Notes from Future Directions Group – 2 December

Present: Mick Davy, Murray Johns, Bruce Howard, Chris Johns, John Cordell, Anthony Harris, Liv Johnston, Kent Poulton, David Findlay, Robbie Dent Tony Clarke, Andrew Harris, Sharyn Cook, Kylie Bain, Rosie McKinnon, Paul McShane

Apologies: Seona Findlay, Matt Johnson Chris Richardson

Report from Farm Advisory Group
- Looked at financials
- Looked at report from consultant David Armstrong– as a way forward economically and educationally
- Suggested mixed farming
  - Beef cattle
  - Prime lambs
  - Crops - poppies and wheat
  - Leased land for potatoes – rejected due to concerns and spraying, suggested agistment instead

Dairying
- Wanted to revisit dairy model to see if it was viable
- Capital expenditure about 350,000 – 500,000 needed to upgrade dairy
- Would need to increase herd substantially – would need 1.0 farmer or even more?
- Connection to education programs not strong – not meeting goal of expanding educational provisions, with total focus on dairy, and few opportunities for groups to see milking in action
- Increasing herd can lead to other issues such as flies, etc

As a result of reports and discussions held at meetings the Farm Advisory Group decided to recommend the mixed farming model, and take back to Future Directions Group

Discussion held around challenges moving forward, questions about mixed farming model

Challenges
- Developing industry partnerships
- Finding remaining FTE for farmer to enable full-time employment
  - maybe increase poultry – shift to farmer’s responsibility
  - Incorporate farmer position into educational delivery

Question asked about how Matt feels about the model
- Preliminary discussions have been had
  - if go with mixed farming model – need to look at how we can build the role to full-time

Proposal for key educational improvements – (working title) Food and fibre awareness centre
See attached proposal, presented by Andrew Harris
Potential funding to support proposal:
- Shared proposal with Guy Barnett and Eric Hutchison, and Federal Education Minister – in principle support to view a proposal developed by Mick and EC staff asking for support for support for educational programs
- DOE Secretary also very positive about ideas
- Links being made with industry groups TAPG, TFGA – Dairy Tas keen to support the development of education centre

After discussion, general feedback from the group indicated that most members believe this is model is the right direction to take.

 MOTION PROPOSED BY KENT POULTON, SECONDED BY ROBBIE DENT, THAT THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS GROUP ENDORSE THE PRESENTED PROPOSAL FOR THE MIXED FARMING MODEL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOD AND FIBRE AWARENESS CENTRE. MOTION PASSED

Group endorsed moving forward to build a case to put to interested political and business groups to secure financial support

Discussion was held about possibilities to open to the public.
- School asked to investigate the possibly of opening one afternoon a week for the general public, holding open days, etc.
- Group endorsed looking into opportunities for this.

Next steps:
- Mick, Harry and EC staff to continue liaising with industry, government and departmental reps to work up proposals for funding
- Explore designs for buildings – uni students a possibility
- FAG to contact David to develop transition model – anticipate transition will happen over the next 12 months or so
- Work with Matt to explore his employment as a full-time farmer – develop a new job description
- Need to share this information with wider school community – perhaps through newsletter, a display at welcome-back BBQ next year.
- Will make decisions as needed, in consultation with appropriate stake holders, eg selling dairy herd

Where to for this group?
- Keep group going for now – continuing oversight role – group may need to meet a few more times to touch base on progress, provide opinions and advice
- Meet on an as needed basis – perhaps every few months
- Next meeting will be Term 1, 2016