



Options for Property Management and Enterprise Diversification

Bruce McGregor, Attwood

Introduction

When people consider changing the management of their rural property or consider diversify their farm enterprise mix they are looking to improve, grow or develop from a current situated to a better situation for themselves and their family. There are a number of pathways people can take to make these changes.

This Information Note provides a summary of options that rural property owners have when considering changing the management of their land and resources. This Note is part of a series of Notes that provide information about decision making.

Trends in rural properties

There are increasing numbers of people living on rural properties in Victoria. Many of these properties are now too small for economic production of traditional commodity products such as wool, beef and dairy. Approximately half of Victoria is in either the rural amenity zone or a transition zone between commercial size properties and the amenity zone.

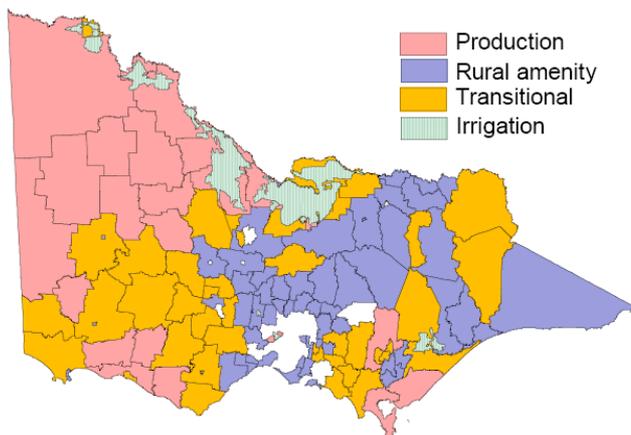


Figure 1. Social landscapes of Victoria

For property owners in the production zone the decisions are primarily economic. Owners of properties in the amenity and transition zones are faced with more complex decisions relating to how they intend to manage their land and resources compared with owners in the production zone.

Property management options

The relationships between different property management options are illustrated in Figure 2.

Existing farm business

A farm business can grow in a number of ways: through intensification (efficiency and improvement), integration and diversification.

These options are discussed further in another Information Note.

Properties in the amenity and transition zone

As traditional industries are increasingly uneconomic in the amenity and transition zones more and more owners are obtaining work off their property. These people become time poor as they are trying to work two different jobs and the increased travel increases stress.

Property management options include:

- Introducing low labor enterprises
- Introducing enterprises where labor demands can be contracted to others
- Agistment of other peoples live stock
- Share farming or share cropping
- Lease their land to others
- Subdivision and sale.

Lifestyle or hobby farms/land holdings

Most or all the income of the owners of lifestyle and hobby farms is generated off the farm. Some of these owners are retired.

Many owners of lifestyle and hobby farms have limited knowledge of agriculture. A surprising number of these people want to start an agricultural enterprise. For many, the desire to become 'farmers' is based on a romantic view of rural life. Unfortunately for many of these landholders, the consequences of their decisions are failure and disappointment, decidedly unromantic.

Property management options include:

- Retaining bushland for conservation and biodiversity uses
- Revegetation of the property (native or forestry)

- Traditional crop and animal industries
- Exploring new alternative industries.

There are many advantages and disadvantages for each of the options listed and also many varieties of each option.

It is important for lifestyle and hobby farmers to very carefully evaluate their decisions. After all you are going to have to live with the consequences of any decision you make.

Further information on decision making

The series of Information Notes on decision making is designed to help you work through this important process and come to decisions that will help you enjoy your rural lifestyle. It is recommended you refer to the other Information Notes where examples of these options are discussed in further detail.

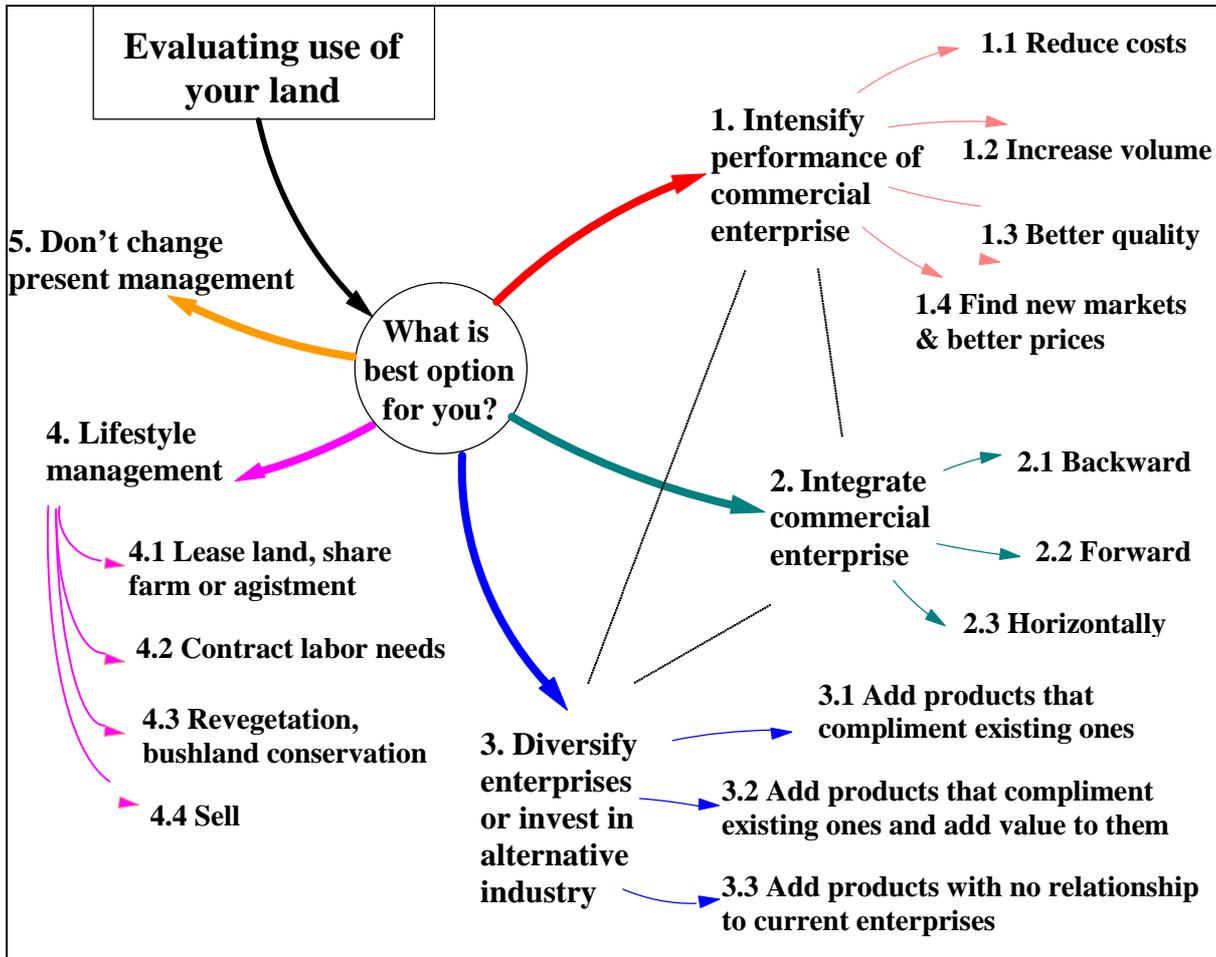


Figure 2. Some of the options that land owners and farmers have when deciding the use of land

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