

**SEARCH CRITERIA**

<b>Model</b>	Model A: Empowerment Model
<b>Industry</b>	Dairy
<b>Focus/Level</b>	Industry
<b>Outcomes</b>	Building individual confidence; Building management skills
<b>Special Interest Groups</b>	Women

**1. PROJECT TITLE:**

Women in Dairying Program

[Based on an evaluation by Alison Osborne and Bob Williams August 2000.]

**2. FUNDERS:**

The Dairy Research and Development Corporation (DRDC) is funding the project.

**3. PROVIDERS:**

Cathy McGowen

Cheryl Phillips (Changing Communities)

**4. KEY CONTACTS:**

Cathy McGowan Ph: 02 6024 6834

Cheryl Phillips Ph: 03 5825 1233

DRDC – Paul Donnelly Ph: 03 9602 5300 – for report and evaluation

**5. INDUSTRY/ISSUE/GEOGRAPHY:**

This is a national project seeking to increase the participation of women in the dairy industry. It aims to address the issues of leadership roles for women within the industry, the capacity of dairy women as facilitators of change and development and dairy women's involvement in industry decision making processes.

**6. PROJECT CONTEXT:**

Leading up to the deregulation of the dairy industry a national pilot program funded by the Dairy Research and Development Corporation (DRDC), that would research women's needs in the dairy industry, and explore ways to effectively fulfil those needs, was developed in 1996. That pilot program was co-ordinated by Cathy McGowan and Cheryl Phillips and aimed to support and encourage women to take a leadership role within the industry. It was conducted at a regional, state and national level with many of the initial and on-going activities being regionally based.

*During the pilot dairy women were consulted to establish the barriers to their broader industry involvement. The findings concluded the following factors inhibited participation: the time, distance and cost of attending meetings; the lack of female role models; lack of confidence, and the patriarchal tradition within the industry.*

Subsequently, these findings were shared with industry stakeholders and industry leaders to create awareness and facilitate changes that were more inclusive of diversity.

Following this initial consultation, a series of workshops were designed to develop specific skills. These included:-calf rearing; reading the milk statement; machinery

maintenance; stress management; public speaking; communication; goal setting; and herd health.

Women in some dairy regions also established discussion groups, particularly in New South Wales.

However, by the end of 1996 it was clear that many women in the dairy industry still lacked:

- confidence - reflected in low self esteem, inability to acknowledge the contribution they were making or the potential contribution they could make to both their own enterprise and the industry as a whole;
- Detailed knowledge of the key issues, priorities and structure of the industry;
- An effective working relationship with industry leaders;
- A framework or theory base in which to place the women's personal; .community or organisational development experiences and skills, in order to apply their learning to future situations.

## **7. PROJECT NICHE (SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES):**

### **Vision:**

A sustainable and profitable industry, providing a quality lifestyle.

### **Aim:**

To create an environment, and supporting strategies within the dairy industry, in order for women to contribute to a sustainable and profitable industry.

### **Objectives**

- Create opportunities for dairy women to develop the full range of skills necessary to establish an extensive professional network, increase their overall understanding of the industry and take on leadership roles.
- Develop the capacity of dairy women as facilitators of change and development,
- Increase the participation of dairy women in industry decision making processes.

### **Beliefs**

- *Women want to be more actively involved in the dairy industry,*
- *The industry is encouraging and supportive of more women being involved,*
- *On-going funding is available to enable this process,*
- *When the barriers articulated by women have been removed, then women's involvement in the industry will increase, and the dairy industry in Australia will become more competitive, sustainable, productive and profitable.*

### **Outcomes**

- *Specific projects undertaken by participants of the leadership program which are enhancing family, community and industry.*
- *A strengthened network of women in the dairy industry.*
- *Increased industry skill bank.*
- *Increased knowledge of the industry issues, priorities and opportunities for involvement.*

**8. PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH:**

Several stated principles and theoretical frameworks underpinned the program. These included:-

- A community development approach
- A feminist perspective
- An action research approach
- Creating an environment that was inclusive of diversity
- Experiential learning

**9. RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING STRUCTURES:**

Two Consultants – initial advisory group which was disbanded after two years. Five years program. Approx \$150,000 for two years and \$50,000 for three years. Flat structure.

The Dairyfarmers' Association of New South Wales funded the development of the Course and its initial pilot in September 1997.

DRDC agreed to fund the fees and other expenses of the Program Co-ordinators to run these Courses for three years. The costs of the Course were met by participants, a few industry sponsors, and a lot of free time given by farmers' organisations. Indeed, the Regional Development Program or the State Dairy organisation in each region took a lead role in supporting the Course through the provision of staff time to organise the logistical aspects of the training program. In most areas there was also a committee of dairy women to organise the Course.

**10. PROCESS/METHODS USED:**

A four-day Women in Dairying Leadership Course was developed. The first three days were run as a single residential workshop, and the fourth day brought participants back together six months later.

The Course was based on the idea that women could benefit from some form of transformative experience that would:-Provide motivation; Help women focus that motivation; Provide them with initial skills and networks to undertake a relevant project; and Provide further support and skill development.

The Course had three components:-

- Personal awareness and development,
- Organisational and community development and change, and
- Industry structures, issues, priorities and opportunities for involvement.

To allow for different learning styles each Course session had a combination of theoretical input, case studies, application of theory to the participant's personal situation, and practice of the skill. There was also a session where participants met and talked with major industry figures.

Towards the end of the Course, participants identified, planned and implemented a project to further develop the skills learned during the training program. Participants were also informed of a range of other training opportunities, including the Company Directors course, Working in Groups workshop, tertiary courses, as well as related conferences and seminars.

In the past three years approximately 20 Courses have been run, and around 350 women have attended them.

National networks and national email groups.

### **11. IMPACTS TO DATE (AND EVALUATION APPROACHES USED):**

An extensive evaluation was undertaken by Alison Osborne and Bob Williams (the basis of this report) in August 2000. Their summarised impacts of the project were as follows:

Ultimately this evaluation sought to understand this complexity by exploring the program from three different perspectives. It posed the following question :-

*What can be learned by viewing the women in dairy program in terms of: human resource development; community development; and organisational development ?*

From a *human resource development* viewpoint the program had a substantial impact on many women's levels of motivation, confidence and to a lesser extent skills. In some cases the industry provided opportunities for those new levels of confidence, motivation and skills to be used, and in other cases women developed their own opportunities. The impact was mostly off-farm rather than on-farm, where there were often significant ownership and role barriers. At a broader level the impact was hampered by a lack of an overarching human resource development focus within the dairying industry. Perhaps that is one reason why many women focussed on goals that were more "personal" than "industrial".

From a *community development* perspective the program often resulted in much stronger communities of women. Indeed, it is possible the program had greater impact in local communities than on farms or the dairy industry as a whole. Many women developed community based organisations to meet their own needs, and also influenced local services to be more responsive to their needs. However, community development strategies should include more than a focus on developing personal and local support. They have to work on the structural, political and attitudinal barriers (at local, regional and national levels) that impede wider community participation. The program had less impact in those areas.

The program had two main *organisational development* components. There was a motivational component that enabled women to engage in institutional change, both on-farm and off-farm, and an industry level component designed to bring about structural change in off-farm organisations. The organisational development aspect of the Women in Dairy program was successful when women were supported by others who were strongly committed to organisational change within their own organisations or farms, and in a position to do something about it. In some cases these individuals were other Women in Dairy participants, in some cases partners of Women in Dairy participants, and in some cases people occupying key positions in dairying organisations. The approach was less successful when women participants were "on their own" or set themselves goals that were primarily personal. Organisational change also requires more than motivation and support from influential individuals. In many cases the program did not equip women with the skills necessary to bring about and sustain substantial change in farm or farming organisations. Nor did it provide to those organisations a concrete idea of what the benefits could be.

Other impacts to date include an attendance of 350 participants at the leadership workshops and more than 1000 participants overall in the program's workshops and conferences. At the Victorian Farmers Federations (United Dairy Farmers of Victoria) meeting in 2002, over one third of the attendees were women.

**12. EFFECTIVENESS:**

Did the program work? Just how successful was it?

The answer to these questions is “it depends”. In some cases women lives were transformed, farms changed the way they did things, communities strengthened and farming organisations had new life breathed into them. On the other hand there were individuals, farms, communities and parts of the industry where the program had little or no impact.

The reasons for this diversity are both simple and complex. When the right person was in the right environment at the right time, extraordinary things happened. If those particular ducks were not lined up, the results were more complex.

In 2001 the program received an APEN award for excellence in extension.

**13. PROJECT DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE:**

Osborne A & Williams B (2000) Women in Dairying – an Evaluation, Meat and Livestock Australia August 2000.

National Women in Dairy Project: Leadership Training Program-The Process, Learnings and Outcomes. Phillips,C. Changing Industries.

**14. ISSUES:****Debate about the role of women specific activities and institutions.**

The program activities currently imply an exclusive focus on the inherent value of women only activities, or at least that these activities are currently a priority. What this evaluation suggests is that many people are saying that there is value in exploring a strategy that seeks to accommodate the best aspects of “women only” and “integration” approaches.

One of the aims behind this program was not to marginalise women but rather to provide a safe environment for them to learn and gain confidence prior to them contributing to mainstream industry decision making. This model has been particularly effective in northern Victoria

**Impact of deregulation on the way farms are run.**

There is the suggestion that deregulation may have two contrary effects. One effect will be to place women’s skills at the forefront of farm business, especially their ability to know what is going on in the world beyond the farm gate. On the other hand, the time women had to do this may be reduced because of the need to focus more on farm based work.

**Implications of deregulation on farming organisations.**

The most active supporters of this program have been farming organisations and government agencies. At a formal level, some processors and other commercial agencies have been less supportive. The general view was that the role of these agencies will change; they will become more focussed on advocacy. They will have less influence and resources whilst the influence of processors and commercial agencies (especially supermarkets) will increase. Farms will need to develop much more skilled relationships with processors than in the past – something many considered that women were generally better at than men.

**No explicit overall strategy for increasing the role of women in the industry**

Whilst there was general and widespread support for the greater involvement of women in the industry from those we interviewed, no-one was able to describe how

all the initiatives fitted together, and whether the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. Many interviewees commented that the Leadership Course, the various activities that spun off it, and other features of the program were not linked to any overall coherent strategy.

Another issue that was raised included the need for ongoing support for women and their work once the formal project has ended. For various reasons DRDC are reluctant to carry this on. .

#### **15. COMMENTS/CONCLUSIONS:**

Clearly the program had a substantial and positive effect on many women at a whole variety of levels. In that sense the judgement to design a course focussing on motivation and confidence was correct.

However, the responses give some credence to the point that that the “one size fits all” approach of the Leadership Course may need tailoring more to the specific needs of participants. More radically it suggests that the program as a whole could gain more leverage by influencing the development of courses outside the existing program.

Subsequent programs developed by Changing Industries for the Seafood Industry and Young People within the Dairy Industry have three tiers to ensure programs are matched to participants. The programs are matched with National Competencies and articulate to other training programs to ensure continuous improvement and life long learning are promoted.

The program had two major organisational focal areas. There was a motivational process that increased people’s dissatisfaction with the status quo, provided an individual vision for the future and encouraged people to take the first steps institutional change and increase awareness of farming organisations. There was also a strategy to bring about structural change in off-farm organisations.

This approach was *successful* when there were individuals who were strongly committed to organisational change within their own organisations, and in a position to do something about it (ie the effort required was feasible and acceptable). In some cases these individuals were the women themselves, in some cases it was the partners of the women, and in some cases these were people in key positions in dairying organisations.

Consultants are now transferring the lessons learned in Women in Dairying Program to a leadership program with the seafood industry and with Women in Horticulture.

#### **16. REVIEW METHODS:**

- Reviewing available reports and literature on the project
- Forwarding the analysis summary to project managers for proofings additions and challenge