

Dairy Womens Network

Annual General Meeting 22 October 2008

Chair's Review of the Year 1 June 2007 to 31 May 2008



It is with the greatest of pleasure and much sadness that I present this, my last Chair's Year Review, to the fourth Annual, General Meeting of the Dairy Womens Network.

This year has seen us establish and settle into our new home here at AgResearch. The offices we have plus the use of AgResearch facilities has been a huge milestone in our development. We thank Dr Andy West and the directors of AgResearch for their generosity. At this time I would like also to thank AmBreed and Jos Koopman for the use of their facilities, in the past.

Along with this move to our new home came the very exciting launch in May at the Hamilton conference of our rebranding, new logo and the development of some merchandise. This coincided with our tenth birthday and it was magic to be able to celebrate this in style and also in the heart of the place where it all began, ten years ago. It was sad to see our faithful old cow and her greener pastures go - but she was replaced by a more superior, genetic model which I feel reflected our femininity and our movement with the times.

A personal highlight was that in July last year I attended the five-day residential Company Directors' Course run by the Institute of Directors in Wellington. This was made possible by funding from Agmardt for Trust Board members to attend various Institute of Directors' courses, during the next five years. My grateful thanks must go to Agmardt as this opportunity gave me a huge amount of insight plus reaffirmed the route as to what and how we are governing the Network.

Also this year some Trust Board members, along with some dairy women, had the opportunity of creating their digital stories. This proved to be a very powerful teaching and leadership tool and we hope that the chance to repeat this will happen again.

Once again the Board's and my ever grateful thanks must go to our General Manager, Lynda Clark. Her expertise, her keen eye for detail, industry knowledge and her commitment to work beyond the terms of her contract has been instrumental in continuing to develop the new and innovative programmes and in promoting the Network's professionalism. We also acknowledge the support of Mary Gough as our new Office Manager. She replaced Sam Palmer at the beginning of this year. Sam has continued to help in the development of the Dairy Days.

I would also like to thank Chris Bristol, who was our Marketing Manager until towards the end of the year. Jillian O'Neill has replaced Chris and we acknowledge Jillian for her support and fresh ideas in promoting and 'selling' the Network. Our thanks go also to Cathy Seal who continues to quietly work in the background supporting the email network.

To provide Professional Development Opportunities for Women in Dairying.

We especially value the continued support of: The ANZ Bank as Prime Sponsor, Ambreed, Ballance Agri-Nutrients, CRS software, and new companies - ING, Meridian, UNO.land and AgResearch as our Network Partners plus all of our conference only and Dairy Day sponsors. The Network is very aware of the increased demand on each of your sponsorship dollars and so we will continue to endeavour to deliver real value for you.

The Network also acknowledges the funding support of DairyNZ. Without this funding we would not be able to deliver the innovative and professionally delivered programmes that New Zealand dairy women have come to expect of us.

At this time there are others that I would like to acknowledge for their input to the Network. A huge thank you must go to the Regional Group Convenors who work voluntarily to help the women in their regions. I hope that we have been able to acknowledge this voluntary help by providing the annual coaching/mentoring to you, plus we have provided the additional support of Michelle Wilson. Also I would like to extend a thank you to the participants of the Regional Groups, Dairwn email group and also to the Conference and Dairy Day organisers and attendees.

We are grateful to our lawyers Simon Makgill and Lisa Ware of Lewis' in Cambridge. Also, we thank Annette Ryan of The Effect who has helped the Board with our strategic planning and Neil Richardson who has been hugely helpful as mentors to Lynda and me. We also acknowledge our accountants Hammond & Moir in Te Awamutu.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to all of the members of the Trust Board. Christina Baldwin, Lynda Clark, Robyn Clements, Angela Fullerton, Katrina Knowles, Sue van der Poel, Michelle Wilson and Monica Hutchinson who resigned at the end of last year. Katrina is the newest member of the Trust Board. Thank you, Katrina, for taking up the gauntlet to help us govern this dynamic organisation. To all of you, I thank you for your support of me over the last three years as Chair, your enthusiasm and commitment cannot be measured and without it the Network would not be where it is now – a credible and respected organisation in the dairy industry.

I believe that we have continued to achieve more milestones in participant growth and activities and innovation during the year. The challenge of course, as always, is to be able to continue to provide opportunities to innovatively assist women's professional development. As outgoing Chair, I leave this challenge with you and it is with much personal sadness, I hand over this robust and very dynamic organisation to the very capable hands of our incoming Chair, Robyn Clements.

Thank you.

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Dairy Womens Network Trust Board

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