

# Press Release

**Masterton, October 2008**

## Female Enrolments Reach All Time High

THE INCREASING flow of women into New Zealand's agricultural industry has been illustrated with high numbers of female enrolments at Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre.

So far this year the amount of female students enrolling for Taratahi's January 09 intake has reached just under fifty percent - the highest ever female intake in the history of the agricultural training centre and twenty percent up on 2008 enrolments.

On a recent campus visit, Hon Michael Cullen referred to the fifty percent female enrolment as a clear indication of the continued importance of agriculture within the New Zealand economy. He said the fact that females are obviously confident about entering into training illustrates that agriculture is considered a perfectly viable and promising career option.

Taratahi's business development manager Stephen Carr said the large number of female students coming to Taratahi reflects the higher profile women are gaining with the industry. A look at the status of Taratahi graduates is evidence in itself of the levels women are reaching within the realms of agriculture.

These successes in the field range from herd managers and sharemilkers through to rural agriculture technicians. Female graduates are winning industry awards and coming out tops throughout rural New Zealand.

"The female students we see coming in are as dedicated and talented as their male counterparts. They are proving time and again that gender is no barrier in what was for so many years a male dominated industry."

Sandra Tombleson is a Year One student only a couple of months away from completing her Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture. She has already proven herself to be a thoroughly capable student with a promising future career and is hoping to return in 2009 to gain Level 4 national qualifications.

Sandra's first experience at the training centre was an introductory 'Taster course' last year. She said she knew immediately after the four-day course that Taratahi would offer what she needed in order to obtain a career on the land.

"Straight away I thought 'This is the place for me'. It didn't matter that I was a female – in fact in a way just by coming here you get more respect from the male species. And I know that coming here will get me a job in

what I love. It gives me a big advantage over people who don't have that piece of paper or the physical experience of farming," she said.

"Without this Taratahi certificate you probably wouldn't get a job just because you are a female. But if you say you can shear a sheep, drive a tractor or lift heavy lambs they will consider you for a job."

So while New Zealand continues to forge its way ahead in terms of agricultural innovation, females will continue to make their mark on the industry and in increasing numbers. And Taratahi will proudly guide them towards their goals.



Some of Taratahi's female dairy students