



Transcription details:

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Transcription results:

I'm Diane Ray. This is Grandvewe Cheeses. We're in the southern area of Tasmania. So myself and my two children decided to do something a little bit crazy. We moved down from Tasmania from Brisbane, Queensland area and decided we'd milk sheep because no one else does [chuckles]. So here at Grandvewe, we do everything. We raise the sheep. We milk the sheep. We make the cheese. And then we also have our farm available for visitors every day of the year except Christmas Day.

When we first started, we had to learn a lot about sheep. We came out of a business background and financial background. So, what we had to learn is how to farm and how to be sheep farmers. I read a lot of books. I joined the British Sheep Dairy Association, and they had journals that I could buy. So I bought all the back-dated journals to the early 80s and actually sat and read one every night in bed. We then needed to know a lot more, so I was fortunate that I applied for a couple of scholarships - which I got - that sent me overseas to look at how dairy sheep were dealt with overseas. So a lot of the learning has been on the job. As we've learned more things we've adapted and changed the farm, the systems, not just with how we look after the sheep, but also how we make the cheese as well.

In Australia it's no longer enough to be broadacre farm, it's-- you can survive, and just survive, if you only grow a product or a commodity. But if you had the ability to take that commodity and turn it into an end product, then that's where you can be successful as an agri-business.

Our major influence on other farmers is hopefully encouraging them to follow their dreams. If there's a young person and they want to head off into an agri-business, the most important thing they can do in the beginning is research their market. The first thing you need to do is understand your potential market. Firstly, is there a market? Does it exist? We did that in the beginning and we realized that there was over ten million dollars of sheep milk coming into Australia, and a marketplace that was craving something that was Australian grown that didn't exist. So, you've got to know that the market exists. You've got to then do your figures, and this is the boring part because if they're anything like me, to actually have to tie myself down, look at the figures and say, "Does it work?" is a discipline. And you've got to get the figures right in the first place.

Then, you've got to say, "What are my skills? Do I have skills? Yes, no. What areas do I need to skill up in?" And then go and seek that skill improvement. It can be through TAFE courses, it can be through reading, it can be through talking with other farmers. We've had people here that have come on work experience on the farm. There's a whole range of ways that you can educate yourself and up-skill. Then once you have that knowledge, out of that knowledge base then make your decision how you're going to do this. And then once all that's batted down then just jump.