

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Grain producing women share ideas at IRWC 2015

GRAIN Producers SA supported two female grain producers to attend this week's International Rural Women's Conference in Adelaide – Jennifer Horne, Wharminda, and Katie Preston, Eudunda.

Jennifer and Katie were part of the 150 mostly female crowd who gathered on Monday and Tuesday to hear from speakers on the importance of women in agriculture, learn new information on the conference's four key themes – food security, women influencing agribusiness, technology inspiring innovative change, and health and well-being in rural communities – and make new networks.

GPSA chief executive officer Darren Arney says the standard of applications was extremely high and deciding on who would receive the sponsorship was not easy.

“Both Jennifer and Katie are extremely passionate about the industry and are huge contributors to the success of their own businesses and their communities,” he said. “The standard of entries were so high that we forwarded on many of the other applicants to the conference organisers who sourced other bursaries for them to attend.

“I hear the conference was a fantastic event so congratulations to Carol Schofield and the organising committee for their hard work in pulling it all together and offering rural women an avenue to learn, network and be inspired.

“Women are an integral part of the grain industry and through this sponsorship, GPSA wanted to further encourage the participation of women in the grains industry and help build their skills and knowledge in agribusiness by giving them exposure to other leading women in the industry.”

Jennifer farms with husband Monty and daughter Sarah. They have been farming at Wharminda for 15 years, growing wheat and barley over about 1350 hectares and running sheep.

She says her key learning from the conference has been the importance of looking after the wellbeing of rural communities for the future sustainability of farmers.

“That's something that resonated with me because as farmers we are good with grains research and the operational side of the business, but we are not always as good at looking after our well-being which has a huge impact on the way we make decisions and ultimately, the bottom line of the business.”

Katie farms at Hampden, near Eudunda, with her husband Trevor and five children. They are first generation farmers, relocating from England after experiencing Australian agriculture while on a working holiday nearly 15 years ago. They now farm grain, sheep and pigs on their own 350ha property, with plans to expand.

Katie says the GPSA sponsorship has been a great opportunity to expand her networks and meet like-minded women in the industry from across Australia.

“I see there are so many opportunities in Australian agriculture and I’m very keen for our family farm to expand. I’m also very proactive in our community so it has been great to engage with like-minded people and build networks. The conference overall has provided me with so much joy, growth, food for thought on the challenges we face and things to think about to stretch ourselves.”

The sponsorship included conference registration (valued at \$445 each), the conference dinner, travel and accommodation.

ENDS

For interviews:

Darren Arney, GPSA chief executive officer, 0448 186 707

Jennifer Horne, Wharminda, 0428 289 069

Katie Preston, Eudunda, 0408 809 259

PHOTO CAPTION: GPSA policy officer Trudy Huczko (left) and business manager Belinda Ryan (right) with winners of the GPSA sponsorship to attend the 2015 International Rural Women’s Conference in Adelaide this week, Wharminda grower Jennifer Horne and Hampden grower Katie Preston.

For more information on Grain Producers SA and its policies, visit www.grainproducerssa.com.au or get in touch on 08 8391 6621 or email info@grainproducerssa.com.au

About Grain Producers SA:

Grain Producers SA is a not-for-profit organisation that represents all levy-paying grain producers in South Australia. GPSA’s objective is to foster the development and implementation of policies that promote the economic and environmental sustainability of the South Australian grains industry for the benefit of its producers and the wider community. Growers are encouraged to have their say on policy and have input on the people who represent them.



