

Opening the gates on farmer health 11–13 October



Staff at the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) were delighted with the success of the Centre's inaugural conference, held during October in Hamilton. The Centre was swamped by national and international applications from speakers, which translated into a highly successful event.

The NCFH Director, Clinical Associate Professor Susan Brumby, said the conference committee was really pleased with the support received for the conference. Speakers and delegates travelled from across the country and as far away as the US, UK and Sweden to attend the conference.

The conference took an in-depth look at the health, wellbeing and safety of farming families, with over 60 presenters covering 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.

Clinical Associate Professor Brumby said speakers at the conference were selected for their capacity to deliver the most relevant and varied messages to conference participants, arming them with knowledge and positive information to take back to their farming communities, research centres and workplaces, to make a difference.

Production agriculture is recognised globally as one of the most hazardous occupations and the conference's international key speakers reflected this worldwide issue.

Keynote speakers included the University of Iowa's Professor Kelley Donham, who

spoke on agricultural medicine; UK public health nurse consultant Linda Syson-Nibbs, who spoke on the health and social inequalities experienced by farming communities in the UK; and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences Peter Lundqvist and Catharina Alwall Svennefelt, who spoke about injury prevention in agriculture from a Swedish research perspective.

The conference also turned to the stage to help get its message across, with a night at the theatre featuring two comedies by Alan Hopgood AM on the evening of Tuesday 12 October.

The plays use humour to explore the effects diabetes and prostate cancer have on individuals and their families. Sponsored by Diabetes Australia – Vic and the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, the plays were followed by a forum with medical professionals so that audience members could ask questions and find out more about the conditions.

Deakin professor helps in the fight against depression

Professor Prasuna Reddy, Deputy Director of Health Services Implementation Research within Deakin's Population Health Strategic Research Centre, features on a newly released DVD that will help in the fight against depression and anxiety among people with diabetes.

'Taking Control: Diabetes, Depression and Anxiety' is a free DVD that has been developed by beyondblue: the national depression initiative in partnership with Diabetes Australia – Vic.

Research has shown a strong link between depression and diabetes, with studies finding that having diabetes almost doubles the risk of developing depression, while depression can double the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and also increases the likelihood of diabetes complications.

'Depression in people with diabetes is under-diagnosed, under-treated and under-managed by health professionals, but treating the diabetes doesn't treat the depression', Professor Reddy explains.

The DVD features interviews with people who have type 1 or 2 diabetes and depression or anxiety, and health professionals, including a psychologist and endocrinologist. It discusses how to manage diabetes and depression or anxiety and features tips for how to take control of these conditions.

For more information on the DVD visit the beyondblue web site, http://beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?link_id=7.233.