

Stronger farming businesses help address challenges

Programmes to help strengthen farming businesses are being extended to more than 750 farming women next year at a time when farmers are responding to climate change and the need to operate in an environmentally sustainable way.

Skills and confidence to manage current farming challenges are on offer through the Agri-Women's Development Trust's (AWDT) 'Understanding Your Farming Business' (UYFB) programme, set to be held in 35 rural centres in 2020.

Along with UYFB, an associated programme 'Wāhine Māia Wāhine Whenua' (WMWW) will be delivered in five locations to women involved in whānau, trust or incorporation farming operations.

Fully funded by the Red Meat Profit Partnership (RMPP), both programmes equip and support women with the knowledge, skills and confidence to lift the performance and profitability of their farming businesses.

AWDT General Manager Lisa Sims said over the past five years the programmes had seen more than 1900 farming women become more engaged in their businesses and would provide even greater benefits during the present period of dynamic change in the sector.

"Now, more than ever, UYFB and WMWW support farming women to help navigate these challenges together with their farming partners and prepare for the future by developing strong business plans that deal effectively with uncertain times."

Delivered by AWDT's team of topic and communications experts, the programmes empower sheep, beef and dairy farming women to contribute more fully to their business. Each programme involves three full-day workshops, some homework and a graduation celebration held over a four-month period.

"Along with generating plans for more resilient businesses, women learn financial and benchmarking skills and how to positively influence decision making in their farming teams, and with their banks and advisors."

RMPP Chair Malcolm Bailey says the programmes are on track to achieve the goal of reaching 25 percent of New Zealand red meat farmers.

"These programmes are playing a critical role in ensuring New Zealand has a thriving rural sector. RMPP is committed to supporting programmes which provide the right practical support and learning for farmers. It's critical we develop and grow the business skills of both men and women within the farming partnership and attract the next generation of top talent."

Another farming business programme 'Future Focus' involves farming partners, women and men, and will be offered in 20 locations throughout New Zealand through RMPP and AWDT.

Further details including how to register are available at www.awdt.org.nz/programmes/, or by calling 06 375 8180.