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Planning boost for farming partners

Planning for long-term business success is the focus of a new programme for sheep and beef farming partners, developed in response to strong industry demand.

Launched this week, the programme equips farming partners to decide their business and family goals together, then use that to plan for, and lead, their teams.

Funded by the Red Meat Profit Partnership (RMPP) PGP programme, 'Future Focus', is initially being offered in seven rural centres, involving more than 100 participants. Designed and delivered by the Agri-Women's Development Trust (AWDT), each two-day programme will be held over two months.

Future Focus builds on AWDT's Understanding Your Farming Business (UYFB) course, also funded by RMPP, which has been completed by more than 800 women since 2014. It follows a pilot last year with 16 farming couples and research into what is needed to lift farm performance.

AWDT executive director, Lindy Nelson, said the new programme recognises that joint planning and decision making is vital to business success.

"There is plenty of research, including our own, showing farming businesses perform better when the business aspirations of both partners are agreed and aligned. We also know that many couples have never had the opportunity to go through a process where they look to a far horizon, decide together what this should look like and how they will get there."

Mrs Nelson said the couples will consider how the vital elements of people, the environment and profitability will fit into the future success of their businesses, against the background of rapid change being faced by the red meat sector.

RMPP Chairman, Malcolm Bailey, said RMPP's successful UYFB courses had created strong interest from farmers for other courses to enable them to take time out together with their partners and business decision makers to work on developing their business, instead of only working in their business.

Course participants will develop a business vision and goals, and then an action plan with specific results to be achieved. They will learn how to keep their plan on track, how to overcome obstacles and how to engage and lead the wider farming team - including staff, bankers and advisors.

Starting in May and June, Future Focus will be held in Gore, Oamaru, Amberley, Whangarei, Te Kuiti, Whanganui and Dannevirke. Further information is available at www.awdt.org.nz.

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