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Improving health, improving farms

Farmers from Boort and district attended a Sustainable Farm Families workshop last week to help improve the health, wellbeing and safety of local farmers and their families.

The Sustainable Farm Families program aims to develop the knowledge of farmers regarding their own health, with a focus on what practical steps can be taken to improve the lives of farm families and the impact this improvement could deliver to their business.

"The workshops are excellent and over the two days I certainly learnt a lot about my health," said participant John Campbell.

"The program should be compulsory for all rural Victorians."

Participant Laurie Maxted said the program was "so beneficial to the wellbeing of families and communities".

"We all received a health assessment, and the workshop sessions were interactive," he said.

Boort District Health's Melissa Weaver said the program covered a range of areas including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, women and men's health,

stress, depression, farm safety, nutrition and exercise.

Farmers who attended came from Boort, Durham Ox, Pyramid Hill and Kerang districts, became aware of the opportunity through Boort-Pyramid Hill Water Services Committee.

Sustainable Farm Families is an award winning initiative of Western District Health Service, based in Hamilton, and is delivered in partnership with the Department of Human Services and Boort District Health in conjunction with Northern District Community Health Service.

Farmers who have completed the program have reported that the program enhanced their overall health with everything from better eating to improved farm safety.

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

All of the participants will return to complete another two-day workshop in 12 months, again receiving a health assessment so they can track their health indicators over time.