

Dairy Women's Network



Annual General Meeting 26 October 2011

Chief Executive's Report on Year 1 June 2010 to 31 May 2011

2010-11 was a busy and challenging year for the Dairy Women's Network.

The DWN database was just over 2400 at May 31 and is continuing to grow.

DWN continues to enjoy significant support from a range of sponsors. Our Prime Funder is DairyNZ, and we gratefully acknowledge the significant support from DairyNZ that enables the Network to deliver a range of professional development activities for dairy women. Additional funding in the 2010-11 year has allowed us to offer more opportunities for women to access professional development.

BNZ Partners is our Prime Sponsor. The support of BNZ Partners has made a big difference to the regional groups in particular, and I would like to formally thank BNZ Partners for the use of this outstanding facility for our meeting today. The continued support of our family of Network Partners CRS, CRV, Donaghys, MilkHub, MSD Animal Health, NZX and Meridian is also significant and very much appreciated.

We are also very appreciative of the support from AgResearch in providing both a centralised office and a supportive working environment for our management team and board.

Key Activities

The Dairy Women's Network continued to deliver a range of professional development activities during the 2009-10 year. We know that there is a need for a range of forums – from face to face to on-line, and that the opportunity to grow leadership skills, and offer a supportive network for Dairy Women are also key deliverables.

Dairy Days

Dairy Days are a flagship activity for the network. The November series of Dairy Days was focussed on Breeding Basics and was supported generously by CRV. This learning was delivered to over 200 people in 10 locations around New Zealand. The April Dairy Days were focussed on FarmHer Wellbeing looking and physical and mental health and were attended by over 400 people. There were an additional 25 Dairy Days in the autumn on the topic of *Cashbook to cashflow* and focused on building a farm budget. This series of Dairy Days was an outstanding success, being delivered to 300 people with evaluation results showing the majority were still using the skills learnt 2 months later.

Regional Groups

Regional groups are the backbone of our organisation. Maintaining effective regional groups is a core activity for the Network, and keeps us in touch with the issues and concerns for dairy women in New Zealand. A total of 65 regional group meetings were held during the year, an increase of 14 over the previous year. Topics covered during the meetings included risk management on farm, post-calving management, pre-mating catch ups, emissions trading, business planning, setting up an office, operations manuals, leadership, personalities, IT and calf rearing. Regional group convenors were well supported by the Regional Group Co-ordinator, Michelle Wilson, and the subsequent employment of Fiona Heberley in November. Thank you, Michelle and Fiona for providing this valuable coaching, mentoring and support to regional group convenors. There continues to be interest in establishing new regional groups, and enabling this to happen, especially in the Waikato and South Auckland areas is a goal for the current year.

Conference

The annual two day conference was held in Invercargill in May, with the theme of *Milk Fills the World's Cup*, and was attended by nearly 300 women. Thanks to the very dedicated and hard working Southland conference committee for delivering a high calibre event that is still talked about by attendees and sponsors. The Celebrate U award announced at the conference went to Maree Crowley-Hughes. Maree is a quiet leader in her community who is an excellent role model to other dairy women.

Website, Email Network and E-Learning

The Network's website is its virtual shop window. During the year, regular updates of information, including notices of events and other relevant items have occurred. Visits to the website continue to increase, with the site receiving over 75,000 hits during the year. The average session length was 13 minutes, 42 seconds. The email network, e-digest, is still very active with over 500 members, and a wide range of topics have been discussed. During the year the Network maintained a Facebook page. We have recognised that use of various forms of social media can be an important communication tool for business, especially to younger audiences.

Leadership Development

Regional group convenor training was held in Christchurch in February, and 20 regional convenors and co-convenors attended this very successful programme. The participant greatly enjoyed and learned a lot from the session on facilitation skills delivered by Annie Perkins of Groundwork. The evaluation survey of participants rated this training very highly.

Personnel

There are a number of people whose dedication and hard work have been instrumental in the success of the Network over the past year. Nita Harding and Lynda Clark both contributed hugely in the role as GM and Temporary GM. Mary Gough, the Network's Office Manager worked diligently to ensure systems and processes were in place to ensure all events and other activities were meticulously organised.

Jillian O'Neill, our Marketing Manager, continues to drive a marketing programme that has seen growth in sponsorship and recognition for the Network. Cathy Seal effectively and efficiently manages our email network.

Jillian O'Neill (Marketing Manager) and Rachael Singh (contractor, Events) worked tirelessly alongside Lynda, Nita and Mary to ensure delivery of high quality events, the whole team often working under huge pressure.

My thanks goes to all of you, without your efforts there would be no Dairy Women's Network.

Trust Board

A special thanks to the Trust Board, not only from me, but also from our dairying women and staff for the support and guidance provided during the year. An organisation does not prosper and grow without good governance, and the Board has provided this. This has been done with passion, dedication and professionalism, and is greatly appreciated.

In conclusion this has been a very busy and successful year for the Network. Our success would not have been possible without the support of a great number of people and organisations – thank you, and we are looking forward to another exciting year.

Sarah Speight
Chief Executive
Dairy Women's Network