

# Charter outcome from conference

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A MAJOR outcome from the National Centre for Farmer Health Conference held in Hamilton recently is the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health which was developed and adopted and will be submitted to the Journal of Agromedicine.

Sue Brumby, Clinical Associate Professor and Director of the National Centre for Farmer Health said everybody who was presenting was asked for a key message that was then weaved into a document.

"We provided opportunities for all the chairs and the delegates to provide feedback, that as a result got reshaped and we are on about version six now, so it was presented at the end of the conference.

The charter was collated and written with the assistance of Evelyne de Leeuw Professor of Community Health Systems and Policy at Deakin University.

Prof de Leeuw said the aim of the charter was to formulate a statement on farmer health that anyone can take home and advocate for farmer health in their own constituency.

"Whether they are industry partners of the national centre or communities, politicians or bureaucrats.

"It sets out a number of things that need to be done in five action areas and we

hope to be forward looking enough to make a fairly good statement about farmer health and not just in Australia but around the world," she said.

Ms Brumby said the key message was very clearly that the health and well-being and the safety of farm men, women and families around the world was a barometer for the level of national and global health as a resource and reserve.

"That healthy farm families provide fibre food and nutrition, essential determinants for anyone's health. Unhealthy farming conditions produce farm families whose health is under pressure and are potentially unable to sustain themselves, their productive capacity and their markets.

"Very much about saying we need to open the gates on farmer health and really make sure that this pattern of normalising poor health outcomes for farming families needs to be debunked," she said.

Ms Brumby said they would pull out key things, but for the way forward it says very clearly:

"This Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health has five core principles to guide us as we return to our workplaces, communities and countries".

We undertake to:

\* Empower ourselves and others to consider

the health impacts of agricultural production and campaign to ensure that negative impacts on farmer health is recognised and not normalised as a by-product of production.

\* Understand the cycles of farmer health and the relationship of farmers to nature whilst delivering appropriate and quality farming health programs to all.

\* Defend and celebrate, profitable and sustainable rural industries in a global market recognising and valuing the key role of farmers in providing food and fibre for the world.

\* Broaden the identity of farm men women and

communities, beyond the life is work ethos, and thus enable them to successfully meet their new challenges through opportunities, alliances and education.

\* Recognise that improving farmer health involves new relationships and strengthening of old relationships across sectors and within sectors.

Research, policy development and service delivery will need to be developed in place, recognising the valuable interaction in and with communities. The interdependency and synergistic drive of these relationships will move

this Charter forward.

'Go forth and sow and water the seeds of the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health into your work, workplace, community, governance or new policy'.

Ms Brumby said that the international speakers had asked if the charter could get submitted to the international Journal of Agromedicine. The Journal of Agromedicine is published in Philadelphia USA and is devoted to the health and agricultural sciences. It focuses on the health effects of agricultural operations on workers, consumers, and the environment.



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