



A NETWORK FOR WOMEN INVOLVED IN DAIRYING:
An Opportunity for Recognition and Involvement in Decision Making at all Dairy Industry Levels for the benefit of all People Involved in Dairying

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report discusses the importance of recognising the actual activities and varied roles of women in dairying in New Zealand rather than traditional perceptions. It describes the advantages of increasing their participation in decision making for both their farming business and the dairy industry. It suggests barriers that could be preventing fully utilising their contribution and considers how leadership opportunities could be implemented using skills from different perspectives. It discusses examples of establishing networks for women in dairying and the consequent benefits for both the women involved and the dairy industry.

2. APPROACH TO REPORT

In preparing this report review of some of the previous research and written material on New Zealand and Australian rural women and rural networks was undertaken. Data was obtained from a survey of 184 women participating in the inaugural conference of the Network for Women in Dairying. Information was obtained by the writer's participation since 1998 in establishing the Network for Women in Dairying. In addition participation in the Australian dairying women's email network provided background material to their women's network. Information was also obtained from an informal interview with Cathy McGowan, President of Australian Women in Agriculture. Information on WFFF (now renamed Rural Women) from a personal view was obtained from a discussion with a past dairy farmer and continuing active member of that organisation for the last 53 years.

3. DEFINITIONS

A **network** can be a vehicle for a group to inform, value, support and mentor each other to implement change. Jenni Mitchell referred to the Victorian rural women's network as a network belonging "to anyone that who wants to make new understandings, broaden a support base, bring fresh ideas to old concerns, acknowledge experience and learning as equal partners in knowledge and to basically found out how a difference can be made to people's lives."(Mitchell, 1994,p141).

A similar view of networks by Naisbitt (1982, p182) is referred to by Grace (1997,p.13) "they promote self-help and self-reliance, and may exist 'to exchange information, to change society, to improve productivity and to share resources'. Grace highlights while there have been many studies on women networks from a management perspective little has been carried out on what they mean for rural women. Yet she suggests they share in common the means to improve the "status of women" (Grace, 1997,p13).

This term 'network' refers to the make up or form of the usually informal structure whereas the term '**networking**' means the action (Mitchell, 1994) or process (Grace, 1997). "Networking includes all those activities that allow free exchange of information and the development of links which activate discussion about issues of concern. It encourages people to find their own solutions by making connections with a broad range of people who can add to the solutions or directions that are sought" (Mitchell, 1994, p147). This view is reiterated by Welch when describing networking for business women to help their career paths.

"It's asking for help when you need it - knowing when you need it, knowing whom and how to ask for it. It's *giving* help, too, serving as a resource for other women, In sum, it's getting together to get ahead."
(Welch, 1980, p.15).

In addition to information exchange and supportive views of networking Grace (1997) also refers to a third concept of program management which she believes her research has shown to be effective by the use of a professional network co-ordinator to act as facilitator for the network programme.

In this report the term '**women involved in dairying**' is used to include all women involved in activities *on farm* be it on a casual, part-time or full time basis and/or, *off farm* within dairying industry and related service organisations, or government bodies. The *on farm* activities recognise and include those associated with the farming household and farming family.

4. RECOGNITION OF RURAL WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION - The New Zealand and Australian Experience

4.1 The Invisible Rural Woman:-

Until women's contribution to the farming business is recognised by both the women themselves as well as those in the industry and providers of service to that industry then it is difficult for either group to actually value that contribution.

Hogan (1994) asked if rural women were not being recognised "in the paddock" did this mean they were not productive despite often being active in finance, administration and domestic areas of the farming business. Yet she noted people often reiterated to her that without the women's contribution (both on farm and off farm) the viability of the farming business would be in question. Webber (1997) reiterated this view when addressing the LIC 1997 seminar for women in dairying. She referred to comments made to her by men as she went around farms on a dairy company directorship campaign. They often acknowledged to her the business would not be where it was but for their wives and partners involvement.

4.2 “Sadie” the Cleaning Lady?

In a 1989 survey of 861 farm based women Ponter (1996,p92) found 42% did domestic work in the house which they considered to be part of the farm business. He observed many of the women commented they felt their input was neither valued or acknowledged. In respect of the domestic work he offered the explanation that historically the pioneering rural women had a labour intensive work load which left no time to pursue any other choice of work. When technology reduced the domestic workload and women’s roles expanded on farms he suggested the perception that rural women continued to only handle the domestic work prevailed. However on dairy farms Rivers (1992, p13) points out the women typically milked and did helped with stock work. In World War II rural women ran the farms yet on the servicemen’s return Ponter (1996)suggests women returned to concentrate on the domestic role.

A more recent study of Waikato women active in farming by Shaw (1993) showed that these women did believe their work was recognised by their families although not by the wider public. Her findings reinforced the varied nature of the activities carried out by these farming women.

Rivers, Pomeroy, Buchan, Pomeroy and Fogarty (1997, p60)also identified these many roles including the running of their own business or taking off farm employment, in addition to work in areas of physical/management; domestic; community and family.

4.3 Lack of Recognition from Rural Service Providers

Shaw (1993) also surveyed those who serviced the rural sector and found the women's role was still not adequately recognised.

Rural service and finance provider Wrightson Limited reiterated this through research by their business Development Group. David Rutherford, General Manager of the group, was reported as acknowledging his company was very male orientated and needed to improve or warned "we ignore it (women's input) at our peril" (Rural News, December 8, 1997,p6).

In Australia the rural service firm of Elders believed 32% of their clients were women and implemented specific strategies to target that market. (Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australia 'Guidelines for Reaching our Women Clients' 1999).

As recent as 1998 dairy farming women received a mail drop addressed "To Mr Farmer" from Allfex, a major ear tag manufacturer. Interestingly when the writer of this report complained in writing, the Allfex Marketing Manager had received numerous similar complaints, which he acknowledged, meant for each written complaint there were many more farming women who had not written but were equally unhappy at their lack of recognition.

Another typical example of the subtle media message is a monthly national journal for dairy farmers published under the name "The Dairyman".

4.4 Rural Women's Profile - In Data and the Media

Grace (1997) refers to a report by Williams (1992) commissioned by the Australian Department of Primary Industries and Energy 'The Invisible Farmer'. Three significant reasons cited for this lack of recognition of Australian farming women were little qualitative or quantitative records on their activities, incorrect perception of their work in terms of their public profile and their isolation causing disempowerment. Included in strategies suggested was use of rural women's networks at regional and national levels so as to "become part of an identifiable and credible organisation" and improving the media profile of rural women (Williams, 1992 p14). Rivers et al.(1997) also believed more realistic media coverage of rural women's work help change this traditional perception.

Earlier in 1988 Marilyn Waring in 'Counting for Nothing' had written a critical analysis of the United Nations System of Public Accounts methods which did not in her view adequately recognised the work of women in agriculture. Grace notes this was reinforced by Waring (1995) where she warned if, in this case, Australian farming women continued to describe their activities as home duties then they may find poor policy decisions and economic consequences could be implemented by politicians.

It is suggested therefore one of the main barriers to farming women's work being recognised is the lack of accurate data historically being sought has meant their workload both on the farm, in the farming household/office and in the farming community has not been identified. Difficulties in placing economic values on some social elements that are integral to the farming business have compounded the "invisibility" of this work.

This has created difficulties in changing the traditional public perception of agriculture being seen as male dominated when the reality is women farm on their own as well as in partnership with men. Research referred to earlier however indicates growing acknowledgment by the farming men of the women's contribution yet that has been slow to filter through into the public arena.

Without this recognition of women's contribution to farming it is difficult for them to be valued and thereby gain credibility and influence with the dairy industry decisionmakers such as dairy companies, the New Zealand Dairy Board and related groups or government bodies as well as service providers.

5. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

5.1 Barrier to Rural Women's Involvement:-

One of the suggested effects of not recognising their work is the inference it was not of value so consequently some women lacked confidence. This lack of confidence was self perpetrating because it created a barrier to their participation in industry organisations. In a report on the Australian National Women in Dairying Project, which focused on their dairying women being involved in all aspects of the industry, Phillips (1999) identified barriers to the women's involvement beyond the farm gate.

Phillips Ibid., referred to this lack of confidence with examples such as coping with public speaking and the women's belief they needed to be twice as knowledgeable as men before expressing an opinion.

Other barriers included lack of role models, time constraints given their many roles, lack of child care, as well as problems with attending meetings due to distance and cost. Additional barriers to participation identified by Grace (1997) included workload once women started raising their children, lack knowledge on politics of

producer groups, the exclusion from 'old boy' networks, and gaining approval and support from partners as the women's traditional roles were reversed

With rural women's many different roles on farm, in the home, in the business organisation, community and paid workforce there are already significant demands on their time (Rivers et al. (1997); Grace (1997)). Therefore the addition of another role and its workload can then often require a reversal of traditional roles for the women's partners and families. This was one of the barriers identified by Grace *Ibid.*, for the women joining rural networks or moving into leadership roles who described the "tension between the need to affirm rural cultural values and traditions and women's desire for change" (Grace, 1994 p44-45).

In considering this difficulty for women to balance the time demands of their many roles access to suitable childcare in a rural community also presented problems for those endeavouring to participate in industry groups, as well as on farm activities. This barrier was identified by Southland rural women themselves in a case study by Rivers et al.(1997).

Furthermore In the male dominated dairy industry one could suggest those involved are more likely to give recognition to the men's skills and experience compared to women when either electing or appointing directors (Rivers et al.1997). This struggle experienced by women to have their work experience and skills credited was discussed in Section 4.

It was also suggested by Southland rural women in a study by Taylor and Little (1995) that the women's own lack of recognition of their abilities and options also limited their decisions. (Rivers et al. 1997, p 59).

5.2 Levels of Involvement by Rural Women:

Critics of networks or similar farming groups specifically for women often hold the view that if women wish to participate in decision making then they have the same opportunities as the men farming. Given there are approximately 14,000 dairy farmers in New Zealand of which 40 to 50% are women the statistics below indicate an extremely low, to non-existent participation by the women in off farm decisions made by industry and associated boards.

BOARD:	SIZE:	NO. WOMEN
NZ Dairy Board	13	1*
Kiwi Co-op Dairies Ltd	13	1
NZ Dairy Group	10-12	None
(prior to September 2000)	16	1
Livestock Improvement	11	None
Centre for Excellence	6	1*
(Transition Board)		
BOP Co-operative Fertiliser Co Ltd	10	None
(* indicates by appointment rather than elected)		

Continuing this trend Federated Farmers National Board of 7 has no women. It has 5 women on their 34 member national council. Their Dairy Farmers of NZ Council has 1 woman and 30 men. Also the Federated Farmers Sharemilkers Council has 2 women and 10 men. New Zealand Dairy Group has two women councillors on their 24 member Shareholder Council, with 10 to 12 women supplier representatives compared to over 300 male representatives.

Yet a survey by Ponter in 1989 revealed New Zealand dairying women were actively participating in the decision making process "on farm". From 249 surveyed women dairy farming in partnership with men 70% considered they shared in making decisions with their partner compared to the 28% who believed their partner made the decisions for the business (Ponter, 1996,p 130).

Addressing the 1997 Farm Management Society conference at Massey University David Rutherford, then General Manager for Wrightson's Enterprise Development Business Group, was reported as being astounded by the results of his research on women's input to the farming business. This had showed women had significant influence on and often made most of the financial or major on-farm business decisions. He believed that his company and other financial institutions had failed to recognise their value and acknowledged "rural women are a tremendous resource" (Rural News, December 8, 1997,p 6).

5.3 Encouragement to Participate:

Grace (1997) acknowledges it is a challenge for organisations to change their structures and culture but believes they will gain by adding to their resource base of decision makers. The opportunity for dairy women to vote as shareholders in their dairy co-operatives is a typical example. Whether votes are cast per farm or by shares held in relation to milk production, only one shareholder can cast the vote for partnerships or multiple share ownership. The first named shareholder having precedence if more than one vote is received. Due to social convention it is the usual practice to have the men's name first, although NZ Dairy Group provide a simple process to alter the order.

NZ Dairy Group's recent move to allocate two votes per farm for elections of Shareholder Councillors, who act in a representative role, indicates the beginning of such initiatives. This move was intended to provide an opportunity for both

sharemilkers to vote (as well as landowners who currently can only hold shares in dairy co-operatives) and both parties independently in a farming partnership. This has meant recognition to both partners input in the decision making process.

Given the particularly male dominated dairy industry in terms of decision makers at industry level shown in Table A. encouragement needs to be given to open up the process of appointments and elections in boardrooms, and other decision making groups below them. This could then provide opportunities for an added resource that has the potential to bring the fresh perspective of women to the decision making process for the benefit of all farmers and the associated industry groups.

The Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (AFFA) is actively encouraging the 62 statutory boards it is responsible for to seek involvement of women in their committee structures. The woman can then gain experience to provide a stepping stone to appointments to the boards of those authorities. The focus of departments portfolio of boards is predominantly research and development and marketing.

In 1999 only 19.7% of these boards directors were women. AFFA is required to annually report to the government's Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management on women's participation at boardroom level. This forms part of a performance indicator for implementation of a national plan to improve women's involvement in both agriculture and resource management. The Secretary of AFFA, K.H. Mathews refers to the fact that despite 70,000 Australian women being involved in farming "few women directly influence decision making and policy development in industry, agribusiness and government" (AFFA Guidelines for Reaching our Clients - Women, 1999, p 1).

Such policies to offset gender or ethnic imbalances can be criticised as an discriminatory practice itself rather than selection by merit only. However Rivers et al.(1997) refers to Smith's (1994) findings that highlighted women board members believed their biggest obstacle was gaining that first appointment to a board.

5.4 Potential Industry Benefits:-

Rivers et al.(1997) found women interviewed from a range of boards, including producer boards suggested the skills women could bring to boardroom included expertise in public consultation and ability to work through problems to find solutions in the decision making process.

Roberts (1994) credits the success of Australian Landcare groups to women's ability to motivate their local rural community and professionals to work together. "it has led to networking between interested parties without the competitive or exclusive leadership style which too often has plagued rural organisations in the past" (p.129).

The reality is, as shown in Table A, is it is difficult to visualize how these additional benefits and perspectives can be implemented at the moment in the New Zealand dairy industry when the ratio of women to men around the Board room table is usually 1 to 13 or so. Although there is potential that once women are on a board it can be a stepping stone for others.

6. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO NEW ZEALAND NETWORKS FOR RURAL WOMEN

6.1 In the Beginning:

Over the last 100 years or so New Zealand dairying women have worked both on their own and alongside men on farms. Traditional networks for rural women were Women's Division of Federated Farmers (Wdff) and Country Women's Institute (CWI).

Rivers (1992) suggests these were more lobby groups for the rural community. However a dairying woman who has been a Wdff member for 53 years believed Wdff did focus on the women themselves. "We sought companionship, a chance to discuss our problems and it was often the only time women got together on their own because of limited transportation and communication opportunities." (Stewart, 2000). The Wdff member noted that it was virtually the only opportunity to earn spending money of their own from a sales tables where members kept half of what they sold the balance going to causes the group wished to support.

6.2 In the 1970's and 1980's:

In the 1970's rural women networks however started to develop globally. Grace (1997) refers to networks for farming women developing in America, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia.

According to Rivers (1992) in New Zealand in 1973 rural women attending the first national convention of women in New Zealand formed their own discussion group. Subsequently in 1980's *Women in Agriculture* (WAG) then emerged to raise public awareness of the economic and social contributions of rural women. WAG had a national newsletter and arranged seminars highlighting the activities of the women in these areas and the barriers to their development (Rivers 1992). Danna Glendining's significant input supported by a network of woman was noted by

Rivers et al.(1997). Glendining was also involved in the Paddocks to Parliament movement.

In addition since the early 1980's Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) held seminars for women involved in dairying to assist development of their farming skills. As a result a dedicated women's discussion group in Springfield was formed by Livestock's Karen Martelletti at the initiation of local women who had participated in the seminars. Growing interest lead to the formation of several other discussion groups for women involved in dairying supported by LIC. These groups primarily continued as an information source but also served as network for the women. By 1997 there were six such groups supported to varying degrees by LIC Consulting Officers spread over the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Haurakai Plains and further south at Galatea. Currently there are 12 to 15 such groups which now include groups in the northern regions of Dargaville, South Whangarei and Kerikeri as well as Manawatu/Hawkes Bay and Taranaki and one in Otago.

6.3 In the 1990's:

In the early 1990's the WAG network petered out except in Central Otago where the network for Southland Women in Agriculture has combined with Rural Education Activities Programme(REAP). There is a network newsletter 'Barbed Wire', field days and educational opportunities. There is now also an active website entitled "Not Just Gumboots & Scones" (www.notjust.org.nz) as an additional communication tool for rural women to network in lower part of the South Island.

Both Grace (1997) and Rivers et al. (1997) suggest this Southland WAG network which is incorporated with REAP has been successful in providing opportunities because of the combination of the local network involvement and the professional input able to be resourced from REAP's education officer.

In 1994 the first International Conference for Women in Agriculture was hosted in Melbourne. Among some New Zealand women who attended was Christina Baldwin, a dairy farmer and lecturer for the Department of Women's Studies at Waikato University. Her networking at the conference stirred her ongoing interest in rural women's issues, particularly those for women involved in dairying. This was continued when she networked globally with rural women as a participant of the New Zealand contingent of 100 women attending the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. This was held in Beijing in 1995 with the associated NGO Forum attracting 32,000 women. Inspired to look at a women's network to provide support she began to actively look out for women in the dairy industry who were getting involved. As a result in 1998 she joined up with 3 other women who had a similar interest in such a network for women in dairying. They were dairy farmers Willy Geck, the writer of this report Robyn Clements, and Hilary Webber who was also a New Zealand Dairy Group company director. Section 9.1 details their initial establishment of the network 'Network for Women in Dairying'.

7. AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO INVOLVE DAIRYING WOMEN

7.1 Australian Women in Dairying Project

In Australia a specific project for dairying women has been implemented since 1995 funded by the Dairy Research and Development Corporation. The project is intended to assist the women to increase their contribution to the dairy industry at all levels thereby fully utilising the industry's human resource base.

As the six stage project progressed each stage provided a stepping stone by building information and findings for the next stage. This started with a pilot study in 1995 which identified the **barriers to women's participation** in the dairy industry. These included lack of confidence; lack role models; difficulties of attending meetings and lack of child care. Then the industry **stakeholders were**

consulted and from this a **leadership course** designed to deliver the support, skills and motivation the dairying women and industry wanted. Women's **discussion groups** were initiated and **regional workshops** run for the dairying women. In addition **networks were created** across Australia and globally.

The leadership course has been utilized as a resource by dairying women's networks. Since 1997 there have been 350 women have graduated. It is a three day course, with subsequent work on a project of their choice over six months concluding with a follow up day. Included in the content are opportunities for the women to network with industry leaders who visit as dinner guest speakers. This format is similar to that adopted in the New Zealand's Kelloggs Rural Leadership programme.

According to Project Co-ordinator, Cheryl Phillips, believed the benefit of having a specific course for women was "important for developing confidence, introducing role models, building trust and creating a safe learning environment" (International Conference of Women in Dairy, May 2000).

Phillips (2000) outlined some of the results when describing the projects evolution to the first International Conference of Women in Dairying in Australia in May 2000. These included:-

- (a) Increased participation in the industry by the women credited to their improved understanding and knowledge of the dairy industry structure and decision making process
- (b) A larger resource base of skilled people to fill various roles in the industry
- (c) A raised public profile recognising the dairying women's contributions from media.

(d) The individual projects of the women had made a contribution not only to the industry but rural communities and families. For example one was organising an international dairying conference.

(e) An email network by 150 Australian and overseas women which acted as a forum for discussion and information on dairy issues nationwide and globally.

An evaluation of the programme by B. Williams and A. Worsley is being drafted for release in December 2000. Preliminary work appears to indicate the leadership course is regarded more as a motivational course that can transform or implement change than specifically developing leadership skills. Although it was recognised that "leadership" was not only about position but achieving ones potential. These preliminary findings also stress the importance of the project creating and sustaining networks for the dairying women because the informal nature of networks precludes them from most existing funding requirements.

Cathy McGowan, President of Australian Women in Agriculture and fellow Project Co-ordinator suggests through the project, recognition will evolve of the different work dairying women carry out to men. Thus decision makers will start to consider the implications on women when implementing changes to the industry (McGowan, informal interview with writer 10 May 2000).

7.2 Queensland Women in Rural Industries Unit

In August 2000 the Queensland State government allocated \$210,000 to a Women in Rural Industries unit to increase participation by rural women in associated decision-making bodies by developing skills and creating opportunities specifically for the women. Research showed there are 7000 more Queensland women employed in agriculture than five years ago. In a press release the Primary Industries and Rural Communities Minister Henry Palaszcauk commented the growth figures indicated "the need for more rural women to assume decision

making roles in their respective industries” (Queensland Primary Industries and Rural Communities Media Statement, ‘Strong focus on women’s role in rural Queensland’, dated 1 August 2000).

While the numbers of women involved in dairy farming in New Zealand are on a much smaller scale, and more geographically concentrated, this type of encouragement is suggested by Rivers et al. (1997) to promote greater involvement on producer boards or associated decision making roles for women. She suggests further encouragement by men’s networks to include and support women’s participation, and women to likewise advocate and nurture those women who do want to be involved. At the same time she suggests the need for men to be more active in sharing in family and household responsibilities. However the reality on a dairy farm is seasonal workload dictates limited time available combined with physical tie of milkings twice a day for much of the year unless staff are employed.

Rivers reiterates the supportive role that networks can play in the decision making process commenting when various networks work together then “issues, experiences, wisdom and skills of women can be shared and incorporated into decision making processes” (Ibid., p.62)

8. THE SOUTHLAND EXPERIENCE FOR RURAL WOMEN

Rivers et al. (1997) made a case study of the rural women in Southland because participation by rural women in industry boards, local government and associated leadership roles was at a higher level than elsewhere in New Zealand.

Rivers Ibid., attributed this situation to networks the women had established. Initially the traditional Women’s Division of Federated Farmers and Country Women’s Institute played an active support role. They were followed by Women in Agriculture network referred to in Section 6. There was acknowledgment of a

number of women participating in Kelloggs Rural Leadership programme going on to use their developed skills actively in the community. There had even been a local adapted version for both men and women being instigated.

Rivers et al. (1997) believed the success of Women in Agriculture (WAG) was their combination with the Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP) to use as a facilitator REAP's Community Education Officer. She found these networks particularly effective in promoting information exchange, as well playing a supportive role to raise the level of these rural women's involvement.

9. NETWORK FOR NEW ZEALAND WOMEN IN DAIRYING

9.1 In the beginning:-

In 1998 four women dairy farming in the Waikato, Christina Baldwin, Willy Geck, Hilary Webber and Robyn Clements agreed there was a need to establish a network. The idea was for supportive network for women in the dairying where women could increase their knowledge of the dairying business, develop confidence to participate in all levels of the industry and promote recognition of their varied roles in dairying.

They recognised the importance of attending the second International Conference of Women in Agriculture (ICWA) to gain information on how other countries had successfully implemented networks. One of the women Christina Baldwin had attended the first conference in 1994 in Australia and subsequently networked with rural women in Beijing in 1995 at the United Nations 4th Conference of Women as part of a team of 100 New Zealand women funded by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. As a result in June 1998 Willy Geck and Hilary Webber (also a director NZ Dairy Group) attended the ICWA conference in Washington.

On their return they presented their recommendations to form a network to a group of women NZ Dairy Group supplier representatives in July 1998. Support from that meeting led to an open meeting for dairying women in Cambridge in October. Encouraged by the interest sponsorship was obtained from Westpac Bank in February 1999. With the help of an administrator and dairy farmer Suzy Williams this was used for an email network to be established based on an Australian one which all four women were participating in.

9.2 Network Conference:-

In order to raise public awareness of the network a conference was planned to launch the network. With the help of former Kellogger Sandra Goodwin and Lisa Van der Poel the six dairy farmers organised the inaugural conference “Absolutely Positively Dairying” which was held on 9 May 2000 in Hamilton.

A media campaign with coverage on radio, national and local newspapers, advertising at the Large Herds conference and Livestock Improvement’s women’s discussion groups as well as word of mouth resulted in over 200 women participating. While predominantly Waikato, Bay of Plenty, King Country dairy farmers, there were women farming in Taranaki and Manawatu plus some from the South Island.

Conference support by ASB Bank and Anchormart enabled a high calibre of presentations to the conference. Speakers included the US Ambassador Carol Mosley-Braun, Cathy McGowan President of Australian Women in Agriculture and other professionals involved in dairying together with successful dairy farmers Sue and Jim Van der Poel.

9.3 Participation and Attitudes:

Consequently the email network established in 1999 increased from approximately 45 participants to 124 by September 2000. Planning is underway for the 2001 conference to provide more opportunities for networking for those not only on email.

It was interesting for the original core group to observe the change in attitude about the concept of such a network by service providers, industry and government groups. Initially in 1998, early 1999 there was virtually no interest when first suggested and funding sought compared to the enthusiastic and supportive response that acknowledged benefits to all those associated with dairy farming as the network inaugural conference became a reality.

10. THE PATH FORWARD FOR NETWORK FOR WOMEN IN DAIRYING

10.1 Survey of Dairy Women's Use of Current Networks

A survey of 184 women attending the inaugural conference of the Network for Women in Dairying was conducted by the writer (Appendix A).

Of these women 83% were active in on farm activities(milking, stock work, including calf rearing, animal health and feeding cows) with 86% carrying out administrative roles(including financial work and animal recordkeeping). Also 90% of those surveyed ran the farm household. However only 25% were participating in dairy company or industry groups such dairy company supplier representatives or Livestock Improvement Liaison farmers.

It was found that 83% of the women surveyed were using existing industry networks. These were identified as LIC Discussion groups, Federated Farmers, Rural Women (previously Wdff), Landcare Trust, and DRC.

Community networks were being used by 85% of the women. These included neighbours; school; district groups; family; friends and personal hobby or interest groups.

Included in the figures of women using the networks listed were 120 women who used both industry and community networks (65%).

The survey was predominantly of women owning farms(121). Where women held the position of both Land Owner and Sharemilker they were entered as Landowners only. This related to only 5 of the women surveyed. There were 35 sharemilkers and a similar number of women referred to as 'others' employed in managerial or staff positions or supportive roles. Sharemilkers were more likely than farm owners and others to use industry networks whereas the farm owners were more likely to use community networks than the sharemilkers and other staff.

In respect of age groups women in the 31 to 40 age group were most likely to use industry networks (92% of this age group). Similarly 85% of those in the 41 to 50 age group(60 women) and 85% of the over 50's(17) women used these networks. It was also noted 70% of the younger women aged 21 to 30 also participated in the industry networks. Use of the community networks was highest with women aged aged 41 to 50 (85% of this group) followed by those aged 31 to 40 (69% of this group).

The survey is a small sample of potentially 6000 to 7000 New Zealand women involved in dairying. Further investigation is therefore required and should include data to judge the level of input by women in the respective activities in terms of hours worked. The survey suggests this group of women were networking however the data did not provide information on the level of activity. However given the

publicity campaign about the network and conference it appeared these women were also interested in being involved in a Network for Women in Dairying.

Earlier surveys and research discussed previously in the report (Ponter, 1996; Shaw, 1993) however indicate this group of dairying women had a similar level of "on farm" activities to those of the larger groups of women surveyed. It could be suggested the problems of lack of recognition, and the barriers to involvement discussed in Sections 4 and 5 of this report are some of the factors for this group's low level (25%) of participation in dairy company and industry groups in comparison to their other activities. Furthermore it could be suggested this demonstrates the need for a network for women involved in dairying in New Zealand to provide support and facilitate change for dairying women if they desire to be more involved at all levels of the dairy business. Further investigation is required to consider the need and benefit of such a network enjoying the support from the dairy industry and government similar to the 'Women in Dairying Project' in Australia discussed in Section 7.1 of this report.

10.2 Use of a facilitator:-

The challenge for the network is to facilitate the networking process for those women in dairying that are outside its current email base. The ongoing difficulty has been one of resources. Establishing and facilitating such a network creates an added workload for women already recognised in earlier discussion in this report as having significant demands on their time with existing commitments to their dairy farming business, industry and families.

In order to remove such barriers the suggested model by Grace (1997), that incorporates a funded facilitator such as in the Southland Women in Agriculture case study by Rivers et al.(1997), is one that has merit. The Australian 'Women in Dairying Project' also used funded facilitators for their networks.

However the above research has clearly signaled the success of implementing such network models hinges on ensuring constant input from the women themselves to identify their continually changing and developing needs to the person or organisation facilitating the process. In other words the self-help work ethic, which is a feature of networks because of their flat structured organisation, should not be stifled. Rather the added resource of a facilitator ensures more effective management by the women to barriers that may prevent their potential to contribute to dairying in either business and/or nurturing roles.

10.3 Funding:-

Difficulty in access to funding for existing groups associated with dairy farming and agriculture in general already exist. Critics of establishing rural women's networks express concern of fragmenting support for these existing interest groups and potential funding conflicts (Australian Farm Journal, October 2000, p14; Grace 1997).

It could be suggested that an industry like dairying recording sales of \$7.7 billion (NZDB Annual Report 2000)intending to "grow to \$40 billion in 10 years" (NZ Dairy Board, 7 May 1999) needs to consider funding a programme to better utilise its human resource base. One stated means to achieve this growth is

“productivity of 4%” across all levels. This could be attainable if you utilise the people involved in the business more fully and effectively.

10.4 Equal terms = Equal Place:-

Furthermore it has been suggested it is up to rural women themselves to reach their potential in the same way that the men must. However given the traditional dominance of men in agriculture such as in dairying, and other barriers for women to actually have their work recognised and participate more actively in the business mean women face significant difficulties in trying to take a place on equal terms.

Research on Australian’s top 300 women agricultural leaders by Margaret Alston was reported in the Australian Farm Journal (October 2000, p7). According to Alston these women did not enjoy the same or equal opportunities in the areas of leadership or decision making in rural industries as men (Alston, 2000).

11 CONCLUSIONS:

New Zealand and Australian rural women’s research and studies have highlighted the invisibility or lack of recognition of rural women’s contribution to the business of agriculture. The perception of the pioneering woman whose activities concentrated on the domestic role appears to persist in the rural women’s public profile and with many rural service providers. Although research indicates recognition of the women’s valuable contribution is acknowledged by fellow farmers, and a limited number of rural service providers.

The lack of data gathered about rural women's activities, possibly because of difficulty in placing an economic value on some supportive and social aspects of it, have compounded the problem of recognising the rural women's contribution. Furthermore the media's portrayal of agriculture and the dairy industry being one where it is mainly the men that are active in it, has continued the perception that women are either not contributing or only playing a supportive role of little value.

There are many varied reasons for dairying women's low level of participation in the decision making process of the New Zealand dairy industry. Possible barriers suggested to this were lack of confidence due to their activities not being recognised and valued, time commitments of existing roles, either on farm, in the farm household, or off farm interests in community and businesses. Also lack of role models and exclusion from existing industry 'old boy' networks. In addition dealing with the challenge of changing their traditional supportive role to one that itself needs support has also impacted on their level of involvement.

Rivers(1997) made the point that the level of recognition (or visibility) affects power status and influence in policy making. Strategies suggested to encourage greater involvement include the dairy industry looking closely at their structures to be more open to different perspectives and leadership styles with possible support by government in implementing a more inclusive policy for all dairy farmers – men and women. The benefit to the industry is the expanded human resource base it could utilise as the Dairy Board grows its business to \$40 billion.

Networks for rural women in New Zealand began with traditional community support groups. These expanded to focus on the women themselves in the 1970's -1980's as part of a global trend for rural women to be recognised. The 1990's saw this continue with WAG in Southland, LIC women's discussion groups, then formation of the Network for Women in Dairying.

Networks for Australian dairying women have gained momentum since the implementation of the 'Women in Dairying Project' in 1995, with growing participation by those women at all levels of their dairy industry. Improvement in their level of involvement was sought to widen the human resource base available to meet the challenge of safeguarding a sustainable profitable industry.

The launch of the 'Network for Women in Dairying' by the women themselves has signposted a pathway forward for New Zealand dairying women. The challenge is for this network to gain momentum as in the Australian experience. However given the barriers this group of women face without the support of a facilitator and funding it will be difficult for the network to develop. The concept of such a network is not about excluding men but rather it is seen as an initiative to encourage women to be part of a business and industry to ensure all human resources available can be utilised effectively. Short-term support by the dairy industry and government to also fund a leadership project similar to the Australian experience to increase women's involvement in decision making at all levels of the industry would mean a long term benefit for all New Zealand farmers – men and women.

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Appendix "A"

NETWORK FOR WOMEN IN DAIRYING - CONFERENCE 9 MAY 2000

"Absolutely Positively Dairying" - Survey & Evaluation Sheet

The information you provide below will be used by the Network for Women in Dairying to assist planning the way forward & to provide data for funding applications to set up the Network.

It will also be used by Robyn Clements for her Kelloggs Rural Leadership Project on a Network for NZ Women in Dairying to gain a Network profile from which she will then conduct a more in depth random survey subject to the approval of those approached.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION:

TOPICS	On a Scale 1 to 5 1 = Poor 3 = Average 5 = Excellent	Y = Yes ST = Sometimes N = Rarely or No	
	Gained Knowledge	Able to Participate if wanted to	Believe will use information
Network for Women in Dairying W/shop			
Profitable Partnerships			
Profit Past Farm Gate			
Employment			
C. Randall - Power One morning session			
C. Randall - afternoon session			

GENERAL COMMENTS You may have about this conference:

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SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES (please include topic suggestions):

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*****Please also complete survey over page*****

Please hand this form in as you leave conference. It can be posted to the Network for Women in Dairying at P.O.Box 386 Putaruru.

NETWORK FOR WOMEN IN DAIRYING - CONFERENCE 9 MAY 2000

"Absolutely Positively Dairying" - Survey & Evaluation Sheet

SURVEY - NETWORK FOR WOMEN IN DAIRYING CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Please only tick box or boxes applicable. If the answer does not apply leave box empty

1. Your Current Position:

Landowner Sharemilker Contract Mangm. Staff Other Off-farm

2. In your household number and ages of those who live with you - if applicable:-

.....

3. Your Age:- Under 20 21 to 30 31 - 40 41 - 50 51 - 60 Over 60

4. Computers: (a) Do you own a computer? Yes Considering

(b) Do you have email? Yes Considering

5. Please tick farm activities you participate in:-

Running farm household Milking Animal Health & Rearing Calves

Administration/Paperwork Feeding cows Farm Machinery
(Includes pay accounts, book (eg pasture mangm.) (eg. tractor work)
keeping etc)

Animal Recordkeeping Dairy Company/Industry work
(eg Livestock records) (eg Supplier rep, Livestock Liasion farmer etc)

6. Support groups or networks you currently use in your farming business:-

***Industry groups: Livestock Improvement Discussion Groups

DRC Field Days

Monitor Farms

Federated Farmers

Rural Women (previously WDFF)

Landcare Trust

Other

***Community: Neighbours

Schools & District groups

Other

*** List Others:

.....

Thank you for you time in completing this evaluation sheet and survey.

Please hand this form in as you leave conference. It can be posted to the Network for Women in Dairying at P.O.Box 386 Putaruru.