



# The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

**Report by:**  
Thelma Hutchison  
2005 Fellow

*The Jack Green Churchill Fellowship to study the development of career pathways in the dairy industry with a special focus on training mechanisms used by industry, community and family.*

## **New Zealand & California**

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this Report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication.

I indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claim or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report submitted to the Trust and which the Trust places on a website for access over the internet.

I also warrant that my Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which into the Final Report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

*Signed:.....Dated.....*

# Index

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4-6</b>
- <b>Summary</b>	
- <b>Highlights</b>	
- <b>Implementation and Dissemination</b>	
- <b>Recommendations</b>	
<b>Fellowship Program</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Learn by Doing</b>	<b>8-12</b>
<u><b>California</b></u>	
- <b>Creating and Awareness</b>	
- <b>Ag Education Development</b>	
- <b>Higher Education</b>	
<u><b>New Zealand</b></u>	
- <b>Mixing Practical with Theory</b>	
- <b>Assessment and Delivery</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>14</b>

# Introduction

The Jack Green Churchill Fellowship enabled me to travel to California and New Zealand to study the training and career pathway development of young people in the dairy industry and some methods of training used by industry, community and family. Not only was the experience a learning one for me it was also a learning experience for some of the people I met. Contacts that I have made will be invaluable for the future gathering of knowledge, swapping of ideas and general friendship.

During my travels I have endeavored to spread the story of the Churchill Trust as a means of extending my appreciation for the opportunity that has been made available to me specifically and more broadly to the dairy industry.

I extend my appreciation to the individuals and companies in the dairy industry and the JT Reid Charitable Trust who have worked so hard to provide the funds for this fellowship.



*Career display at Hilmar Cheese Visitor Centre*

# Executive Summary

Thelma Hutchison  
65 Cochranes Road, Nyora 3987  
Phone: 03 5659 9209  
Email: [thelhut@dcsi.net.au](mailto:thelhut@dcsi.net.au)

## Summary

The fellowship travel was taken between March 1<sup>st</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006. My aim was to visit training farms, school programs, farmers, industry programs and community members to see how they encouraged young people to look at agriculture (specifically dairy) as a career path. Next was to see how they delivered the training and eventually what employment opportunities would be available.

I started by watching young children working with animals under the guidance of young leaders and family members with community and industry support.

I was able to visit farmers in their workplace and observe their staff and listen to their summary of what the value of training was. I also spent time with consultants and industry people and listened to their views on what was needed or what they thought the farmer wanted. Some of my time was spent at a training farm observing and talking to students about the training they received and their future place in the work force. Finally I participated in adult training days and spent time with a moderator who assessed farmer trainers and the content and delivery of training programs.

Along this journey I have been impressed with the friendliness and helpfulness of people and with the way they have answered my questions quite openly. Each of the countries I visited have either addressed or will need to address the same issues that we face in Australia with training, career pathways and employment.

## Highlights

- Watching young children at a 4H day competing with cattle and displaying their knowledge of agriculture and the support that was being given to them by family and mentors.
- Spending a day with a 21 year old graduate from Cal Poly who was going home to become part of the family business, and listening to his plans for the future.

- Attending the National Calf and Dairy Heifer conference where we discussed training and labour management and how dairy farmers should handle the media.
- Spending a day with a Californian dairyfarmer whose enterprise covered over 11,000 hectares and was home to 11,000 head of dairy cattle. He employed 200 staff and was still able to travel the world and use his vision to contribute to the dairy industry.
- Travelling for the day with a farm consultant who gave us his view of the dairy industry in California and the value of good training and good management.
- Spending some time with two high school seniors who knew how 'valuable' agriculture was in their education process.
- Watching a class session of young ambassadors at a college going through a training session that they were going to present to secondary students.
- Learning about and participating in 4H and Future Farmers programs.
- Spending four days at a training farm observing students participate in a taster course.
- Spending time with a person who assesses farmer trainers and is a moderator of the quality of all delivery provided by training organizations.

## Implementation and Dissemination

Written articles and public presentations to industry bodies eg. Farmers Federation, UDV, Fonterra, Murray Goulburn, Dairy Australia, Gardiner Foundation, Go-Tafe, farmers and students.

By continuing to make myself available for committees and panels within the industry and to work closely with farmers and students in the field of training and assessment.

# Recommendations

To increase the number of young people looking for a career in agriculture, specifically dairy and its associated industries, we need to:

- Start the education or awareness program earlier so it is a natural progression to look at agriculture as a career that competes favourably with other industries.
- Raise the awareness of the importance of dairy products in the food chain and enhance the image of the industry.
- Encourage industry and community to 'invest' in ag. education.
- Develop and expand formal training opportunities that receive proper recognition in the education sector and allow for ongoing training.
- Recognise that the mix of theory and practical learning will achieve the optimum results and that these results are relevant and receive the support of the dairy industry.
- Collect and use information that we already have available and use this to expand or compliment training techniques that we use at the moment.
- Encourage the development of a training facility relevant to the dairy industry and impress the benefits of such a facility to industry bodies and farmers.
- To develop programs that are accessible for distance students.
- To encourage a learning culture which encompasses practical and theoretical programmes and nurtures social development, whilst provides opportunities for employment.
- Encourage overseas study opportunities – exchange options.
- To encourage people already involved in dairy farming to act as mentors or trainers for people coming into the industry.

# Fellowship Programme

March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Reedley College – California
March 4 <sup>th</sup>	Tulare Showgrounds – 4H Field Day & Dairy Centre, California
March 6 <sup>th</sup>	Ruann Dairies, California
March 7 <sup>th</sup>	College of Sequoias, California
March 9 <sup>th</sup>	UC Davis – Tulare, California
March 10 <sup>th</sup>	Dairy Consultant – Farm Visits, California
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Milk Advisory Board – Modesto College, California
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Dairy Advisor – Fresno, California
March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Cal Poly University – San Luis Obispo, California
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	Dairy Advisor – Merced – 4H Co-ordinator and Extension Manager, California
March 21 <sup>st</sup>	Clovis High School, California
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	National Calf & Heifer Conference – Visalia, California
March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Reedley College, California
April 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup>	Retired dairy farmer, New Zealand
April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Dairy farmer, employer and trainer, New Zealand
April 18 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , 20 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup>	Taratahi Training Farm, New Zealand
April 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Adult training day – lifestyle farmers, New Zealand
April 26 <sup>th</sup>	Distance Education Tutor – Ag Hort, New Zealand
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Private Training Provider, New Zealand
April 29 <sup>th</sup>	Private Training Provider – Aglto and moderator of Ag. Ag. Delivery and training in New Zealand

# Learn by Doing

## CALIFORNIA Creating an Awareness

There is a junior program in California called 4H where children as young as 8 become involved in projects. The 4H projects have a philosophy of learning by doing in an atmosphere where learning is fun. Children choose a project and receive guidance from an adult in a leadership or mentoring role. The projects are aimed at planned objectives that can be attained and measured; for example, raising a calf. The project is summarized by some form of record keeping which is the first stage of ongoing learning and recording. As experience is gained over the years sizes of projects may increase or additional projects may be selected. Opportunities for adult leadership include community, family and industry members who act as mentors and project leaders.

The 4H emblem stands for Head, Heart, Hands and Health. Head for clearer thinking; Heart for loyalty; Hands for service and Health for better living.

This program continues as children progress through their secondary schooling and as the projects become more involved so does the assessing and the development of the individual.

**Motto:**     *“To make the best better”*

At a 4H field day I watched children and young adults working with cattle in a competitive arena. They worked as individuals and team members and were assessed on practical and theory work.

The work commenced at this early stage is developed and recorded and follows the young people through their education years.

# Ag Education Development

Next I met two High School Seniors who had been part of the Ag program at their school for six years. Their project has been to purchase an animal, raise it and then sell it to use as funds for their education. The project was treated as a proper enterprise project with the students paying for the animal, the feed and other associated costs – budgets were done and projects completed. Jessica was intending to go onto Cal Poly University and Catherine was considering a career in politics.

“Ag education is an integral part of education in California. There are three circles for a successful Ag. Program, classroom experience, supervised Ag. experience projects and Future Farmers of America” – this was Catherine’s quote.

These students were 16 years old. They had been engaged at a young age, pathways had been mapped out before them and they were making informed choices with positive attitudes.

The Ag science teacher at the high school left me with this parting quote, “we need to educate people to the fact that agriculture is our bread and butter. These are the young people that will eventually be voting and will have an impact on where our funding comes from”.

4H leads to Future Farmers of America which is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth and careers success through agricultural education. They run through the public education system at Junior High (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade) and High School levels (9<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade). The organization is a national organization.

## **The aims are to:**

- Develop competent and assertive agricultural leadership
- Increase the awareness of the importance of agriculture and its contribution to our well being.
- Promote the intelligent choice and establishment of agricultural careers.

High school students participate in leadership, citizenship and career development activities.

# Higher Education

The next step was to visit Cal Poly University and meet with Steve, a 21 year old graduating student. Steve had had the motto “learn by doing”, instilled in him by his family and the university.

Steve’s rounded view of his place in the dairy industry was inspiring. After hearing a comprehensive story about what Cal Poly offered and future plans for the University Steve told us about his plans for the future.

“I am going home to the family farm to become the manager of the milking herd. I realize that I will have to gain the respect of the people already working there so I plan to get involved with some of the hands on work. I won’t make changes in a hurry but I will make some changes gradually. One of the most important things is the way you treat your employees. I think we need to give them more responsibility so they have pride in their work. To do this I need to have structures in place and be willing to listen”.

*“In the end everything is a business”,* said Steve, who also has plans to complete his Master’s. When asked about mentors Steve had no problems calling on people he had worked with at Cal Poly or family members. I think Steve is a great mentor in his own right and a great example of the Ag. Education possibilities.

With so many young people being involved in ag. education I was beginning to think there was an abundance of people and not enough jobs. When I spoke to Aileen at the Milk Advisory Board and Dr. Moore at UC Davis they changed my thinking.

*“The career pathways are endless, and the ethic of learning through agriculture is a good base for any industry. From scientist to promotion; advisors to AI technicians, the jobs are out there”.*

Both of these people put back into the industry as well by mentoring or taking classes involved with 4H & FFA.

From the receptionist at our hotel, the waitress in the restaurant to the directors of companies we found that along way they had been a part of Ag. Education.

*“If you don’t get them by fifth grade you’ve lost them. You need to start creating awareness early to open the options”. (Dr. Moore).*

# NEW ZEALAND

## Mixing Practical with Theory

Whilst in New Zealand I spent 4 days completing a Taster Course at Taratahi with 16, 15 and 16 year olds. This course is designed to let the prospective students get an idea of what it will be like to live and learn in a proper working farm environment. Training is a mix of practical and theory and is carried out in small groups where students can get some one on one attention if needed.

Whilst learning farming skills the students are also developing personally which can help them fit into workplace situations. This is very important in an industry which can make demands on your time and place you in semi-isolated locations working with animals and people.

Taratahi conditions would help to prepare people to live away from home; would give them the skills to complete tasks; would instill an ethic of ongoing learning; would help to choose farm options with courses that are reviewed regularly to ensure they are up-to-date.



*Heading back for lunch after a session on motor bikes. This is a group of English students on a 3 week exchange to Taratahi.*

Students who graduate from Taratahi are almost guaranteed jobs as farmers respect the training ethic provided and know that they will be getting a 'sound' employee who will compliment their business. Some students will also go on to Massey or Lincoln University to explore further education possibilities.

Some of my time was spent with Aglto (Ag Industry Training Organisation) deliverers who deliver training similar to the way we do in Australia. Modules or unit standards are given to students who already have employment.

## Assessment & Delivery

Assessments are open book assessments and when completed are evaluated by an industry teaching professional (Agribusiness). Credit points are given per unit and registered with NZQA. These units can also be completed by distance education, thus making it available to a wider number. The age range of students can be from 16-60 but would typically be from 16-22. This type of learning gives people an opportunity to accelerate their learning process and can be as social or anti-social as needed.

Moderators are in place to ensure that the content and delivery of training units meet required standards. Training providers are assessed and so are the farmer trainers. This is necessary to give the courses credibility so that they can receive funding from government and industry.



# Recommendations

To increase the number of young people looking for a career in agriculture, specifically dairy and its associated industries, we need to:

- Start the education or awareness program earlier so it is a natural progression to look at agriculture as a career that competes favourably with other industries.
- Raise the awareness of the importance of dairy products in the food chain and enhance the image of the industry.
- Encourage industry and community to 'invest' in ag. education.
- Develop and expand formal training opportunities that receive proper recognition in the education sector and allow for ongoing training.
- Recognise that the mix of theory and practical learning will achieve the optimum results and that these results are relevant and receive the support of the dairy industry.
- Collect and use information that we already have available and use this to expand or compliment training techniques that we use at the moment.
- Encourage the development of a training facility relevant to the dairy industry and impress the benefits of such a facility to industry bodies and farmers.
- To develop programs that are accessible for distance students.
- To encourage a learning culture which encompasses practical and theoretical programmes and nurtures social development, whilst provides opportunities for employment.
- Encourage overseas study opportunities – exchange options.
- To encourage people already involved in dairy farming to act as mentors or trainers for people coming into the industry.

# Acknowledgements

To the Churchill Trust for their organizational skills and their support.

To the people who have worked so hard to support the Jack Green fellowship.

To the people who encouraged me to step out of my 'comfort zone' and explore the wider world of the dairy industry.

To my husband John who travelled with me for the first 6 weeks and went to meetings and conferences.

To the people who openly shared information about the work they do and who opened their homes to me and made me feel so welcome.

*“All of this support has been invaluable.  
Together we need to work to educate people to the  
value of agriculture and the opportunities this industry  
has to offer.”*