

73% male farmers overweight: study

RESULTS from the Sustainable Farm Families' first dairy farmer health assessments in 2005 showed that 73 per cent of males and 47 per cent of female participants had a body mass index above the recommended range, indicating that a large proportion of the group would benefit from losing some weight.

Waist measurements supported this finding, with 38 per cent of males and 56 per cent of females having waist measurements greater than the recommended maximum of 102 cm for men and 88 cm for women.

Last week, south-west dairy farmers participating in the project completed their year two health assessments and annual workshops.

Principal investigator Susan Brumby said 210 dairy farmers from across Victoria are taking part in the project, which has already been delivered to broadacre farmers, and will extend to the sugar and cotton industries this year.

Other interesting results showed that although more than 90 per cent of participants reported that they were in good health, 22 per cent of females and 27 per cent of males reported that



FARM TALK by JO CROSBY

they had suffered moderate to very severe body pain in the previous four weeks, and 34 per cent of females and 40 per cent of males stated that their health interfered with their normal activities.

It will be interesting to see whether any of these health and well being indicators have changed when results from the 2006 health assessments are collated. For more information, visit www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au

VICTORIAN EXPORTS SLIP

VICTORIAN food and fibre exports for 2005 were valued at \$6.8 billion, a decrease of \$465 million (6 per cent) from 2004, according to the just-released 2005 Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report, for the 2005 calendar year.

Produced biannually by the Strategic Market Analysis team within the CAS (Catchment and Agriculture Services) Agribusiness Group, the report reveals that Victoria accounted for 27 per cent of Australia's food and fibre exports, up one per cent from 2004.

Japan remained as Victoria's top food and fibre export market, with China overtaking the USA as Victoria's second largest market.

There was significant growth in the value of exports to Indonesia, which increased by 32 per cent to be worth \$235 million.

Dairy, meat and wool accounted for 64 per cent of food and fibre exports. Significant changes included a 30 per cent increase in wine exports to \$623 million, and a 55 per cent decrease in grains exports to \$447 million. However, grains exports are affected by confidentiality agreements and this figure should be used with caution.

Top performing products included nuts, which more than doubled in export value from 2004 to \$31 million; goat meat, which grew by 47 per cent to \$24 million; and olive oil, which grew from \$1 million in 2004 to \$5 million in 2005.