

MENTORING PROGRAM CASE STUDY

The Liebe Group's Mentoring Program commenced in October 2016 with 24 registered mentor/mentee participants. The initial workshop was aimed at empowering, encouraging and inspiring partnerships to be prepared for what the program entailed.

Partnerships were established to ensure mentees were partnered with a mentor who supported both personal and professional development of the mentee. Stuart and Gareth were one partnership that developed well and encouraged growth of both participants.

Gareth is a young Wubin farmer who is working on the family farm. Gareth specifically requested Stuart as a mentor as he believed Stuart's ideas and way of thinking would challenge him and offer a different perspective to that of his father and grandfather, Gareth's other mentors. He has participated in other mentoring programs which he found beneficial in learning about farm finances.



Stuart is a farmer from Buntine who is interested in innovative ideas and offers a different perspective to challenge the thinking of others. Stuart has had experience in mentoring programs in the past and found that a mentee/mentor relationship is valuable to form and maintain ongoing friendships and has offered advice on the adoption of different practices on the family farm.

At their first meeting, Gareth was unsure if he was asking the right questions or what he wanted to get out of the program but he acknowledged that his learning with Stuart would be ongoing. Throughout the course of the program, Gareth and Stuart were able to keep in regular contact via phone calls which suited both men over the busy times of year such as harvest and seeding.

Due to the conditions of the 2017 season Gareth stated that he 'lost interest in farming' in a way, as did other growers in the region, which made change difficult. Also due to the season, there weren't the opportunities to implement any new practices on-farm, but he noted that he is eager to continue his partnership with Stuart in order to get a deeper understanding of biological farming and implement change in the future (it will be a long term implementation process due to the nature of the practice change). He has found his way of thinking has changed and he is keen to learn about, and implement different practices, to get the

pH levels right through crop rotation in the coming years.

Both have enjoyed the program and found it to be beneficial despite the poor season. Gareth has been given a different perspective and Stuart has been able to offer advice and support Gareth through his thoughts and ideas which will be implemented on farm in the future. This partnership will continue after the completion of the mentoring program.

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