STRATEGY IN CONTEXT

Farming in the Green, Red, Black and ... the Doghouse!

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On the face of it …

- Farming is simple
Such ‘simplicity’ requires considerable juggling

- Competing objectives
- Information constraints
- Multiple factors
- Interpretations and bias
Some challenges …

World and Natural Environment

- Soils
- Biodiversity
- Water systems
Some challenges …

Society and Human Environment

• Markets
• Legislation
• Interest rates

Sourced from Weekly Times website, 8/9/2012

Sourced from PETA website, 8/9/2012
Overlaying these external factors …

- A farmer’s own family, farm and finances
and, importantly …
Farmers live in this world
but getting ‘enough’ information is not the only requirement

- Exist
- Observe
- Make sense
- Judge
- Make decisions
- Act
- ...

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each individual is unique in:

- What they see
- How they interpret it
- Their assessments
- Application of judgements
- The ultimate impact
These in turn influence

- Frame and attention
- Perception
- Experiences
- Judgement
- Aspirations
- Influences
Farmers live in this world

Jensen, 2006, p. 1 “good sensemaking is more important than high quality information”

Observation: notice, label

Judgement: intuition, analysis

Decision Making: Suitable, available

Situational Awareness

Sensemaking: match, relate

World as Perceived

Action

Existence

Attention / frame

Observation: notice, label

see

Drawing from the work of many …
responding to change in a system is difficult

- Cognitive barriers
- Meaning of change
- Collated information
- Respond through strategy

“A great strategy is only great in a given context”

Vossough, 2012 re Sony
a critical strategic ability is to …

- Sense
- Assign meaning
- Enable flexibility and order

The aim of strategic thinking may not be to achieve certainty, but to prepare us for uncertain times.

#von Oetinger, 2004
So … we know:

• Challenges
• Complex inter-relationships
• ‘Messy’ situations
• Human element
• Logic – application and use
and things we don’t really understand include …

- Unclear relationships
  - Purpose
  - Survival
  - Resilience
  - Innovation
  - Risk
  - (Luck)

- Environmental factors
- Hindsight
- Re-thinking
  - situation
  - opportunities
  - strategy
sometimes strategic decisions are coloured by ...
or coloured by ... red
or by ...

black
and even by …

A stint in the doghouse!
If you know someone with some interesting approaches to making strategic farm decisions …

• Please invite them to get in touch with me!

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How do farmers account for context when making strategic farm decisions?
Thank you!
This project asks how farmers perceive and respond to their unique situations when developing farm strategy.

Presenting a summary of some key areas of knowledge, this paper strives to set the background for learning.

It also hopes to increase awareness of the issues, and to let people know about the project. Perhaps those attending may know someone interested in sharing their knowledge and expertise?
Figure 1. Macrocognitive functions and supporting processes for individuals, teams, and information technologies.
Figure 2: A diagrammatic representation of the notion of sensemaking
Figure 2. Model of SA in Dynamic Decision Making (from Endsley, 1995b)
Concept of Lenses: how decision makers view options in creating opportunities. This is an iterative process and the lenses may not be used in exactly the order shown.

- **Lens 1**: Intrinsic interests
- **Lens 2**: Family considerations
- **Lens 3**: Knowledge of personal components of opportunities
- **Lens 4**: Social considerations
- **Lens 5**: Knowledge of and access to external components of opportunities

**Internal components of opportunity**: The **SUITABILITY** of an opportunity

**External components of opportunity**: The **AVAILABILITY** of an opportunity

Feed-back to compare indented and unintended results with the family’s motivations / aspirations as a guide to future decisions.

Opportunity taken up
These in turn influence:

- Frame and attention
- Perception
- Experiences
- Judgement
- Aspirations
- Influences

**McCown**

Fig. 1. A theoretical Framework for a farmer's adaptive cognitive system to aid scientists' thinking about intervention with an information system management of uncertainty in dryland cropping situations. (Shaded elements of 'Internal system' are cognitive structures, unshaded are processes. Do 'world as acted upon'; follow arrows up and counter-clockwise.)