

Media Release

23 February 2011

Dairy industry's future pumping through their veins

The dairy industry has and always will be in Rebecca Gell's blood and she wouldn't have it any other way.

The Kyabram dairy farmer, who is the herd and farm manager for a 600-cow organic dairy farm, is planning for the various roles she will undertake in the industry moving forward and the new Developing Dairy Leaders Program is helping her achieve this.

"I wanted to improve myself development, meet other like-minded people and learn more about the industry," Rebecca said. "So far it has been stimulating, challenging and rewarding."

The pilot program, developed by Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and Dairy Australia, aims to build on the leadership skills of people aged 18-30 who are committed to the dairy industry. Two other young northern Victorian dairy industry players have joined Rebecca on the program – Gunbower's Jason Smith and Ashley Hogg from Biggara.

The three northern Victorians are part of a group of 17, 10 men and seven women, from across Australia taking part in the program, which is being delivered by the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA). The group recently completed the first stage of the pilot program, which involved a four-day residential skills development program in Melbourne where participants interacted with current industry leaders from various state and national organisations.

"It was great to meet people in the industry from boards and leading roles and hearing their stories and challenges they have faced which I can learn from," Rebecca said. "The program gives confidence to younger people who are coming up through the industry and helps them take the step they need to into a new role."

Participants learn how to articulate, present and debate ideas, provide advocacy and representation, participate as a member of a board, participate in a media interview or presentation, lead and manage community or industry organisations and manage personal work priorities and professional development.

The next phase of the program will involve a regionally based project with the support of an industry-leading mentor. It will conclude with a two-day residential policy and media development program in Canberra in May. The end result being formal accreditation.

The program has been developed in response to the Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) Dairy Leadership – An Industry Blueprint 2010-15, which identified 200 leadership roles are required across the industry - 40 new people each year.

ADF Vice President Adrian Drury said the program was a key activity in supporting the development of the dairy industry's state level leaders.

"I have met the participants of the Developing Dairy Leaders Program and believe them to be a group of young people who are more than capable of responding to any challenge thrown at them, leading our industry and staying true to themselves," Mr Drury said.

Dairy Australia managing director Ian Halliday said the course had attracted a group of enthusiastic and passionate young people from the industry.

“It is very encouraging to see a group of young people so keen to build on their dairy careers, which just goes to show the future of our industry is in extremely good hands,” Mr Halliday said.

“While the course has just started participants have taken hold of the opportunity to learn from current leaders with gusto and are already taking the necessary steps to become the next wave of dairy industry representatives as managers, presidents, directors and board members.”

The Developing Dairy Leaders Program is one of the many examples of the dairy service levy at work. Farmers receive a benefit of \$3 for every \$1 invested by Dairy Australia on their behalf. For more information on this and other levy investments visit www.dairyaustralia.com.au

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