



Sustainable farm families

REGION -The most important aspect of a healthy Australian farm? A healthy farming family.

Developed to bring better health, wellbeing and safety to people on the land, Sustainable Farm Families (SFF) is a program of practical, straightforward information and advice that has proved life-changing for many participants.

Natimuk farmer Carl Sudholz participated in SFF last year when the Natimuk Silo group did the program and will return March 17 and 18 for the group's follow up program.

"Farmers can be a bit reluctant to do health checks and this is a good opportunity to check things out. Being farmers, having a health check can get put on the never never," Mr Sudholz said.

Participants receive health assessments, including fasting glucose and cholesterol levels, eyesight check, height, weight, and body mass measurements; blood pressure and respiratory tests.

Results are discussed one-on-one with a health care professional and referrals for follow up appointments arranged.

"The workshops are a great opportunity to learn more about ourselves and what we can do

right now to prevent illness," Mr Sudholz said.

During the program, health and wellbeing topics covered include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, stress, women and men's health issues, nutrition, physical activity, anxiety and depression as well as farm safety.

There are practical applications for the information - for example going to the supermarket and learning to read labels on food so you can assess the nutritional value and understand what it means for you and your family's health.

The opportunity now exists for another 20 groups to have the program run in their local area. Applications are due by March 27, 2009. To take part in one of the SFF programs across Victoria call Emily Moule on (03) 5824 5502 or visit the [website:](http://www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au)

SFF is an initiative of the Western District Health Service, Hamilton and delivered in partnership with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and local health agencies.

Farmers learning about their health or similar at the Sustainable Farm Families workshop in Natimuk in March 2008.



Participants in last year's program, learning to read labels in supermarkets.