Australian farm gate.



*Annabelle Coppin
RIRDC Rural Women's Award 2010
WA finalist*

Apart from my individual study, we covered broad sectors of agriculture to get a taste of major global trends, as you can imagine it opened my mind and increased my interest into the many depths of agriculture. I have come back with many ideas and theories to digest.



*Annabelle in the sheep
yards of Bahrain in the
Middle East*

I strongly believe that Australia is still the land of opportunity for producing food, though I quickly came to realise that Australian farmers are in the thick of a highly competitive global market place. Despite the future outlook of increasing demand for agricultural commodities due to depleting food stocks, demand is still mainly influenced by simple quality specifications and price. This means we must work hard to prevent our market share being dominated by competitive players across the globe, and keep focusing on consistently producing a competitive product and improving our business performance.

So what really drives our business to keep our product saleable and competitive in the global market place?

What is it that will keep us profitable and therefore sustainable into the future?

Is it our cost of production, our product or our market?

How can I personally develop myself to face the world benchmark of global competition?



Annabelle in the Pilbara sun

Much of this boils down to savvy agribusiness management skills. This is the foremost reason why I applied for the RIRDC Rural Women's Award 2010. There are many opportunities available to sharpen my skills: farm business management and strategy, personal development, management skills, financial management, marketing, risk management, benchmarking and growth opportunities. All of which I believe are essential to establish and or run a profitable, fulfilling business as well as enjoy and handle the pressure of all factors surrounding this task.

I believe the success of individual farm businesses will assist in solving many of the on going challenges faced in rural and regional Australia. This is because the opportunities and support from this success will always flow through and beyond farm gates. In many cases, it is the pivot for the growth and health of our local community as well as giving a solid scope to work on improving our environment.

I strongly believe it is the most powerful encouragement for the savvy, astute and passionate young farmers to return to the land, to not only efficiently feed its own growing nation but the rest of the world.

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