



Health program to assist farm families

By **Ray Frawley**

AN increasing number of Victorian farmers and their families are adopting healthier lifestyles.

They are doing so by participating in the Sustainable Farm Families program, aimed at improving farmer health, wellbeing and farm safety.

Rural health services and agricultural industry groups are invited to apply to run

programs in their local areas.

The Western District Health Service, Hamilton, is coordinating the initiative in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries.

“Funding is available to deliver the program to 1000 farmers across the state and the program is underway now, with 49 health professionals trained to deliver the program across Vic-

toria,” said project manager Emily Moule.

The SFF program is free of charge and provides 20-minute one-to-one health assessments with trained rural health profes-

sionals and two-day workshops on key health issues such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, men’s and women’s health, farm safety, nutrition and exercise.

SFF principal Susan

Brumby said: “The program has been successful in decreasing participant risk factors for major diseases, improved the uptake of farm safety and influenced positive behavioural changes, such as farmers actually taking holidays.

“After a very successful pilot with more than 400 Victorian farmers, our research shows that every single participant would re-

commend the program to other farmers.”

Agricultural industry groups or farmer groups interested in organising a course for their local area or attending a course should contact Emily Moule, Department of Primary Industries, Sustainable Farm Families project manager, on 5824 5502 or visit www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au

Applications close on September 17.