

Worldwide interest in farm health conference

THE inaugural National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) conference has been swamped by national and international applications from speakers, guaranteeing it will be one of 2010's must-attend events in the area of rural health and well-being.

NCFH director, Associate Clinical Professor **Sue Brumby**, said she was overwhelmed by the presentations received by organisers and sponsors.

More than 60 presenters will cover critical areas such as service delivery, mental health, men's health, climate variability, chronic disease, allied health, diet and disease, the challenges of social interaction (such as alcohol issues in farming communities), farming families, agricultural health and safety, and animal health/human health.

"We have selected speakers we feel will deliver the most relevant and varied messages to conference participants, arming them with knowledge and positive information they can take back to their farming communities and workplaces to make a difference," Professor Brumby said.

"This has seen us invite speakers and delegates from the US, UK and Sweden to attend the conference in Hamilton, Victoria, from October 11-13."

The University of Iowa's Professor Kelley Donham is focused on agricultural medicine, the specialty field of occupational health dealing specifically with the health and safety of agricultural producers, their families and employees, including the spread of production agriculture, recognised globally as one of the most hazardous occupations.

UK public health consultant Linda Syson-Nibbs will be speaking on the UK experience of the health and social inequalities experienced by farming communities.

Peter Lundqvist and Catharina Alwall Svennefelt, from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, will present on injury prevention in agriculture from a Swedish research perspective.

Organisers have worked hard to ensure the conference also recognises every aspect of life in rural and farming Australia. Part of that has been the launching of a national photography competition in tandem with the conference.

"Its theme of celebrating rural life has already attracted a lot of interest – and entries – from around the country," Professor Brumby said.

"Entries close on September 24 and they will be judged by a panel of award-winning photographers.

"Anyone can enter, with details at www.farmer-health.org.au."