

Dairy Women's Network

Annual, General Meeting 15 October 2009

Chair's Report of the Year 1 June 2008 to 31 May 2009



It was a challenging time for everyone involved in the dairy industry for this twelve-month period. Dairy Women's Network (DWN), through its professional development programme, gave dairying women the information, knowledge and support to survive and improve their businesses, or progress their careers, in the environment of a global recession.

It was a difficult time also for our wonderful, supportive group of funders and sponsors – but they continued to provide the vital financial funding and 'in kind' support.

Many thanks to our Prime Funder, DairyNZ, where we have appreciated the support of both the management and board. We have also appreciated the support of our Prime Sponsor, the ANZ Bank. We have, over the years, established a special working relationship between them and our regional groups, our management, and our Board - both through ANZ and their personnel at the National Bank branches.

The Network also values and very much appreciates the support of our sponsors and Network Partners:

AgResearch; Ballance AgriNutrients; CRV AmBreed; CRS Software; Donaghys; ING; and Meridian Energy. Thank you also to all our conference and Dairy Day sponsors.

During the financial year I attended seven Dairy Days in the South Island and witnessed, first hand, the impact of these on dairying women. In addition to the empowerment of the knowledge they were going to take back on-farm, it was rewarding to see their growing recognition of their own, valuable contribution to the dairy industry. Similarly, our outstanding Christchurch 'Farming Forward' conference provided a motivational learning environment which, along with our regional groups, ensures that DWN can continue to provide 'a pathway to excellence for women in dairying'.

Delivering professional development for women in dairying to the high standard people now expect of us is only possible by having a special, dedicated team of professional people ably led by our General Manager, Lynda Clark. Her passion for this work has seen her put in many hours as she has continued to develop innovative learning packages and capably manage the significant operational workload.

To provide Professional Development Opportunities for Women in Dairying.

We acknowledge and value the support of Mary Gough, our Office Manager – especially with the Dairy Days’ organising. Jillian O’Neill, our Marketing Manager, has continued to work hard at promoting our Network and nurture our sponsors’ relationships in difficult times. Our thanks go to Cathy Seal, who diligently supports our valued email network.

Our Regional Group Convenors (RGCs) do an amazing job in a voluntary capacity. They are capable leaders in the dairy industry who are developing their leadership skills further by participation in our annual training programme. Westland’s support enabled RGC Sally Gallant to also attend an Institute of Directors Governance course. Michelle Wilson’s work in supporting and mentoring this team has been appreciated and highly valued.

As Chair of the Trust Board since October 2008 I believe the Network has continued to be an influential industry participant, helping expand dairying women’s potential because of the governance expertise of the current Board members. Many thanks to our Deputy Michelle Wilson; Christina Baldwin, Lynda Clark, Angela Fullerton, Katrina Knowles, and Sue van der Poel. I would like to express a special thank you and acknowledgement of the outstanding leadership contribution by the immediate past Chair, Willy Geck. Through her leadership, Willy exemplifies the Network values – her integrity, commitment, and innovation has ensured the Network continues to be recognised as a credible, professional organisation.

We acknowledge and greatly appreciate AgMardt’s funding of the Institute of Directors courses for several of our Trustees, during the year. The five-day Directors course I attended was both practical and stimulating.

Our thanks to Fonterra, and the NZ Lotteries Board for their financial support that enabled Board members Willy Geck, Michelle Wilson and Lynda Clark to attend the International Women in Dairying Conference in America. This was a stimulating experience for the Trustees and helped add a global perspective to the leadership roles of dairying women.

We are also grateful to our solicitors Simon Makgill and Lisa Ware of Lewis’ of Cambridge.

Our Board also appreciate the help of Annette Ryan from The Effect, and Neil Richardson to progress our strategic planning as we endeavour to maximise the role of women in the New Zealand dairying community. The challenging times of the last twelve months have highlighted to the Board the need to focus on developing the Network as a sustainable business model.

Thank you.

Robyn Clements

Dairy Women’s Network Trust Board

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