

Recognising the value of skills learned 'by default'

Margaret Hore



When Maniototo farmer Margaret Hore took part in First Steps in March 2013 it helped her realise the value of the skills and opportunities she had gained from being part of a family, farming business, rural community and as a former Plunket nurse.

"Our First Steps group was an amazing group of ladies and facilitators and it was a time of encouragement and empowering the positive. This has been extended as we continue to meet and support each other.

"As rural people, there is so much we learn by default – stepping up and doing things that we never would have done otherwise. I can now see the value of the secretarial, fundraising, catering and support work I've done with various committees including School Committee/BOT, Plunket, Lones, Scouts and Guides.

"I am now using the same skills in our farming business and have more confidence to give things a go, knowing that I can contribute and make a positive difference. It's made me a more effective member of our farming team as we move forward with succession planning and the formation of new companies.

"First Steps allowed me to step out beyond my comfort zone and do the AWDT's Understanding Your Farming Business (UYFB) and the Institute of Directors Governance Essentials courses." Understanding what it means to be a director, legal aspects and the difference between governance and management has been invaluable in Margaret's involvement in new entities for the family farm and an irrigation company.

"I now realise that the budgeting we've done over many years, especially during the tough times in the 80s, was a key part of our farming success. There is more we can do with more understanding. The key to succession planning is encouraging and allowing the younger generation to play a part in the team, while planning where my husband and I belong in our farming business.

"We never stop learning, no matter how old we are. First Steps is for all women of all ages – it's the mix of people that is special. The programme encourages us to enjoy who we are and what we want to achieve at any stage of our life."

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