



THE Minster for Agriculture, Bob Cameron, recognised the SDFF team (from left) Stuart Willder, Susan Brumby, and associate Professor John Martin at Parliament House.

Farm families project wins \$250,000 grant

Western District Health Service and its research partners are the recipients of the first major community development grant from the Gardiner Foundation.

The Sustainable Dairy Farming Families (SDFF) project has been awarded \$250,000 over three years from the foundation, the major funder of this \$649,000 project.

Western District Health Service chief executive officer, Jim Fletcher, said the project would build on the Rural Industries Research Development Corporation-funded Sustainable Farming Families project, currently in the second year of this three-year project, and would be at the leading edge in terms of a collaborative approach to focusing on health issues in rural farming communities.

"It also provides another opportunity for Western District Health Service and its staff to have leadership involvement in another major new health and research initiative."

The other parties in the SDFF project are WestVic Dairy, the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, Colac Area Health and the Department of Primary Industries.

Ms Brumby, Director Community Services and SDFF project leader at Western District Health Service, Sue Brumby said:

"We are pleased that the Gardiner Foundation has recognised the importance of the health and well being of farmers in the dairy industry and chose to fund this major project.

"The SDFF project will involve 200 dairy farmers, men and women, from across Victoria in a three year study that focuses on farming family health and well being and its impact on farm safety and the farming business."

Men's health educator at Western District Health Service, Stuart Willder, said: "The recognition the grant gives to farming family health builds on the previous work we have been doing over the last six years in men's health."

Associate Professor John Martin, Director of the Centre for Regional and Rural Development at RMIT and research adviser to the project said the project demonstrated the opportunities created through the location of universities in regional Victoria.

"A significant factor in the success of the SDFF project is the collaboration of health services, universities, industry and farmers," he said.

The Minster for Agriculture, the Hon Bob Cameron MP recognised the SDFF team and other recipients at a function in Parliament House in Melbourne on Tuesday February 15.