

Farming families get down and help stress with new DVD

Superstar actor Jane Fonda started the craze, but the National Centre for Farmer Health is taking the fitness video to a new level.

For a start, it's a DVD and no longer a video.

Even better, leg warmers and bright pink tights are optional, not mandatory.

And this DVD has been made specifically for farm men and women.

Which is the most crucial thing about it all. Because research has shown farmers were actually at a loss as to how they could best implement fitness programs at their properties. Yet most farm men and women noticed that they felt better after exercise.

NCFH director Sue Brumby says producing the DVD was one thing; clearly getting it used effectively is another.

Associate clinical professor Brumby says the Farming Fit project, funded by *beyondblue*, began in February last year to research the effects of exercise on health and mental health levels in the farming population.

But Professor Brumby says despite the exercise program, Farming Fit participants were still finding it difficult to incorporate exercise into their daily routine.

“They were also finding it difficult to understand, and undertake, some of the exercises in the program,” she says.

“So the exercise DVD was produced after it became obvious there was such a large gap in information available to help farm men and women become more active in their daily farm routine.

The DVD uses an exercise physiologist and real farmers on their farms illustrating the exercises and was a research partnership between Vitality Health and Fitness, Deakin University School of Medicine, Western District Health Service and the National Centre for Farmer Health.

“The DVD will be distributed to Farming Fit participants and will also be available at the National Rural Health Conference delegates from the National Centre for Farmer Health stand (stand 33) or by contacting the Centre directly.” The DVD is also available online at www.farmerhealth.org.au

The conference will run in Perth from 13 to 16 March.

Associate Professor Brumby says while many farming families might not have easy access to a gym, or personal trainers, most of them do have DVD players,” she says. We are happy to post out copies to farm families.

“Making the *Farming Fit* DVD was the most effective way to get the program in front of the biggest number of people – and without the need for them to have access to expensive gym equipment or driving to gyms.

“The DVD provides a resource to help farmers, and others, in rural and remote communities integrate physical exercise into everyday activities using the farm.’

“This, in turn, will potentially improve the health and mental health outcomes.”

beyondblue funded the initial program, and the production of extra DVDs, with more than \$100,000.

A spokeswoman says its Victorian Centre of Excellence holds an annual round of grants to help finance initiatives to address depression and its contributing factors in all sectors of the community.

“beyondblue is supportive of, and remains committed to, this kind of work to reduce the impacts of depression in Australians,” she says.

Further details are available from Susan Brumby, director, National Centre for Farmer Health 0355518533