

Passion for ag drives Sarah

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Rural chartered accountant Sarah Becker, at home at Glenarchy, Banana, Central Queensland, with a Jarrah Cattle Company Redford sire, a breed her family has developed, and a Hereford sire.

ROCKHAMPTON born and bred rural chartered accountant, Sarah Becker is passionate about the agricultural industry in Australia and shows her commitment to it every day in advising her rural clients.

Sarah moved back to her grassroots of Rockhampton in 2005 after completing her secondary and tertiary studies in Brisbane and now manages the accounting practice set up by her father in 1985, James Becker & Co, which specialises in rural advisory.

Complementary to this, Sarah has become senior manager of rural management consultancy firm, Agrify, along with her father Jim Becker and Adelaide-based Dale Champion.

Sarah has also taken on the role of chief financial officer for Jarrah Cattle Company, assisting her brother Sam Becker and sisters, Frances and Alexandra Becker, in their family's cattle operation in the Dawson Valley.

Sarah's love for agriculture, and in particular the Dawson Valley in Central Queensland, developed at a young age when she spent weekends, school and university holidays on her own parents' properties.

This experience, combined with her professional accounting and commercial knowledge, provided a sound basis for her future in her current roles.

"From an accounting perspective, I am most privileged to deal every day with, what I consider to be, some of Queensland's top rural families and their business operations," Sarah said.

"The exposure is invaluable to me, and increases my awareness and knowledge of the rural industry so that from a financial perspective I can provide guidance to my clients.

"Every day there is something new; every day creates a new challenge, be it for my family or for my clients; and every day I get to hear news from my clients about the state of their businesses and operations."

Sarah explains: "There have been highs and lows of late for the rural industry. No day is better than when I receive a call from a client who tells me (excitedly) that they have had rain, or achieved good sales with their cattle, or that their crops are all harvested."

"I have witnessed some of the true beef entrepreneurs of the industry.

"What I now recognise, and try to instil in my clients, is that we are competing in an international marketplace with many other readily available protein sources.

"Not only is the Australian beef industry competing internationally, I believe there are many national issues. Australian beef players are running enterprises. This should not be forgotten as we are all producing a product with the end result being the highest

return on the beast. To name just a few issues - taxation and legal, industrial relations, rising cost of labour, increased input costs due to world commodities, rising dollar, consumer affairs, best practice management, technology, marketing and general management."

Sarah can see the benefit to rural businesses by combining hands-on experience with defined management policies.

By combining these two important elements, Sarah has gone on to develop a new management reporting system. This system allows every single event that is performed on the farm to be linked to a formulated calculation.

Sarah's passion was recognised in 2012 when she claimed the Beef Australia 2012 Rabobank Young Ambassador Award.

She was selected from a high calibre group of up-and-coming industry leaders.

Rabobank Young Beef Ambassador applicants are judged on their successful and progressive approach to farm business management and must show great potential as leaders and contributors to the beef industry.

Sarah's other community commitments include being on the board of the Central Queensland NRL Club and the natural resource management group, Fitzroy River and Coastal Catchments.

