

# HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities

## Unit outline

HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities is a twelve-week online postgraduate unit offered by the School of Medicine at Deakin University and the National Centre for Farmer Health. It aims to provide an overview of the social, environmental, health promotion and policy determinants of health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia. A growing body of evidence shows that the more remote a community is, the poorer the health outcomes experienced by its people. Agricultural workers, their families and communities endure limited access to essential health services, lower health literacy and higher rates of workplace injury and lifestyle disease than their town-based and urban counterparts. Further compounding this unhealthy 'life on the land' is an ageing and diminishing workforce required to work harder for longer in a time of changing agricultural practices, increasing corporatisation and global food insecurity; all this while dealing with the stress of tightening financial pressures, climate variability, natural disasters and succession. If the picture of health in rural and remote Australia isn't complicated enough, agricultural communities face reduced access to community-level wellbeing initiatives and are underrepresented in health policies. HMF702 aims to distill the key aspects of these issues.

## Who can study this unit?

HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities is a single unit (non-award study) that can be undertaken alone or as an elective in a number of Deakin's postgraduate courses. This unit is conducted through Deakin Studies Online and is offered in Trimester 2. HMF702 has been specifically designed to appeal to multidisciplinary graduate-level students from public health, health promotion, social work, nursing, medical and agricultural backgrounds. The curriculum encompasses materials relevant to postgraduate-level students, farmers, rural professionals, health professionals, allied healthcare providers, social workers, healthcare administrators and policy makers.

## Why study this unit?

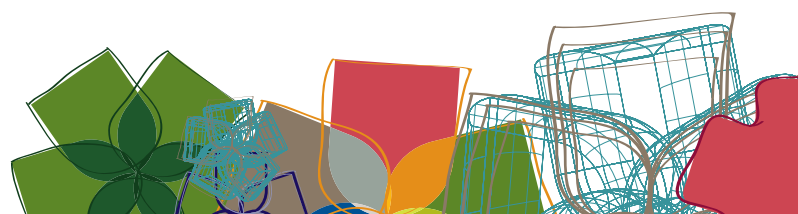
The most important attribute of a sustainable and productive agricultural industry is a healthy agricultural community. HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities will focus on the environmental, social and community stressors that are negatively impacting the wellbeing of today's rural and remote communities. The unit will highlight the importance of improving the physical and mental health of rural and remote workforces to the productivity of primary industries and agribusiness. You will gain the skills and knowledge to positively influence the physical, mental and social health of high-risk rural populations.

## Career opportunities and professional accreditation

This unit opens possibilities in a variety of exciting career paths in health provision, health management, health promotion, agricultural productivity and rural policy. HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities provides you with a strong foundation in agricultural health, sustainability and community wellbeing with a focus on providing both the knowledge and skills relevant to the above career paths. HMF702 is worth 1 credit point towards a postgraduate qualification at Deakin University (depending on course rules) and offers continuing education and professional development points relevant to a number of professions. HMF702 is also a core unit of the Graduate Certificate of Agricultural Health and Medicine, and is of further benefit to health professionals seeking to become a health provider for AgriSafe Australia.

## Unit information

Offered through the National Centre for Farmer Health and Deakin University's School of Medicine in Trimester 2, this unit will be delivered wholly online between 9 July and 19 October 2012. All assessment tasks will be completed off campus using Deakin Studies Online. Further information about this unit, and the application form for a small number of scholarships, is available at [www.farmerhealth.org.au](http://www.farmerhealth.org.au).





## Topics include

The unit will cover the following topics:

- Social determinants of rural health
- Remote health service provision and workforce shortages
- Natural disaster recovery in agricultural communities
- Roles of rural health professionals
- Agricultural health literacy
- Decision making in rural emergencies
- Impact of climate on health
- Health impact of disease outbreak and quarantine
- Rural and remote health planning and policy
- Mental wellbeing in rural communities health
- Social dislocation and rural networks
- Sustainable Farm Families
- Small town health promotion
- Metabolic syndrome
- Lifestyle disease
- Rural nutrition
- Alcohol misuse
- Minority workforce health in agriculture
- Food security
- Remote gender

## What you will get out of it

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- describe the social determinants of health that contribute to poor physical and behavioural health outcomes in the agricultural workforce, nationally and internationally
- comment on the environmental, economical and health service constraints experienced in farming communities and how these influence physical and mental health
- discuss the role climate variability plays in the health and wellbeing of rural and remote communities
- consider the underlying attributes of successful health policies, health promotion and community-level interventions in agricultural settings
- critically evaluate literature surrounding the role of lifestyle disease on rural morbidity and mortality
- use online communication technologies to investigate and address agricultural and rural health population problems.

## Prerequisites

This unit has no prerequisites. It has been developed to complement HMF701 Agricultural Health and Medicine, offered in Trimester 1, although both units can be undertaken as a stand-alone unit of study. HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities is available to all postgraduate-level students or interested professionals from agricultural, medicine, health, social work, education, governmental and policy backgrounds.

## Unit fees

HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities is a full-fee unit offered through the School of Medicine at Deakin University. For more information on 2012 tuition fees, visit [www.deakin.edu.au/future-students/fees](http://www.deakin.edu.au/future-students/fees).

## How to apply

Applications for this unit can be made through Deakin University's online application portal <http://applicantportal.deakin.edu.au/connect/webconnect>.

## Further information

If you would like further information about this unit or the application process, please contact the unit chair:

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