



# Media Release

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## Managing your most important asset – your family's health

As you prepare to wish friends and loved ones a happy and healthy New Year – take the time to stop and ask yourself what you'll do in 2007 to keep yourself and your own family healthy.

As one participant in the SRDC-supported Sustainable Farm Families Program put it; you need your health; without it you have no balance, no stability, no life.

With such positive reactions to the Sustainable Farm Families Program conducted in the Herbert and Burdekin in 2006, SRDC is keen to encourage others to find out about the links between sugar farming family health, farm related accidents and farm sustainability.

Margaret Linton, who participated in the workshop in 2006 said it was a real eye-opener, easy to follow, really beneficial and she'd definitely recommend it to others.

"The thing that surprised me the most was that the research they spoke to us about said that people in rural areas aren't as healthy as people living in the city – I really thought we'd be the healthier group," Margaret said.

"We talked a lot about different health issues and did a tour of a supermarket to learn more about nutrition and how to read labels on food," she said.

The SFF Program takes participants through an intensive health evaluation, education and training process and identifies potential risks to health and wellbeing.

The program is based on assisting sugar farmers and their family to identify strategies to enhance individual and family health, and Margaret said that the information was easy to follow and was put in everyday language, not medical terms.

Participants from the 2006 program are reminded to continue thinking about their family's health as they prepare for the festive season and to keep they eyes out for information about follow-up sessions in 2007.

SRDC is also gauging interest for future workshops in other regions and is encouraging people to register their interest as soon as possible.

And just in case you needed any more encouragement to take part, here are some more comments about the program from other sugarcane growers:

- "It gave me a better understanding how health impacts on business decisions and the financial performance of my own farm."
- "100% practical, 100% applicable and 100% understandable."
- "If you know, then you can act. Prevention is better than cure."
- "Most time any medical person has spent with me."
- "People are most important asset on a farm and people need good health to perform."
- "Without good health you are no good to your family or farm productivity. You and your health is the most important and only you can improve it."

The program is an initiative of Western District Health Service, Hamilton, Victoria and commenced in 2003 with a grant from the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation's Joint Venture on Farm Health and Safety.

For more information, or to register your interest contact SRDC Investment Manager, Les Robertson via email [lrobertson@srdc.gov.au](mailto:lrobertson@srdc.gov.au) or telephone 07 3225 9442 or Susan Brumby at Western District Health Service on 03 5551 8450. Visit <http://www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au/sugar.htm>

**For more information contact Claire Power, Communications Manager, 07 3225 9444**

*Investing in Sugarcane Industry Innovation*