Enthusiasm for WestVic’s key role in the industry

WESTVIC Dairy held its annual general meeting on September 18, 2014, at the Camperdown Golf Club as part of its Stepping Stones in Dairy.

The 2013/14 annual report was presented at the meeting and highlights the changes within the dairy industry in the last season, as well as changes within the organisation.

WestVic Dairy’s chairman Lisa Dwyer said that WestVic Dairy was responsible for advancing the interest of “arguably the most important dairy region in the nation”.

“I am a firm believer that nothing worth achieving was achieved easily and understand that we have much work to do as a result,” she said. “It has been a privilege to lead a group of people who have so willingly taken on the tasks of beginning to transform WestVic Dairy into an organisation you can rely upon to deliver on the things that are important to (our farmers).”

Acting executive officer Jozzy Bevin also complemented the team of WestVic Dairy for their commitment to deliver more relevant and targeted programs for farmers.

“The organisation at WestVic Dairy underwent change in 2013 with the aim of better understanding farmer needs,” she said.

“In the long term, WestVic Dairy, with the support of Dairy Australia and its stakeholders, continues to invest in extension projects, research and development, education, marketing and promotional activities and the next generation of dairy farmers.”

The WestVic Dairy Honey and Silage Project last month.

Tapping into farm science and safety

TIMBOON P-12 grade 4 and 5 pupils went on farm to investigate very different aspects of agriculture as part of the Timboon Agriculture Project last month.

Grade 4 pupils visited one dairy and one beef farm as part of their science studies into sustainability and the environment. Pupils documented the key features of each farm, including how and why the farms were laid out very differently to each other.

On Lenehan’s dairy farm, pupils explored the dairy plant — and what its various components were made of — with the help of Leon Lourey, from Daviesway.

They followed the path of water on the farm and learned about water recycling with farmer Tim Lenehan, from Manoora Park Limousins, who freely gave their time.

Dairy farmer Bronwyn Lenehan quizzes grade 4 pupils on how much manure a cow makes, and what it can tell us about her diet.

Chris Harkness, of Upper Murray Seeds, helped pupils to compare seeds and pasture samples while learning what pasture was, its purpose and how it was grown.

Grade 4 teacher Pam Hawkins said it was a fantastic day.

“We learnt so much more than if we were just sitting in a classroom,” she said.

For the third year running, dairy farmers Michelle and Paul Fowler hosted the grade 5 pupils, who were learning about safety on dairy farms.

They had already had a classroom session with WorkSafe officer Alison Dennis, identifying hazards on a model farm.

On farm, they explored safety in relation to chemicals and silos with WorkSafe; farm traffic and machinery with Sam Daiziel, from Murray Goulburn; animals with farmer Michelle Fowler and Emma Bruce, from The Vet Group; in and around the dairy with farmer Paul Fowler; and emergency first aid with the help of ED officers Frances McDowall and Marcia Carter.

TAP Coordinator Andrea Valiance expressed her gratitude to the industry presenters who freely gave their time.

“Such hands-on learning would not be possible without generous farmers willing to provide access to their farms, as well as to their knowledge,” she said.

Michelle Fowler has hosted the school’s farm safety visit for three years running, and the Martins and Lenehans have hosted and supported the grade 4 farm science day for two years.

Outdoor classroom

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