



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
**FARMER
HEALTH**



AgriSafe Australia™ - addressing health and safety in farm men, women and agricultural workers

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National Centre for Farmer Health

A partnership between Deakin University School of Medicine and Western District Health Service

Mission: *To make a difference to farmers' lives*

Focus on: Improvement of health, wellbeing and safety of:

- Farmers
- Farm employees
- Farm families across Australia

Through leadership, advocacy, service, research and education

Why make a difference?

The **agriculture, forestry & fishing** industry had the **highest** fatality rate in **2017**



That's
27%
of total
worker
fatalities



Source: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/book/work-related-injury-fatalities-key-whs-statistics-australia-2018#work-related-injury-fatalities1111111>

Why making a difference is so important?



Agriculture, forestry
and fishing

16.5

fatalities per
100,000 workers

- Worker fatality rates are high with 16.5 fatalities per 100,000 workers.
- **No dramatic improvement** over the last 10 years.

Source: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/book/work-related-injury-fatalities-key-whs-statistics-australia-2018#work-related-injury-fatalities1111111>

Largest exporter of wool



3rd largest exporter of dairy



Largest exporter of barley



3rd largest exporter of beef



10th largest exporter of cotton



Agriculture

- Agricultural land covers more than 1/3 third of the world's land area.
- There are more than 570 million farms in the world.
- More than 90% of farms are run by an individual or a family and **rely primarily on family labour.**
- Family farms **produce about 80% of the world's food.**

Source: The State of Food and Agriculture. Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2014
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4036e.pdf>. Accessed: 27 October 2016

Health of rural populations

Farmers are at increased risk of:

- Chemical/pesticide exposures
- Drug & alcohol abuse
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Skin complaints
- Hearing loss/ disorders
- Farm acquired illnesses (Zoonoses)
- Cardiovascular disease
- Respiratory diseases
- Diabetes
- Cancers (skin, colon, prostate, hemopoietic, lymphatic)
- Depression and suicide

Compounded by reduced access to health, distance and social services

Farm safety hazards



Program Objectives



- To address the health, wellbeing and safety risk among the farming community members in Australia.
- To improve health, wellbeing and safety behaviours/practices through assessment, education, and recommendation
- Provide post evaluation to assess effectiveness of program

Method



- **Program period:** 2011 – 2018
- **N =** 216
- **Program locations:** 5 AgriSafe™ clinics across Victoria -Hamilton, Coleraine, Penshurst, Shepparton & Numurkah
- **Participant recruitment:** via self referral, word or mouth hospital presentation
- **Program process:** 3 parts – pre survey, one on one assessment & health coaching

Method – part 1

Pre Occupational Health History Survey

Themes

- About You and Your farm
- Illness and Injury
- Diet and Physical Activity
- Hearing and Eyesight
- Respiratory and Skin
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Use of Personal Protection Equipment

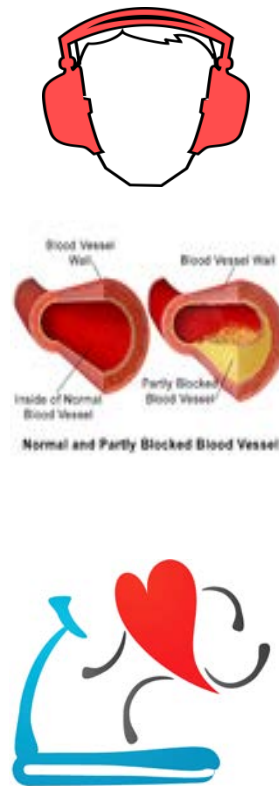
Method – part 2

One on One Health Assessment

Screenings and Assessments		
Blood glucose AusDrisk	Lipid Studies	Blood pressure
Body mass index Body fat %	Cholinesterase testing	Respiratory PiKo – 6 & Fit testing
Urinalysis	Otoscopy & hearing test	Skin assessment
Cancer risk and screening status	Kessler 10 Wellbeing	Musculoskeletal & balance assessment
Eye review	Farm safety Q fever status	PPE recommendation

Method – part 3

Health & Safety Coaching – Education & Recommendation



The participants



Variable	Number of participants (n=216)	Percentage of participants %
Male mean age (years) n=166	48.7	76.8%
Female mean age (years) n=50	47.1	23.2%
Current smoker	15	6.9%
Current alcohol drinker	202	93.4%
BMI overweight/obese		
Male	121	72.9%
Female	28	56.0%
Bodily pain – moderate or above		
Male	112	67.5%
Female	38	76.0%

Risk factors



Variable	Number of participants (N=216)	Percentage of participants
*High risk of developing type 2 diabetes AUSDRISK		
Male (n=166)	74	44.6%
Female (n=50)	12	24.0%
Short term high risk alcohol consumption \geq monthly¹		
Male	119	72.5%
Female	21	42.8%
Hypertensive range \geq140/90 or on antihypertensive meds		
Male	73	44.0%
Female	18	36.0%
Total Cholesterol \geq5.5mmol/L/ or on lipid lowering meds		
Male	45	27.1%
Female	16	32.0%

¹ National Health and Medical Research Council 2001, Australian alcohol guidelines: health risks and benefits, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra

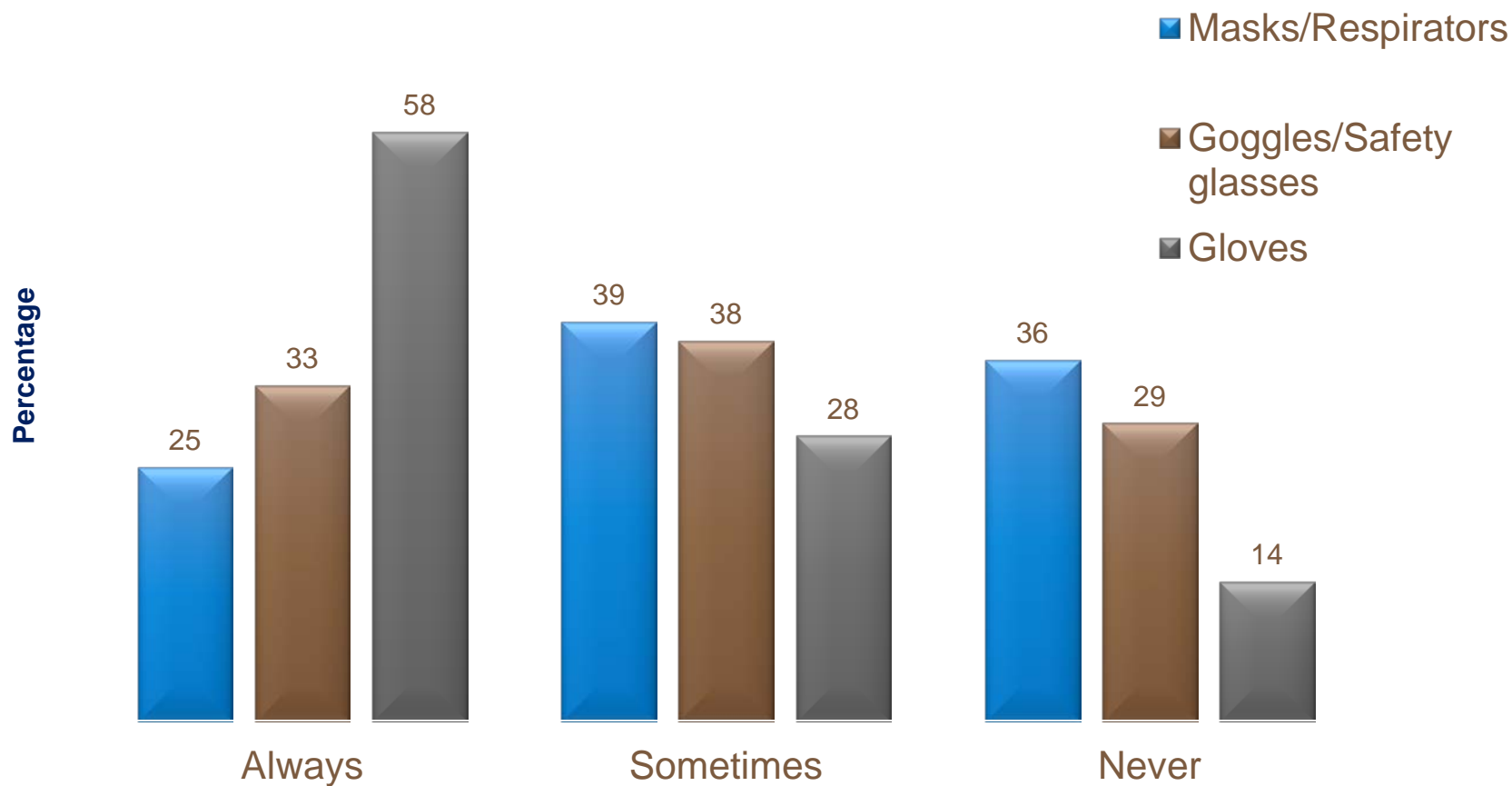
Safety risks



Variable	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Hearing loss data	202	
Always wearing protection in noisy	81	40.1%
Report hearing loss	106	52.5%
Never wearing helmet		
2 wheel (riders n=112)	37	33.0%
4 wheel (riders n=163)	83	50.9%
Do you use chemicals on farm	160	
Applying – do they wear some form of PPE	147	91.9%
Always read the labels before use?	100	62.5%

Agrichemicals PPE

When using chemicals on the farm (n=160)



Conclusion in addressing health and safety



- Identified serious, risky health & safety behaviours
- Moderate to severe body pain
- CVD risk (hypertension)
- Diabetes risk is higher in males
- Short term high risk alcohol consumption
- Connect agricultural hazards to farmers and their practices.
- Post evaluation underway to assess change over time



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Thank you

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#ncfh2018conference
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