

# Healthy help for farm folk

By **DON HEATH**

THE award winning initiative, Sustainable Farm Families, is again coming to the North East, and farmers from the Benalla district are being offered the opportunity to attend.

Developed by the Western District Health Service located in Hamilton, and delivered in partnership with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the program has seen over 700 farmers participate to this stage.

And, to a person, every participant has recommended it to others.

The program consists of a thorough health check, and two days of interactive health information sessions with participating families.

Following the sessions, families leave with a personalised action plan and goals for the next twelve months.

A follow up program a year later repeats the health checks, and de-

livers new and different health information.

The main message links the health of the farming families to the health of their farm business, reminding them there is no point in a better bottom line if you're not there to enjoy it

Farmers who have completed the program have reported an overall enhancement of their health, including better eating habits and improved farm safety.

Some have also found they were able to make better decisions because they had a new perspective of how important their health and families were in their lives.

The Sustainable Farm Families program, which is free of charge, will be held on Wednesday, April 9 and Thursday, April 10, at the DPI offices, Sydney Road, Benalla.

For further information contact Deb Smith, community health nurse at Delatite Community Health Service on (03) 57612200.