

WOULD YOU BUY YOUR OWN FARM?

Maria Fathollahi · Planfarm

Berry Practical 2026 · Yarra Valley



**If this farm came up for sale tomorrow — exactly as it
exactly as it is — would you buy it?**

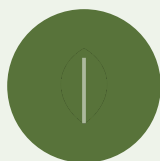
**I've asked myself this question about my own
own farm.**

Blueberries, New Zealand, under Quedan tunnels — sold in 2013.





A fee-for-service farm business consultancy — 18 consultants working with farming businesses nationwide.



FARM BUSINESS ANALYSIS

Know your numbers

Enterprise analysis, profitability and performance so you understand what's driving your business.



CASH FLOW & DECISIONS

Plan ahead

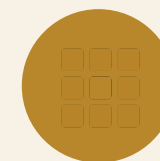
Budgets, forecasts, cash flow and investment decisions to give you confidence for the future.



COACHING & STRATEGY

Turn plans into action

Set goals, get clarity and implement change with ongoing support and accountability.



INDUSTRY BENCHMARKING

Know where you sit

Projects like Level Up Hort provide benchmarking and industry insights for growers.

Our job is to connect production → financial performance → better business decisions.

Costs up. Weather uncooperative. Margins squeezed.

None of that is in your control.

Control vs Influence

Which group of these have you spent most of your mental energy in over the last six months?

THINGS WE CAN'T CONTROL

Weather
Markets
Input prices
Policy changes
Interest rates

THINGS WE CAN INFLUENCE

Planning
Cost management
Labour productivity
Timing decisions
Marketing decisions
Business systems
Information quality

The objective isn't to control the uncontrollable — it's to become exceptional at the things that are still yours to influence.

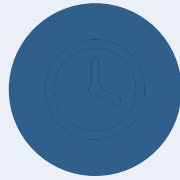
WHERE FRESH EYES WOULD LOOK

Four places to find margin



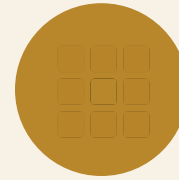
CROP PERFORMANCE

Is this dollar working?



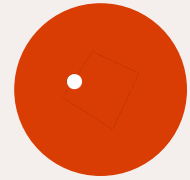
LABOUR

Busy, or productive?



ENTERPRISE MIX

**Your most
profitable hectare?**



PRICE

**Do you know
your numbers?**

Not: how much did we grow?

**But: how much saleable production did we get per dollar spent?
spent?**



Every extra dollar in should come back as more than a dollar out.

Is this dollar actually working?



CROP



LABOUR



ENTERPRISE



PRICE



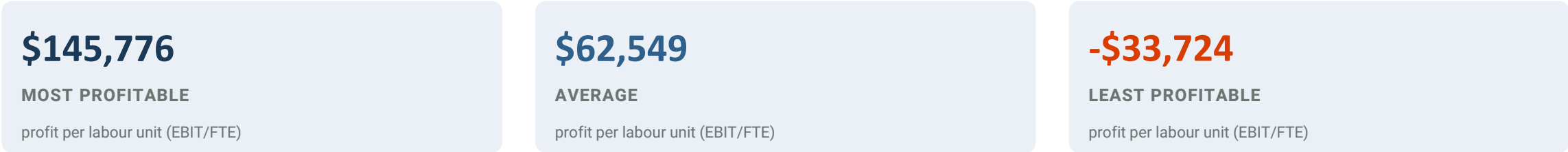
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Anthony Yewers - Berry Sweet

Busy does not equal productive.

Output. Process. Waste. Downtime. Cost per unit.



The most profitable growers use MORE labour per hectare (0.39 FTE/ha vs 0.29 average) — they just get far more profit out of every labour unit.

Do you know how productive your labour is — or only what it costs?

Source: Planfarm / Hort Innovation, Season 2025 National Vegetable & Onion Benchmark Report. Not berry-specific data — the pattern is observed broadly across horticultural businesses.

 CROP

 LABOUR

 ENTERPRISE

 PRICE

What's your most profitable hectare?

Not your best-yielding crop. Your most profitable one — variety, block, planting age, protected vs unprotected, production system, market window, customer channel.

“If I gave you another 10 hectares tomorrow, what would you plant — and why?”

Could you prove that decision with numbers?



What 20 hectares moved to a better-performing crop is worth.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Crop	Hectares	Income \$/ha	Costs \$/ha	Margin \$/ha	Total Margin
Crop 1	220	\$21,000	\$21,262	-\$262	-\$57,706
Crop 2	100	\$23,100	\$21,328	\$1,773	\$177,250
Crop 3	60	\$18,000	\$9,992	\$8,008	\$480,456

Total margin: \$600,000

TARGET PERFORMANCE – SHIFT 20HA, CROP 1 → CROP 2

Crop	Hectares	Income \$/ha	Costs \$/ha	Margin \$/ha	Total Margin
Crop 1	200	\$21,000	\$21,262	-\$262	-\$52,460
Crop 2	120	\$23,100	\$21,328	\$1,773	\$212,700
Crop 3	60	\$18,000	\$9,992	\$8,008	\$480,456

Total margin: \$640,696

Modelled gain from shifting 20ha: +\$40,696 – with no new land, no new capital.

Example, modelled on real Planfarm benchmarking work.

 CROP

 LABOUR

 ENTERPRISE

 PRICE

Confidence in pricing starts with knowing your numbers.

Your break-even.

Your cost of production.

Your best-return channel.

What would one percent on your realised price actually be worth this year?

 CROP

 LABOUR

 ENTERPRISE

 PRICE

WHAT THE NUMBERS ACTUALLY SHOW

Top performers aren't the lowest-cost operators — they convert more of every dollar into income.



Source: Planfarm / Hort Innovation, Season 2025 National Vegetable & Onion Benchmark Report. Not berry-specific data — the pattern is observed broadly across horticultural businesses.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE — NOT A REAL BUSINESS

SAME FARM. SAME HECTARES.
SAME WEATHER. BETTER DECISIONS.

 Crop spend reviewed → Same yield, less wasted input

 Labour tracked by output, not hours → Picking cost per kg down

 Lowest-margin block re-planted → Most profitable hectare found

 Cost of production known → Walked into pricing with confidence

Nothing changed except how closely they looked.

Illustrative example — not real farm data.

 CROP

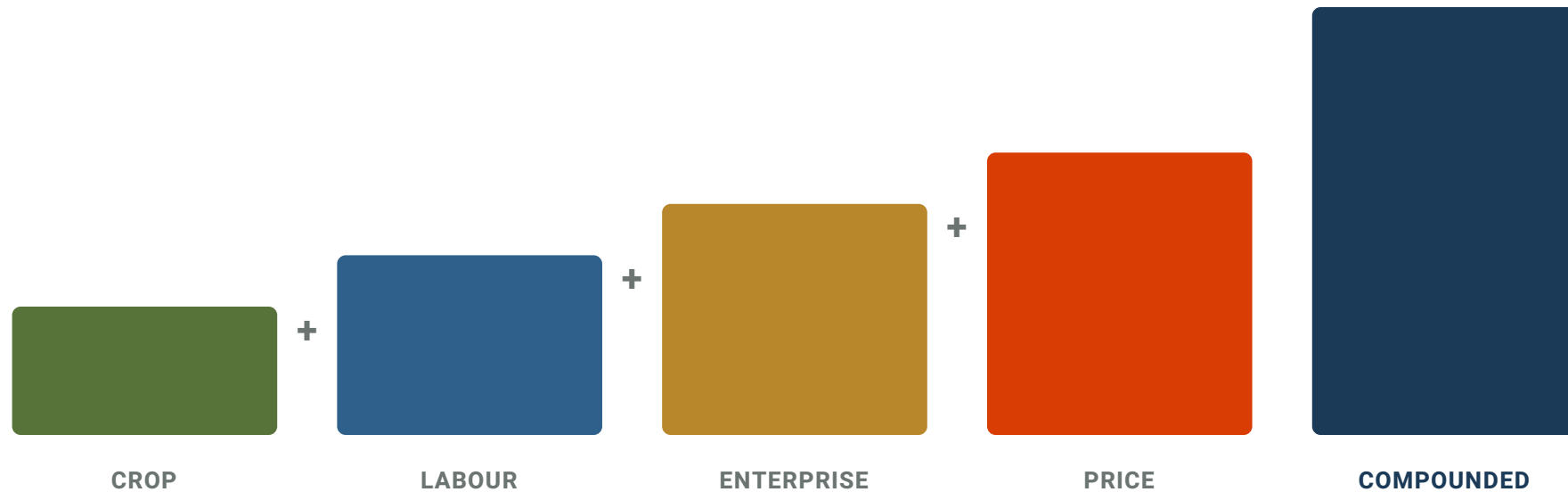
 LABOUR

 ENTERPRISE

 PRICE

There's no silver bullet.

It's a handful of 1-2% decisions, made consistently — and they compound.



*A great operator isn't the one with no problems.
It's the one willing to keep asking, "is this still working?"*



Fresh Eyes Diagnostic

Score yourself, 1 to 5, on each:

	Crop performance	Do you know your return per dollar spent?	1	2	3	4	5
	Labour productivity	Do you measure output, or just hours?	1	2	3	4	5
	Enterprise mix	Could you prove your most profitable hectare?	1	2	3	4	5
	Price realisation	Do you know your break-even cold?	1	2	3	4	5

Circle your lowest score. Not necessarily your biggest weakness — just the first place worth a fresh set of eyes.

WHAT'S THE ONE THING YOU'D LOOK AT DIFFERENTLY?

Think back to the question we started with: Would you buy your own farm?

STOP

What are you doing
because
“we’ve always done it
this way”?

START

What’s one number you
need
to understand better?

QUESTION

What assumption in your
business
deserves another look?

ACT

What’s one decision
you’ll
make differently?

You don’t need ten actions. Pick one.

Would you buy your own farm?

If it wasn't yours, would the numbers still stack up?



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