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New Agri-Women's Development Trust GM announced

The Agri-Women's Development Trust (AWDT) has a new general manager with the appointment of Lisa Sims to the role.

Sims will lead the operations of the charitable trust, taking over from its founder Lindy Nelson who will step down as executive director at the end of this month.

Since 2010, AWDT has equipped and supported almost 3,000 women to generate economic, social and environmental progress in the primary sector and rural communities through its business, leadership and governance programmes.

Nelson will continue in her role as an AWDT trustee and as programme director for the trust's flagship programme, Escalator. She will also lead the development of the trust's growing number of programmes for women involved in primary industries, and oversee programme quality.

AWDT chair Mavis Mullins said the appointment of a general manager was part of the trust's planned leadership succession following an independent recruitment process that attracted strong national interest.

"Lisa has been an integral part of AWDT since day one. She stood beside Lindy and me when we launched the trust at Parliament in 2010 and has since played a key role in shaping our vision through her communication and engagement work with us.

"She brings 30 years of deep experience in strategic communications, business, agriculture and community leadership. As an outstanding member of our Escalator Alumni and one of our culture keepers, she truly lives and breathes our values.

Sims' career to date has spanned international government relations, promoting New Zealand red meat in Japan and leading communications and engagement for her own diverse range of clients in the private and public sectors.

She has served on several regional boards and is a partner with her husband Tom in their farming business near Eketahuna where they have raised their four young adult children.

Sims said she looked forward to working with the trust's board, industry partners, staff and wider team of 40 programme facilitators to build on AWDT's success and growth.

"I've been inspired by what Lindy and her team have achieved so far and the impact the trust's programmes have had on people's lives, their businesses, rural communities and the wider primary sector. I look forward to working in service to the AWDT vision."

Mavis Mullins said Nelson's contribution as AWDT founder and executive director had been immense.

"Lindy started with her own research and a clear vision for women to become vital partners in world-leading primary industries. Ten years later we have strong partnerships with industry, a highly skilled team and are ready to move ahead to continue to create positive change."

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