

Fitter Farmers? A comparison of physical activity levels in agricultural, regional and urban workforces

Improving Farmer Health: A Call for Volunteers

The National Centre for Farmer Health is seeking participants for a new study to investigate just how active Victorian farmers are. Exercise is increasingly recognised as being protective against chronic disease, and beneficial to mental health. However, little is known about physical activity levels of farmers, or how they compare to other workforces. This means that the development of effective physical activity programs or recommendations to improve farmer health and prevent disease is challenging.

The Fitter Farmers study will compare physical activity levels in farm-based agriculture,

regional healthcare and urban workers. Identification of activity patterns in these workforce groups will provide a strong foundation for development of physical activity and exercise-based programs to enrich lifestyle, prevent disease, and improve mental health outcomes for Australian farmers.



Finding creative ways to stay active on the farm

What's involved in the Fitter Farmers study?

The study is seeking full-time workers over the age of 18, from one of three groups:

- **Farm-based workers** located within 150km of Hamilton, Victoria
- **Regional workers** employed within Western District Health Service or ANZ Regional branches
- Urban workers, who work in **Geelong** or **Melbourne metro areas**

If you decide to participate, a 'FitBit' device will be fitted to your wrist, and an 'ActivPAL' activity device to your hip. Over a 7-day period, the device will record time spent in sitting, standing and stepping activities. You will also be asked to complete two interviews (Approx. 30 minutes each) relating to your daily physical activities to document activity context.

National Centre for Farmer Health

Get in Touch

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AM I ELIGIBLE?

You may be eligible to participate if you:

Are 18 years or over

Speak & Write English

Are employed full-time

Have no injuries or long-term illnesses that interfere with your typical work activities

Have no history of reaction to medical tape

Your Results

All information you give us is confidential. The activity information collected will be entered into a database, at which time your name and other identifying information will be removed. When all of the activity monitoring has taken place, we will analyse the information, to determine links between physical activity types or levels and occupation. No individual information will be published.

When the study is completed, all interviews, activity data and other information will be locked in filing cabinets, which will be the responsibility of Vanessa Vaughan and Susan Brumby from the National Centre for Farmer Health & Deakin University. All information collected during this study will be destroyed after 7 years.

You are under no obligation to participate in

the study. If you decide to participate you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular questions
- Withdraw from the study at any time
- Ask questions about the study at any time during participation
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded



How active are you during your average work day?

This research is supported by a Deakin University Faculty of Health Research Development Grant

Where & When will the Fitter Farmers Study take place?

The Fitter Farmers study will be recruiting participants from July to November 2015. If you participate in the study, you will be asked to complete activity recording over a continuous 7-day period.

If you are in the agricultural or regional worker groups, the research

team will organise to meet you at your workplace at a convenient time to fit the activity monitoring devices. If you work in Melbourne or Geelong, you may be asked to meet a member of the research team at a Deakin University site at a time convenient to you. Interviews will be

conducted over the phone on Day 3, and either over the phone or in person on Day 7.

Once your monitoring period is over, a member of the research team will organise the return of your devices.

As a gesture of appreciation, participants will receive a \$50 gift voucher.

How to Get Involved

We hope that with your help we can find out more about the levels of physical activity of agricultural and regional workers in Victoria, and develop better health programs for Australian farmers.

If you have any questions, or would like to speak with the research team about joining the Fitter Farmers project, please get in touch...

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Deakin University Human Ethics Committee HEAG-H 70_2015.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact:

Human Research Ethics Office
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Ed Kus getting active for Farmer Health at the Melbourne Marathon 2014