

Media Release

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Here come west Victoria dairy drivers of tomorrow

Western Victorian field officer Rowan Ault says much of what he has learned so far in the new Developing Dairy Leaders Program can be applied to everyday life in some way.

“I will be able to use a mixture of industry and life skills,” he said. “Industry information is readily applicable in my role as a field officer with Warrnambool Cheese and Butter.”

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. Rowan is one of three from western Victoria to take part in the program, he is joined by Colac’s Sophie Hester and Tahnee King from Warrnambool.

There are a total of 17 young dairy industry people from across Australia participating – 10 men and seven women. Recently, the group completed the first stage, which involved a four-day residential skills development program in Melbourne where participants interacted with current industry leaders from various state and national organisations.

Rowan grew up on a dairy farm at Rochester in northern Victoria and said the program, delivered by National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA), was a great opportunity to meet key industry leaders.

“It gave me a greater awareness of how the industry operates and I had the opportunity to learn how key leaders have reached the positions they are in,” he said. “I think the course could be of great value to the industry - pathways need to be developed to keep people involved. It’s a good way of introducing people to broader aspects of the industry and opening up a lot of opportunities that might not have been available.”

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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