



Alpine Valleys

agribusiness forum

Australian Alpine Valleys - Where the Best Grows to Perfection

media release & photo opportunity

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Many young farmers take time out for forum

Over 40 of the regions younger farmers attended the Rural Futures Young Farmers Forum held at the Department of Industries Rutherglen Research Centre yesterday.

They came to hear an expert panel of guest speakers present many of the current hot topics such as climate change, carbon emissions trade-offs, local farm demographic changes and succession planning.

Key presenter, Traci Griffin from the Department of Primary Industries addressed the audience on some of the key issues currently impacting on farmers, now and in the future. Included in her presentation were climatic cycles and trends, what constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance' and where Victoria's key viable agribusiness regions could possibly lay in 2050. A major topic of discussion was carbon offsets and how DPI were working towards improving feed and technology in an effort to reduce the well publicised high emissions percentage generated by farming activities and improve returns.

The number of farms in the region are reducing and the farmers are getting older, according to the statistics presented by DPI's Neil Barr. The price of land is rapidly increasing due to outside influences, preventing many farms from undertaking the growth necessary to remain profitable. He also reported on the trend of young people leaving family farms to generate an off-farm income, with many never returning to the farm.

Mike Stephens delivered a light approach to succession planning. Those in attendance were given several succession scenarios, some of which worked, with just as many not, due to poor future planning. The message given to the audience was to plan ahead early and ensure everyone is in agreement as to their specific role in the family business.

'We are delighted to have had such a strong response to the Young Farmers Forum, said Anne Shaw, AAVAF Drought Services Co-Ordinator. "The forum attracted young farmers from right across the region, with many travelling several hours to attend. The Young Farmers Forum, supported by the Rural Futures Initiative delivered very up to date and vitally important information to the key group in attendance, ensuring they are well armed with the information to make well informed decisions in the not too distant future."

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