

Farmers face health risk

By TERRY SIM

Workshop points to cardiovascular fear

A TIMBOON Sustainable Farm Families Workshop has highlighted the risk of cardiovascular disease and other health conditions among south-west farmers.

Timboon community health nurse Amanda Nash said 21 farmers and members of the Port Campbell Discussion Group attended the workshop on March 18 and 19.

Sustainable Farm Families is an award-winning initiative of the Western District Health Service and delivered with the Department of Primary Industries.

Ms Nash said south-west Victorian residents had a poor record for cardiovascular disease.

After body mass index,

blood pressure and glucose level and cholesterol testing was done, several farmers in the SFF workshop were shown to be at risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

SFF facilitator Sue Watt said SFF programs Australia-wide had found that 60-80 per cent of first-

time participants needed referrals for on-going health screening and checks.

The Sustainable Farm Families program aimed to develop the knowledge of farmers regarding their own health, well-being and safety issues, with a focus on steps to improve the lives of farm families and the im-

provement this could deliver to farm businesses.

Timboon and District Healthcare Service health promotion officer Melanie Green said the program covered a range of areas including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, women's and men's health, stress, depression, farm

safety, nutrition and exercise. "Apart from a bit of over-enthusiasm at times, a great lot of learning occurred and they all left with lots of motivation to tackle health, well-being and safety issues for their farm business," she said.

Timboon dairy farmer Nick Renyard said the workshop format meant there was the opportunity to discuss the implications for farmers and their farms.