



Making healthy farmers

Farmers from Strathmerton and surrounding areas attended a Sustainable Farm Families workshop last week as part of a statewide initiative to help improve the health 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 can deliver to their businesses.

Participant Phil Gundrill said he saw the benefit of the workshop.

"The workshops were excellent and over the two days I certainly learned a lot about my health," he said.

"We all received a free health assessment and the workshop sessions were interactive, and I think everyone enjoyed themselves."

Sue Crowther from the Cobram District Community Health Centre 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 Katunga, Strathmerton and Yarroweyah districts and became aware of the opportunity through the Strathmerton branch

of United Dairyfarmers of Victoria.

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 Primary Industries (DPI) as part of their longer term drought work.

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

Some 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.

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

A second program will be conducted in the Cobram/Katamatite area on May 26 and 27.

To register your interest please contact Sue Crowther at the Cobram District Community Health Centre on 5871 0900.

For more information contact the Western District Health Service on 5551 8508 or visit www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au



Supporting the day: Strathmerton United Dairyfarmers of Victoria representatives Leigh Barry and Phil Gundrill are pictured with David Kennedy (Katunga) and Peter Mazanberg (Yarroweyah).



Coordinators: The team behind the Sustainable Farms Family Program include (back from left) Adam Taylor (Western District Health Service), Russell Maher (North Eastern Health), (front from left) Libby Cummins (DPI), Amy Hutchins (Western District Health), program coordinator Sue Crowther (Cobram Community Health) and Jenny Gaylard (Cobram Community Health).



Sustainable families: Heath, Nicky and Tilly (five months) Fox learned many new and fascinating facts about life on the farm and health issues at the day.