# Sustainable farming and health



• BETTER HEALTH: Rural Northwest Health community nurse, Betty Richardson (right) discusses family health with district farmers Cameron and Stacey Drage and sons Will and Toby. Mrs Richardson is excited to be working with farming families in the region.

is an award winning initiative of Western District Health Service, Hamilton, delivered in partnership with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries.

Already 600 farmers have participated in the program and 100 per cent of participants recommended it to other farmers and helped shape the program.

Sustainable Farm Families co-ordinator for Rural Northwest Health, Betty Richardson said: "The program covers a range of areas including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, women and men's health, stress, depression, farm safety, nutrition and exercise."

"All participants also have a health assessment and this program is available to farming men and women," Mrs Richardson said.

Minister for Agriculture, Joe Helper said: "The Sustainable Farm Families program focus is to improve the physical and mental health of farmers and their families".

"This program is about recognising that for many Victorian farming families the drought's impact continues to affect their lives; and helping people get through that," Mr Helper said.

Farmers who have completed the program have reported that it 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.

Farmers interested in attending should contact Mrs Richardson on 5396 1265.

More information on the program can also be obtained from the Western District Health Service on 5551 8450 or visit www.sustainable-farmfamilies.org.au

FARMERS from the Wimmera Mallee district have an opportunity to learn more about their health by attending a Sustainable Farm Families program on February 14 and 15.

Sustainable Farm Families