



**Media information**

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### **Primary sector women funded to step up**

Government investment in developing and supporting women to create sustainable prosperity in the primary sector and regional communities has been welcomed by the organisation that is growing the leadership, governance and business skills of women in the sector.

The Agri-Women's Development Trust (AWDT) has received \$289,000 from the Government's Sustainable Farming Fund to extend its work to three groups of women who have been identified as part of the key to sustainable primary industry growth.

The two-year project will see AWDT research, design and deliver pilot programmes for younger women who are entering primary sector careers, Māori women in the regions, and women who have had careers outside of primary industries whose expertise was of value.

AWDT chair, Charmaine O'Shea, said the new funding would enable the trust to build on the success of its work over the past six years to develop and support women's capability to lead and create positive change.

"Our research has identified that these target groups are not well supported through current offerings, yet they are critical to the sector's future success. This new funding commitment will create development opportunities for all women in primary industries at all stages of their careers."

Beginning in July, the project will enable women to lead their businesses and rural communities by learning to engage with markets and stakeholders at local, regional, national and global levels, and by better telling their own and sector stories in a largely digital and urban-centric world.

"Because women make up 50 percent of the primary industries, we want to make sure every woman has those opportunities," said AWDT executive director, Lindy Nelson.

"We've worked hard in our first six years of operation to create specific development opportunities for women ranging from farm owners to those in corporate roles. These women are creating transformational change as we have flipped the script for how they view their contributions and how the sector views their potential.

"For example, almost 500 graduates of our Understanding Your Farming Business (UYFB) programme have changed how they view themselves, moving from saying 'I'm just a...' to seeing themselves as critical farming partners in the strategic and operational success of their farming businesses.

"This new project is about going deeper by extending development to women who are on the periphery of what we do now."

Lindy Nelson said the new project would not only focus on the women themselves, but also the contexts in which they are leading. "We will be supporting women to contribute to financially, socially, environmentally and progress-led businesses, products and communities.

"This approach supports our belief that changing views of resource stewardship will require women to be able to lead within these four contexts which we also believe are how the success of businesses and communities will be measured."

Stage one of the project will begin with focus groups, interviews, surveys with women across primary industries. AWDT welcomes involvement from all primary sectors including apiary, aquaculture, arable, dairy, fibre, forestry, horticulture, meat, poultry and viticulture.

Ends

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<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-invests-women-primary-sector>