

Dairy Women's Network

Annual, General Meeting 20 October 2010

General Manager's Report on Year 1 June 2009 to 31 May 2010



The Network's purpose'to provide professional development opportunities for dairying women' continues to be the guiding force for the activities delivered by the Network over the past year.

The focus for the 2009-10 year was to deliver the Network's range of activities, while at the same time consolidating its position to prepare for further growth and development in the 2010-11 year.

The Network database was just over 2400 at the end of the financial year, a growth of almost 20% over the year.

The Network 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. 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 support from our Network Partners 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 Dairy Days, *Click here to connect*, focused on understanding and using new technologies. This learning was delivered to 200 people in 10 locations around New Zealand. The March Dairy Day topic was *Cashbook to cashflow* and focused on building a farm budget. This series of Dairy Days was an outstanding success, being delivered to over 450 people in 13 different locations.

Regional Groups

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 51 regional group meetings were held during the year, an increase of 11 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, capital structure, IT and calf rearing. Regional group convenors continued to be well supported by the Regional Group Co-ordinator, Michelle Wilson, and visits were made to many regional groups. Thank you, Michelle 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 is a goal for the current year.

Conference

The annual two day conference was held in New Plymouth in May, with the theme of *Farming Forward – Dairying to be you*, and was attended by nearly 200 women. Thanks to the very dedicated and hard working Taranaki conference committee for delivering a high calibre event that is still talked about by attendees. Survey data from attendees indicates that 92% thought the conference represented value for money.. At this event each year the annual *CelebrateYou* award recipient is announced. This year's well deserved recipient was Katrina Knowles for her significant contribution to Taranaki dairying women and the Dairy Women's Network.

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 started 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. Each participant developed and recorded their digital story, and also attended a session on Extreme Self Care and Leadership presented by Coach Approach. 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. Mary Gough, the Network's Office Manager, has worked diligently to ensure systems and processes are in place to ensure all events and other activities are 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.

Michelle Wilson and her team of Regional Group Convenors have delivered interesting programmes to regional groups, and provided significant support to Network members over the year. Finally and not least, Lynda Clark, the previous General Manager worked tirelessly to deliver an innovative programme of relevant professional development to women in one of New Zealand's biggest export industries. 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 myself, 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 successful year for the Network, this 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.

Nita Harding
General Manager
Dairy Women's Network