

# Western District Health Service



Sustainable Cotton & Sugar Farm Families Newsletter is produced in collaboration with the above partners.

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<i>Year two report</i>	1
<i>Statistical results</i>	2
<i>Business Decisions</i>	3
<i>Quiz: Getting your fats right.</i>	3
<i>Diabetes</i>	4
<i>Lifestyle Choices</i>	4
<i>Action plan results</i>	4

Welcome to the final edition of the Sustainable Farm Families Cotton and Sugar Newsletter!

In 2007 we returned to Ayr, Dalby, Wee Waa and Ingham to revisit the learning's from year 1 and build new learning's with the focus on depression, anxiety and swapping the gender bender workshops. A total of 53/63 (84%) participants returned which was particularly pleasing considering the floods that held back Ingham participants.

We would like to acknowledge the great work you achieved over the program - group farm safety meetings, attended OH&S seminars, taking a family holiday, completed first aid course, grow only Bollgard cotton, walk the Kokoda trail and educated children on label reading.

In this newsletter we show some of the progress (some good, some bad) and changes you have made over the program. It has been a successful program with all participants recommending it for its great wake up call regarding farming family health.

It has been a pleasure and a great deal of fun working with you over the duration of the program and we hope you continue the good work; by eating healthier food, becoming more active and being more farm safe.

We wish you all the best with the seasonal challenges ahead and would enjoy hearing back from you at any stage.

Sue, Stu and John

**LIFELINE'S JUST ASK - 1300 131 114**

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service Life-line's Just Ask is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit <http://www.justask.org.au>



**5 minutes in the morning...**

**...or 5 months off the farm**

PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE WHILE INDISPENSABLE ASSES YOU



**Congratulations to all participants from Ayr, Wee Waa, Ingham and Dalby!**

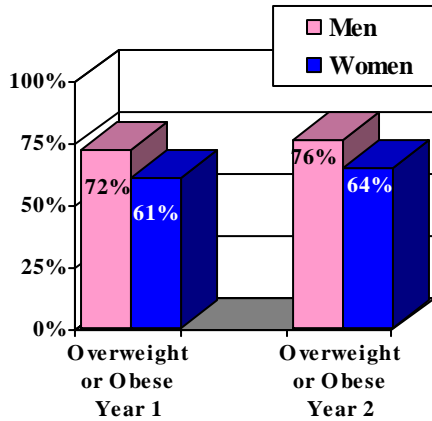
# Results from Year 2

Body mass index (BMI) is used to estimate your total amount of body fat.

Our results show that there was a slight increase in the incidence of overweight or obese participants. The need for focusing on health as well as the upcoming seasonal challenges must be kept in mind. We encourage all participants to get into the healthy BMI range by managing their 30 minutes of exercise five times a week and maintaining a healthy diet!

The results were largely the same between sugar and cotton producers.

Percentages of participants with overweight or obese BMI Scores



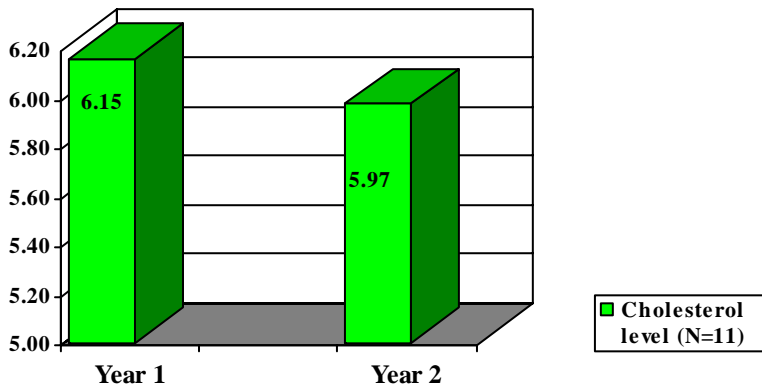
## Risks of being overweight and physically inactive

If you are overweight (BMI over 25) and physically inactive, you may develop:

- Cardiovascular (heart and blood circulation) disease
- Gall bladder disease
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Diabetes
- Osteoarthritis
- Certain types of cancer, such as colon and breast cancer.

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

Mean Cholesterol Levels of participants at risk (>5.5mmol)



## Cholesterol

The graph to the left highlights the mean cholesterol level of participants at risk (>5.5mmol). It can be seen that there has been a reduction by 0.18mmol for participants at risk from year 1 to year 2. We hope that you keep working to achieve a level below 5.5mmol. Medical specialists believe that levels above 5.5 indicate an increased risk for vascular disease such as heart disease and strokes. Remember reducing your intake of saturated fat is best for lowering your cholesterol level. Saturated fat is found in animal fats, dairy (choose lower fat options) coconut and palm oil (often used in takeaways and commercially prepared biscuits).

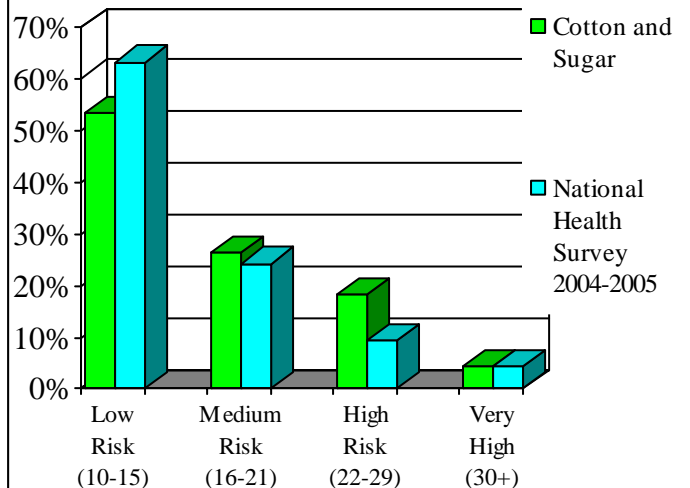
## Kessler Test (K10):

### A measurement of risk for psychological distress.

The Kessler test has been used as a tool for identifying potential risk of psychological distress. The cut off scores are 10-15 low risk, 16-21 medium risk, 21-29 high risk and scores over 30 are very high risk. In the Sustainable Farm Families program participants that scored over 21 in the high risk category were offered a referral for mental health support. The graph shown gives a relative comparison between cotton and sugar farmers and the national population of 2004-05. It should be noted that the SFF data is only raw data that has not been standardized like the National Health Survey Data. The sugar and cotton industry have had some potentially stressful challenges over the program due to climate and seasonal differences. If you are a participant that is feeling distress, anxious or depressed remember to refer back to your mental health chapter in your SFF manual or seek assistance.

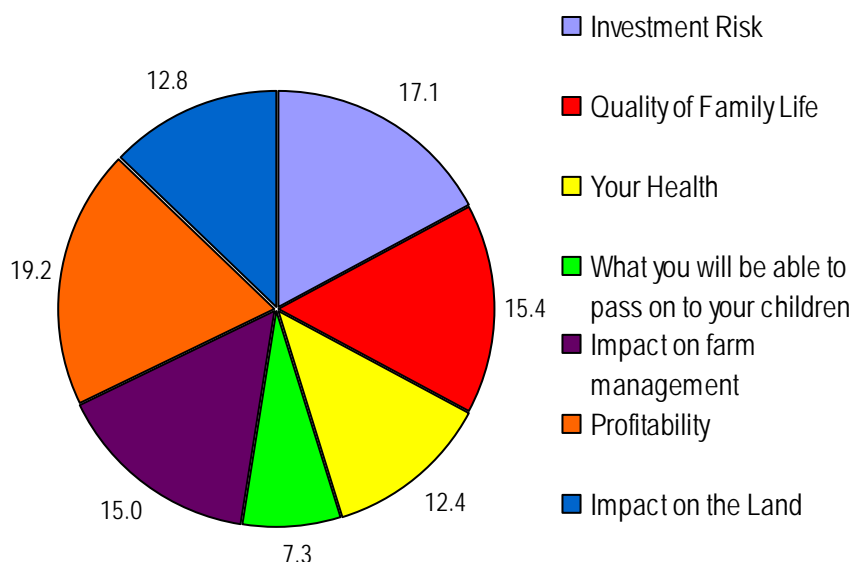
Rural Mental Health Lifeline 1300 131 114

Kessler Psychological Distress Scores.



# What gets your business ticking?

## Factors that you consider when making decisions about significant change



In the final year you were asked to complete a survey prior to the workshop on your perceptions of the relationship between health and farming business decision-making, and the different kinds of changes that you had made to your farm management practices, as a consequence of this project. It would seem obvious that profitability and investment risk dominate when making a business decision, but it is great to see that other aspects like family life and health are major contributors.

**You were also asked whether improving your health would help you to make better business decisions; to which 92.5% thought that it would.** So to get the best out of your business you should be in the best health!



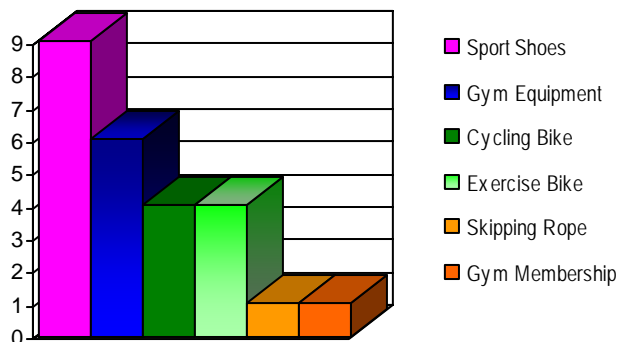
## Quiz: Getting your fats right.



- To satisfy the body's needs for essential fatty acids, it's important to eat some greasy foods every day. *True or False?*
- A single average serve of chocolate mud cake contains about how many grams of fat? a) 20g b) 40g c) 60g d) 80g
- If you've been exercising to build muscle and then stop, your muscle turns into fat. *True or False?*
- Fried foods do not increase your risk of heart disease so long as they are fried in vegetable oil. *True or False?*
- The most useful way to keep blood cholesterol levels healthy is to: a) avoid eating eggs b) avoid eating all foods containing cholesterol c) Cut back on foods containing trans and saturated fats
- One 100g bar of chocolate has roughly the same amount of kilojoules as: a) 2 large apples b) 4 large apples c) 6 large apples
- Margarine is healthier for your heart than butter. *True or False?*
- All types of fat (saturated, monosaturated, polyunsaturated) contain the same amount of kilojoules *True or False?*
- If you're trying to lose weight, you should aim to lose no more than: a) Between 0.5-1.0kg a week b) Between 1.0-1.5kg c) 2kg a week
- To lose one kilogram in a fortnight, you would need to cut your energy intake by approximately how many kJ a day on average? a) 1000kJ b) 2500kJ c) 5000kJ
- To burn off 1000kJ (2.5 TimTams) a 70kg person would need to walk briskly for approximately how long? a) 20mins b) 1hour c) 2 hours
- Foods prepared outside the home usually have more fat than foods cooked at home. *True or False?*
- Cold pressed liquid oils (extra virgin olive oil) are healthier because they contain more disease-fighting antioxidants. *True or False?*
- Children under 12 should not be routinely given reduced-fat dairy products. *True or False?*
- All seafood have very little fat or cholesterol. *True or False?*

# Lifestyle Changes

**Fitness Equipment bought/borrowed as a result of project**



At the end of the final workshop you were asked to fill out a health economics survey. One of the more interesting results was the changes seen in the everyday diets of participants. Of the 47 people who completed the survey, 41 (87.2%) said that they had changed their diet as a result of the project. The major change that has been made to diets was using or purchasing lean meat when cooking and preparing meals. Additionally, participants were also asked if the project had prompted them to purchase or borrow fitness equipment to help reach their activity goals. Twenty-one out of the forty-seven that completed the survey answered positively with sport shoes and gym equipment being the favorite among participants. It is great to see the results of this survey portraying a keen group of people committed to changing their current habits in order for a healthier lifestyle.

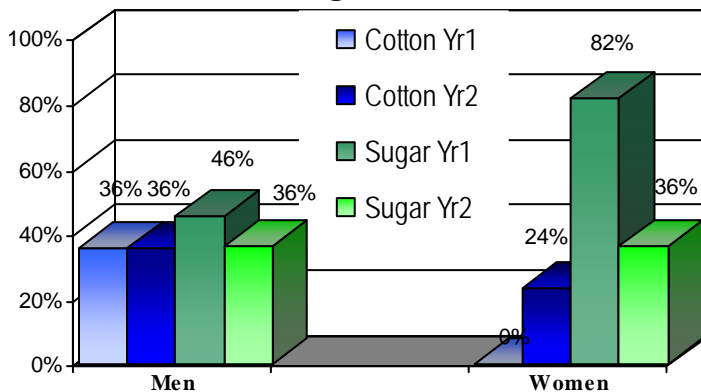
## Diabetes: The Silent Epidemic.

In pre-diabetes blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. Pre-diabetes has no warning signs or symptoms. Each year, in your early morning assessments we tested your fasting blood glucose and people greater than 5.5mmols were referred for further follow up and/or diet advice.

The results from the two workshops show that the sugar participants have strongly reduced the amount in high risk. The male cotton participants have stayed constant and the women still have the lowest percentage risk out of all the groups.

Research from the US, Finland and China show that moderate weight loss, and exercise reduce the risk of pre-diabetes developing into type 2 (mature onset diabetes) and help reduce your blood glucose levels. If you have a high glucose level get working to reduce fat intake, watch diet, exercise more and read your food labels to make better choices!

**Percentage of participants with fasting blood sugars over 5.5 mmols**



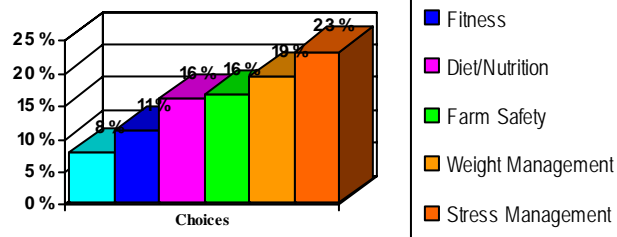
## Action Plans: How did you go?

Our summary from the action plans indicated that stress and weight management along with farm safety were the priority of most participants. In our second year workshop, all participants were asked to review their action plans and give themselves an achievement rating on their progress. These ratings have revealed that 82% of participants action plan choices showed moderate to

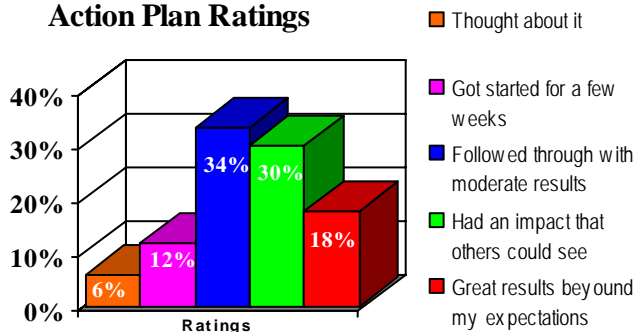
great results beyond expectations, whilst only (6%) had no action taken. We hope you continue to tackle your action plans and achieve your own personal goals.

Finally we want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year and remember to slip, slop, slap, seek slide!

**Top Action Plan Choices**



**Action Plan Ratings**



PROTECT YOUR FARM'S MOST IMPORTANT ASSET. YOU.



Slip on sun-protective clothing



Slop on SPF 30+ sunscreen



Slap on a hat



Seek shade when possible



Slide on some sunglasses



www.sunsmart.com.au