



FARM OWNERS ACADEMY

FREE
PRACTICAL
PLAYBOOK

OFF — THE — HOOK

KEEP THE FARMWORK YOU LOVE.
STOP CARRYING THE REST.

- ✓ **See** where your business still depends on you
- ✓ **Clarify** who owns what and eliminate confusion
- ✓ **Build** a team that carries more of the day to day

MORE PROFIT · MORE CONTROL · MORE FREEDOM

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The Real Issue

Why having a team can make you busier, not freer

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A QUICK NOTE BEFORE YOU START

This is a working session, not a quick read. Set aside a few hours away from the day-to-day, do the exercises, and write things down. If you can do it alongside your business partner, spouse, or a senior team member, even better.

Why Having A Team Can Make You Busier, Not Freer

Somewhere along the way, building a team made things harder, not easier.

The idea was simple: bring people in, share the load, carve out some space to breathe, think, and actually run the business rather than just survive each week inside it.

And instead the opposite happened.

You've got more people to manage, more problems to solve, more messages before breakfast, and more decisions that somehow only you can make. You're working just as hard as when it was just you - maybe harder - and the farm still doesn't move without you at the centre of it.

That's not how it was supposed to go. And often, it's not a reflection of your people.

**It's a leadership issue & it's a structure problem.
And a structure problem has a structure solution.**

From:



To:



The Business Hasn't Outgrown You. You've Outgrown Your Systems.

The informal way of running things works fine up to a point. Verbal instructions, loose role boundaries, everyone pitching in wherever the gaps appear. It's how lots of farm teams start, and for a while it's enough.

But there comes a point where the business gets complex enough that "everyone helping" stops working. Roles that grew organically around who was available or who was family start creating invisible problems. Tasks fall in the cracks between people. Decisions escalate upward because nobody's sure who's supposed to make them. And the farm owner ends up being the gap-filler, the memory bank, the backup plan, and the last line of defence.

More people isn't the answer. Clear seats. Clear ownership. Clear handovers with the right training and systems behind them. A team that knows what it's responsible for without having to check with you first.

That's the answer, and that's what this playbook helps you build.

A Quick Note On Freedom Farms

When we talk about stepping back or building a farm that runs without you, we're not talking about disappearing. Not selling up, not handing the keys to someone else, not walking away from a business you've spent years building - unless you want to.

We're talking about farming at the level you want to. Keeping the jobs that give you energy and that you are good at. Letting go of the ones that drain you. Leading the business rather than being consumed by it.

That's what a Freedom Farm looks like. And it starts with getting the team structure right.

Who this is for:

This playbook is for you if:

- ➔ You have a team around you - family, employees, contractors, or a mix - and the business still depends too heavily on you each day
- ➔ You're the person everyone comes to when something goes wrong, a decision needs making, or a task falls through the cracks
- ➔ You've tried to hand things over before, but they keep coming back, or you're frustrated they don't get done to the level they should
- ➔ You want more control and more freedom without walking away from the farm

This playbook is not for you if:

- ➔ You're still working toward your first team member - come back when you've got people around you
- ➔ You're looking for a succession plan or an exit strategy - that's a different conversation
- ➔ You want someone else to fix it without you doing the thinking - this is a working document, and the thinking is the work



The Three Things Keeping Farm Owners Trapped

We call them the Three Gravity Traps, because each one quietly pulls you back toward the work the moment you try to step away to work ON the business or have more time away from the business. You make progress, start to loosen your grip, and then something pulls you straight back in - often before you've even noticed it happening.

1

Mindset & Conditioning

The beliefs running quietly in the background. "If I don't do it, it won't get done right." "My people aren't ready." "It's faster to just do it myself." These thought patterns developed for good reasons. But they're also the force that pulls you back in every time you try to let go.

2

Team

The right people aren't in the right seats. Or the right seats don't have the right clarity - no defined role, no clear ownership, no training, no system behind them. So everything still comes back to you..

3

Systems

No rhythm keeping everyone focused, aligned, and accountable. No clear plan the whole team can see. No scoreboards. No meeting structure that creates real follow-through. Without this layer, even a good team drifts — and the owner re-inserts themselves just to keep things moving.

This playbook focuses on Gravity Trap 2 - the Team.

For many farm owners, that's where the work needs to start. You can work on mindset all day, but if nobody knows who owns what, stepping back just creates chaos. You can build great systems, but if the wrong people are in the wrong seats, those systems won't hold.

Get the right people, in the right seats, doing things right, and everything else gets easier.

(We cover all three gravity traps together in the workshop. More on that at the end.)

What This Playbook Will Do For You

By the time you work through this, you'll have:

- ➔ A clear picture of your current team structure - who's in what seat, where roles blur, and where the gaps already are
- ➔ A complete list of everything you're carrying - and an honest read on what should actually stay with you
- ➔ A delegation plan - with clear answers to who owns what, what training they need, and what systems need to exist before a handover is real
- ➔ A redesigned org structure - clearer seats, clearer reporting lines, and a visible map of where the risks and gaps sit
- ➔ Three clear actions to take in the next 90 days to start making it real

How To Use This Playbook

Don't skim it. This is a working session, not a quick read. Set aside a few hours, ideally away from the day-to-day, and work through it section by section. Do the exercises. Write things down. Be honest with yourself.

If you can do this with your business partner, spouse, or a senior team member, even better. Two perspectives on the same structure will surface things one person alone might miss.

LET'S GET INTO IT





Join our Platinum Mastermind Program

IN-DEPTH STRATEGY · INSPIRING COMMUNITY · INCOMPARABLE RESULTS



"We are no longer just farmers who are dictated to by their farm.
We have a plan, a life and a farm business, in that order!"

SHIRLEY SPRENGER, FARMER BUSINESS OWNER



The Platinum Mastermind program gives you everything you need to remove the struggles that often come with being a farm owner, and run a highly profitable farm business that can work with or without you (we call this a "Freedom Farm").

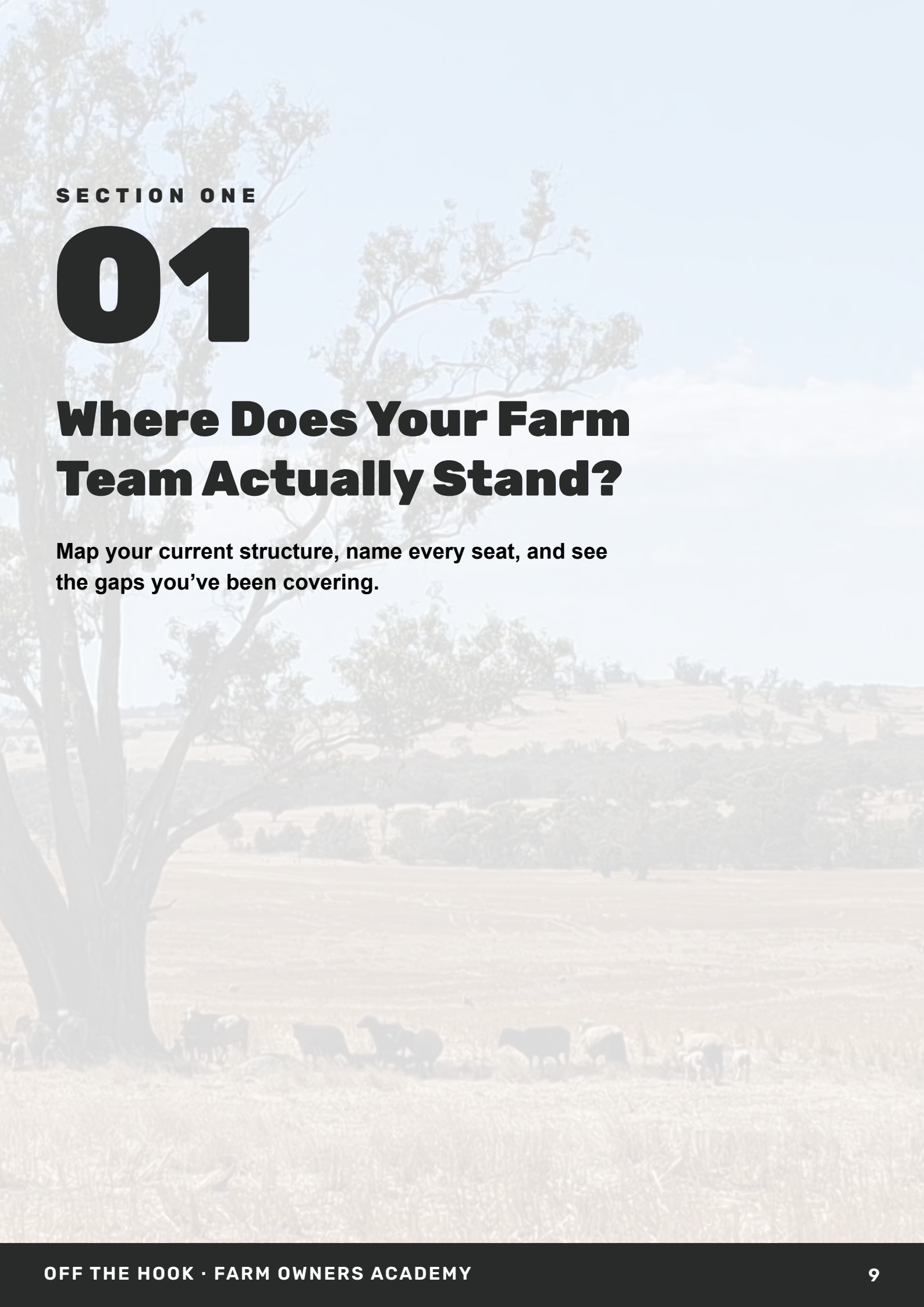
Your Platinum Mastermind journey includes:

- » **Yearly benchmarking** and support to help you make strategic decisions
- » **Planning:** we give you the tools and training to create a strategic plan, that you update every 90 days, so you stay on track and smash your goals
- » **Events:** join the FOA team and community three times per year for in-depth workshops, where you'll Deep Dive into important topics to help you master the skills that will change your business and life
- » **Coaching & mentoring** from highly experienced leaders, including directly from the FOA Leadership Team
- » **Tools, templates & resources** to help you build and scale your operation
- » **A supportive community** of like-minded farmers who are ready to help you - make lifelong friendships & tap into their collective wisdom!



FARM OWNERS ACADEMY

Discover more & apply for enrolment



SECTION ONE

01

Where Does Your Farm Team Actually Stand?

Map your current structure, name every seat, and see the gaps you've been covering.

The Structure Of A Farm Business

Most farm businesses, regardless of size, enterprise type, or how many people are on the team, need someone responsible for each of the following areas. On a smaller team, one person will often cover multiple seats. That's completely normal.

What matters is that every seat has a name next to it, and that name belongs to someone who genuinely owns that area of the business - even if that name is yours. If your name is next to most of the seats, that's the problem this playbook is designed to help solve.

Here's what each seat generally covers.

Shareholders

The people who own the business. Set the overall direction and vision, and hold the CEO accountable. In many farm businesses, one of the owners is also the CEO, but it's worth separating these two roles in your thinking, especially when family members are involved.

CEO

Overall business direction, goal setting and strategic decisions, key relationships with the bank, advisors and major partners, culture and values. Working on the business, not just in it.

Implementation Manager

Bridges strategy and execution - takes what the CEO is working toward and makes sure it actually happens. Organised, reliable, strong at following through. On many farm teams this seat is either vacant, or quietly sitting with the owner on top of everything else.

Operations Manager

Day-to-day running of the farm. Stock, cropping, machinery, scheduling, seasonal planning, managing contractors. The engine room of the operation.



SECTION ONE · WHERE DOES YOUR FARM TEAM ACTUALLY STAND?

Finance

Financial oversight, bookkeeping, invoicing, compliance, reporting and record keeping. Someone needs to own the numbers and the paperwork. Often filled by a partner, a family member, or an external bookkeeper - but it still needs a clear, named owner.

Administration

Responding to email enquiries, taking and returning phone calls, paying bills and handling accounts payable and receivable in conjunction with the Finance Manager, booking travel and event requirements, checking mail and mailing items

Marketing & Sales

Commodity marketing, agent and supplier relationships, contract negotiations, market awareness. The level of activity here varies by enterprise type, but it still needs to be accounted for.

HR / People

Recruitment, onboarding, training, rosters, performance conversations, and keeping good people engaged and clear on what's expected. On many farm teams this function sits with whoever has time - which usually means it sits with no one consistently.

Farm Hand

The hands-on work. Feeding, mustering, fencing, operating machinery, day-to-day labour across the farm.

Exercise 1.1 · Draw Your Current Team Structure

Using the org chart on the next page, draw your farm team as it stands right now.

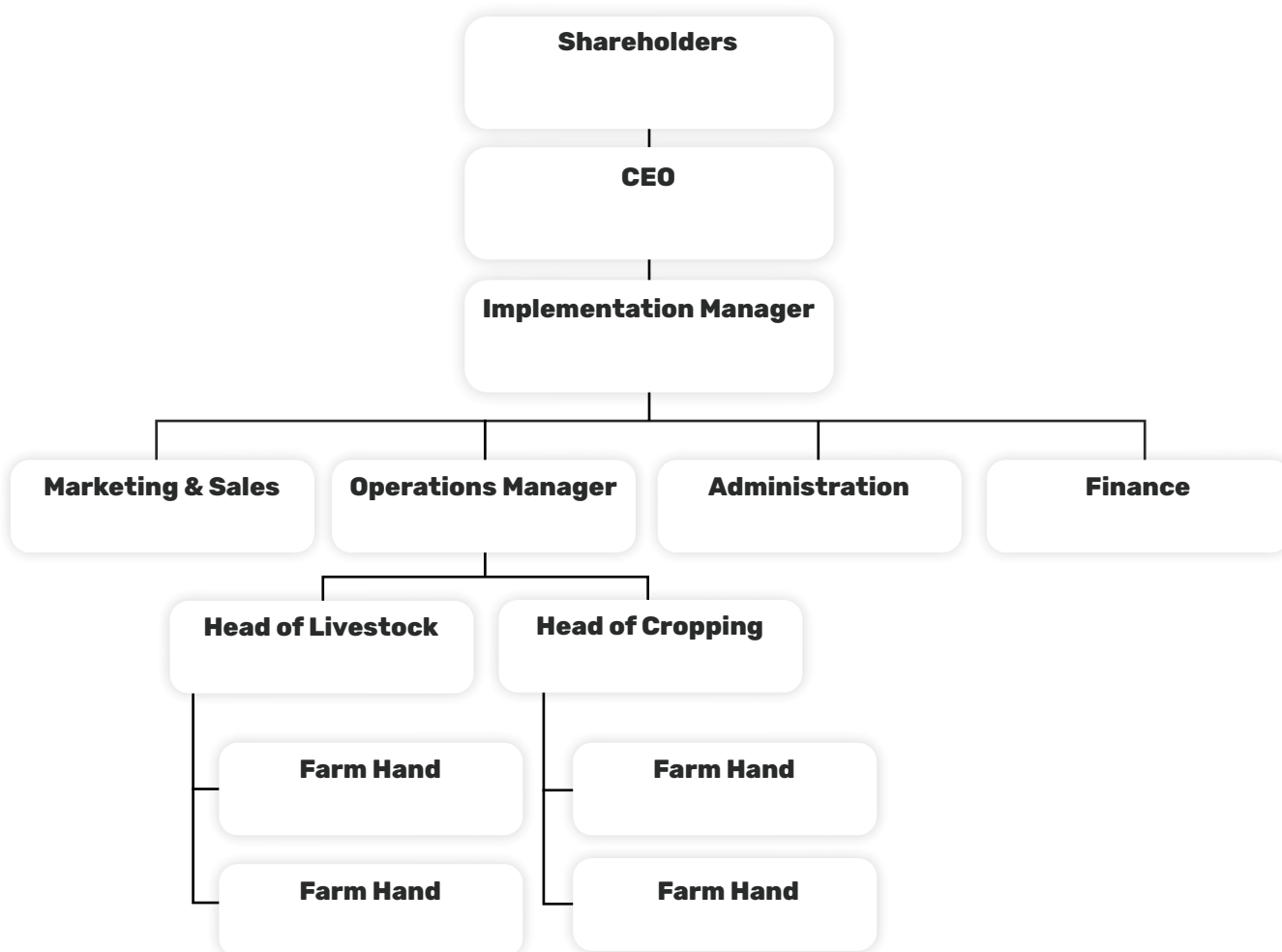
-  Put a name next to every seat, even if that name is yours
-  If a seat is shared between two people, write both names
-  If a seat has no one in it, leave it blank - that blank space is useful information
-  If someone doesn't fit neatly into one of the seats, add them where they make most sense, or create a seat that fits your business
-  Next to each seat, jot down three to five things that person is actually responsible for day to day

Exercise 1.1 · Draw Your Current Team Structure

Draw Your Team As It Is Today

Write a name in every seat. Leave empty seats blank. Draw your reporting lines across the grid, and jot responsibilities beside each box. Note that some farm businesses won't need all the seats in this example, while others will have more. Create the chart for your specific farm business.

AS IT IS TODAY



Tip: draw arrows between boxes to show who reports to whom.

SECTION ONE · WHERE DOES YOUR FARM TEAM ACTUALLY STAND?

Exercise 1.2 · The Gut-Check Questions

Once you've drawn the structure, sit with it and answer these honestly. There's no scoring here, just reflection.

1. Where does your name appear more than once?

Write down every seat you currently hold, formally or informally.

2. Where do roles blur or overlap between people?

Seats where two people both think they're responsible, or both assume the other is handling it.

3. Where are the obvious gaps?

Which seats have no name? Which functions happen inconsistently, or only when someone remembers?

4. If one person on your team left tomorrow, where would it hurt most?

That's a risk worth knowing about now rather than when it happens.

5. Is there anyone whose name is in a seat that doesn't quite fit them?

Not a judgement. Hold onto it for Section 2.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

What you've drawn isn't a criticism of how you've run things. Farm team structures grow organically - around who was available, who was loyal, who said yes when you needed someone. That's how it works in the real world. What you're looking at now is simply where things stand. Keep this page close. You'll come back to it in Section 3 to redraw it, with everything you'll know by then.



THE TOP PRODUCERS WORKSHOP

THE ULTIMATE FARM BUSINESS EVENT

Transform Your Farming Future in Just 2 Days



“When it comes to building and growing a successful agricultural business, if you think about the topics and aspects that you would like covered in a program, I guarantee you that Farm Owners Academy covers it all! We’ve attended the Top Producers Workshop and I think it’s safe to say that our lives will never be the same!”

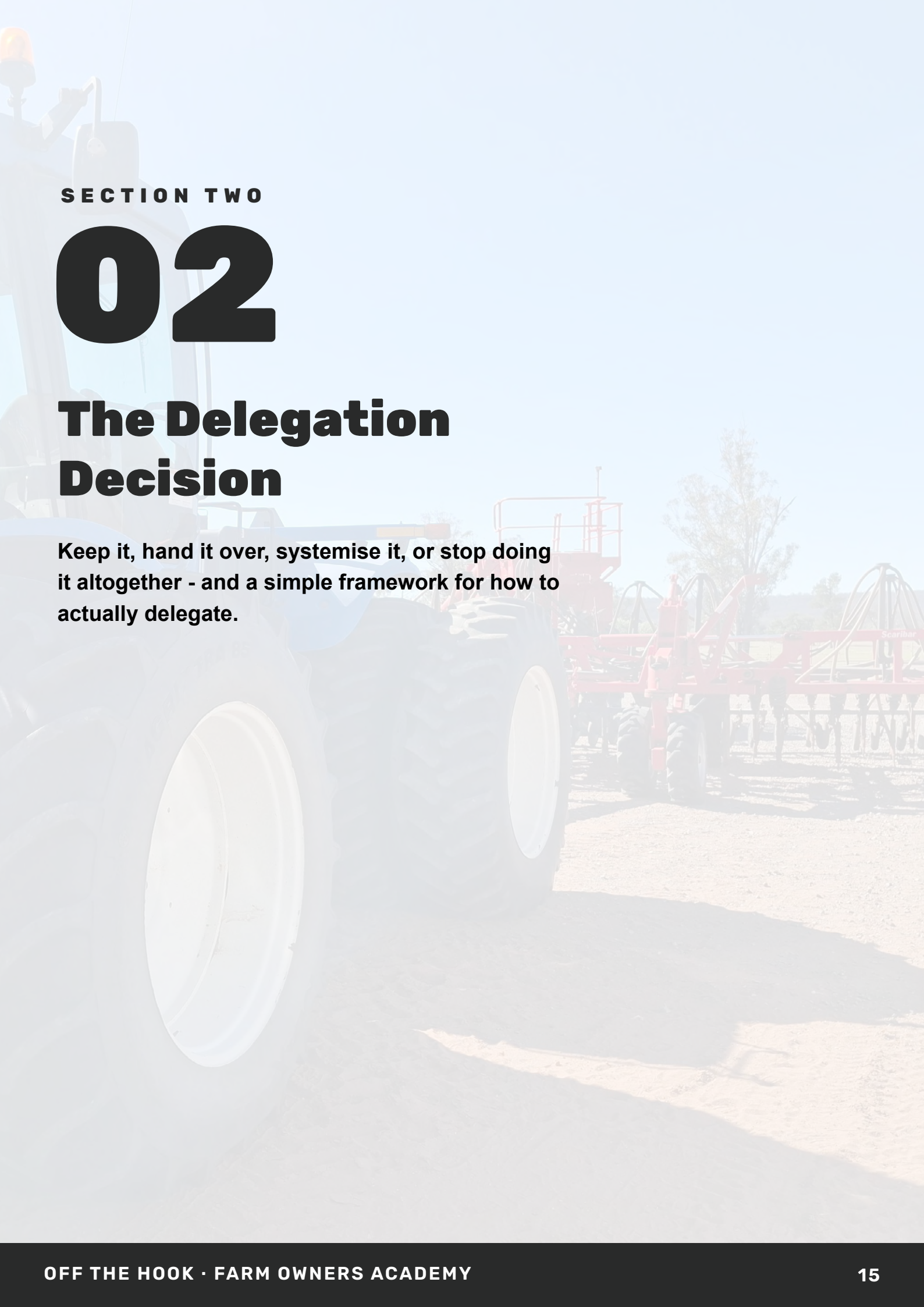
**EMMA KUERSCHNER,
FARMER BUSINESS OWNER**



Check for the next event date and secure your spot



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SECTION TWO

02

The Delegation Decision

Keep it, hand it over, systemise it, or stop doing it altogether - and a simple framework for how to actually delegate.

Before You Can Delegate, You Need To Know What You're Actually Carrying.

This is a critical step that often gets missed. You know you need to delegate more. You just haven't stopped to write down exactly what you're doing.

Every task. Every responsibility. Everything that only gets done because you remembered to do it, chased it up, or quietly picked it up when someone else dropped it. That's what this section asks you to do first.

It might feel tedious. Do it anyway. Because until you can see the full picture of what you're carrying, you can't make good decisions about what to keep, what to hand over, and what the business actually needs from you. Right now, a lot of that knowledge lives in your head, in your habits, in the way you move through a day. That's exactly what keeps the business dependent on you.

**This is a brain dump.
You'll sort it in a moment.**

Write down every task you do in the business - day to day, week to week, across the season. Include the things you do without thinking, the things you do because no one else does them, and the things you keep meaning to hand over but haven't yet. Use the prompt categories on the next page so you don't miss anything.

Prompt Categories

Use these to jog your memory before you fill in the table. Don't overthink it - just keep writing.

Day-to-day farm operations.

Feeding, checking stock, operating machinery, managing contractors, moving stock, irrigating, spraying, fencing, harvest prep, farm maintenance, vehicle checks.

Marketing, sales and agribusiness relationships.

Commodity decisions, managing agent relationships, negotiating contracts, staying across markets, maintaining supplier relationships.

Planning and scheduling.

Seasonal planning, work scheduling, rostering, booking contractors, coordinating labour around weather or season.

Admin and compliance.

Record keeping, chemical registers, WHS documentation, insurance renewals, vehicle registrations, government reporting.

People management.

Hiring, onboarding, training, performance conversations, managing rosters, dealing with issues, keeping good people engaged.

Family and ownership decisions.

Direction of the business, succession, land decisions, major capital purchases, family roles and expectations.

Financial management.

Invoicing, paying bills, banking, reconciling accounts, budgeting, cashflow management, talking to the accountant, reviewing reports.

Communication and coordination.

Team briefings, contractor messages, phone calls that should have gone to someone else, following up on jobs, being the person everyone checks in with before doing anything.

A NOTE ON THE TASKS YOU DO WITHOUT THINKING

Some of the most important ones are the tasks that didn't feel worth writing down at first. The quick call you make every Monday morning. The mental check on the way to the yards. The thing you fix at 9pm because you spotted it before bed. These habitual tasks are often the most deeply embedded and the hardest to see clearly, because they've become invisible to you. They don't feel like tasks anymore. They just feel like your day. But they are tasks. Write them down.

Exercise 2.1 · Your Stop Doing List

Write down every task you currently do in the business. Then mark each one:



KEEP IT

You want to own this, and it's the right use of your time.



OPEN TO DELEGATING

You can do it, but it probably doesn't need to be yours forever.



DELEGATE IT

This should belong to someone else. The sooner the better.



STOP DOING

Cross it out. It shouldn't be happening at all, or stopping it is a perfectly valid option.

SECTION TWO · THE DELEGATION DECISION

Exercise 2.1 · Your Stop Doing List

List every task you do, then mark its decision: Keep, Open, Delegate, or Stop.

#	Task	K	O	D	X
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					

A NOTE ON THE STOP DOING COLUMN

Before you assume something needs to be delegated, ask: does it actually need to happen at all? A practical example — stop answering the phone and start calling people back instead. Either the person figures it out before you call back, or you return the call on your own terms without losing 20 minutes of switching cost every time you're pulled mid-task. That's not a delegation. That's just a better habit. The Stop Doing column is full of moments like that.

Once You're Clear On What To Delegate, Here's How To Actually Do It.

Two things stop people from delegating properly:

1

I don't have anyone to delegate it to

Section 3 addresses this one - who's in what seat, and who could take on what.

2

Open To Delegating

Worth covering here, because many people get it wrong in the same way.

The most common mistake is jumping straight to full handover without working through the steps in between. You hand something over with a quick briefing, assume the person knows what good looks like, and then wonder why it keeps coming back half-done. The handover failed because the process was skipped, not because the person was incapable.

**Delegation is a series of levels,
not a single leap.**

On the next page are the five levels of delegation. Work through every level with every team member. Don't rush it.

The 5 Levels Of Delegation

Many farm owners try to go straight from doing everything themselves to handing something over completely, then wonder why it doesn't get done the way they expected. The issue usually isn't the person. It's that the key delegation steps in between were skipped.

1

Research and report back

"Go and find out about this for me, then come back and we'll talk it through - I'll make the call." They gather information; you retain full decision-making. The starting point for any new task or new team member.

2

Research and recommend

"Go and find out about this, and come back with your recommendation." You still make the final call, but you're developing their thinking and judgment.

3

Decide and tell me before you act

"Come back with your plan - what you'll do and the likely impacts - before you take action." They make the decision; you review it before it happens. This is the step many people skip.

4

Decide, act, and debrief

"Handle it, then let me know what you did and how it went. I'm here if you need coaching." Decision-making is fully delegated; you're mentoring, not managing.

5

Full ownership, exceptions only

"This is yours. I trust your judgment. The only time I need to hear about it is if something unexpected comes up." No surprises - that's the only rule at Level 5.

The goal is to get every team member to Level 4 or 5 on their core responsibilities. If someone isn't performing the way you'd expect, the first question worth asking is: which level are they actually at - and have I been treating them like Level 5 when they're really still at Level 2? This applies to each task they are responsible for.

SECTION TWO · THE DELEGATION DECISION

Exercise 2.2 · Your Delegation Plan

For every task you marked Delegate (**D**), plan the handover. Start with the tasks that happen most often - weekly and monthly repeaters give you the fastest return.

#	Task	Who I'm delegating to (or "gap to fill")	What they need to know or be trained on	Start level 1-5	What does "done well" look like?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

A NOTE ON TASKS YOU MARKED "OPEN TO DELEGATE" (O)

These don't need to move right now. But revisit them every quarter. What feels like "mine for now" has a way of shifting as your team builds confidence and you get better at working through the delegation levels together.



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STORIES FROM THE FARM

Hear from the farmers transforming their business with Farm Owners Academy.
We've helped over 5,000 farmers, here are some of their stories.



"When it comes to building and growing a successful agricultural business (what ever success looks like for you...) if you think about the topics and aspects that you would like covered in a program, I guarantee you that Farm Owners Academy covers it all! We've just completed the 2 day TPP Program and I think it's safe to say that our lives will never be the same! Very empowering, very inspiring and extremely crucial! Could not recommend highly enough! Loved it!!"

EMMA KUERSCHNER



"What a fabulous wealth of knowledgeable people. It has been fantastic getting together with like minded people. Well done for such a fantastic informative program. The teams enthusiasm to help and advise really shows and makes the sessions enjoyable to follow. Well done FOA."

BEC HAY



"Farm Owners Academy has done it again with another mind blowing deep dive. Forever learning and growing. We always come away with so much information to process. Thank you FOA team!"

BIANCA SCHULTZ



Just attended Top producers 2 day event. Thought provoking, informative, passionate and well presented. Superb venue and organisation of event. Fellow farmers don't fear the title of event, it is really aimed at raising the average to excell!

IAN JOHNSON

The background of the page is a faded photograph of a farm. In the foreground, three people are walking away from the camera on a dirt path. In the middle ground, there is a large white semi-trailer truck parked. In the background, several large metal grain silos are visible, connected by a long conveyor belt system. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

SECTION THREE

03

Redesign Your Org Chart

Redraw the structure with clearer seats, clearer reporting lines, and honest answers about who's in the right role.

Same Chart. New Clarity.

Go back to what you drew in Section 1. Look at it with fresh eyes - because you know things now that you didn't when you drew it. You've written down everything you're carrying. You've sorted your tasks and made decisions about what should move and who it should move to.

That first org chart was a picture of where things stand. This section is where you design where things are going. You're not starting from scratch - you're building on what you've already worked through.

Before You Redraw: Three Questions Worth Sitting With

1

Where is your name in seats it shouldn't be?

Look at the tasks you marked D. For each one you've decided to hand over, ask which seat it belongs to. Is that seat currently yours? If so, it needs a different name next to it.

2

Where are there seats with no one in them?

Gaps aren't just inconvenient they're usually where the owner ends up quietly filling in. If a seat is empty and work is still getting done, it's probably getting done by you. Name the gap. Own it honestly.

3

Where are the reporting lines unclear or missing?

Who does each person actually report to? Who gives them direction? Who holds them accountable when something slips? If the honest answer is "they come to me," that's worth examining.

One Name Per Seat

There's one rule worth following as you redraw this. Every seat gets one name. Not two, not a couple of people who share it. One person accountable for the outcome.

Others can absolutely help with the work. But a seat with two names next to it is usually a seat with no clear owner, and that's exactly how things end up drifting back to you. If two people are genuinely sharing a function, either split it into two seats with two clear sets of responsibilities, or decide which one actually owns it.

The first chart was honest about how things are. This one is deliberate about who owns what.

Exercise 3.1 · Redraw Your Org Structure

Using the chart on the next page, draw your farm team as you want it to look. This is your future-state structure. It just needs to be honest about where the business is heading, rather than perfect or achievable next week.

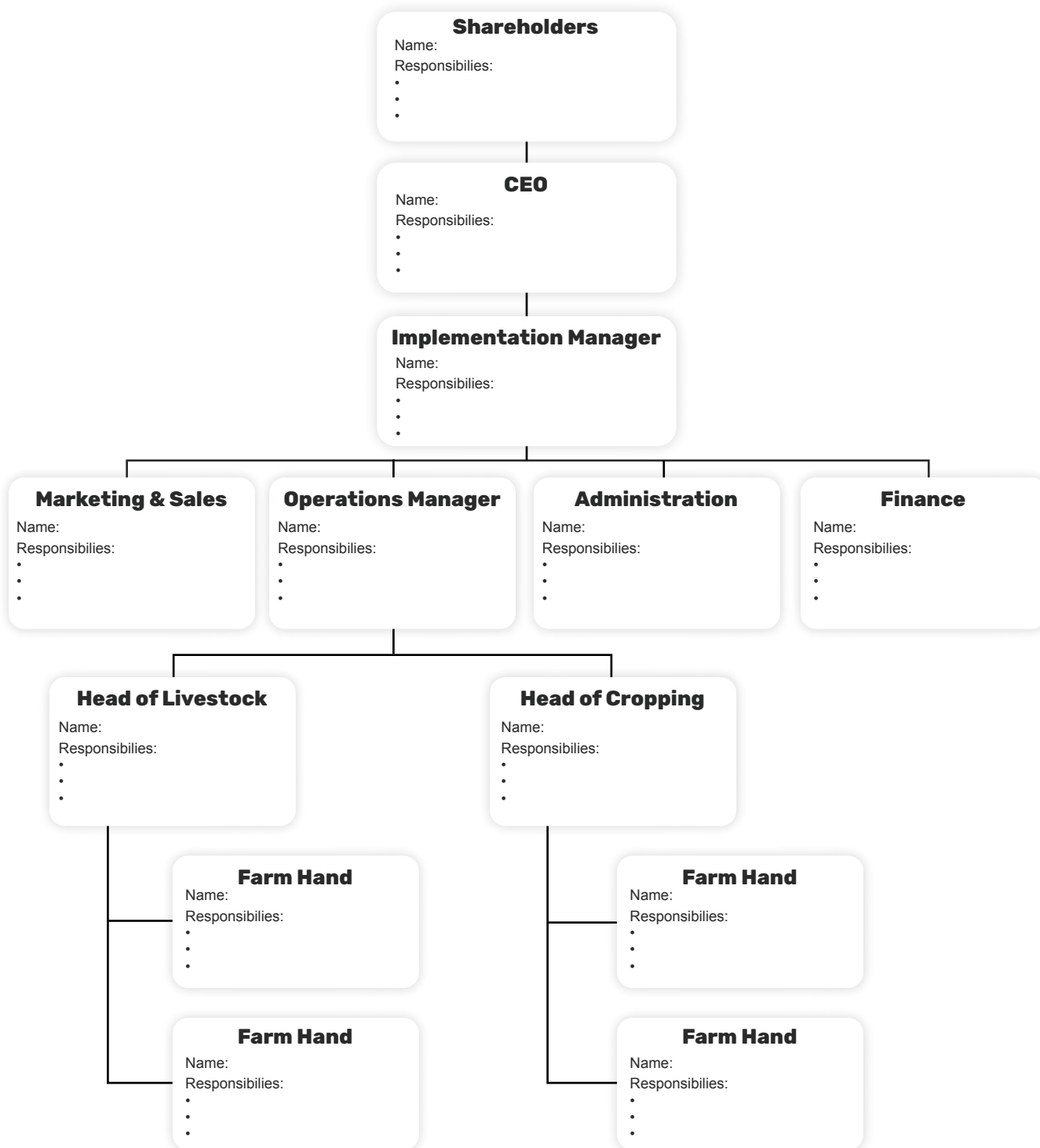
- ➔ One name per seat you're keeping or handing to someone already on the team - the person accountable for it
- ➔ For seats where the right person isn't yet on the team, write the role name and mark it as a gap to fill
- ➔ Draw the reporting lines clearly: who reports to whom, and who each person goes to for a decision
- ➔ Note any seats where you're still listed but working toward stepping back over the next 90 days

Exercise 3.1 · Your Future Structure

Draw Your Team As You Want It

One name per seat and the top 3-5 roles or responsibilities each seat is accountable for. Mark empty seats as a “gap to fill”. Compare this against your Section 1 chart.

AS YOU WANT IT



Tip: circle any seat that's still yours but where you're working toward stepping back in 90 days.

Exercise 3.2 · The Seat Map

Structure first, people second. Go through each seat and honestly assess whether the right person is in it. This applies to yourself and your family - no exceptions. For each seat, ask three questions: do they get it, do they want it, do they have the capacity?

A VERY IMPORTANT DISTINCTION: “Gets it, Wants it, and Has Capacity”

When building your organisational structure, a crucial idea (thanks to the book Traction for teaching this) is to make sure that whoever you assign to each role meets three key criteria:

1. GETS IT

Do they really understand the job? For instance, if you hire a bookkeeper who struggles with numbers, then they don't get it. If you hire a farmhand who is more of a people person, then they also don't get it.

2. WANTS IT

Are they passionate about the work? Do they really want the job? If they don't, then they are not the right person for the role.

3. HAS CAPACITY

Do they have the ability to perform the job physically, mentally, and time-wise?

It would be unwise to put someone in charge of being a CEO if they aren't good at strategic thinking or don't want the job. The same goes for an Implementation Manager. You want someone who is organised, likes following through, and is great at completing tasks.

Verdict options:

Right Seat / Wrong Seat / Right Person, Needs Development / Gap (No One Yet)

This isn't about judging your people. A “wrong seat” finding might mean someone is far better suited to a different role. “Right person, needs development” is often the most useful outcome - it tells you exactly what investment to make in someone worth keeping. And check yourself here too: what does your own seat actually look like in the structure you've just drawn?

SECTION THREE · REDESIGN YOUR ORG CHART

Exercise 3.2 • The Seat Map

[illegible]

SECTION THREE · REDESIGN YOUR ORG CHART

Exercise 3.3 · Gap And Risk Audit

With your redrawn structure and seat map in front of you, answer the following.

1. Where are the structural gaps?

Which seats have no one named? Which functions sit with you by default?

Where is the business most at risk?

If one person left tomorrow, where would it hurt most?

Where is a good person in the wrong seat?

Capable and committed, but in a role that doesn't suit or stretch them.

What would the right seat look like?

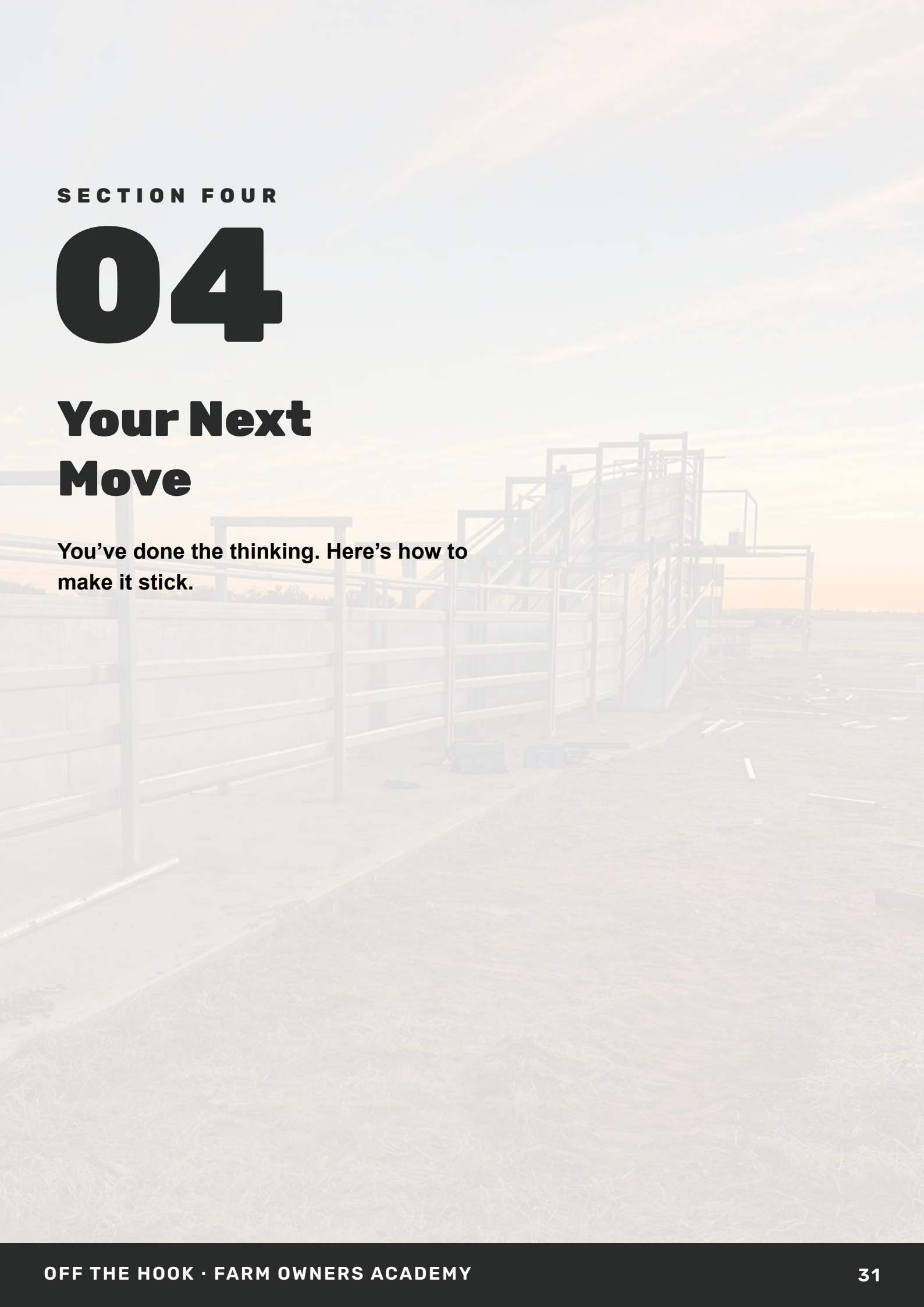
Where is a seat held by someone who isn't the right fit?

Harder to write down - but leaving it unexamined doesn't make it go away.

Which seats are still yours that shouldn't be - and what needs to happen before they're not?

Be specific: the person, the training needed, and the system required before handover is real.

WHAT YOU NOW HAVE

The background image shows a farm scene at sunset. In the foreground, there is a dirt path and a large, multi-level metal structure under construction, possibly a horse arena or a large stall. The structure has several levels and railings. In the background, there are more farm buildings and a line of trees under a sky with soft, orange and yellow clouds. The overall tone is warm and slightly hazy.

SECTION FOUR

04

Your Next Move

You've done the thinking. Here's how to make it stick.

This Is Further Than Most People Get.

You’ve mapped your team, worked out what to hand over, drawn the structure you’re building toward, and identified who’s in the right seat and who isn’t. That’s a serious piece of work. Lots of farm owners carry all of this in their head and never put it on paper.

But paper doesn’t change anything on its own. What changes things is deciding what you’re going to do first... and actually doing it.

Exercise 4.1 · Your Three Actions

From everything you’ve worked through, write down the three most important moves you’re going to make in the next 90 days. Not ten. Not a full project plan. Three. If you’re not sure which to pick, go back to your Stop Doing List - the tasks you marked Delegate (D) that happen most often are almost always where the fastest return is.

The three actions I’m going to take in the next 90 days are:

1

2

3

An Honest Note Before You Close This.

These changes are straightforward to understand. They're harder to make in practice, because changing how a business runs means changing habits, having conversations you've been putting off, and trusting people in ways that don't always feel comfortable at first.

Don't wait to take action. It's just worth knowing before you start, so that when it feels harder than expected, you don't assume you're doing it wrong. A good coach doesn't make the work easier — they make sure you don't stall when it gets uncomfortable, and that the moves you make are in the right order.

What Else Is In The Way

You've addressed the team piece. But there are two other things that quietly pull farm owners back into the day-to-day, and this playbook only covers one of them.

-  **Your mindset is still running old patterns.**
"It's faster if I just do it." "They're not ready yet." Those don't go away just because the structure changed.
-  **There's no rhythm keeping the team focused.**
Meetings that create follow-through. Scorecards that show what's actually happening. A plan everyone can see.
-  **You don't have a scorecard.**
If you can't see at a glance whether the business is on track, you'll keep inserting yourself just to feel in control.
-  **Your team doesn't have a meeting structure.**
Not just a weekly catch-up - a rhythm that creates accountability and surfaces problems early.
-  **The right conversations aren't happening.**
Performance. Expectations. Who's in the right seat and who isn't. The ones that feel uncomfortable to start are usually the ones that matter most.

We cover all of this in the workshop.



WHAT'S NEXT?

You've done the thinking and made a start.

The fastest way to turn this into a farm that runs without you at the centre of everything is a conversation about your specific situation. We'll talk through where things stand and the right next step for you. No pressure, no script.

Book a complimentary call

Want to go deeper on all three gravity traps — mindset, team and systems? Watch the free workshop recording below and work through them alongside other farm owners facing the same challenges.

Watch the workshop recording

From all of us at Farm Owners Academy - thank you for doing the work. We've watched owners go from "it all comes back to me" to leading a farm that runs without them at the centre.

**You've made the first real move.
We'd love to help you finish it.**

MEET THE AUTHOR

& the team helping farmers grow their business



Sam Johnsson
CEO of Farm Owners Academy

Sam is an experienced executive with strong leadership and business analysis skills gained through years of leadership in the construction industry.

Sam now translates these skills to the farm business context, helping clients focus on what is important in their business and supports them to make the robust decisions that help move them towards their goals. With a passion for the agricultural sector, Sam is committed to delivering on Farm Owners Academy's mission to help Australian farmers create more profit, more control, and more freedom in their business.



**The Farm Owners
Academy Team**

Whether you're looking to improve profitability, save time, develop your team, or run a better business, the Farm Owners Academy team have the experience to help unlock the full potential of your farming business.

Backed by decades of on-farm experience, we're dedicated to helping you create a business that you're both proud of and is profitable, while also giving you the freedom you deserve.

Book your complimentary call with our team

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9NEWS



FOR FARMERS IN NEED

The Farm Owners Academy Foundation helps farming families recover from adversity by bridging the gap between donors and farmers in need. We ensure that those who need support receive it immediately and appropriately, while also helping donors make a meaningful impact with their contributions.

With a focus on providing direct, targeted assistance to those who need it most, our foundation is committed to helping farming families overcome challenges and achieve greater success. Through our work, we aim to build a stronger, more resilient agricultural community.



THE FARM OWNERS ACADEMY FOUNDATION EXISTS TO:

- ➔ Help farming families recover from adversity.
- ➔ Bridge the gap between passionate donors, and farmers most in need.
- ➔ Ensure those in need get support immediately and appropriately.
- ➔ Help donors make the exact impact they hope to with their pledged funds.

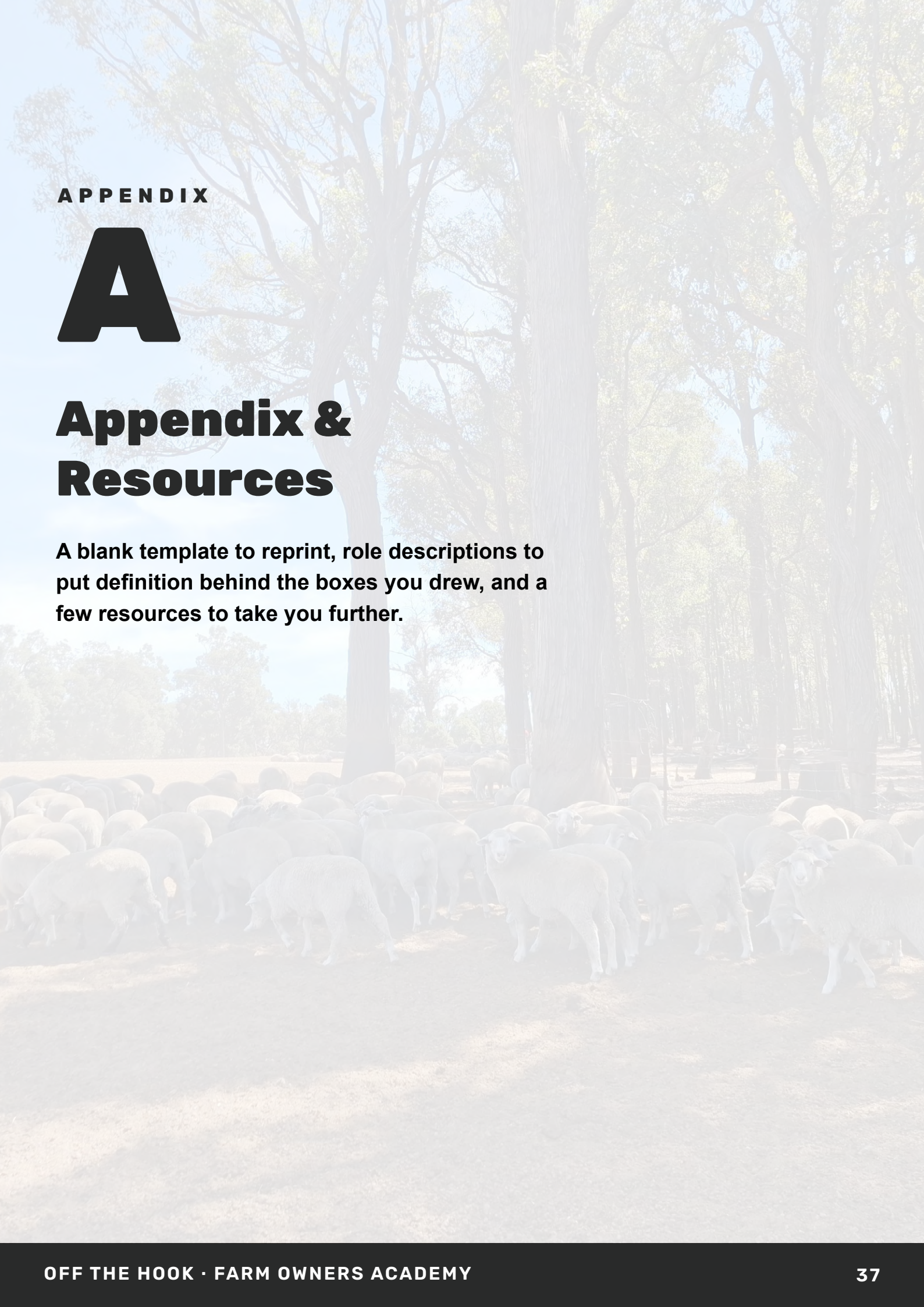
Inspired by the courage, resilience and determination of our members, as well as the immense out-pouring of love and support extended to all families impacted by the tragic fires on Kangaroo Island in 2020, we determined to do more and more actively play our part.

HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE OF SIGNIFICANCE IN THE LIVES OF FARMING FAMILIES IN NEED, DONATE TODAY! 100% OF DONATED FUNDS GO DIRECTLY TO FARMERS IN NEED.

www.farmownersacademy.com/foundation

Administered in partnership with Blaze-Aid



A large flock of sheep is gathered in a field, with several tall, mature trees in the background. The scene is captured in a soft, slightly faded style, giving it a dreamy or artistic feel. The sheep are of various shades of grey and white, and they are standing in a loose group. The trees have thick trunks and dense foliage, with some sunlight filtering through the leaves.

APPENDIX

A

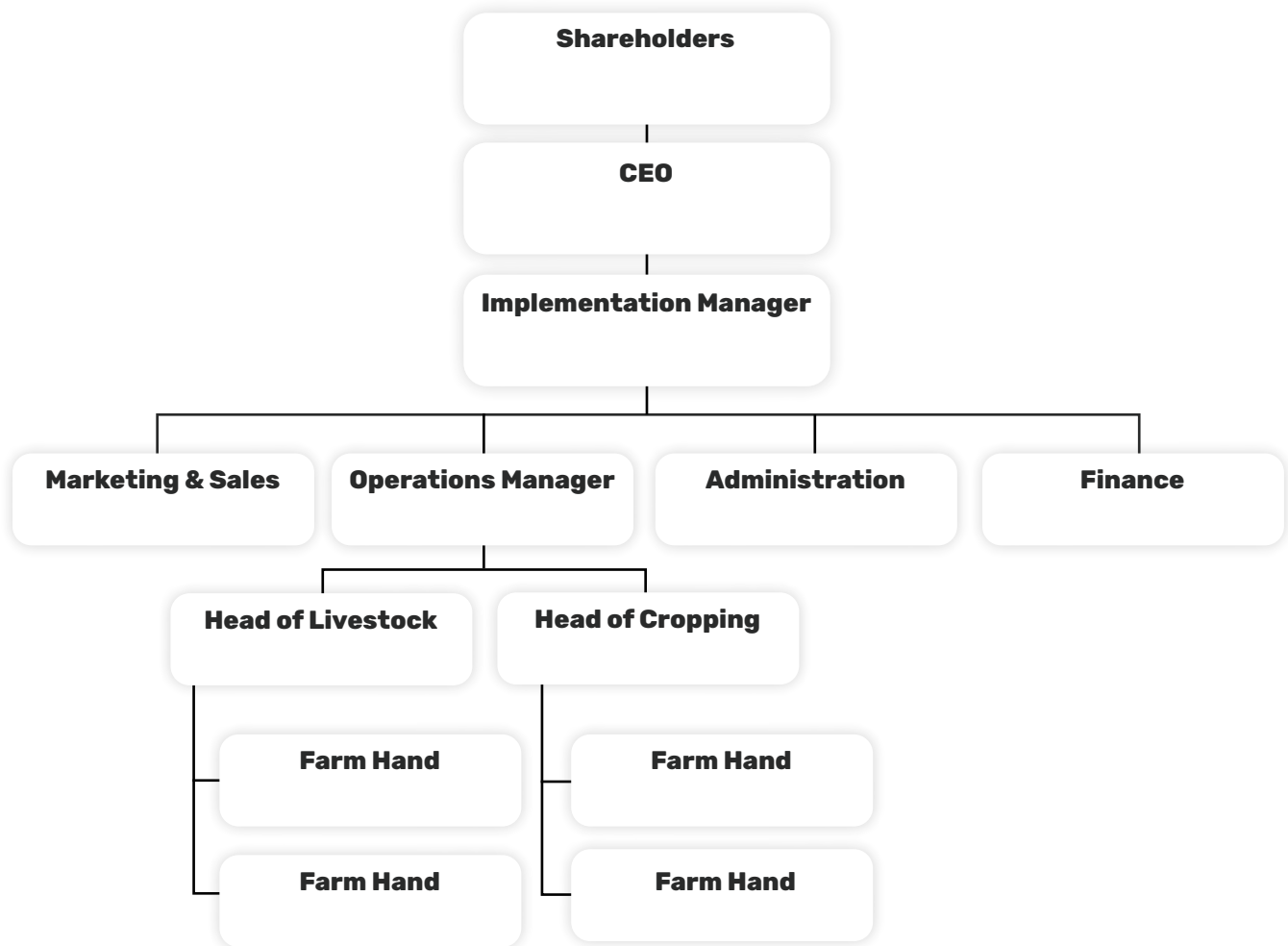
Appendix & Resources

A blank template to reprint, role descriptions to put definition behind the boxes you drew, and a few resources to take you further.

Blank Org Chart Template

One blank, fillable template to use with Section 1 (current state) and Section 3 (future state). Photocopy or reprint as you iterate.

BLANK COPY AS NEEDED



Draw arrows between boxes to show who reports to whom.

What Each Seat Owns

Use these to put real definition behind the boxes you drew. They describe what each seat owns, not who currently sits in it. **These are seats, not people** - one person can hold more than one. Before you put a name in a seat, run that person through the three questions from Section 3: do they get it, do they want it, do they have capacity.

Shareholders

The seat that owns the business itself.

Owns: the overall direction and vision, the destination the business is working toward, and holding the CEO accountable for getting there.

A good Owners seat means: the people who own the business are clear on what they want from it, and the CEO knows what they're being held to. Worth separating from the CEO seat in your thinking, especially where family members are involved.

CEO

The seat that should keep your name in it. Everything else in this playbook is about getting your name out of seats so you have room to do this one properly.

Owns: the direction of the business. Goals, major decisions, capital and land calls, key relationships with the bank, advisors and major suppliers, risk, and leading the team toward the destination.

A good CEO seat means: someone is working on the business, not just in it. The numbers get reviewed monthly and decisions get made from them.

Implementation Manager

The seat that turns direction into action. The CEO decides where the business is going. This seat makes sure it actually happens.

Owns: the operating rhythm. The yearly plan, the 90-day reviews, the weekly team check-in, agendas, the scoreboard, and following up who said they'd do what.

A good Implementation seat means: plans don't die in a drawer. On many farms the same person holds CEO and Implementation - that's fine, as long as both jobs actually get done.

Operations Manager

The engine room. Owns the day-to-day running of the farm and the people doing it.

Owns: stock, cropping, machinery, scheduling, seasonal planning, rosters, systems and checklists, one-on-ones with the team, and maintenance oversight.

A good Operations seat means: the standard holds whether or not the owner drove past that day.

APPENDIX B • ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Finance

The seat that owns the numbers and the paperwork.

Owens: bookkeeping, invoicing, banking, reconciliation, BAS and compliance, budgets, cashflow, and a monthly profit and loss the CEO actually reads.

A good Finance seat means: the books are done during work hours with a fresh head, not at 9pm with whatever's left in the tank, and the CEO gets one clear financial report every month. Often filled by a partner, family member or external bookkeeper - but it still needs one clear owner.

Administration

The seat that owns the numbers and the paperwork.

Owens: Responding to email enquiries, taking and returning phone calls, paying bills and handling accounts payable and receivable in conjunction with the Finance Manager, booking travel and event requirements, checking mail and mailing items.

A good Administration seat means: enquiries get answered same-day, bills get paid on time and the CEO's diary and travel are sorted before they even have to ask. Often filled by an office manager, EA or admin assistant.

Marketing & Sales

The seat that sells what the farm produces, well.

Owens: commodity marketing, price and contract decisions, agent and customer relationships, supplier relationships, and market awareness.

A good Marketing and Sales seat means: selling is deliberate, not last-minute. For commodity operations this can be a smaller seat. If you sell direct, it's a big one. Either way, someone should own it on purpose.

HR / People

The seat that keeps good people clear, capable and engaged.

Owens: recruitment, onboarding, rosters, training plans, performance conversations, and progression.

A good People seat means: expectations are clear, issues get handled early, and your best people have a reason to stay. On many teams this sits with whoever has time, which usually means no one consistently. Naming an owner for it is often a quick win.

Farm Hand

The seat where the hands-on work of the farm gets done.

Owens: stock work, machinery operation, fencing, water, spraying, feeding, and harvest support.

A good Production seat means: the work gets done to a written standard, by someone properly trained. The question is rarely whether someone else can do it - it's whether anyone has been properly trained, and whether the standard has ever been written down.

The Person - First Job Ad

Most job ads start with a list of tasks. Start with the person instead. Decide who you're looking for first - then let the task list come second. Use this when you're hiring ahead, or replacing a weak fit.

Role Title (The seat this fills)

The attitude and aptitude we need Attitude beats skills almost every time

The gap this person fills in the team including the personality mix - don't hire a second strong, direct personality if what the team is short of is steadiness

How we'll know they're a good fit beyond the resume

Then - the responsibilities (task list comes second)

Onboarding Checklist

A simple checklist so a new person gets up to standard without it all running through you. Tick each item as it's done; use the lines to make it specific to the seat.

Before Day One

-
- ☐ Role and responsibilities written down
 - ☐ Who they report to is clear
 - ☐ The standard for the work is defined
 - ☐ The system or SOP that supports the role exists
 - ☐ Add your own
-

First Week

-
- ☐ The essentials covered
 - ☐ The safety basics covered
 - ☐ Who to go to for what
 - ☐ Add your own
-

First Month

-
- ☐ Training milestones set
 - ☐ A clear scoreboard for the seat
 - ☐ A check-in date booked
 - ☐ Add your own
-

Go Deeper

FROM THE PROFITABLE FARMER PODCAST

Episodes that go deeper on the themes in this playbook:

Episode 117: Are you Proactive or Reactive in Your Management?

Episode 111: Aligning Your Team To A Plan

Episode 77: People 'wrangling' and all things leadership

Episode 69: Clarity and high-quality farm business planning

Episode 61: A new spin on leadership and driving efficiency

Worth Reading

- ➔ **Traction** by Gino Wickman - the source of the “gets it, wants it, has capacity” framework.
- ➔ **The E-Myth Revisited** by Michael Gerber.
- ➔ **The One Minute Manager** by Ken Blanchard.
- ➔ **Dare to Lead** by Brené Brown.



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