

Bridging the Gap



Presented by: Heather Watson, Executive Director, Farm Management Canada

The Situation...

- A staggering 8% of Canada's farmers have written succession plan
- 52% of farms do not have an identified successor
- The Succession Effect*
- “Succession planning” is needed, but is losing traction



Our Approach...

1. Farm families and team members attend together (parents, children, spouses, siblings, partners)
2. Work through difficult conversations with the help of a family coach and strategic planner (tag-team) – talking stick!
3. Use a combination of open discussion, small-group discussion, individual exercises, polling and presentation
4. Each participant receives a personal binder - a physical resource farm team members can refer to, and continue to work on
5. Letter to self/mentor
6. Based in strategic business planning as a platform for working towards transition planning



Our Results...

- Close to 150 farmers participated in the 6 workshops
- Ages ranged from 22 to 85 years old
- 45% of participants were female
- Participants crossed all sectors of farming



Our Results...

“This was the first time that all four of us had been to the same learning event. Usually only one person is able to attend and attempts to bring home the information and try to relay what they learned.”

“We learned that other farms have had similar challenges to ours, and more importantly we learned how to work through those challenges.”

“I now feel optimistic about all 4 kids playing a role in the farm – either on or off the farm”

“We finally started monthly business meetings, with a push from a letter we had to send to ourselves.”

“We were able to ask the right questions at the right times to the professionals we had helping us.”



Our Results...

“Because of this program, we will be incorporating the early use of facilitators and coaches to guide us through the process.”

“My father-in-law and I have already spent a day in the office working towards a clear, written business plan (something that until now he wasn't convinced we needed)..”

“I realized how much I need my parents around, how much I wanted to show them respect for what they were passing onto me, and how I wanted to slow the whole transition process down”

...

“Life changing.”



Lessons Learned...

- Communication is key – what to say, when?
- Redefining the gap – it's not just parents vs. children!
- An untapped resource – the farm advisor
- Creating champions for change



Creating champions for change...



FUTURE FARMING SYSTEMS

21st International Farm Management Congress



Creating champions for change...



FUTURE FARMING SYSTEMS 21st International Farm Management Congress



Stewards of the land

Getting succession right

Continuing legacy

The Management Team

Sage Bluff Farms Ltd.

Profitable and successful business

Visionary & Innovative

 @HJKizz #IFMA21

Hannah Konschuh
Owner/Operator



Creating champions for change...



FarmTech™

Bridging the Gap: Towards Farm Transition Producer Panel



Areas for improvement...

- Coaching is personal
- Have time to reflect
- Marketing – “succession”
- Keep the conversation going



Concluding remarks...

- The greatest challenge that permeated all the workshops was the inability to communicate with family
- Bridging the gap between generations became bridging the gap between husband and wife, siblings, introverts and extroverts - need to appreciate and recognize differences as strengths and opportunity
- Looking at farm transition in the context of business continuity and thus, strategic planning helps alleviate the emotion behind difficult conversations as visions, dreams and goals are shared, new perspectives are gained, and a path forward can start to take shape as a guiding light along the way



Learning alongside family members is a unique experience and one that has created a sense of understanding and compassion like no other, and more importantly, a feeling of shared accountability for the path forward.



Follow On Programming & Next Steps

- Successor Alumni Program – Peer Support Network
- Farm Transition Advisor Working Group
- Farm Transition Toolkit
 - Producers
 - Advisors
- Bridging the _____ Gap?



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Thank you...questions?



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IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT
≡ YOUR FUTURE ≡
IT'S ABOUT THEIRS.





**"Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success."**

-Henry Ford