

**NATIONAL CENTRE
FOR FARMER HEALTH**
Biennial Conference 2012



**SOWING THE SEEDS
OF FARMER HEALTH**



CONFERENCE HANDBOOK AND ABSTRACTS

**HAMILTON, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA
17 – 19 SEPTEMBER 2012**

www.farmerhealth.org.au
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NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
**FARMER
HEALTH**

in partnership with





For over 140 years, *The Weekly Times* has been the voice of the country, committed to supporting farmers and rural communities. *The Weekly Times* is a proud sponsor of ‘Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health’ and the work of the National Centre for Farmer Health in improving health, well-being and safety for farming families.



Contents

Welcome from the Chair	2
An Introduction from the Director	3
Scientific Review Committee	5
Delegate Information	5 - 6
Registration Desk	5
Name Badges	5
Mobile Phone Courtesy	5
Photography and Video Recording	5
Venue	6
Feet to Floor – Early Morning Walks	7
Eating Out in Hamilton	8
Trade Displays	10
Hypothetical	11
Photography Competition	12
Program	13 - 22
Day 1: Monday 17 September	13 - 14
Day 2: Tuesday 18 September	15 - 18
Day 3: Wednesday 19 September	19 - 22
Invited Speakers	23 - 25
Keynote Speakers	26 - 34
International Speakers	26
Australian Speakers	27 - 34
Keynote Abstracts	35 - 46
Concurrent Abstracts and Presenters	47 - 88
Day 2: Tuesday 18 September	47 - 64
Day 3: Wednesday 19 September	65 - 88
Poster Abstracts	89 - 93
The Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health – Précis	94 - 95
Conference Sponsors	96 - 98
Photography Competition Sponsors	99 - 100



Welcome from the Chair

On behalf of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) Board of Management, we welcome you to the biennial conference ‘Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health’.

There is compelling evidence that Australians living in rural and remote areas are generally not as healthy as those living in cities. Australians who work in farming and agriculture also have higher rates of mortality and morbidity through accidents and poorer mental health outcomes. The underlying reasons for these outcomes are multifactorial, and the tyranny of distance and the challenges facing health services that cater for farming communities are considerable.

The National Centre for Farmer Health, a partnership between Western District Health Service and Deakin University, is based in Hamilton, Western Victoria. Its vision is to be “a thriving centre inspiring quality education, research and service delivery through innovative partnerships that advance agrihealth and medicine both locally and globally”.

The centre has accomplished a great deal since its inception and is now recognised as an energetic and highly innovative organisation, providing state and national leadership to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of farm men and women, farm workers and their families.

The core pillars of the National Centre are:

1. Professional Training and Education;
2. Applied Research and Development;
3. An Information Technology Hub;
4. Agri-Safe Programs; and
5. Service Delivery, including the Sustainable Farm Families program.

‘Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health’ incorporates the core principles of the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health, endorsed at the inaugural conference ‘Opening the Gates of Farmer Health’ in 2010, throughout the conference program. The conference theme and ‘In Focus – Celebrating Farm Life’ photography competition encompass the principles of the Charter.

We are grateful for the support of all the sponsors, and recognise that many partnerships are required to successfully hold a conference. We are delighted



to be welcoming presentations and attendees from across Australia, and internationally including USA, New Zealand, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Nepal and Thailand.

During the conference I encourage you to view the photography exhibition at the Hamilton Art Gallery and to be entertained and educated by the high calibre speakers. You could even consider post graduate study in Agricultural Health and Medicine!

Professor Brendan Crotty
Chair, National Centre for Farmer Health
Pro-Vice Chancellor, Health, Deakin University



An Introduction from the Director

I would like to personally welcome each of you to the 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' conference in Hamilton, as we provide you with a broader and entertaining understanding of agricultural health issues. Hamilton is home to the established National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) and is surrounded by diverse and productive agricultural enterprises. During this conference we aim to purposefully enact and build upon the five key principles of the 'Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health', endorsed at the 'Opening the Gates on Farmer Health' conference held in 2010. These inseparable five principles of valuing culture, living with work, future proofing farm systems, building skills and knowledge, and creating political momentum are woven through the themes and activities of the conference. A précis of the Charter is included in the conference handbook.

It is clear to the NCFH that farmers ARE interested in their health. As Australia faces a decreasing number of farms, a diminishing and ageing agricultural workforce, increased climate variability and raised global food demands, it is now more important than ever to find new ways to keep farmers and rural communities thriving. The key is dispelling the myths around farmers' attitudes and practices and filling the gaps with health and rural professionals who really understand farm businesses, the risks they face and their responses to health problems.

With that in mind, I would like to give you an idea of what you can expect over the next few days of the conference. On Monday we have the opening, our first keynote addresses, the new health and biosecurity hypothetical, and the awards for the 'In Focus – Celebrating Farm Life' photography competition. A record number of 675 photos have been received and the exhibition at the renowned Hamilton Art Gallery will be open until 14th October, 2012. On Tuesday we have an excellent line up of keynote and concurrent speakers with diverse presentations. We finish Tuesday with the networking dinner 'Celebrating Excellence: Paddock to Palate' at the distinguished Hamilton Club. Wednesday will have challenging sessions on 'Agricultural Hazards and Safety', the guided tour of posters and will conclude with a stimulating wrap up of the conference. Make sure you get all the trade stamps as winners will be announced at the conference closing. At every session the chairs will be asking for a key message and an action. These will be collated and communicated back to you through www.farmerhealth.org.au.

I would like to thank each of you for attending and supporting our 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' conference and bringing your expertise, knowledge and experience to our gathering. Thank you to all the sponsors, scientific review committee, donors, partners and staff that have all assisted in making this a landmark conference. We should all be very proud of where we are today and what we have achieved at the NCFH. All our staff, sponsors and partners have worked hard to make this a fabulous conference, as they continue to contribute and make a difference in this challenging but exciting field.

Throughout this conference, I encourage you to stay engaged, view the exhibition, posters and trade displays, take a walk, visit the remarkable local waterfalls and mountains, stay proactive and help sow the seeds of farmer health together.

**Susan Brumby, Clinical Associate Professor,
Director, National Centre for Farmer Health**



Scientific Review Committee

The Conference Committee gratefully acknowledges the generous work of the Scientific Review Committee, who all provided constructive and invaluable feedback to ensure the high standard of abstracts and posters.

Professor Evelyne de Leeuw, Deakin University

Dr Paul Lewandowski, Deakin University

Professor David Mellor, Deakin University

Ms Tracey Harper, Department of Primary Industries

Clinical Associate Professor Susan Brumby, National Centre for Farmer Health

Dr Ananda Chandrasekara, National Centre for Farmer Health

All abstracts included in the conference handbook have undergone a double-blind peer review process, with de-identified feedback and suggestions for revisions.

Delegate Information

Registration Desk

The registration desk is located in the Entrance Foyer of the Performing Arts Centre, Hamilton. The desk will be open from:

Monday 17 September: 1:00pm – 6:30pm

Tuesday 18 September: 8:00am – 5:40pm

Wednesday 19 September: 8:00am – 4:00pm

Name Badges

Your name badge is your ticket to conference sessions. All delegates are requested to wear their conference name badge at all sessions, including social functions. Entry may be refused without conference badge.

Mobile Phone Courtesy

For the comfort of others it is requested that delegates ensure that their mobile phones are switched off during times.

Photography and Video Recording

The National Centre for Farmer Health will be photographing and filming parts of the conference. Your image and contributions may be photographed, filmed or recorded and may be used in the Conference DVD and for marketing, promotional, website and education purposes. If you do not wish to be included in this procedure please go the Registration Desk and advise staff of your position.

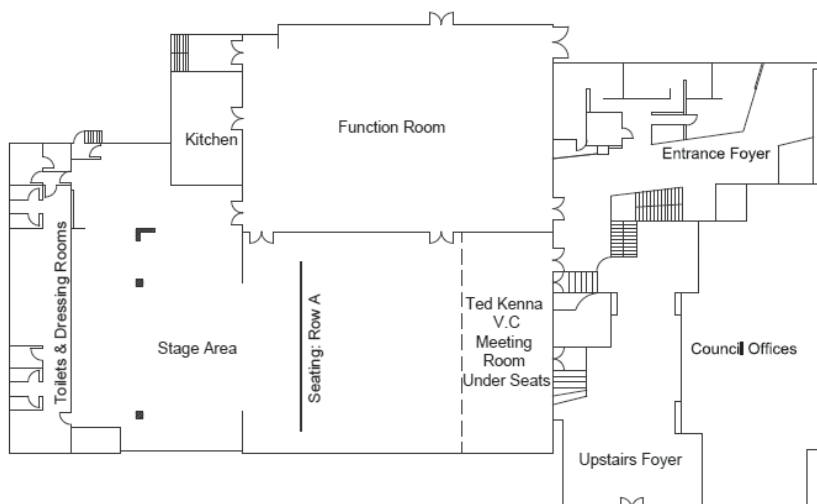
Venue

Sessions: Hamilton Performing Art Centre (PAC), 113 Brown St, Hamilton. Conference sessions will be held in the Auditorium, Ted Kenna Room and Cinema.

Trade Displays: Function Room, Hamilton PAC

Posters: Upstairs Foyer, Hamilton PAC
(upstairs from the Entrance Foyer)

Meals: Function Room, Hamilton PAC



Conference Welcome Reception: Hamilton Art Gallery, 107 Brown St, Hamilton

Ph. (03) 5573 0460, www.hamiltongallery.org

NCFH staff will escort delegates from the PAC to the Conference Welcome Reception and photography exhibition 'In Focus – Celebrating Farm Life' – it is next door.

'Celebrating Excellence – Paddock to Palate' Networking Dinner:

The Hamilton Club, 39 Gray St, Hamilton

Ph. (03) 5572 2299, www.hamiltonclub.com.au



Feet to Floor

Early Morning Walks

*Hosted by Cate Mercer-Grant,
National Centre for Farmer Health*



Enjoy a leisurely walk whilst seeing the sights of Hamilton!

Walkers MUST register their interest the day prior at the Registration Desk.
If there are no takers, the walks will not proceed.

Tuesday: Meet at the Apex Park on the Grangeburn River promptly at 6:30am

Wednesday: Meet at the Lake Hamilton Spillway promptly at 6:30am

Suggested Walks

Key

- Start / Finish Point
- Lake Loop (5.2km)
- Grange Burn Discovery (2.6km one way, 5.2km return)
- Short Loop (0.7km)
- Parking Available
- Toilets



Eating Out in Hamilton *(in alphabetical order)*

There are a diverse range of dinner outlets in Hamilton, including pubs, cafes or restaurants, and only a short walk from the Performing Arts Centre. We advise phoning and securing bookings in advance as not all restaurants are open 7 days.

Alexandra House

134 Brown St
Ph. 5571 1736
A great value meal

The Bandicoot Restaurant

152 Ballarat Rd
(at The Bandicoot Motor Inn)
Ph. 5572 1688
Home cooked meals

Botanical Restaurant & Bar

cnr French & Thompson St
(at The Comfort Inn Botanical)
Ph. 5572 1855
French influenced comfort food

Café Catalpa

7921 Hamilton Hwy, Tarrington
(10km out of Hamilton)
Ph. 5572 1888
Relaxing, atmospheric dining

Caledonian Hotel

153 Thompson St
Ph. 5572 1055
Fully licensed bistro

Commercial Hotel

64 Lonsdale St
Ph. 5572 4119
Pub meals

Court Lantern Chinese Restaurant

133 Thompson St
Ph. 5572 2818
Traditional Chinese food

Darriwill Farm

99 Brown St
Ph. 5571 2088
Gourmet food and wine

Gilly's Bistro & Beer Emporium

106 Gray St
Ph. 5571 9111
Great food and friendly service

Grand Central Hotel

141 Gray St
Ph. 5572 2899
Pub meals

The Grange Restaurant

142 Ballarat Rd
(at Comfort Inn Grangeburn)
Ph. 5572 5755
Quality restaurant, bar and fireplace

Izzy's Tavern

71 Gray St
Ph. 5572 1677
Bistro by day, restaurant by night

The Roxburgh

64 Thompson St
Ph. 5572 4857
Cosy café, restaurant and wine bar

Tandoori Royal's Indian Restaurant

100 Thompson St
Ph. 5571 9288
Indian inspired curries and dishes





Darriwill Farm invites you
to visit their Award Winning
Cafe Restaurant & unique
gourmet retail store.

Our restaurant will be open **Monday 17th of September**
for dinner, light snacks or coffee & cake.

Bookings

T 5571 2088 (99 Brown Street, Hamilton)
E hamilton@darriwillfarm.com.au

*Darriwill Farm, proud supporters of the National Centre
for Farmer Health as they 'sow the seeds' of farmer health.*



GRANGEBURN
OFFICE & IT

82 Brown Street, Hamilton Victoria 3300
Ph: 5571 1114 | Fax: 5571 1137
www.grangeburn.com.au



*Kindly donating the Toshiba AT100 Tablet
to 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health'*

Trade Displays

Visit the trade displays to go in the running for great prizes! Stamps required from **ALL** stands. Return to registration desk. Winners announced in Plenary Session 7.



- **Toshiba's AT100 Tablet powered by Android™**
donated by Grangeburn Office & IT
- **2hrs Financial Planning with Prime Super OR Akubra Hat** *donated by Prime Super*
- **Waltanna Gold Flaxseed Oil, Dressing & Rolled Flaxseed** *donated by Waltanna Gold*
- **Bottle of Wine** *donated by Vision2020 Australia*



Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

TRADE DISPLAYS		STAMPS
Andrology Australia www.andrologyaustralia.org		
Arthritis Victoria www.arthritisvic.org.au		
Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine www.acrrm.org.au		
National Centre for Farmer Health www.farmerhealth.org.au		
Prime Super www.primesuper.com.au		
SunSmart, Cancer Council Victoria www.sunsmart.com.au		
Vision 2020 Australia www.vision2020australia.org.au		
VicRoads www.vicroads.vic.gov.au		
Wesfarmers General Insurance Ltd www.wfi.com.au/wps/wcm/connect/internet/wfi		
Wimmera Hearing Society <i>Hearing van located out the Western doors of PAC Function Room</i>		



Hypothetical

Plenary Session 2: Biosecurity Outbreak in “Sheepstown”!

Entertaining, lively and informed hypothetical discussion forum

Farmer, industry, rural media, health and agri-professionals explore disease outbreak in the national flock, just as the nation is getting ready to eat lamb on Australia Day!

The Host

Jamie Fisher, Jamie Fisher & Associates (*Lawyer and Farmer*)



The Panel

1. **Academic & Social Epidemiologist:** Anthony Hogan, Director, NIRRA, ANU, ACT
2. **Agri-consultant:** Cathy McGowan AO, Catherine McGowan Consulting, VIC
3. **Communications & Rural Events Consultant:** Esther Price, EPP, WA
4. **Farmer:** Rob Henry, Woodrising Farms, TAS
5. **Industry:** Jock Laurie, President, National Farmers’ Federation, ACT & NSW
6. **Medical Practitioner:** Scott Kitchener, Medical Director, QRME, QLD



...answering the big questions

What are the implications for the farming community and sheep industry?

What does a biosecurity outbreak mean to humans in a health context?

When a scourge confronts humankind, where will you be?

Will there be enough lamb cutlets available for our Australia Day BBQ’s?

‘Farmers are classic optimists. We don’t let ourselves think of the potential consequences of an industry disaster... I expect this hypothetical discussion will highlight some serious gaps in our armoury, but also show what opportunities there are for strong leadership to make a positive difference during times of crisis’, Esther Price

Sponsored by



Serving regional Victoria for 30 years

Photography Competition

Conference Welcome Reception: In Focus – Celebrating Farm Life

The National Centre for Farmer Health initiated a photography competition in 2010 celebrating rural life. In 2012 we invited the Australian community to enter photographs that reflected ‘celebrating farm life’ in the following themes:

Theme 1 – Of droughts and flooding rains (impact of weather events)

Sponsored by Regional Landcare Program, Glenelg Hopkins CMA

Theme 2 – Red sky at night (farming environment)

Sponsored by Ivory Print

Theme 3 – Country wisdom (safe farming practices)

Sponsored by Hamilton Spectator & Western District Farmer

Theme 4 – Working the land (agriculture at work)

Sponsored by Rural Industries Skill Training Centre

Theme 5 – Malting barley to Mallee bulls (what we grow)

Sponsored by LMB Linke Livestock

Theme 6 – Future farmers (what does farming look like in the future)

Sponsored by Vision 2020 Australia

Theme 7 – Images of farm life

Sponsored by Livestock Intel

School's Prizes

Sponsored by Hamilton Camera City

People's Choice –Vote for your favourite image at the Conference Welcome Reception!

Sponsored by Harvey Norman Computer Superstore



The event surpassed all of our expectations, with 678 images submitted from every state and territory across Australia, as well as international entries from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Canada, England, New Zealand and the United States of America. This firmly demonstrates the strong personal links individuals have to agriculture... there's dirt in everyone's veins!

- Open, Secondary & Primary School Student Categories
- Judged by renowned photographers Ewen Bell, David Fletcher and Jill Frawley
- Photographs exhibited at Hamilton Art Gallery, 29 August - 14 October, 2012
- Winners announced at Conference Welcome Reception, Monday 17 September
- Cash prizes, Ewen Bell's "Photography for Travellers" book awarded, and entry into the Art4Agriculture Archibull Prize (a supporting partner of the competition)


A coffee table book and deck of cards featuring images from 'In Focus – Celebrating Farm Life' are available for purchase at the conference and at www.farmerhealth.org.au



Program

Monday 17th September	
1:00pm	Registration desk opens
2:45 – 4:30pm Auditorium	PLENARY SESSION 1: WELCOME AND CONFERENCE OPENING Chair: Chris Faulkner, Department of Health, VIC
2:45pm	Welcome from Master of Ceremonies – Libby Price, Country Hour Presenter, ABC Radio, VIC
2:55pm	Conference Opening – Simon Ramsay MLC, Member for Western Victoria, VIC
3:05pm	Welcome – Professor Brendan Crotty, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Health, Deakin University, VIC
3:10pm	Welcome Address – Jim Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer, Western District Health Service
3:15pm	Keynote 1: ‘A decade in farmer health’, Clinical Associate Professor Susan Brumby, Director, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC 
3:50pm	Keynote 2: ‘Art feeds the mind. Farmers feed the future.’, Lynne Strong, Owner, Clover Hill Dairies & National Program Director, Art4Agriculture, NSW 
4:25pm	Celebrating excellence in rural life – from the audience
4:30pm	Session concludes
4:30pm Function Room	AFTERNOON TEA, catered by Banquet on Burns Trade displays open – collect your trade display stamps to go in the running to win great prizes 
4:40pm	Bells

Monday 17th September

4:45 – 6:15pm Auditorium	PLENARY SESSION 2: HYPOTHETICAL
4:45pm	<p>HYPOTHETICAL: Biosecurity Outbreak in “Sheepstown”!</p> <p><i>Hosted by Jamie Fisher (lawyer/farmer) of Jamie Fisher & Associates, NSW</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer – Rob Henry, Owner, Woodrising Farms, TAS • Agri-professional – Cathy McGowan AO, Catherine McGowan Consulting Pty Ltd, VIC • Communications and Rural Events Consultant – Esther Price, Director, Esther Price Promotions (EPP), WA • Academic / Social Epidemiologist – Dr Anthony Hogan, Director, National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia, ANU, ACT • Industry – Jock Laurie, President, National Farmers’ Federation, ACT & NSW • Health Professional – Professor Scott Kitchener, Medical Director / CEO, Queensland Rural Medical Education (QRME), QLD
6:00pm	Conference Summary - Bringing the discussion to a close/ summary/roundup – 3 points to think about over next few days
6:15pm	<p>Session concludes</p> <p><i>please make your way to the Hamilton Art Gallery – next door</i></p>
6:30 – 8:00pm Hamilton Art Gallery (107 Brown St)	<p>CONFERENCE WELCOME RECEPTION:</p> <p>Cocktail party and ‘In Focus – Celebrating Farm Life’ photography competition presentations</p> <p>Catered by Banquet on Burns</p> 



Tuesday 18th September

6:30am – 7:30am	Feet to the floor – start your day the healthy way with a 40 minute walk along the Grangeburn River <i>(meet at Apex Park, refer to map in conference satchel)</i>
8:00am	Registration desk open – Exhibition open and posters on display
8:30 – 10:20am Auditorium	PLENARY SESSION 3 Chair: Grains Research and Development Corporation – (TBC) 
8:30am	Celebrating excellence in rural life – from the audience
8:35am	Keynote 3: <i>'Farmer health... it is your business'</i> , Dr Lisa Schiller , Assistant Professor / Nurse Practitioner, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, USA
9:10am	Keynote 4: <i>'Teaching agricultural medicine to rural based medical students and general practice registrars'</i> Professor Scott Kitchener , Medical Director / CEO, Queensland Rural Medical Education (QRME), QLD
9:45am	Keynote 5: <i>'Implementing OHS models on the farm'</i> , Rob & Kathy Henry , Owners, Woodrising Farms, TAS
10:20am	Session concludes
10:20am Function Room	MORNING TEA , catered by Darriwill Farm Trade displays open – collect your trade display stamps to go in the running to win great prizes 
10:35am	Bells
10:40am – 12pm Concurrent session 1A – Auditorium	THE BUSINESS OF FARMING Chair: John Hedditch, Department of Health, VIC 
10:40am	Psychosocial support needs of farmers experiencing financial stress Patricia McNamara & Grant Doxey, Rural Financial Counselling Service, VIC
11:00am	Strategy in context: Farming in the green, red, black and ... the doghouse! Georgina Luckock, RMIT University, VIC
11:20am	PinG: Building women's capacity for farm and rural resilience Kim Blenkiron, Partners in Grain Inc., SA
11:40am	Care Farming: Enhancing community connection and resilience for farmers Sharon Condon, Rural Clinical School, University of Tasmania, TAS

Tuesday 18th September

10:40 – 11:40am Concurrent session 1B – Ted Kenna Room	AGEING IN PLACE ON FARM – Duty of care versus dignity of risk Chair: Marilyn Di Stefano, LaTrobe University, VIC	
10:40am	“Who will still need me, who will still feed me when I’m 84”? Zoe O’Callaghan, LaTrobe University, VIC	
11:00am	Older people and heat – learning from the adaptations of an older farming community Matthew Carroll, Monash University, VIC	
11:20am	Ageing in place: Supports to promote mobility independence and road safety for older or impaired drivers living in rural communities Tricia Williams, VicRoads, VIC	
10:40am – 12pm Concurrent session 1C – Cinema	PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ACTION Chair: Janette Lowe, Southern Grampians & Glenelg Primary Care Partnership, VIC	
10:40am	Innovative partnerships for improved farmer family health in NW Tasmania Stuart Auckland & Maree Gleeson, University Department of Rural Health, TAS	
11:00am	The role of Local Governments in behaviour change for farming community’s health and wellbeing Michelle Graymore, University of Ballarat, VIC	
11:20am	On the road again: Identifying and reducing the socio-economic cost of travelling for health care Dorothy McLaren, RMIT University Hamilton, VIC	
11:40am	From the country hills to all Australia (includes DVD) Kelly Foran, Friendly Faces Helping Hands Foundation, NSW	
12:00pm	Session concludes	
12:00 – 1:00pm Function Room	LUNCH , catered by Darriwill Farm Trade displays open – collect your trade display stamps to go in the running to win great prizes	



Tuesday 18th September


12:10 – 12:55pm Auditorium	LUNCH TIME SESSION: Sowing and reaping responsive change in hospital processes: Making the patient journey easier for farming families PANEL: Dr James Muir, Ms Rebecca Morton, Ms Bronwyn Roberts, Ms Gillian Jenkins, Ms Katherine Boyd, Ms Dorothy McLaren Western District Health Service & RMIT Hamilton, VIC Facilitator: Libby Price, Country Hour Presenter, ABC Radio, VIC
1:00pm	Bells
1:05 – 2:20pm Auditorium	PLENARY SESSION 4: MENTAL HEALTH – Wagging the black dog's tail Chair: Cate Mercer-Grant, National Centre for Farmer Health , VIC
1:10pm	Keynote 6: 'Walking and talking the black dog in the country', Matthew Johnstone , Author, Illustrator and Public Speaker, Drawn From Experience, NSW
1:45pm	Keynote 7: 'Experience of depression in farming communities', Jock Laurie , President, National Farmers' Federation, ACT & NSW
2:20pm	Session concludes
2:25 – 3:25pm Concurrent session 2A – Auditorium	MENTAL HEALTH – Wagging the black dog's tail Chair: Jock Laurie, National Farmers' Federation, ACT & NSW 
2:25pm	Assessing the mental health issues of climate variability affecting rural and remote communities in southern region of Queensland Delwar Hossain, University of Southern Queensland, QLD
2:45pm	Burnout among NZ dairy farmers: results from two studies Neels Botha, Ruakura Research Centre, Waikato, NZ
3:05pm	Reduction of psychological distress and obesity by increasing physical activity; The 'Farming Fit' study Ananda Chandrasekara, National Centre for Farmer Health & Deakin University, VIC

Tuesday 18th September

2:25 – 3:25pm Concurrent session 2B – Cinema	CHRONIC DISEASE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES – Feast or famine Chair: Cathy McGowan, Catherine McGowan Consulting Pty Ltd, VIC
2:25pm	Comparing salt and potassium intake between Victorian farm families and capital city residents Paul Jeffery, Deakin University, VIC
2:45pm	Audit of rural rheumatology services in Victoria Gavin McDonald (on behalf of authors), Arthritis Victoria, VIC
3:05pm	Drinking, smoking and distress: Will our young farmers even make it to become ageing farmers? Alison Kennedy, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC Alexandra Head, Deakin University, VIC
3:25pm	Session concludes
3:25pm Function Room	AFTERNOON TEA , catered by Darriwill Farm Trade displays open – collect your trade display stamps to go in the running to win great prizes
3:40pm	Bells
3:45 - 5:35pm Auditorium	PLENARY SESSION 5 Chair: Evelyn de Leeuw, Deakin University, VIC
3:50pm	Keynote 8: 'Bloom where you are planted', Cathy McGowan AO , Catherine McGowan Consulting Pty Ltd, VIC
4:25pm	Keynote 9: 'An Australia without hunger... good food for all', Greg Warren , General Manager, Foodbank Australia, VIC
5:00pm	Keynote 10: 'Farmer health and wellbeing – strategies to become fully engaged now and in the future!', Dr Roberto Lianardi , Europa Health Forecasting Group, Milan, ITALY
5:35pm	Session concludes
7:00 for 7:30pm Hamilton Club (39 Gray St)	CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE – PADDOCK TO PALATE: Networking Dinner , catered by Hamilton Club



Wednesday 19th September

6:30 – 7:30am	Feet to the floor – start your day the healthy way with a 40 minute walk around Lake Hamilton <i>(meet at spillway, refer to map in conference satchel)</i>
8:00am	Registration desk open – Exhibition open and posters on display
8:30 – 10:20am Auditorium	PLENARY SESSION 6: AGRICULTURAL HAZARDS AND SAFETY – Reducing harm on the farm Chair: Katie Little, Iluka Resources Limited, VIC 
8:30am	Celebrating excellence in rural life – from the audience
8:35am	Keynote 11: ‘Farm chemicals – estimating individual risk’ Associate Professor John Edwards , Toxicologist & Associate Dean – Teaching and Learning, School of the Environment, Flinders University, SA
9:10am	Keynote 12: ‘Agriculture: A dangerous industry’, Julie Hill , Director, Data and Analysis, Safe Work Australia 
9:45am	Keynote 13: ‘Human injury on the farm – causes, prevention and implications’, Dr Daryl Pedler , Professor of Rural General Practice, Deakin University, VIC
10:20am	Session concludes
10:20am Function Room	MORNING TEA , catered by Fiona Wall Fine Foods Trade displays open – collect your trade display stamps to go in the running to win great prizes 
10:35am	Bells
10:40am – 12:05pm Concurrent session 3A – Auditorium	PRIMARY AND PREVENTATIVE HEALTH  Chair: Gerry Sheehan, Department of Health Farming Men! A guided tour to the health and wellbeing of our Australian icons Adrian Calvano (on behalf of authors), National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC, and Western District Health Service, VIC
10:45am	
11:05am	Having a field day - linking rural communities to better health Ruth Williams, Wimmera Primary Care Partnership, VIC
11:25am	“Losing it – in the bush” – a partnership to support the Hastings Rural Community Darcy Budden & Dianne Penberthy Mid North Coast Local Health District, NSW
11:45am	Noise does destroy Sue Ward, Wimmera Hearing Society Inc., VIC

Wednesday 19th September

10:40am – 12:05pm Concurrent session 3B – Cinema	AGRICULTURAL HAZARDS AND SAFETY – Reducing harm on the farm Chair: Julie Hill, Safe Work Australia 
10:45am	Drug and alcohol use by farming and fishing workers: Key findings for the farming industry Julaine Allan, The Lyndon Community, NSW
11:05am	Self-reporting of illnesses and accidents among sugarcane farmers in Northeastern Thailand Kessarawan Nilvarangkul, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen Province, Thailand
11:25am	Careful - they can't hear you Heidi Mason, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC
11:45am	Six stories of avoidable rural tragedies (DVD) Anne Taylor, Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support, TAS
10:40am – 12:05pm Concurrent session 3C – Ted Kenna Room	EDUCATION AND TRAINING Chair: Rodney Vile, Development Manager NCDEA, Dairy Australia 
10:45am	Listening to their stories: Assisting nurses in their ongoing response to alcohol misuse in farming communities Alison Kennedy, National Centre for Farmer Health & Deakin University, VIC
11:05am	Utilising Interprofessional Education (IPE) to improve retention of graduates in rural communities James Roth, Deakin University, VIC
11:25am	Getting out the message: Sowing seeds for health professionals Liana Matthews, Rural Health Education Foundation, ACT
11:45am	PETS – Pathways, Education, Training and Skills Cate Mercer-Grant, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC
12:05pm	Session concludes



Wednesday 19th September

12:05 – 1:05pm Function Room	LUNCH , catered by Fiona Wall Fine Foods  Trade displays open – collect your trade display stamps to go in the running to win great prizes
12:30 – 12:55pm Upstairs Foyer	LUNCH TIME SESSION: GUIDED TOUR OF POSTERS Facilitator: Alison Kennedy, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC
12:30pm	Beyond the Potter Farmland Plan - a link to wellbeing.... Julia Schlapp & Michelle van Loggerenberg, RMIT Hamilton, VIC
12:35pm	Needlestick injuries in agriculture Anne Taylor, Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support (PASS), TAS
12:40pm	Seeing into the future Glenn Howell, Glenn Howell Pty Ltd, VIC
12:45pm	Like crops, human lives grow from seed potential, nourished by available resources Jan Watson, Journal Workshops, VIC
12:50pm	Poverty alleviation of Nepalese farmers Yuba Raj Shrestha, Centre for Drinking Water, Agriculture Development & Environment Improvement, Kathmandu, Nepal
1:05pm	Bells
1:10 – 2:35pm Concurrent session 4A – Auditorium	MENTAL HEALTH – Wagging the black dog's tail Chair: Helen Dugdale, Cotton Research and Development Corporation, NSW 
1:15pm	Preventing poor health outcomes: Risk factors of psychological distress within the farming family population Connar McShane, James Cook University, QLD
1:35pm	CORES – Community Response to Eliminating Suicide Coralanne Walker, CORES Australia, TAS
1:55pm	New Zealand dairy farmer stress Neels Botha, Ruakura Research Centre, Waikato, NZ
2:15pm	Men's Shed finds new tools to stave off the black dog Carolyn Alkemade Orbost Regional Health, VIC Diane Robinson Gippsland Lakes Community Health, VIC

Wednesday 19th September

1:10 – 2:35pm Concurrent session 4B – Ted Kenna Room	HUMAN & ANIMAL HEALTH – All creatures great and small Chair: Paul Lewandowski, Deakin University	
	Cutting through the spin Sarah Laurie, Waubra Foundation, VIC	
1:15pm		
1:35pm	Agrisafe™ Australia - improving health in agricultural communities Mark Atcheson, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC	
1:55pm	Takotsubo cardiomyopathy in agriculture Anne Taylor, Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support (PASS), TAS	
2:15pm	Blue Green Algae....no shark attack! Katrina Rainsford, Farmer, Veterinarian & Councillor, VIC	
1:10 – 2:35pm Concurrent session 4C – Cinema	CHRONIC DISEASE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES – Feast or famine Chair: Ananda Chandrasekara, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC	
	“Active Farming” study: Improving farmers’ management of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions Henrike Milne, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC	
1:15pm		
1:35pm	A pilot study of practice nurse (PN) pap testing initiatives: An evaluation of their impact on cervical screening activity in Grampians general practices Christine Hallinan, University of Ballarat, VIC	
1:55pm	Health in the saleyards - bringing the health professional to the farmer Mark Newel, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC	
2:15pm	What’s to gain from grains and legumes? A role for staple foods in chronic disease prevention Michelle Broom, Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council, NSW	
2:35pm	Session concludes	
2:40 – 3:40pm Auditorium	PLENARY SESSION 7 Chair: Susan Brumby, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC	
	Keynote 14: ‘Health, wellbeing and the adaptive capacity of Australian farmers’, Dr Anthony Hogan, Director, National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia, ANU, ACT	
2:45pm		
3:20pm	Closing Address: Professor Evelyne de Leeuw, Chair in Community Health Systems and Policy, School of Medicine, Deakin University, VIC	
3:40pm	Session concludes - Announce winners of trade display prizes.	
3:40pm	FAREWELL AFTERNOON TEA, catered by Fiona Wall Fine Foods	



Invited Speakers *(in program order)*

Conference Facilitator



Libby Price

**Country Hour Presenter
ABC Radio, VIC**

Having presented a number of radio programs including Statewide mornings, Libby Price is no stranger to ABC Local Radio audiences. Libby

comes to the presenter's chair with a wealth of experience and knowledge in broadcasting and current affairs. Starting as a Current Affairs journalist for ABC Radio in 1988, Libby reported for current affairs programs such as AM, PM and The World Today.

In 1994, she moved to the ABC's national network, Radio National to present Countrywide - a program specialising in rural and regional issues, followed by Radio National's Drive program. In 1995, Libby was recruited as Senior General Reporter for the new National 7.30 Report, presented by Kerry O'Brien.

After three years with the 7.30 Report, Libby joined ABC TV news in 1998 as a Senior Reporter, covering many major Victorian stories including the Riverside nursing home dispute, Longford gas explosion, Linton fires and the state and federal elections. In her spare time, Libby enjoys horse-riding, sailing, children's literature, reading, movies, food and wine.

Conference Opening



Simon Ramsay MLC

Member for Western Victoria, VIC

As a local farmer and small businessperson, Simon is a passionate supporter of regional Victoria. He is proud to use his experience and knowledge to represent the communities of Western Victoria with a fighting spirit and a determination

that their voices are heard at all levels of government. He was elected to the Legislative Council as the Member for Western Victoria in November 2010. The issues he deals with every week are as broad as the region he represents - an expanse that includes Nhill, Casterton, the Great Ocean Road, Ballarat, Melton, Kyneton, Daylesford and Maryborough. He also Chairs the Parliament's Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee.

Simon was born and raised on a family property at Birregurra and attended Birregurra Primary School and Geelong Grammar School. He graduated from Glenormiston College with a Diploma in Farm Management before completing a certificate in Small Business from the Adult Education Centre in Colac. From jackaroo to company director, Simon's experience has been robust and expansive.

Simon is a past President of the Victorian Farmers Federation where he advocated for the needs of our regional communities. He is also actively involved in the local community, serving with the Birregurra CFA and as President of the Birregurra Primary School Council.

Simon is a keen Geelong Cats supporter and can often be seen competing in fun runs across Victoria. He is also a strong supporter of men's health, particularly in rural communities.

Hypothetical Host



Jamie Fisher

Lawyer and Farmer

Jamie Fisher & Associates

Jamie Fisher was raised on a solidier settler's farm 30 kms from Geelong at Lethbridge. He attended secondary school in Geelong. After leaving school he attended the Gordon Institute of Technology, qualified as a wool classer and later found casual work as a wool classer whilst being engaged in developmental work of scrub land at Tarwin Lower, Gippsland.

After a few of years farming in Gippsland, the family sold that farm and bought a grazing property at Chetwynd 35 kms north of Casterton. After a further brief time farming there he was called up and served two years National Service as an Officer in the Australian Army, within Australia.

Over the years Jamie has engaged in a number of community and industry activities including serving on school councils, progress associations, hospital committees, and field days committees, as well as professional extension work auspiced by the Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria conducting seminars around Victoria for rural succession planning, together with conducting training for real estate auctioneers and rural industry training. He is a former Deputy Group Officer with The Country Fire Authority of Victoria.



Hypothetical Panellist *(refer to 'Keynote Speakers' for additional panellist bios)*



Esther Price

Communications & Rural Events Consultant

Principal Consultant/Company Director

Esther Price Promotions (EPP)

Esther is a marketing professional with 20 years experience in the marketing, events and promotions industry and a unique network of contacts and associates across the rural industries, events and marketing sectors. She was born and raised on a farming property near Kulin in the WA wheatbelt and maintains a very close affinity to rural issues. Her company, Esther Price Promotions Pty Ltd (EPP), is a communications, marketing, projects and events business established in 1989 that has a reputation for providing a professional, flexible and diverse marketing package to its clients, best summed up by the business slogan "Putting it all Together". EPP is the registered office of the Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants (WA) Inc, representing farm consultants throughout Western Australia.

Closing Address



Professor Evelyne de Leeuw

MSc (Maastricht) MPH (Berkeley) PhD (Maastricht)

Chair in Community Health Systems and Policy

School of Medicine, Deakin University, VIC

Evelyne is professor and chair of Community Health Systems and Policy at Deakin University, Victoria, Australia. She also acts as senior evaluation advisor to the Healthy Cities programme in WHO/Europe, and implementation expert consultant for Healthy Cities in WHO/Western Pacific. She teaches community health promotion in the Deakin Medical School for which she has developed novel reflective cloud-based learning technologies.

Her research stems from a fascination with political behaviour, and why 'in-your-face-evidence' (e.g. on Farmer Health) does not enter the decision-making discourse. For VicHealth she undertook a systematic review of theoretical approaches at the nexus between research, policy and practice.

Previously she was based in Denmark, France and The Netherlands. Recent books cover Healthy Cities (Springer, with Jean Simos) and health political science (OUP, with Carole Clavier), and chapters in an upcoming global non-communicable disease manual (Springer).

Keynote Speakers *(in program order)*

International Speakers



Dr Roberto Leonardi

MBA Cambridge Judge Business School BEc M.Sc (Hons) Universita Di Milano

**President & Health and Wellbeing Futurist
Europa Health Forecasting Group, Milan, Italy**

Dr Roberto Leonardi, is a health and wellbeing futurist and founding President of the Europa Health Forecasting Group based in Milan, Italy. As an internationally recognised consultant Roberto provides market forecast and strategic advice to a wide range of hospitals, medical groups, managed care organisations and suppliers throughout Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Roberto has written several books on the future of healthcare and wellbeing. His monthly newsletter 'Europa Health Trends', has been published for 12 years and is translated into five languages throughout Europe. Roberto is currently on an Australia wide lecture tour where he is speaking to a wide range of hospitals, medical groups and government departments. Like most Italians, Roberto is a truly passionate and entertaining speaker who presents a refreshing and profound perspective on health and wellbeing today and in the future.



Dr Lisa Schiller

PhD, RN, APNP, FNP-BC

**Assistant Professor / Nurse Practitioner
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, USA**

Dr Schiller is an assistant professor and nurse practitioner. She is faculty at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, teaching both graduate and undergraduate nursing students. Her primary research focus has been agricultural occupational health and safety. She has worked to introduce agricultural health and safety content into both the undergraduate and graduate nursing curriculum which has included on farm visits to deliver services to Hispanic dairy workers. Dr Schiller was involved in the development of the Rural Health Initiative, an innovative program in eastern Wisconsin that provides farm visits to promote health and safety. She has nearly 30 years of experience in nursing with 15 years of experience as a nurse practitioner in family practice in rural Wisconsin. She is a certified AgriSafe provider and was awarded the AgriSafe provider of the year



award in 2010. She is actively involved in training new AgriSafe providers. She integrates agricultural health and safety into her family practice with individuals and families across the lifespan. Dr Schiller feels a healthy and safe agricultural sector is dependent upon education and intervention at many different access points including family practice, health care provider education, farmer education, community education, and policy advocacy.

Australian Speakers



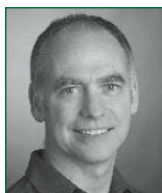
Clinical Associate Professor Susan Brumby

RN RM GDipWomen'sStudies MHM MACN ACHSE

Director, National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC

Sue is the founding director of the National Centre for Farmer Health an innovative partnership between Deakin University and Western District Health Service, Hamilton Australia. She leads the implementation of five key strategies to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of farm men and women which includes inventive and award winning service delivery models, farmer research, Agriclincs, novel education and the farmer health website **www.farmerhealth.org.au**. In 2010, the National Centre for Farmer Health hosted the Opening the Gates on Farmer Health conference where the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health was developed and endorsed.

Sue's background blends both a theoretical and practical understanding of agriculture, health, management and rural communities. She has been recognised with personal awards for her outstanding and visionary service to rural health and has practical experience in farming and rural communities, managing the family property of performance recorded beef cattle and self replacing fine wool flock for twelve years. Sue is the Principal Investigator of the award winning Sustainable Farm Families™ (SFF) project which has been delivered in all states of Australia. She has also been Chief Investigator on Australian Research Council, NHMRC, RIRDC and beyondblue grants. She has previously been awarded a Victorian Travelling Fellowship to the USA and the EU looking at farmer health and decision making.



Associate Professor John Edwards

PhD, RN, APNP, FNP-BC

**Toxicologist & Associate Dean – Teaching and Learning
School of the Environment, Flinders University, SA**

John Edwards has been a toxicologist since the early 1980s, with broad interests in the effects of occupational and environmental chemical exposures in human health. This has involved investigations of chemicals including pesticides, solvents, carcinogens, illegal drug laboratories and genetically modified foods. The common theme of his research in all these areas has been how to estimate exposure levels in individuals and how these exposures occur. He is a senior staff member in the School of the Environment at Flinders University in South Australia, with major teaching responsibilities in the area of health and environment. He is also Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning. Outside work John is a keen sailor, both as a qualified yachtmaster and a cruising instructor.



Rob & Kathy Henry

Owners

Woodrising Farms, TAS

Diverse farmers Rob and Kathy Henry of Woodrising Farms in Cressy Tasmania will be attending the conference as keynote speakers, and Rob sitting on the hypothetical's panel. Woodrising Farm is a family owned mixed farming business. Aside from their wool, prime lamb flock and Coopworth stud, their 431ha farm includes opium poppies, peas, grass seeds, clover seeds, pyrethrum, hybrid cabbage seed, peppermint and fennel for the essential oils market, a steam distillation unit, onions, brussel sprouts and organic compost, just to name a few! Several farming accidents within the local community prompted Woodrising Farm to develop and implement a comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management system, creating a safer and more efficient working environment for both workers and visitors to Woodrising Farms. They will be sharing their OHS model at 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' conference in September, 2012.





Julie Hill

**Director, Data and Analysis
Safe Work Australia**

Julie Hill began working for the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission in 1994. Since that time she has worked for it and its successors, the Australian Safety and Compensation Council and Safe Work Australia. Julie is currently working as Director, Data and Analysis at Safe Work Australia. The Data and Analysis section produces statistical reports using a range of data sources including workers' compensation data, notified fatalities, the National Coroners Information System, cancer data and hospital separations data.



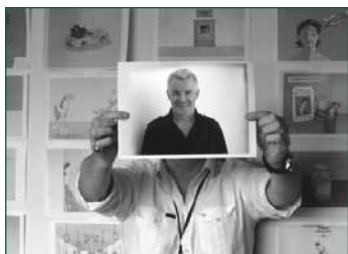
Dr Anthony Hogan

BA (Welfare Studies) M.Sc (Hons) PhD QPMR MASRC

**Director, National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia
The Australian National University, ACT**

Dr Anthony Hogan is a Fellow in the School of Sociology at The Australian National University, the Director of the University's National Institute for Rural & Regional Australia and Convenor of the Australian Sociological Association's thematic group on applied sociology. Anthony holds qualifications in sociology, welfare work, epidemiology and rehabilitation counselling and is accredited as a Qualified Practising Market Researcher (QPMR) by the Australian Market and Social Research Society and is an Adjunct Associate Professor with the Centre for Research Action in Public Health at the University of Canberra. Anthony is President of the ACT Deafness Resource Centre, a community based organisation providing services and support to people with acquired hearing loss.

While continuing his work in disability studies over the past 5 years Anthony has also focused his research energies on the many social issues arising in rural Australia in the face of economic and climate change. His first major project in this space was the provision of quantitative inputs into the Kenny Report on Drying which examined social aspects of drought and drying in Australia. He subsequently has completed several projects on the health and social impacts of climate change on Australian farmers.



Matthew Johnstone

Author, Illustrator, and Public Speaker
Drawn From Experience, NSW

Matthew Johnstone had 15+ years as a creative in advertising where he worked in Sydney, San Francisco and New York. He worked for some of the world's best agencies and won many industry awards.

In 2005 he published *I Had a Black Dog*, an illustrated book on what it is to suffer depression and what can be learnt from it. This book has been a best seller and is now published in 20+ countries. In 2008, with his wife Ainsley, he published the sequel *Living With a Black Dog*, a guide to those who care for people living with depression. This also was a best seller and made the top 10 best selling books in the UK in February 2009.

In October 2009 Matthew, along with his co-author; James Kerr, published *Alphabet of the Human Heart: The A to Zen of Life*. It's a book about balance. This book went to number 3 in the UK in March 2011. His new book, *Quiet the Mind* is an illustrated guide on how to meditate and was released in March 2012.

Matthew works as the Creative Director of the Black Dog Institute developing various creative, educational programs on understanding mental health, mood disorders, mindfulness and resilience for schools and the work place. He also delivers talks to community groups, schools, corporations, health resorts, sporting groups and the farming community. He has talked extensively all over Australia and the UK.

Fifteen years working as a creative in advertising gave Matthew skills he didn't fully appreciate until he began this work at the podium. Those skills are being able to communicate simply and effectively about topics that are intrinsically difficult to articulate. His unique point of difference is that all his slides are illustrations, illustrated by himself. There's not a pie chart or graph to be seen and actual words are a rarity.

'I truly believe the old cliché that a picture is worth a thousand words. An image is simply more visceral and gets to the core of the message in the blink of an eye. I've also come to understand that, even if they'd never admit it, adults still love a good picture story', says Matthew.





Professor Scott Kitchener

MBBS(UQ) DrPH MD GAICD FAFPHM(RACP) COL RAAMC

**Medical Director / Chief Executive Officer
Queensland Rural Medical Education, QLD**

Scott Kitchener completed the The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Family Medicine Training Program in 1992 and continued onto advanced training in Population Health to receive a Fellowship in the Faculty of Public Health Medicine (The Royal Australasian College of Physicians). He has practiced in rural Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia as well as in Timor and Bougainville. After completing doctoral studies in primary care of tropical disease he worked on vaccine development in Cambridge then returned to The University of Queensland in 2004 teaching in postgraduate medicine and public health. Scott and his family moved back to Toowoomba in 2006 where he worked for Queensland Health developing the role of Director of Rural Medicine on the Darling Downs in addition to part time medical education with Queensland Rural Medical Education (QRME). He became full time with QRME in 2008. He also practices in Clifton and Pittsworth on the Darling Downs.



Jock Laurie

President

National Farmers' Federation, ACT & NSW

Walcha farmer and National Farmers' Federation President Jock Laurie always wanted to be a farmer growing up but never saw himself taking on such a representative role. A fourth generation farmer, Jock was raised on his family's 3,500 acre property "Deloraine" near Walcha, where he returned following his schooling in Sydney. In 1997, Jock and his wife Lyn went out on their own, leasing country from the family business and buying a small place of their own, "Tungurra", near Bendemeer, to run a fine wool sheep, cross bred lamb and cattle operation.

Jock's career in agricultural politics began with a severe case of foot rot. The dedicated farmer became active on the issue in the Walcha area, and was invited onto the NSW Farmers' Association Foot Rot Steering Committee. Three years later, Jock was elected onto the Association's Board, and in 2005, took over as Association President.

During his time at NSW Farmers' Association, Jock also held positions on a number of key agricultural bodies, including as a member of the NSW Agricultural Ministerial Advisory Council, Chair of the NSW Rural Mental Health Network and a Director of the National Farmers' Federation.

In 2009, having served the maximum term of four years as President, Jock stepped down from the helm, and spent a year at home on the farm at Walcha before returning to agri-politics as President of the National Farmers' Federation in November 2011. He represents farmer's interests on the carbon tax, the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, research and development, drought policy, infrastructure, food security, free trade, and most recently animal welfare and Australia's live export industry.



Cathy McGowan AO

BA (Monash), Dip. Ed (Melbourne)

M.Applied Science in Agriculture & Rural Development

Rural Consultant, Farmer and Academic

Cathy McGowan AO is a rural consultant, farmer and academic. Over the past 25 years she has established and managed an international consulting and training company. Her expertise lies in gender in business, agriculture and research. She has been the team leader for a number of national capacity building and research programs with the horticulture, sugar and dairy industries and has extensive experience in community consultation, program design and management.

Her experience includes researching effective services for rural communities, such as child care and palliative care and the design and presentation of leadership and change management programs for agricultural industries.

Since 2004 Cathy has been mentoring and facilitating processes with women in Ireland and Papua New Guinea to establish national organisations for women in agriculture. She has been on a government advisory committee on the World Trade Organisation, chair of the Regional Women's Advisory Council offering policy advice to the Deputy Prime Minister and his department, and president of the national organisation, Australian Women in Agriculture. She is currently on the (national) Rural Research and Development Council. She is a graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership Program and a Churchill Fellow. In 2001 her work with the dairy industry won an international award for excellence in extension.





Dr Daryl Pedler

MBBS (Adelaide); FRACGP; MPH (Monash); DHSc (Deakin)

Professor of Rural General Practice, Deakin University, VIC

Daryl has been a rurally-based doctor for over 30 years. Over this time his duties have been in either clinical (general practice and emergency medicine) or academic positions (medical student teaching, research into rural injury and rural health professional education). An interest in the nature of farm injury and how it may be prevented arose from his clinical experiences. Subsequently, his professional doctorate was on the impact of acute farm injuries on rurally-based health services. In June 2012, he commenced as the inaugural Professor of Rural General Practice at Deakin University, based in Warrnambool, but with responsibility across south-west Victoria.



Lynne Strong

Owner, Clover Hill Dairies

National Program Director, Art4Agriculture, NSW

Lynne Strong is a proud sixth-generation farmer who was drawn to dairying after a career as a pharmacist. She is co-owner/operator, with husband Michael and son Nicholas, of multi-award-winning Clover Hill Dairies at Jamberoo on the NSW South Coast. Lynne is actively involved in the day-to-day running of their two dairy farms, which produce milk for 50,000 Australians daily. Clover Hill Dairies is the National Landcare Woolworths Primary Producer of the Year and Lynne is runner up in the Rabobank National Farm Industry Leader of the Year.

Lynne believes the health, wealth and happiness of all Australians is reliant on the rural sector's ability to build lifelong relationships with the people who buy their food and fibre. To provide a vehicle to develop these two way conversations Lynne initiated the innovative 'Art4Agriculture' programs which started with Picasso Cows and is now the Archibull Prize. The Archibull Prize uses art and multimedia to engage thousands of students in learning about the valuable role farmers play in Australia's future. With the Art4Agriculture team she is working on establishing an Australia wide network of 'young agricultural champions' who are trained to tell the great story of Australian agriculture to the next generation of consumers – students. This program connects young people from different food and fibre industries. They get to see their similarities, they find common ground, they realise each has issues that are just as challenging, and they learn how they can help each other.



Greg Warren
General Manager
Foodbank Australia

Greg has had a significant career in the Australian Grocery Industry spanning over 25 years. He has held leadership roles in both operations and buying across a number of businesses including Coles Supermarkets, Bilo Supermarkets and Pick 'N Pay Hypermarkets.

Foodbank is the largest hunger relief organisation in Australia acting as the conduit between the food industry's donations and the welfare sector's needs. Greg's primary role at Foodbank is twofold:

- Firstly, to work with our donors across the entire supply chain (primary producers, manufacturers and retailers) to ensure that we are rescuing all usable products that may otherwise go to waste – donated to Foodbank and not dumped.
- Secondly, to work with our donors to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for the supply of staple food items such as milk, cereal, canned meals, packet meals, etc. Unfortunately, we never have enough of these products and the challenge is to develop supply programs that can meet the demand and be sustained year after year.

We call this our Collaborative Supply Program where we endeavour to have all the stakeholders in the manufacture of a product donate their component (e.g. manufacture, input ingredients, packaging and transport). By doing this we share the load across many stakeholders and their individual contributions are sustainable.



Keynote Abstracts *(in program order)*

PLENARY SESSION 1: Welcome and Conference Opening

Keynote 1: **Clinical Associate Professor Susan Brumby**

A decade in farmer health

Western District Health Service (WDHS) is situated in Hamilton, in the renowned agricultural hub of South West Victoria, Australia. With a broad range of farming industries including cropping, wool, forestry, dairy, horticulture and meat production, Hamilton was previously recognised as the Wool Capital of the World and is home to industry events “Sheepvention” and “Beef Expo.”

Farmers have a long history of specific and unrecognised health needs and poorer health outcomes. Like many rural health services, Western District Health Service was frustrated with how they connected with farmers to improve their health, wellbeing and safety. Many health professionals were having difficulty engaging with farmers, particularly as most were not familiar with the type of work that farmers undertake. In 2002 following an application to the Joint Research Venture on Farm Health and Safety, WDHS received funding to pilot Sustainable Farm Families (SFF), a project designed to improve farmer health.

SFF contextualised farm family health in the farmers’ day to day operational activities and the program was well received by farmers, agricultural industries and health services. From this small but critical beginning, new opportunities arose to address farmer health at the individual farmer level, and the broader industry policy level. In 2008, the National Centre for Farmer Health - a partnership between Western District Health Service and Deakin University received funding through the Victorian government Future Farming Strategy and the Helen and Geoff Handbury Trust.

Five key areas were identified for action:

1. Agricultural Health and Medicine as a post graduate course
2. Research and development to contribute to the evidence base on farmer health
3. Accessible information through www.farmerhealth.org.au
4. AgriSafe™ clinics
5. Sustainable Farm Families™ data harvesting

A decade in farmer health will highlight the accomplishments and learnings, including baseline anthropometric and health behaviours of farmers from 2003-2012. Australia faces a decreasing number of farms, a diminishing and ageing agricultural workforce, increased climate variability and raised global food demands. It is now more important than ever to find ways to keep farmers and rural communities thriving.

Keynote 2: Lynne Strong

Art feeds the mind. Farmers feed the future.

Sadly Australia is complacent about the challenges to food security. There is a lack of appreciation by society in general of the interconnectedness of environment, agriculture, food and health. If we are to move forward and meet the mushrooming food needs of the cities and the community's expectation about environmental sustainability then both rural and urban communities must have greater empathy for one another.

Farmers today see themselves equally as dedicated to the health and sustainability of the land they live on, as to the production of food and fibre. Meanwhile urban consumers often purchase their food and fibre with some innate suspicion or little knowledge of the value chain that provides it.

A mutual appreciation between producers and consumers of each other's values and needs is reliant on the rural sector's ability to build lifelong relationships with the people who buy their food and fibre. This means creating a community which is engaged and informed with agriculture is our most important job and is the key to the sustainability of, not just agriculture – but to the entire fabric of our modern advanced society.

To provide a vehicle to develop these two way conversations the innovative 'Art4Agriculture' programs, which started with Picasso Cows and are now the Archibull Prize and the Young Farming Champions program, were initiated.

The Archibull Prize uses art and multimedia to engage thousands of students in learning about the valuable role farmers play in Australia's future.

The Young Farming Champions will be an Australia wide network of 'young agricultural champions' who are trained to tell the great story of Australian agriculture to the next generation of consumers – students. This program connects young people from different food and fibre industries. They get to see their similarities, they find common ground, they realise each has issues that are just as challenging, and they learn how they can help each other.



Keynote 3: Dr Lisa Schiller

Farmer health... It is our business

Farmers in the U.S. are getting older - with the average age 56 years. Their health is being affected by increased mechanisation (decreased physical exercise) along with increased demand for production by fewer farmers (economic and psychological stressors). Farmers are working longer (well into their 60's, 70's, and 80's), with many families not transitioning the farm to the next generation. In the U.S., farmer health is further compromised by significant uninsurance and underinsurance, which leaves many farm families without preventive care services. Farming remains among the most dangerous occupations in the U.S., with farm families including children experiencing significant risk of morbidity and mortality related to occupational injury and exposure. In the U.S. the number of farms has decreased and demand for production has increased. The majority of farmers in the U.S., approximately 98% however, remain family farmers, of whom most are not regulated for safety. In the U.S. there are increasingly more Hispanic immigrant workers in agriculture, particularly in dairy, which presents particular problems in that the only legal pathways for immigrants to enter the U.S. is on a seasonal basis, which does not suit the dairy industry. Additionally, there is a lack of a standard framework or network to deliver agriculturally specific occupational health and safety education, a lack of knowledge regarding farm health and safety among health care professionals, and governmental funding to promote farm safety is dwindling. A multipronged approach to address these issues is required to improve health and safety for farm families.

Farmer health and safety has been addressed by several not for profit organisations in the U.S. The AgriSafe Network and the Rural Health Initiative are two of those organisations. The AgriSafe Network is a national program based in Iowa that provides education and support to health care professionals and others in agricultural occupational health and safety. AgriSafe provides occupational health services to farm families through traditional health care systems and via AgriSafe clinics. In my practice, which is largely rural, it is part of every visit for a farmer or farm family member to address agriculturally specific health and safety issues. The Rural Health Initiative, a regional Midwestern program, delivers preventive screening and education to farm families 'at the farm' via farm visits by a health coach or nurse. Although these programs have been effective, they are regional and do not address the overall problem of integration of farmer health and safety within the health care system and more importantly into the culture of farming.

The concept of health and safety must be integrated into the curricula of all health care professionals. Nurses, as the largest sector of health care professionals, are uniquely positioned to provide this expertise. At the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire we have integrated education on agricultural health and safety into the curriculum for nurse practitioner students, of whom many will be providing primary care in rural as well as urban areas. In addition, we have developed a clinical experience for undergraduate students to visit local dairy farms that employ Hispanic workers. The students are all Spanish language minors and provide health and safety education bilingually to both immigrant and local workers. We have collaborated with local health care departments in providing this care which strengthens community awareness and sustainability. There has been collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Medical School to address agriculturally related health topics with medical students via summer projects while assigned to our local clinic.

Farm health and safety must be addressed from multiple individuals, in multiple settings, multiple times in order to affect change. In addition, the importance of addressing farmer health and safety through education, integration and policy is vital to reaching health and safety goals in the farming community. Farm safety and health is all of our business, and the key to sustainability.

Keynote 4: Professor Scott Kitchener

Teaching agricultural medicine to rural based medical students and general practice registrars

Agriculture is a dangerous industry over-represented in occupational mortality and morbidity statistics in Australia and other industrialised nations. An additional health issue is the proximity of farming families to the environmental hazards. Little specific and integrated teaching of these health issues is included in even evolved rural medical education such as in Australia.

Here we report on the teaching detail and success of a novel, integrated agricultural medicine teaching program to medical students and General Practice vocational trainees in Australia using a multimodal approach including experiential teaching on a working farm relevant to the district in which learners will practice.

This program has been well reported by both Registrars and Medical Students as providing valuable insights into improving cultural competence and understanding issues confronting farming families.



Keynote 5: Rob & Kathy Henry

Implementing OHS models on the farm

Rob and Kathy are 2nd generation farmers at Woodrising Farm, 45 minutes south west of Launceston in the upper northern midlands of Tasmania. Their 25 year old son Mike has a Bachelor of Bio Technology from UTAS and has recently returned home to join the business.

They run several agricultural businesses from their 1200 acre home property Woodrising near Cressy. They lease a further 800 acres and Rob is the business manager for 2 large local properties totalling a further 7, 000 acres.

They have several value adding enterprises that are also run in conjunction with the family farm.

They are responsible for the day to day safety of 14 full time employees, up to 30 casual employees at peak planting/harvest times throughout the year and the considerable number of contractors that can visit the various work sites under their control every day.

Rob and Kathy first became aware of the importance of on farm safety when they established a small potato harvesting contracting business in the mid 1980's which for the first time, required them to employ several casual labour units per season.

This was the beginning of their journey towards developing and implementing a documented safety system for their business. Their journey took considerable time and finally cumulated with the business being awarded the 2009 Tasmanian award for the best workplace health and safety practices in a small business and went on to represent the state at the National awards and received a highly commended award.

Rob and Kathy understand the unique difficulties that farmers face in preparing and implementing an on farm safety system and would like to share their story and their system in the hope that it will encourage other farmers to take on the challenge of making their farms a safer place to live and work.

PLENARY SESSION 4:

Mental Health – Wagging the black dog’s tail

Keynote 6: **Matthew Johnstone**

Walking and talking the black dog in the country

For me personally, the real upside being a public speaker is that I get to go to places that I’d never go to on my own fruition. Big corporations, mining companies, professional sporting groups, schools, police services and so forth.

Rurally, I’ve been to many far off communities in the middle of absolutely nowhere and met incredible characters with the most amazing life stories.

My father was a farmer so I feel most comfortable in these areas: the land, the smells, the lingo, the attitude and outlook are all like putting on an old favourite coat.

Often when I speak, it’s about mental health, what happens when and if we lose it, how we can regain it and how to build mental fortitude and resilience.

Sadly my speaking adventures are often in areas that have been affected by drought, floods, fires, cyclones, the down turn in the economy and even earthquakes (NZ).

Even without these catastrophic events, farmers are isolated by the land through distance, and culture. Asking for help, talking about sensitive issues such as mental health and learning how to be vulnerable isn’t generally found in the *‘Farmers Guide to Life’*. *‘She’ll be right’* is typically the verbal band-aid for many cases of adversity faced by farmers.

If there’s one thing I’d like the rural communities to take away from hearing me speak is that asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it is in fact the complete opposite. There is no shame in asking for help. The only real shame is missing out on life.

Someone once said to me that *‘we need to look after our farmers because they are the one’s that feed us.’* It was a simple yet thought provoking statement, which has certainly inspired me to help where I can.



Keynote 7: Jock Laurie

Experience of depression in farming communities

It is a well known fact that farmers are among the group at highest risk of suicide in Australia – a fact that is of great concern to the President of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), Jock Laurie.

For Jock, a farmer from Walcha in northern NSW, the mental health of Australia's 140,000 farmers is a key priority.

Before taking up the role as NFF President, Jock was President of the NSW Farmers' Association during the height of the drought, and has seen firsthand the effect of prolonged drought, isolation and the lack of access to medical services on the farming community.

As the then NSW Farmers' President, Jock was integral in the development of the Rural Mental Health Network, an innovative partnership formed in 2006 to bring together the expertise and resources of key stakeholders involved with rural mental health across rural NSW. The Network created the Mental Health Blueprint, which outlined to the State and Federal Governments a number of key solutions to help ease the devastating mental health crisis gripping many rural communities in NSW at the time.

Today, while Australia may now be officially drought free, weather and other challenges continue to affect the mental health of Australia's farmers. High rainfall over the past year has been both a blessing and curse, bringing much needed moisture, but with it also widespread flooding. These floods have wreaked havoc on crops, livestock, fences, roads and railway lines – and the resilience of our nation's farmers.

The NFF exists as the peak body for Australia's farmers and the agricultural sector, representing the interests of farmers to Government and fighting for a strong and sustainable agricultural sector. Jock, as NFF President, is also an ardent supporter and advocate for measures that support farmer mental health.

PLENARY SESSION 5

Keynote 8: Catherine McGowan AO

Bloom where you are planted

As most farmers know, it's relatively easy to sow seeds. It's the next steps that can be challenging. In a light and entertaining presentation, Cathy will talk about the role of community in creating environments where nurturing, pollinating, pruning, fertilizing and eventually harvesting of the seed can take place. Blooming is not about reaching perfection its about reaching potential. For many of us there may be little choice where we are planted, or transplanted, and its our communities that can make the difference between surviving and thriving. There is strong evidence supporting the connection between healthy communities and healthy people.

Keynote 9: Greg Warren

An Australia without hunger... good food for all

Hunger is not just a 3rd world issue... it's a hidden problem in Australia.

It's a little known fact, but in our lucky country approximately 1 in 10 Australians live in food insecurity and will seek support every year... sadly half of them are children.

The number of Australians relying on welfare agencies is increasing - up 11% in the last year. The current economic climate is resulting in people turning to charity who previously would never have dreamed of seeking such support. It's not just traditionally vulnerable groups such as the homeless, but also the aged, single parents and working poor.

Foodbank commenced operations in Australia about 20 years ago and is today Australia's largest hunger relief organisation. Foodbank has food distribution centres in all states in both capital cities and regional locations. Foodbank acts as the conduit between the food industry and the welfare agencies that support those in need in the community.

Food companies (primary producers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers) donate surplus product to Foodbank. This can be donated for various reasons such as: shorted date coded, out of specification, deleted products, old packaging etc.



Foodbank in turn distributes the food and groceries to over 2,500 welfare agencies across Australia (35% located in regional areas). Welfare agencies have a variety of needs and Foodbank is able to cater for different types of agencies (e.g. from traditional soup kitchens, to household hampers and emergency food parcels).

Last year, Foodbank distributed enough food for 32 million meals; that's approximately 88,000 meals every day. Unfortunately, it's not enough and the demand for food by welfare agencies is far greater than is currently being supplied.

To address this, Foodbank has initiated an innovative product sourcing program to generate a sustainable supply of key staple products such as milk, cereal, pasta, pasta sauce, canned meals and fruit and vegetables.

It involves all stakeholders in the supply of a product (raw materials, ingredients, manufacture, packaging and transport) contributing their component. By doing this, it means that no individual bears the full cost and it can be shared across multiple partners. As a result, the combined contributions have an enormous impact and we are able to generate a more regular supply of essential items.

Keynote 10: Dr Roberto Leonardi

Farmer health and wellbeing – strategies to become fully engaged now and in the future!

Except for droughts, fires and floods, farmers stress levels are seemingly rising due to the changing nature of farming where globalisation, restructuring, the ageing farmer population and increasingly prohibitive legislation affect day to day farming activities. Emotional stress is impacting not only farmers, but also their families, communities as well as the support and mental health services themselves. One proven and cutting edge strategy of managing emotional stress is for farmers, like other managers and leaders, to manage not only their time but rather their energy. Indeed, farmers managing their energy is the key to great performance as well as to health, happiness and life balance. This approach is based on four key principles: full engagement, energy capacity, building energy capacity as well as using positive energy management rituals.

Indeed, the old paradigm was to avoid stress. The new paradigm now and in the future is to seek stress, recover and build both resilience and capacity to better tackle the personal and vocational challenges of being a farmer. Farmer wellbeing - as it is with all other vocations - should be to be physically energised, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned.

PLENARY SESSION 6:

Agricultural Hazards and Safety - Reducing harm on the farm

Keynote 11: Associate Professor John Edwards

Farm chemicals – estimating individual risk

Global pesticide exposures are reported to be responsible for over 3 million acute poisonings each year, with the majority in developing countries. There have been significant efforts to estimate risks associated with pesticides, with strategies ranging from desktop evaluations (of properties of chemicals, the quantities used, and the likely pathways for uptake), to environmental sampling, to quantitate potential absorption, and to personal monitoring or sampling to establish individual dose. The data gathered from each of these approaches depend upon what we measure and how we interpret them.

Desktop evaluations are a generic approach, which may include quantitative or qualitative mathematical modelling of specific exposure scenarios to yield theoretical estimates of risk. These can generally be applied to groups or communities but are less useful for establishing individual or actual risks. Environmental sampling and analysis may be targeted to specific exposure or pesticide application situations to establish potential risks. These estimates may include contributions from sources including occupational exposure, para-occupational transfer, domestic sources and food residues. However, the true risk experienced by individuals may depend upon personal factors such as workplace task, hygiene issues, diet, metabolic capacity and susceptibility. More direct estimates of personal risk require a closer investigation of authentic individual exposures. This may be achieved by personal monitoring, including biological monitoring (sampling urine, blood or other tissues for chemical analysis) to estimate dose. While these may provide more refined estimates of risk, they do not account for individual susceptibility, which itself depends on the mechanism of toxic effect. Biological effect markers, examining specific biochemical or other physiological responses in individuals, allow highly integrated estimates of risk since they are a consequence of the interplay between exposure, uptake and response.

Deciding on a strategy for evaluating exposure is a key part of the risk assessment process. However, different strategies may be applied depending on the circumstances of the community or individuals being investigated. Our approach to developing communities with ubiquitous, high level exposures with poor hygiene or control will be quite different from our investigation of first-world



exposures that may be low level, long term issues. The former may be more concerned with reducing severe, acute toxic outcomes as an early step in gaining control of exposure. The latter may be concerned with diminishing risks associated with perceived rather than actual exposures.

Using examples from research projects this presentation will explore the types of studies that may be performed and the quality of evidence of adverse effect that may be gathered.

Keynote 12: Julie Hill

Agriculture: A dangerous industry

Agriculture is one of Australia's most dangerous industries. More farm workers are killed at work than in any other Australian industry except road freight transport. Tragically, more than 300 farm workers lost their lives from a work-related incident in the last seven years to 2010. More than a quarter of these fatalities were from a tractor-related incident. Farm workers also experience one of the highest rates of serious injury with serious injury workers' compensation claims for farmers occurring at nearly double the national average rate.

Later this year Safe Work Australia will release the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022*. This strategy will provide the framework for work health and safety in Australia for the next decade. Agriculture is identified as a priority industry. In this strategy for the first time the definition of 'working lives' will not just focus on traditional workplace models but will extend to industries like agriculture, where farmers live and work on a farm 24/7.

The presentation will explore the importance of this strategy and what it means for the agricultural sector. Also covered will be death, injury and disease work-related statistics for the industry and work Safe Work Australia is doing to help all farm workers return home safely each day.

Keynote 13: Dr Daryl Pedler

Human injury on the farm – causes, prevention and implications

Everyone attending this conference will be aware that farming is a dangerous occupation and that injury has the potential to impact seriously on farm productivity. While the initial focus of this presentation will be on acute injury data from both local (south-west Victorian) and other (mainly Australian) sources, the presentation will then move to a consideration of the implications of the data and opportunities for injury prevention.

Injury can affect any member of the farming community, regardless of age; all involved, therefore, have an ongoing role in its prevention. However, there are also other groups/individuals that can assist in farm injury prevention. A model, which suggests that injury prevention can be enhanced by specifying the nature of involvement of both the farming community and other groups beyond that community, will be discussed.

PLENARY SESSION 7

Keynote 14: Dr Anthony Hogan

Health, wellbeing and the adaptive capacity of Australian farmers

More than ever, Australian family farmers are under stress from constant change in their environment. Be it climate change (droughts and floods), water policy, the price of the Australian dollar, the GFC, free trade, the latest bug or the compressing terms of trade, Australian farmers are under constant pressure to adapt. This paper draws on recently collected data from three farming communities in the Murray Darling Basin: Waikerie (SA); Namoi (NSW) and St George (Qld) and reports on the adaptive capacity of a representative sample of 2200 people; one third of whom identify themselves as farmers. This paper examines the adaptive capacity of farmers at the individual and collective level and compares their outcomes with other rural Australians. The paper examines the extent to which individual, as distinct from collective adaptive capacity is predictive of health and wellbeing. While farmers are noted for their stoicism and resilience, the data suggest that they key to wellbeing is related to the extent to which one is connected to people in the community, where one has access to collective support in facing continuing challenges.



Concurrent Abstracts and Presenters *(in program order)*

Tuesday 18th September

CONCURRENT SESSION 1A: The Business of Farming

Psychosocial support needs of farmers experiencing financial stress

Patricia McNamara, Grant Doxey, Rural Financial Counselling Service, VIC

In recent years there has been an increasing focus on improving farm productivity and sustainability, accompanied by a discourse emphasising the need to promote the 'farm business', rather than to protect the 'family farm'^{1,2}. One measure utilised by Australian Governments has been a series of exit grants providing means tested financial support for farmers who decide to leave the industry. The most recent of these exit grant schemes were terminated by mid-2011.

This presentation reports on a study conducted in late 2010 and early 2011 to explore the full range of factors, including non-financial issues, affecting farmers' decision-making when they considered taking government grants to leave the industry. This was a qualitative descriptive study; semi-structured interviews were conducted with 37 participants. The findings of the study remain highly pertinent, as they highlight the non-financial challenges of farmers with serious financial issues.

The data illustrates that for many of those who exited the industry the provision of an exit grant was coincidental to decision-making. For many the decision was in large part determined by issues such as ageing, health (including mental health), and disability and family circumstances. It is clear that for all participants the decision-making process was a fraught one with mixed social, emotional and financial outcomes. Earliest possible intervention to address both financial and non-financial issues is an ongoing imperative. Farmers continuing in the industry may also struggle with decision-making as

¹ Pilot of Drought Reform Measures in Western Australia: Progress Report 17th December, 2010 http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/objtwr/imported_assets/content/fm/wapilot_factsheet.pdf Accessed February 25, 2011

² Cockfield, Geoff and Botterill, Linda. Rural Adjustment Schemes: juggling politics, welfare and markets. Research and evaluation. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, v.65, no.2, June 2006: (70)-82.

a result of depression and/or anxiety, and could sometimes make good use of psycho-social support.

Strategy in context: Farming in the green, red, black and... the doghouse!

Georgina Luckock, RMIT University, VIC

Does the way in which farmers account for context impact their capacity to respond to change?

Farmers are at the front line of many changes, with considerable overlap between family, business and environment. The strategic decisions farmers make, both as individuals and as ‘custodians of the land’, can have significant and widespread consequences: there is more than ‘business’ to the business of farming.

Many farmers strive to maintain or improve their resources. Critical to achieving this is appropriate response to the environments in which a farm operates, allowing farmers to manage in accordance with their principles, capacity, context and strategy.

The purpose of the current study is to learn more about how farmers account for this context when making strategic decisions. This project asks how farmers perceive and respond to the economy, society and natural environment, in conjunction with more personal factors, as important aspects of strategic farm decision-making. The myriad factors and trade-offs involved in this process are rarely explicit, and reflect a complexity seldom accommodated by linear models and tools.

Key to this research will be the stories of individuals, learning from the experiences of farming families and representatives of farm-related organisations. The project will consider response (or reaction) to change and seeks to learn more about what triggers a shift in strategy.

Existing knowledge in relation to this spans interactions of issues including change management, decision-making, strategy, and perception. This paper presents a summary of the current state of knowledge in relation to some of these factors influencing farmers’ strategic decisions.

Fundamentally, the paper sets the background in which the experiences and lessons of farming families can be better understood, informing our knowledge of what, in the midst of complexity and inherent change, influences the strategic decisions made by farmers, and why.



PinG: Building women's capacity for farm and rural resilience

Kim Blenkiron, Partners in Grain Inc., SA, **Kerry Thomas**, *interPART* & Associates, SA

In changing global and local contexts, building the resilience of farming families in communities with limited resources is becoming a critical objective.

Partners in Grain (PinG) uses a community engagement model, with a focus on farming women, to build long lasting change in South Australia's rural communities. Over the past 11 years, PinG has achieved significant and diverse capacity development outcomes within grain-growing communities, with limited core funds from industry, supplemented by funding through competitive grants and collaborative in-kind assistance from the business sector.

PinG works in rural communities that are traditionally poorly serviced by government and commercial training providers. Women in these remote locations want to undertake training to increase their involvement in the farming businesses they are a part of. PinG works with these women to identify priority needs to ensure high quality training and development is delivered. There are seventeen groups operating in South Australia, each with a member volunteer coordinator.

This practical, self-directed program is informed by contemporary principles drawn from both community development and capacity building theoretical approaches, blended with a unique mix of business training and health and wellbeing activities, all within a context of building triple bottom line resilience.

Giving women the opportunity to learn in a women's only environment removes some barriers to participation. The approach adopted by PinG in South Australia has generated outcomes far beyond the initial intention. The group structure provides a forum for women to share common issues and in more remote locations provides a focal point for community social events, helping reduce feelings of isolation. In communities severely affected by drought and other factors, it contributes to individual and family health and wellbeing, as well as business resilience. The wider funding base allows PinG to offer a broader range of activities than just the training related to grain production and farm business management as the original program intended.

PinG also provides a leadership pathway for women to take as they gain confidence to move into wider community and industry roles, providing a safe environment to practice and refine their leadership skills.

Care Farming: Enhancing community connection and resilience for farmers

Sharon Condon, Rural Clinical School, University of Tasmania, TAS

Background: Desktop research into programs involving ‘farmers’ and ‘health’ conducted early in 2012, led to the discovery of the practice of ‘Care Farming’ in the UK.

Method: In April 2012 the RCS sponsored a trip to the UK to investigate the field of care farming and see if this initiative has potential in Australia. Contact was made with the National Care Farm Association in the UK, as well as two types of care farms, one urban and one rural, and organised for a meeting and site visits. Desktop research on care farming, combined with notes from the meeting and visits and an analysis of the documentation provided by the National organisation, form the basis for this presentation.

Results: This research highlighted that European farmers experience constraints not dissimilar to the ones faced by Australian farmers: negative public perception, skills shortage, ageing and financial instability. Care Farming (also known as ‘social farming’ or ‘green care farming’) in Europe has revealed a means to address such issues. Care Farming is the use of commercial farms and agricultural landscapes as a base for promoting mental and physical health, through normal farming activity. Care Farming is a partnership between farmers, health and social care providers and participants.

Care Farming provides a link between the farmers and their community. It opens up opportunities for positive interactions with their community as well as potential for training a future workforce. It also provides an alternative work focus for family members wanting to stay and work on the farm. Additionally, it can provide an alternate income source. In terms of the key issues facing the farming community in Australia, Care Farming can provide the answers.

Conclusion: An ageing farming population, a perception of farming youth that employment options are ‘limited’ and the subsequent loss of youth to urban areas places the future of our farming workforce in doubt. Care farming offers an alternative career choice for those wishing to stay on the land but not pursue the traditional role of farmer and could encourage the next generation to stay on. Disadvantaged groups who are involved in care farming activities have the opportunity to learn skills which have, in the past, resulted in paid employment opportunities.



This presentation will provide an overview of the history of care farming in Europe to date. This will lead into an examination of the two very different situations between the UK and the Netherlands, in terms of care farming. Recommendations and suggestions for adopting a model of care farming in Australia will be provided.

CONCURRENT SESSION 1B: Ageing in Place on Farm – Duty of care versus dignity of risk

“Who will still need me, who will still feed me when I’m 84”?

Zoe O’Callaghan, LaTrobe University, VIC

Background: Australian farmers are ageing in a rural climate where uncertainties of weather, commodity and financial market fluctuations and increasing input costs are putting pressures on their already poor mental health. Additionally, their ageing bodies, deteriorating health and their dwindling energy levels are forcing them to sell or lease the family farm in order to slow down. Many baby boomer farmers are unable to convince their children to take over the family business. The ability to sell for many may not be an option as increasing numbers of properties are hitting the market at the same time. Many will be forced to remain, ageing on the family farm.

Methodology: In the context of these issues my research will provide insight into the personal experiences of those affected and how they construct narratives of ageing in affirmative ways. Narrative ethnography has allowed me to not only listen to the narrative of these farmers but observe my field of study. It allows me to draw linkages between what is said and what is done.

Discussion: The identities of masculine Australian farmers are familiar to us as symbols of the spirit of the bush - hard working, stoic and resilient, tough, independent, proud and strong. These characteristics provide discursive (cultural) materials for identity construction yet are problematic when experiencing an ageing self and an uncertain future.

Results: This presentation reports on the findings from my research into how farmers manage their ageing male identity amid the tensions of contemporary rural life and the implications for this group if they wish to age in place on their family farm.

Older people and heat – learning from the adaptations of an older farming community

Matthew Carroll, Margaret Loughnan, Nigel Tapper, Monash University, VIC

Recent heatwaves in Australia have shown that older people are more vulnerable to extreme heat. It is likely that the impact of heat is moderated by behavioural and housing adaptations. Older people, particularly those in rural communities, have experienced heat extremes throughout their lives, including prior to the introduction of air-conditioning, so may have made adaptations that could inform the wider population. This study uses mixed methods to explore the experiences of older people during the 2011-12 summer in a farming community in Northern Victoria regularly exposed to heat-extremes.

Fourteen older residents attended a focus group to discuss knowledge and behaviours related to hot weather. Household interviews were then conducted in 20 households with 26 participants (Mean age 72.5 years, range 55-90; 11 female, 15 male). A review of the household was undertaken to identify heat adaptations in place and temperature/humidity data loggers were installed around the home and in the town centre. Participants were also asked to complete a daily activity diary.

Overall, it was apparent from the focus group and household interviews that after a lifetime of responding to climate extremes, these rural participants did not feel vulnerable to heat, but reported specific heat-related health concerns or knew 'others' who were vulnerable. Significant household adaptations had been made including awnings or blinds (48%), shade plants (56%) and pergolas (40%). The daily activity diary and weather data are currently being analysed and relevant findings will be discussed in this paper. How activity levels change in response to the daily weather variations will provide insights into behavioural adaptations to heat. The possible impact of farming practices on local climate conditions will also be considered.

The learnings from this older farming community will provide critical information for older people, the general public, and policymakers about preparing and responding to heat-events.



Ageing in place: Supports to promote mobility independence and road safety for older or impaired drivers living in rural communities.

Marilyn Di Stefano, Tricia Williams, VicRoads, VIC, Elizabeth Knight, TAC, VIC

Older drivers tend to be cautious and responsible, obeying road law and generally not drink driving or speeding. Overall, older drivers are involved in fewer crashes than other age groups. However, chronic disease, ill health and medication use are more common in older road users. These factors may increase road safety risks for drivers and pedestrians. In addition, frailty associated with the ageing process means that older road users are at increased risk of serious injury and death.

All drivers, regardless of age, have a responsibility to monitor their fitness to drive and to report to VicRoads or other licensing authorities any serious or chronic medical conditions or disabilities. The Austroads *Assessing fitness to drive for commercial and private vehicle drivers: medical standards for licensing and clinical management guidelines 2012* support health professionals to evaluate and counsel drivers in this regard.

Farmers and other members of rural communities face particular challenges in optimising driver independence, health status and mobility to maintain social, vocational and community participation. Effective ageing in place strategies should incorporate planning for mobility transitions which are sensitive to the needs of farming and other populations.

This paper reviews current driver obligations in relation to medical fitness to drive within the context of VicRoads licensing system, which has no mandatory age based testing requirements. Resources and programs available in Victoria to help inform and support older and impaired drivers to manage driving transitions and community mobility will be discussed. VicRoads' new web pages, as well as TAC and RACV publications and community presentations, will be highlighted.

Health, road safety, motoring and community based partners can work together to provide helpful road safety interventions for older road users and their family and friends.

CONCURRENT SESSION 1C: Partnerships and Community Action

Innovative partnerships for improved farmer family health in NW Tasmania

Stuart Auckland, University Department of Rural Health, TAS **Maree Gleeson**, University of Tasmania, TAS

Tasmania is a highly decentralised State with almost 60% of its population living outside the greater Hobart region. Farming is a primary pursuit for many Tasmanians, with approximately 17,000 employed in the farming sector. Whilst the global financial crisis has had significant impact on the agricultural sector, the outlook for the dairy industry in Tasmania is very positive. The Tasmanian dairy industry comprises 450 farms which directly employ 1,900 people in the farm sector and an additional 800 people in the processing sector. In 2009 - 10 the University of Tasmania conducted a Sustainable Farm Families (SFF) pilot study with dairy farmers in the Circular Head region of North West Tasmania. Findings from the study reaffirmed the importance of strong community based partnerships in the design and delivery of effective farmer health promotion programs. The paper draws on the findings from the Circular Head pilot SFF study with particular reference to the partnership approach. The findings are used to explore the potential application of a knowledge partnering approach for working with place-based farming communities to enable improved health and wellbeing. Knowledge partnering is a methodology for regional and community development which has been developed and piloted by the Institute for Regional Development at the University of Tasmania. The methodology offers a structured way to work with placed based communities and regions to recognise and mobilise knowledge from the “ground up” and to co-produce new knowledge for desired futures. This paper will explore the potential of knowledge partnering as an innovative framework for developing sustainable partnerships with the farming community and building local capacity for improved farmer health and wellbeing.



The role of Local Governments in behaviour change for farming community's health and wellbeing

Michelle Graymore, University of Ballarat, VIC

The role of Local Governments (LG) in community health and wellbeing stretches beyond providing immunisations and public health infrastructure. Council Health and Wellbeing Plans aim to build community capacity, social connectedness and liveability, as well as improving community health. As such, rural and regional LG are looking at ways they can improve their farming community's health and wellbeing through building social connectedness, improving eating and exercise habits, raising awareness about mental health and encouraging social connectedness. This requires a range of behaviour change programs to be implemented.

Effective behaviour change programs require an understanding of behaviour change theories, such as the reasoned action model and social cognition models. These models, and others, show that a key to effective behaviour change is a good understanding of the barriers and enablers of the behaviour that we want to change. These models also tell us that information alone is unlikely to change behaviour. However, many council behaviour change programs are limited to awareness raising and education campaigns, and thus, they have limited impact on the health and wellbeing of their farming communities.

This paper will detail the participatory action research approach that will be used in this project to increase LG officer's capacity to carry out effective behaviour change programs with their communities. This will not only improve their farming community's health and wellbeing, but also enhance the sustainability of their communities. The project takes a research and training approach. The first stage will investigate the barriers and enablers of LG officers to carrying out behaviour change programs using an online survey of LG staff in September 2012. At the same time, the community's capacity and willingness to participate in behaviour change programs will be explored through a mail survey. The results of these surveys will inform a targeted training program, based on behaviour change theories. This program will enhance local government officer's capacity to improve the health and wellbeing of farming communities.

On the road again: Identifying and reducing the socio-economic cost of travelling for health care

Dorothy McLaren, Sean MacDermott, RMIT University (Hamilton), VIC,
James Muir, Western District Health Service, VIC

The socio-economic cost of rural transport is routinely identified as an issue of key significance for rural citizens from all sectors of community life. This study will focus on a particular issue (the socio-economic cost of rural transport), relevant to all rural citizens but often most keenly felt by farmers and farming families, to analyse perceptions of, and investigate practical responses to, planning and policy that reflects the lived experience of farmers and other rural citizens. This project is a joint initiative between the Western District Health Service (WDHS) and RMIT University (Hamilton).

WDHS is providing relevant staff to a Steering Committee, that guides the development of the project and will investigate, discuss and potentially implement responsive changes within the organisation to ameliorate the socio-economic cost of rural travel for their constituents. Qualitative data regarding the socio-economic impact of travel for surgery will be collected from approximately 20 individuals/families. These stories will be used to inform and drive the change process in WDHS. Central themes for this project are the identification and investigation of, and response to, issues of concern in rural communities, and the inclusion of the voice of lived experience in planning, service and policy-development.

Data from this project will form part of the data for the doctoral dissertation: *Responsive Rural Innovation: diverse views, shared evidence, shared decisions*. The outcomes of the research and of the practice-based project will be influenced by, and beneficial to, farming families facing travel for health care.

From the country hills to all Australia

Kelly Foran, Friendly Faces Helping Hands Foundation, NSW

Friendly Faces Helping Hands Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that provides that smiling face when people have to leave their home and their community when they or their loved ones are sick.

Its core operation is a website www.friendlyfaces.info and a 24/7 hotline that provides information on available facilities and support networks.



It was a shock to the system, to say the least, when Boggabri mother-to-be, Kelly Foran, discovered she had a brain tumour the size of a goose egg at 34 weeks into her pregnancy, expecting her first child. A tumultuous journey began when country girl Kelly found herself away from home in a major hospital. Along with her husband, they had to abandon their life on the farm, in the middle of the drought, while feeding stock, and relocate to the city. The stress of trying to organize their home life, as well as having to live out of a suitcase in the city, and deal with difficult news was a rough ride to say the least. Kelly has created a web site to help other rural farming families should they ever find themselves in her situation.

What if this happens to you?

What will you do?

How will you organize your family, farm, animals and jobs?

Who can help you?

Where do you start?

The website is a central portal designed around each major public and private hospital in Australia. Each featured facility is linked to its local services including:

- accommodation
- parking
- cheap eats
- childcare
- chemists
- supermarkets
- social workers and counsellors
- support organisations

It provides a simple, easy to use site which supports farming communities and eases the struggle to access services they need.

“Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass it’s about learning how to dance in the rain.”

LUNCH TIME SESSION: Panel Presentation

Sowing and reaping responsive change in hospital processes: Making the patient journey easier for farming families

Panel Presenters:

James Muir, Director of Anaesthetics, Western District Health Service (WDHS), VIC

Gillian Jenkins, Quality Manager, WDHS, VIC

Bronwyn Roberts, Deputy Director of Nursing, WDHS, VIC

Rebecca Morton, Co-ordinator, Community Transport, WDHS, VIC

Katherine Boyd, Clinical Nurse Specialist, WDHS, VIC

Dorothy McLaren, PhD candidate, RMIT University, VIC

The patient journey refers to the experience of being a patient in hospital. In this case, it also refers to the travel and associated costs that rural citizens, and especially farming families, face when accessing health care. This panel will tell the story-in-progress of an attempt to address this issue at the Hamilton Base Hospital. The project is a joint initiative of the Western District Health Service and the Potter Rural Community Research Network, based at RMIT University's Hamilton campus.

This is a story about the motivation to create change, the imperatives and opportunities of policy directions, linking academic research and practice for community benefit, and the value of listening to the voices of rural people travelling for health care in planning that change.

The panel will explore a specific example of responsive service planning to meet the needs of farmers and farm families in their complex rural context. The session will open with a brief overview of the topic, the local context and the academic and practice implications of the study. The practitioners will then speak briefly about their own motivation to create change and their experience of grass-roots' change management. A final brief summary of the findings thus far from the patient stories collected and current and proposed responses within WDHS will conclude the panel presentation with questions to follow.

The interaction between the panel and the audience, both farming and health practitioners, is of interest in itself and should be beneficial to all concerned. The NCFH conference is a unique opportunity for coal-face practitioners and those who farm or support the farming sector to have a frank and practical discussion about addressing the social and economic costs of staying healthy.



CONCURRENT SESSION 2A:

Mental Health – Wagging the black dog's tail

Assessing the mental health issues of climate variability affecting rural and remote communities in the southern region of Queensland

Delwar Hossain, University of Southern Queensland, QLD

Don Gorman, Betti Chapelle, Rod Saal, Wayne Mann, Geoff Penton,

Objectives: To assess the nature of mental health issues of climate variability affected rural and remote communities, and to identify effective measures to build their capacity to manage mental health.

Design: The project is designed to explore the impact of climate variability on the mental health of rural communities and its appropriate measures. Over 238 community representatives participated in 12 workshops.

Setting: Rural and remote region of southern Queensland

Participants: Representatives of landholders, agribusiness, and community service providers - health professionals and rural financial counsellors, Country Women's Association, allied health workers, local council, police, and teachers.

Main Output: Understanding the social, economic, health, and government legislation impact of climate variability on the mental health of rural and remote communities and appropriate measures to manage their mental health.

Results: Participants from 12 communities identified climate variability related social and economic, health, and government legislation issues that impact on mental health. They suggested that Mental Health First Aid training and community events, such as Tie up the Black Dog, need to be delivered in conjunction with other events. Services and facilities need better coordination, with a more effective means of enhancing the community's awareness.

Conclusion: A common theme that emerged from the workshops was that rural people and their surrounding communities are under sustained stress resulting from a mix of droughts and floods. All were seen to impact on mental health and community well-being. A key cause of mental health problems related to loss of control due to climate events

Key words: health, social, economic, training, stress

Burnout among NZ dairy farmers: Results from two studies

Toni White, Waikato University, **Neels Botha**, Ruakura Research Centre, Waikato, NZ

Dairy farming in New Zealand is characterised by long hours of monotonous hard work. Tipples (2008), for example, estimated that one third of the New Zealand dairy labour force worked at least 70 hours per week, almost twice the normal working week. One of the potential outcomes of working at this intensity is an increase in fatigue and mental exhaustion. Results from a survey about dairy farmer stress also suggested that burnout could be an issue on New Zealand dairy farms. The most commonly used instrument for the measurement of burnout is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) but we used the Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) and explain the reasons for this decision in the paper. Burnout consists of two parts, disengagement and fatigue. Both physical (Freudenberg, 1974) and emotional fatigue (Schaufeli, 2003) are core aspects of burnout and are taken into account in the OLBI.

The results of two surveys are discussed. First, we tested the usability of the OLBI with 52 New Zealand dairy farmers in a follow up telephone survey of farmers who had screened positive for depression and or anxiety issues in another dairy farmer mental health survey. Then, the paper also discusses the findings of a second ongoing survey which assesses the mental health and burnout of dairy farmers.

One example of our findings is that, in our first survey, disengagement with work was a bigger issue than emotional and physical exhaustion. This is probably caused by the monotony and repetition of farming that cause farmers to experience “satiation”, a sense that farming has lost its meaning to sufferers. In the second survey we found that exhaustion was a slightly bigger issue than disengagement from work. This differs from the first survey (Botha and White, 2012) where the opposite was found, because the target populations were different. The first survey consisted of farmers who had screened positive for potential mental health (depression and anxiety) issues and the second survey targeted an unscreened population. In the second survey 20.1% respondents had a high burnout score. As the survey was executed during a relatively quiet time on dairy farms the prevalence of burnout is considered high and expected to rise during extremely busy times like winter calving.



Reduction of psychological distress and obesity by increasing physical activity: The 'Farming Fit' study

Ananda Chandrasekara, Susan Brumby, Deakin University & National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), VIC, **Scott McCoombe, Hannah Simkin, Paul A Lewandowski,** Deakin University, VIC, **Peter Kremer,** University of Melbourne, VIC

Background: Australian farmers have a higher likelihood of suffering psychological distress and obesity than their urban counterparts, although the reasons for this imbalance are poorly understood. The Farming Fit study was conducted to explore the effect of a physical activity based intervention on psychological distress, obesity and health parameters in a cohort of Australian farmers.

Methods: A quasi-experimental control-intervention design was used in this study. Farm men and women who had a Body Mass Index ≥ 25 kg/m² were recruited through Sustainable Farm Families™ (SFF) programs held across Victoria, Australia. Demography was recorded along with data on physical and mental health, diet and physical activity at baseline, three and six month post-intervention. The intervention group received an exercise program and regular phone coaching in order to increase their physical activity.

Results: Comparison of baseline and post-intervention data showed significant changes on several clinical and anthropometric parameters. Significant reductions of body weight, BMI, waist circumference, serum triglycerides and blood pressure were recorded for the intervention group. No comparable reductions were observed for the control group except for diastolic blood pressure. In addition, significant increases were observed for BMI and fasting blood glucose levels.

Conclusion: Introducing a targeted physical activity program to overweight or obese farm men and women appears to positively influence a reduction in obesity comorbidities and psychological distress.

CONCURRENT SESSION 2B: Chronic Disease and Healthy Lifestyles – Feast or famine

Comparing salt and potassium intake between Victorian farm families and capital city residents

Paul Jeffery, Deakin University, VIC, **Susan Brumby**, Deakin University & National Centre for Farmer Health, VIC, **Caryl Nowson**, Deakin University, VIC

Background: Excess salt and insufficient potassium intake are risk factors for high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. There is little information on the sodium (salt) or potassium intake using an objective measure in farm families residing in Victoria.

Methods: Adults from farm families across 13 locations in Victoria, who were part of the Sustainable Farm Families™ program, provided 24-hour urine samples between 2009 and 2011. Significant logistical effort was required to obtain samples from remote locations and to deliver the samples to pathology centres. The results from the farm family participants were randomly gender and age matched to a comparison Melbourne metropolitan sample drawn from a group of 341 participants who participated in a follow up study (2011/12), which included 24-hour urine collections, after completing the Victoria Health Monitor survey (2009/2010). All 24-hour urine samples were analysed for sodium (expressed as salt equivalents), potassium and creatinine. The results were analysed for 161 adults from farm families with a mean age of 56.6(9.9) (SD) years (range 28 to 82), which were pair matched with 161 adults residing in Melbourne with a mean age of 56.5(9.9) years (range 26 to 77), with 54% male participants.

Results: The salt intake of men from farm families (11.0 ± 0.4 grams/day)(\pm SEM) was higher than that of women from farm families (8.0 ± 0.4 grams/day)($p < 0.001$). Comparing the farm families with the Melbourne residents, the salt intake of farm families (9.7 ± 0.3 grams/day) was higher than that of Melbourne residents (8.7 ± 0.3 grams/day)($p = 0.027$). There was an indication that the salt intake of men from farm families (11.0 ± 0.4 grams/day) was higher than Melbourne men (9.9 ± 0.4 grams/day)($p = 0.059$), but no such indication that women from farm families (8.0 ± 0.4 grams/day) had a higher salt intake than Melbourne women (7.3 ± 0.3 grams/day)($p = 0.145$). 94% of farm family participants had a salt intake above the Suggested Dietary Target of 4 grams/day.



There was no difference in the sodium to potassium ratio of farm family participants (1.92 ± 0.06) compared with Melbourne residents (1.96 ± 0.07) ($p=0.67$).

Conclusions: Adults from Victorian farm families have a higher salt intake than Melbourne residents. It is possible that farm families have a greater overall intake of food compared to the gender, aged matched Melbourne metropolitan residents as there was no difference in the sodium to potassium ratio between the farm families and Melbourne residents.

Audit of rural rheumatology services in Victoria

Gavin McDonald on behalf of **Geraldine McDonald, Esther Lim, Clare Hawkins, Susannah Wallman**, Arthritis Victoria, VIC

Aim: In 2010 Arthritis Victoria (AV) conducted a consumer research project. This project identified that rural Victorians with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions experience difficulty:

- Navigating the health, disability and social services required for effective management of their MSK condition(s)
- Gaining timely access to medical specialists, particularly rheumatologists.

On identification of these issues, AV sought to better understand the rural rheumatology referral pathway and the difficulties consumers face when accessing specialist care.

Methods: Five rural areas of Victoria were identified as research sites: Bendigo, Robinvale, Mildura, Colac and Bairnsdale. These areas were chosen because of the high prevalence of MSK conditions and the limited access to rheumatology services. Data was collected via surveys, focus groups and semi-structured telephone interviews with consumers ($n=62$), Rheumatologists ($n=9$) and General Practitioners (GPs) ($n=10$).

Results: Consumers highlighted the need to travel long distances for their specialist appointments. In addition, they experienced long waiting times and a complicated referral pathway. Consumers also identified the limited time spent during consultation as a barrier to comprehensive rheumatology care. Rheumatologists and GPs who service rural areas similarly experienced time and resource pressures. This resulted in an emphasis on the most acute patients. Local rheumatology nurse practitioners and additional rheumatology registrar training positions were considered possible solutions to the current specialist shortage in the rural rheumatology workforce.

Conclusions: This project allowed AV to gain a better understanding of the rural rheumatology referral pathways and the issues involved in accessing rural rheumatology care. It illustrated the need for more timely and accessible rural rheumatology services. These findings support AV's advocacy efforts for a more efficient referral experience and better health outcomes for rural Victorians with MSK conditions.

Drinking, smoking and distress: Will our young farmers even make it to become ageing farmers?

Alison Kennedy, Ananda Chandrasekara, Susan Brumby, National Centre for Farmer Health & Deakin University, VIC

Background: Alcohol consumption patterns nationally and internationally have been identified as elevated in rural and remote populations. With increasing remoteness comes a corresponding increase in short-term risky consumption with 19% of metropolitan residents, 23% in rural areas and 31% of populations residing in remote/very remote regions. As our farming population continues to age, this paper takes a proactive approach and explores the relationship between alcohol consumption patterns and the physical and mental health of a young farming cohort – our future farmers.

Method: Cross-sectional descriptive data collected within Australian farming communities of 1792 consenting adults from 97 locations across Australia between 2003 and 2009. 919 of farmers were aged between 18 and 50 years and the remaining 873 aged from 50 to 74 years. Data of anthropometric measurements, general physical attributes and biochemical assessments were used to explore the interrelationships of alcohol consumption patterns and psychological distress with obesity and other physical health parameters.

Results: Younger farmers were identified as being more likely to consume alcohol at short-term risky levels than the older cohort. They also displayed higher rates of smoking and an increased prevalence of psychological distress. Farmers with high levels of psychological distress and concomitant short-term risky alcohol consumption displayed elevated BMI scores and abdominal adiposity.

Discussion: The cumulative impact of risky alcohol consumption patterns on developing physical and mental health detriments is concerning in Australia's young farming population as they age. This situation increases the likelihood of developing a generation of farmers with greatly reduced health when compared with their predecessors. This presentation will discuss these results in light of



general Australian alcohol consumption and health patterns and in relation to existing issues in rural farming communities which, when combined with the current findings, further elevate the level of concern for our future farmers.

Wednesday 19th September

CONCURRENT SESSION 3A: Primary and Preventative Health

Farming Men! A guided tour to the health and wellbeing of our Australian icons.

Adrian Calvano, National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), VIC, on behalf of **Stuart Willder**, Western District Health Service, VIC, **Susan Brumby**, NCFH & Deakin University, VIC

The Sustainable Farm Families™ (SFF) program researched the state of health of farming men and women over six years throughout Australia's agricultural industries. Developed by Western District Health Service, based in Hamilton in the South West of Victoria, Australia, the program has delivered health and demographic data on the state of farmer health.

Based on clinical assessment and adult learning theories this program has worked collaboratively with universities, policy makers, government, health services and agricultural industry partners (from broad acre, dairy, sugar and cotton, viticulture and remote pastoral enterprises) to research farming families. Health data gathered have been instrumental in providing industry partners with an insight into the current health status and relevant health issues of farming men and women.

The program combines structured education, physical health assessments and clinical referrals over a three year period covering specific health topics relevant to farming men and women. Clinical health indicators, focus group discussions, and farm relevant survey's support the notion that this agricultural population, in particular men, under access health services, and poorly supported by health planners.

This paper focuses on the outcomes of research relative to the male cohorts and their clinical indicators over the course of the research. Male participants across varying ages and farming sectors gained information and knowledge, and received clinical assessments and intervention in the course of the research. This presentation focuses on the positive impacts that have been

experienced by male farmers of different ages, and across varying farming industries. The qualitative and quantitative results reveal that regardless of prior attitudes, both men and women learnt and changed the way they think about, and act upon their health, wellbeing and safety.

Having a field day – linking rural communities to better health

Ruth Williams, Wimmera Primary Care Partnership, VIC

Reaching rural and remote populations, especially men, for social marketing and health information in health promotion has its challenges. The Wimmera Machinery Field Days event, one of country Australia's largest agricultural and agribusiness trade shows provides a great opportunity to engage.

The Wimmera Primary Care Partnership "Field Days" collaborative health promotion approach brings together a wide range of agencies to plan and provide community based health information at this annual event.

Each year a health focus is themed to attract rural and remote community members who may not have access to health information and services. The 2012 theme "Linking to better health" incorporated site displays with bright green shop signs making it easier for visitors to link the various agencies to one another. This health and wellbeing hub prevents agencies duplicating their efforts and gives greater scope to showcase the many services available in the Wimmera.

Not only have agencies identified that working together has increased their profile, but visits from "hard to reach" rural populations are increasing each year. For some rural men this is the only contact they have with health professionals. Of the visitors surveyed at the various sites in 2012, 82% reported that they had learnt more about ways to improve their health and wellbeing. Agencies have indicated that the collaborative approach lessens the promotional load and adds value to their site (85%), facilitates broader community engagement (93%) and creates a great deal of media interest.

The collaboration has grown steadily each year, from four agencies in 2006 to fourteen agencies working together in 2012. Agencies are learning that collaboration and partnership towards a shared goal can provide many benefits. More importantly it provides a unique opportunity to engage with rural communities, and inform them of the range of services available to keep them healthy and active.



“Losing it – in the bush” – a partnership to support the Hastings rural community

Wayne (Darcy) Budden, Dianne Penberthy, Mid Coast Local Health District, NSW

This is an innovative, locally developed program to improve the health and wellbeing of rural people living in the Hastings Community. It aims to reduce the risk of complications from chronic disease and promote healthy lifestyle changes. The program is a partnership between Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP), Rural Primary Health Services Program (RPHSP), Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD), Port Macquarie Hastings Council (PMHC), Department of Primary Industries Rural Support Program (DPI) and the private company At My Pace Specialist Rehabilitation. The program was initiated as part of the NSW Healthy Communities Grant Program 2010 – 2011.

The program operated out of 7 non-Council-owned rural halls. Each of the halls has received exercise equipment which is theirs to keep.

To enable the community to use this equipment safely the Rural Primary Health Services developed a twelve-week program to be run in each of the halls. The program was modelled on the TV Campaigns, ‘Measure Up’, Swap It Don’t Stop It and The Get Healthy Line. The program is held one day a week in each community. The classes include exercise, run by an Accredited Exercise Physiologist and presentations on healthy lifestyle by a variety of health professionals.

Results: 145 participants over 9 communities attended the program.

Pre and post evaluation showed significant changes in nutritional intake and there were significant increases in knowledge in the areas of nutrition, general health, exercise, women’s & men’s health and mental health.

Individuals gained improvements in upper and lower body strength, flexibility, agility and cardiovascular fitness. 80% of participants had a waist reduction, the total loss equates to 2.45 metres! Great result in just 12 weeks.

Participant’s feedback indicated there were significant improvements to their health and well-being, they also learnt to use the equipment in their hall safely enabling them to continue using the equipment after completion of the program. A recurrent theme was that participants met health professionals and gained information on services that could help them and their families. A vital outcome was participants had fun, made new friends and enjoyed the sense of community.

Walking groups have been established in all but two communities, some have registered with Heart Foundation and two have commenced a Nordic walking group.

Noise does destroy

Sue Ward, Wimmera Hearing Society Inc., VIC

Background: The Wimmera Hearing Society Inc. has many years of experience dealing with hearing loss and people that suffer hearing loss. Based in Horsham the society has for 30 years operated in the Wimmera region and since 1998 the wider rural region of country Victoria. This service provides free hearing assessment to everyone, along with a year 7 student program in many secondary schools. A weekend family camp is held annually for country families with hearing impaired/deaf members.

A free hearing assessment and counselling service is provided to each client. Along with hearing results referral for further investigation, communication strategies and information about hearing loss prevention.

Discussion: With the use of a Helos Machine and Power Point presentation, we have the ability to demonstrate exactly what it would be like to suffer from different degrees of hearing loss; this presentation would be focused on the high frequency area of hearing loss. This is the area that is depleted due to many hours and years of exposure to loud noise.

We are able to present dialog in different degrees of damage, and eventually demonstrating how difficult it is to cope with a permanent hearing loss, and in different situations. Which I am sure many attending will relate to. The second part of this presentation will be education and prevention strategies, along with communication tips and information about hearing protection.

Case Study: Bruce has attended for his hearing assessment, regularly over the past 30 years. Bruce is still fully involved in the management of his broad acre farm. Bruce is now 54 years of age. Due to Bruce's regular hearing health checks, whilst working in a "high risk occupation" he has maintained a satisfactory hearing ability. It is only of recent times due to years of farming and advancing age that Bruce has recently been advised to seek assistance of hearing support.

The focus of this case study is to illustrate the importance of regular hearing tests for those considered at "high risk", accompanied with relevant



information upon satisfactory prevention of early hearing loss through the use of hearing protection. Failure in seeking regular hearing tests would have most possibly resulted in Bruce's hearing being impaired at a far earlier stage of his life.

CONCURRENT SESSION 3B:

Agricultural Hazards and Safety – Reducing harm on the farm

Drug and alcohol use by farming and fishing workers: Key findings for the farming industry

Julaine Allan, The Lyndon Community, NSW, **Anton Clifford**, University of NSW, **Patrick Ball**, Charles Sturt University, NSW, **Peter Meister**, **Margaret Alston**, Monash University, VIC

The study investigated farm and fishing workers use of drugs and alcohol, identified any effects on their physical and mental health and linked these to workplace health and safety. Recommendations were provided to inform the development of an intervention package to reduce alcohol and drug related harms among farm and fishing workers and improve health & safety.

One hundred and forty-five farm and fishing workers/contractors, partners of workers and community leaders across six research sites completed interviews and surveys. The farming industry was represented in three rural sites in NSW and Victoria with a total of seventy-seven participants.

It was found that alcohol is the major drug of concern for workplaces, while tobacco causes most concern for the participants. Farm and fishing employees consume significantly higher amounts of alcohol than the general Australian population. Many participants described examples of working while affected by alcohol including being drunk or hung-over. There is strong resistance to change hazardous drinking behaviour.

Problematic substance use, especially alcohol, goes to the heart of industry productivity even though most people do not connect out of work substance use with workplace health and safety. Drug and alcohol interventions such as screening (not testing) and workplace policies, are effective when accessible to the population. Challenges include making them fit with the industry context and work practices. Employers may need advice and support to address substance use, particularly alcohol, directly with employees.

Self-reporting of illnesses and accidents among sugarcane farmers in Northeastern Thailand

Kessarawan Nilvarangkul, Khon Kaen University, Thailand, **Kesorn Thaewnongiew**, Office of Disease Prevention and Control Region 6, Thailand, **Je Kan Adler Collins**, Fukooka Prefectural University, Japan, **Ladawan Klungglung**, Khon Kaen Borommaratchachonnani Nursing College, Thailand

This preliminary phase of an action research project aimed to identify self-care practices among sugarcane growers. The project was conducted in three provinces of Northeastern Thailand in 2009. Eighty-eight farmers were recruited by purposive sampling.

Demographic data and data related to self reported illness were analysed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations. Data were collected through self-evaluation handbooks of illness related to work, focus groups, participant observation, and field notes. Data were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Seventy-two percent of sugarcane farmers were men and their average aged was 48 years old. Seventy nine percent of farmers had education of at least primary school and secondary school levels. The study found that sugarcane farmers cared for themselves improperly. They worked with poor posture and 41% reported lower-back-pain. They did not wear gloves or a mask when they used pesticides; 10 per cent reported skin rash and 32% dizziness related to chemical-use. The farmers never used masks when they burned sugarcane at harvest season; 22% reported coughs and 23% throat irritation related to harvest time. Accidents were reported by 14%. No farmers used ear muffs when driving tractors. The sugarcane growers were smokers (44%) and drinkers of spirits daily (41%).

Community nurses and health personnel are able to use these results to care for sugarcane farmers by encouraging them in preventative health measures to better protect themselves against work related illnesses and injuries. The results of this study will be also used as basic information to develop a model for primary care unit to promote better health among sugarcane farmers.



Careful – they can't hear you

Heidi Mason & Susan Brumby, National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) & Deakin University, VIC, **Anthony Hogan**, Australian National University, ACT, **Warwick Williams**, National Acoustics Laboratories, NSW, Cate Mercer-Grant, NCFH, VIC

Background: Agriculture has long been seen as an industry where workers have high noise exposures with subsequent risks to farmers hearing and general health. Hearing difficulty has been identified as a significant and often unrecognised problem in farming populations. 44.5% of previous Sustainable Farm Families™ (SFF) participants self reported a hearing difficulty. Health professionals globally have noted that hearing education and awareness was a gap in current farmer education.

Aim: The 'Shhh hearing in a farming environment' (Shhh) project has been initiated to determine the significant sources of noise exposure in mixed farming enterprises in Victoria and Queensland.

Method: Field researchers from Shhh were trained to conduct field noise assessments on farms using an integrated sound level meter and dosimeters as per the requirements of AS/NZS 1269.1:2005. The subject cohort is a convenience sample drawn from the SFF program that had previously identified a hearing difficulty. Participants were involved in mixed production systems from Victoria and Queensland including dairy, beef, wool and cropping enterprises.

Results: This paper will discuss the preliminary analysis from noise emitted from different farming enterprises. Participants were provided with a noise report explaining their exposure risk according to the national exposure standard derived from their main, common activities, including the A-weighted, equivalent continuous sound pressure level (LAeq) and exposure (E A,T) in Pascal squared hours (Pa²h). Selected noise management strategies were provided to the pilot participants who were actively interested and engaged in the process.

Discussion: Integral to the success of the program was the enthusiasm and interest of the farming participants. It is anticipated that realising how they have been affected, they in turn will take measures to both protect themselves but also others from further noise exposures.

This grant has been funded from the Office of Hearing Services through the NHMRC and in partnership with NAL and ANU.

Six stories of avoidable rural tragedies

Anne Taylor, Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support (PASS), TAS

Background: Fatalities and serious injuries in rural environments have an effect on not only the immediate family but all the community.

Objectives: To produce a DVD to educate all members of rural communities, especially children, about events that have occurred in order to prevent a reoccurrence

Results: The DVD, with 6 stories of avoidable tragedies, features interviews with various persons involved with the tragedies, as well as ambulance officers. The stories include a schoolboy alighting from the school bus, a farmyard run-over of a child, quad bike accident, tractor accident, drowning and incidents with guns. It runs for 18 minutes.

Conclusion: The DVD has been distributed to rural schools in Tasmania as well as farm safety organisations. Audiences have found the DVD to be very powerful.

CONCURRENT SESSION 3C: Education and Training

Listening to their stories: Assisting nurses in their ongoing response to alcohol misuse in farming communities

Alison Kennedy, Susan Brumby, Cate Mercer-Grant, National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) & Deakin University, VIC, **Marita McCabe**, Lina Ricciardelli, **Alexandra Head**, David Mellor, Deakin University, VIC

Objective: Alcohol misuse by farmers has been identified as an ongoing challenge for rural and remote nurses. This paper reports on the enablers and barriers expressed by Australian nurses in their ongoing response to alcohol misuse and associated mental health problems following participation in the Alcohol Intervention Training Program (AITP).

Method: The AITP is an intervention designed to build knowledge, confidence and skills when responding to alcohol misuse. It comprises both practical and theoretical components in a two-day workshop and was designed for use in rural and agricultural communities where nurses encounter alcohol misuse. Following completion of the AITP, a semi-structured qualitative phone interview was undertaken to explore nurses' response to and implementation of the AITP



in their community. The principles of interpretive phenomenological analysis were used to extract nine broad themes.

Results: The AITP provided nurses with a means of building on existing knowledge through the provision of techniques and skills for responding to alcohol misuse. These included measures for understanding, assessing and identifying risky alcohol consumption patterns and responding through the implementation of practical, 'hands on' tools and were positively received.

Barriers to implementing the skills learned in the AITP were identified and included both generic (eg. time and access to relevant clients) and rural specific disablers (eg. lack of local referral service knowledge and difficulty in developing nurse-client rapport with fly-in fly-out services). Constructive feedback from nurses was provided to assist with improving the AITP in the future.

Conclusions: The AITP was received positively by the rural nurses and enabled them to utilise new skills. Barriers to implementation were identified and the need for further support in working with long held cultural attitudes of alcohol use in farming communities and in the nurses themselves will be discussed in this presentation. While not discounting the positive outcomes of the AITP to date, valuable opportunities for further improvement of this targeted approach to reducing alcohol misuse in the farming community were identified by participating nurses. These opportunities exist within the nursing and community health fields and also within other areas where alcohol misuse and concomitant mental health problems are prominent, such as rural sporting and educational environments.

The presentation will also include reference to additional quantitative results outlining changes to nurse's knowledge, confidence and skills in responding to alcohol misuse.

Utilising Interprofessional Education (IPE) to improve retention of graduates in rural communities

James Roth, Deakin University, VIC

A tremendous effort is made to attract young professionals to rural communities but how do you get them to stay? The move to a rural community can be daunting and leave newly graduated professional feeling isolated both professionally and personally.

This paper examines the role of Interprofessional Education (IPE) in not only helping improve patient outcomes in a clinical setting but how it can also help reduce the isolation and lead to improved retention of new professionals. The retention of these professionals is integral in maintaining a workforce to service farming communities.

Interprofessional education in health care is receiving a strong focus at the tertiary level. By utilising this enthusiasm and identifying the additional positive role it may have in addressing workforce shortages in rural areas, IPE can be shown to have multiple benefits. Additionally professionalism is enhanced through an understanding of what each professional is capable of and responsible for. The synergy gained from this process can assist rural communities where health professionals may be limited and hence productivity must be enhanced.

The health workforce provides an excellent example and is the focus of this presentation. Attitudes of Generation-Y and how these interact with maintaining a rural workforce are important and should be considered. As a generation they demand a positive work-life balance and are willing to leave if this cannot be met. Lifestyle and workplace conditions are often cited as a reason to leave a health care job. The roles of sharing responsibility and delegation are central to this balance and are at the core of IPE.

Whilst the retention of professionals of all disciplines is complex the utilisation of IPE to build positive professional and personal relationships provides part of the solution. It is already in use and is something that students are comfortable with and eager to engage in.

Using IPE to build professional, personal and community relationships is a powerful tool that already exists. Ingenuity and making the most of what you have is an ethos of rural Australia and using IPE is a modern example of this.

Getting out the message: Sowing seeds for health professionals

Liana Matthews, Rural Health Education Foundation, ACT

Farming can be a health hazard!

Australian farming families face a range of occupationally-determined health risks and consequences, leading to poorer health outcomes, over-representation in accident and injury statistics, and higher mortality, morbidity, and suicide rates. Health and medical practitioners in rural and remote



Australia need support to develop more awareness of the specific health risks faced by this population group.

The Rural Health Education Foundation is an independent not-for-profit organization which has been delivering free professional development education to healthcare teams throughout Australia for over 20 years. This presentation will illustrate how we go about that, with the development and distribution of a multimedia education package for rural and remote health professionals.

The package titled, *Taking Stock: The Health Hazards of Farming*; comprises several elements: a live, interactive television panel discussion broadcast over our satellite network; a learning guide and an on-line learning module; and a DVD with a range of embedded resource material. The multi-dimensional format enables updated research and resources on farming health issues to be quickly disseminated.

The program aims to alert health and medical practitioners to the specific health needs of Australia's farming community, enabling more precise diagnostic, management and health-promotion interventions, and supporting the development of greater health literacy for farmers and their families.

Accessibility to professional development activities is increasingly critical to the health workforce in rural and remote Australia. The Foundation's programs deliver ongoing education and professional development enabling health professionals to earn points in a manner that does not require them to leave their communities. Taking Stock is accredited through health professional organisations including RACGP, ACRRM, RCNA and APA.

This presentation incorporates the NCFH conference themes; 'Reducing harm on the farm', 'mental health issues', 'human and animal health' and 'Feast or famine'.

Key Words: Health Professional Education, Multimedia, Health hazards of farming

PETS – Pathways, Education, Training and Skills

Cate Mercer-Grant, Tim Harwood, National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), VIC, **Susan Brumby**, NCFH & Deakin University, VIC

Background: Farmers, their families and agricultural workers have higher rates of morbidity and mortality than those living in urban areas. The availability of a suitably skilled workforce is also essential to sustain an effective rural human services system into the future. Through building skills and knowledge the Sustainable Farm Families™ (SFF) program seeks to narrow this gap. The Pathways, Education, Training and Skills (PETS) program builds on the success of the SFF program in order to create formalised learning opportunities for those already studying to work in farm environments or work with farmers in a health care role. The program teaches students the physiological background to health conditions and ways that these can be reduced through good occupational health and safety practices, preventative self-care and professional intervention.

Method: Initial units based on the established Vocation Education and Training (VET) course have been adapted for this purpose. These units will be piloted as part of Agriculture and Community Health Care courses. Students will be surveyed in regards to their satisfaction with the unit and a self-appraisal of their understanding of the material covered.

Results: This paper will examine the effectiveness of integrating SFF materials into existing units and the success of the pilot based on student feedback. It will consider the possibility of creating a course, at VET level, for students to study.

Discussion: Students studying Agricultural Science and Community Health Care in a rural or regional context have the ability to significantly improve their own health circumstances and the health of those around them through understanding the circumstances that lead to good health. They are also in a position to become leaders in their communities in promoting good health practices. By providing information specific to the farmer environment, the PETS project seeks to bring better health, wellbeing and safety to farm men and women and their families and develop a new cohort of health professionals who are culturally competent when working with farmers and agricultural workers.



CONCURRENT SESSION 4A:

Mental Health – Wagging the black dog's tail

Preventing poor health outcomes: Risk factors of psychological distress within the farming family population

Connar McShane, Frances Quirk, Anne Swinbourne, James Cook University, QLD

Past research by McShane (2011) has reported that the farming family lifestyle is a high stress working environment. When this finding is considered in conjunction with the comparatively high suicide rates reported for men and women who work in the farming/agricultural sector (Caldwell et al., 2004; Andersen et al., 2010), significant concern is raised regarding the impact of the working environment on farming family well-being. To determine the relationship between the working environment and poor mental health of farming families, the current research explored risk factors for psychological distress. Farming family participants (N=278) were recruited from across Australia and across production types. Participants completed a questionnaire package which assessed role interference, stressors, coping behaviours, protective factors, life satisfaction, burnout and psychological distress. Cluster analysis was used to identify potential risk factors. Results indicated that there was a significant difference between high and low risk groups [$F(1,70.85)=76.05$, $p=.000$]. Findings suggested that indicators for psychological distress included role interference, family stressors, and high levels of emotional exhaustion (as a component of burnout). Men differed from women in that self-distracting coping behaviours and poor life satisfaction increased risk of psychological distress. Women differed from men in that components of burnout played a greater role in women's psychological distress. Overall, the risk factors centred on the impact that results from difficulties in managing roles and responsibilities. Further, these identified stressors and role impacts represent the extent to which the farm impacts upon family satisfaction and the importance of a successful fusion or integration of the family and business systems. Recommendations were made for future research to develop risk assessment tools for the farming family population.

CORES – Community Response to Eliminating Suicide

Coralanne Walker, CORES Australia, TAS

Community Response to Eliminating Suicide (CORES) is a holistic training and support package that builds a community's strength and capacity to prevent suicide. It empowers community members to recognise the signs of suicide and intervene before a crisis occurs to refer someone to appropriate services.

Our philosophy

"The more people from within a community who complete the training, the less likelihood there is of someone at risk not receiving help. It empowers communities to watch out for each other."

The CORES program is a National Suicide Intervention and Prevention program working in rural Australia. It empowers local communities to recognise what action is required in order to prevent rather than cure those at risk of suicide.

The benefits of the CORES program to a community include:

- The development and empowerment of community members to form a team to train their own community.
- An increased awareness of suicide and the signs that people show when contemplating suicide.
- The reduction of the suicide rate within each community, as a result of the increase in awareness and skilling of community members to intervene.

3898 people have completed the CORES one day course across rural Australia with 533 reported interventions, that is people who have told us they have used the training. The one thing that stands out after people have done the training are the comment like "I didn't know it was ok to ask someone directly if they are suicidal" or "I feel more confident that I can help someone who is at risk of suicide"

In the 24 communities we have been working with most have reported a reduction in the number of suicides from the community's perspective. Its Rural, It's Flexible, It Saves Lives, Its Community, It Works. www.cores.org.au



New Zealand dairy farmer stress

Neels Botha, Ruakura Research Centre, **Waikato**, **Toni White**, Waikato University, NZ

New Zealand (NZ) agriculture has long been focused on the health of grass and animals, but there is increasing acknowledgment by industry and farmer organisations that the wellness and wellbeing of people on farms are crucial to uphold sustainable agricultural production and create resilient farming communities. Dairy farming is one of the most intensive forms of pastoral farming in New Zealand and farmers face multiple pressures, which cause them distress. Very little is known about NZ farmers' wellness and wellbeing. Using structured interviews we surveyed 530 dairy farmers who attended major dairy events during 2010 when they attended Farmer Health Pitstops. The purpose was to get a baseline understanding of their mental health status. The paper gives an overview of the limitations and findings as well as the wider context of this exploratory study. We used anxiety and depression symptomatology as indicators of severe stress. The main findings were that respondents hugely underreported their mental health while about 50% did not seek help or support even when they were seriously stressed. 17% screened positive for depression and or anxiety issues using the self-report PHQ-4 primary health care screening instrument while many more reported other stress related issues. Moreover, relationship issues were associated with self-reported depression anxiety comorbidity symptomatology, while self-reported depression symptomatology and self-reported anxiety symptomatology were mostly associated with more than two causes. Like the rest of New Zealand, a high prevalence of alcohol consumption was evident and binge drinking also occurred. Drug use was minimal in the sample hence we discontinued surveying for it. Based on anecdotal evidence, we suspect that the prevalence of drug use will be higher in younger farmers and farm staff.

The paper concludes with a discussion about future research. Stress for example, is integral to burnout, which consists of fatigue and disengagement, hence it is suggested that research on the latter should be incorporated in future farmer stress research.

Men's Shed finds new tools to stave off the black dog

Carolyn Alkemade, Orbost Regional Health, VIC, **Diane Robinson** Gippsland Lakes Community Health, VIC

Maintaining good mental health of men in isolated rural communities can be difficult, and in East Gippsland many rural men do not seek support.

This presentation will show how 4 different health organisations worked together to provide a mental health education program, which has given rural men confidence to identify mental health risk factors and engage their peers to discuss stressors constructively and take appropriate action. The initiative was offered to coordinators and significant figures across all Men's Sheds in East Gippsland over 2 days in July 2011.

The presentation will highlight some of the key aspects of the journey, from breaking down the barriers that stop men from engaging in training of this kind, through to the initial training and the outcomes from this, to program evaluation 12 months later.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected including the most significant change in story telling evaluation, an approach which enabled participants to identify the most important factors for them in managing mental health issues in many aspects of their lives, not just at the shed. As one 'shedder' put it "I was concerned that the training wasn't for me but after the first day wild horses would not keep me away from attending". The evaluation has shown how giving the men more 'tools in their toolbox' has helped build their confidence to engage with peers and the wider regional Men's Shed.

CONCURRENT SESSION 4B:

Human and Animal Health – All creatures great and small

Cutting through the spin

Sarah Laurie, Waubra Foundation, VIC

It has been asserted globally by wind developers, wind turbine manufacturers, and their supporters that "there is no evidence" or "there is insufficient evidence" of adverse health problems caused by wind turbines. Yet serious health problems have been reported by Rural Medical Practitioners globally since 2003.



The Waubra Foundation was established in 2010 in Australia, to address this disconnect between what residents and medical practitioners were reporting, and the lack of clinical and acoustic knowledge into the effect of wind turbine noise, and other sources of industrial noise, on human health.

Existing research knowledge and recent global advances in acoustic and clinical knowledge about the adverse health consequences of exposure to sound and vibration energy from industrial sources including wind turbines will be discussed, with reference to the latest Australian and international work, and to issues such as the role of cortisol, oxidative stress and chronic sleep deprivation in the observed deterioration of health with long term exposure to operating wind turbines.

There will be reference to the experiences of Australians living, farming, and working near wind developments, collected as field data, and reference to the impact wind developments have had on social cohesion in those communities.

Finally, relevant legal developments will be discussed, including the case in Ontario, where the judges clearly stated that on the basis of expert evidence provided in that court that there are adverse health impacts from wind turbines, and the case for noise nuisance in the UK High Court, settled in December 2011 with a binding lifelong confidentiality agreement.

AgriSafe™ Australia - improving health in agricultural communities

Mark Atcheson, Elizabeth Lawrence, Mark Newell, National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), **Susan Brumby, Ananda Chandrasekara**, NCFH & Deakin Uni., VIC.

Introduction: There is increasing evidence that agricultural workers experience poor health due to elevated rates of cancer, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and mental illness, with limited access to clinical services. Furthermore agriculture is considered a hazardous industry in Australia, accounting for 17% of workplace fatalities in 2009-10¹. Until recently, there were no health clinics specifically targeting the health, safety and wellbeing of the Australian agricultural workforce.

The National Centre for Farmer Health recognised this gap and in February 2011 opened the first AgriSafe™ clinic in Hamilton, Australia, in partnership with Western District Health Service and Deakin University, using the successful University of Iowa model. It provides an individual, holistic and comprehensive health assessment by qualified health professionals and aims to improve the

health, wellbeing and safety of Australian farmers, families and agricultural workers; an important yet historically medically neglected industry.

Methods: The AgriSafe™ clinics screen for preventable diseases hazardous to individual and farming families and more broadly affect the agribusiness sector. They provide occupational health and safety advice for health risks that occur on a daily basis in the lives of agricultural workers and their families.

Results: Of 61 participants screened, mean age 51.2 (SD 11.5) years, prevalence of overweight or obesity 68.9%, increased weight circumference (>102 cm men, >88 cm women):45.9 %; hypertension (>140/90) 32.8%; raised fasting blood glucose (≥ 5.5 mmol/l) 35.0%; raised fasting cholesterol (≥ 5.5 mmol/l) 20.0%. 14.3% of the participants never had any routine health check-ups ; 21.7% never had a cholesterol test % and 40.7% never had diabetes screening although 21% had been referred from saleyard screening. Clients with abnormal results were referred to their GP.

Discussion: Agrisafe™ clients showed strong interest in how to protect themselves from agrichemicals and were keen to receive regular monitoring of their exposure risks and health education for themselves and their families' wellbeing. However a poor understanding of appropriate protective equipment usage among farmers was noted.

Key words: farmer, health, agriculture, community, industry, rural, regional, AgriSafe™.

1 Ref: Work Related Traumatic Injury Fatalities, Australia 2009-2010. Safe Work Australia March 2012



Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy in agriculture

Anne Taylor, Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support (PASS), TAS

Background: The syndrome known as Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy was first described in 1999 in Japan. It is also known as “stress-induced cardiomyopathy” and is predominately diagnosed in post menopausal women. Persons working in agriculture and living in rural areas are exposed to many stressors, be it drought, floods or fire and the subsequent financial impact which may predispose people to acquiring Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy.

Objectives: The objective of the presentation is to explore a case study of a male farmer in Australia who reluctantly presented at accident and emergency with symptoms of chest pain and shortness of breath, after fighting a bushfire which was racing towards and eventually arrived onto his property. The presentation will describe his symptoms, the investigations to exclude the usual diagnosis of myocardial infarction, the rehabilitation period and the implications on return to work.

Results: Having survived the acute stage and expecting an excellent long term prognosis, there were frustrations when the resultant treatment and rehabilitation did impact on his productivity for a several months.

Conclusion: There are implications for all persons involved in emergency situations in rural or urban environments.

Discussion: The presentation will discuss research that has been conducted on Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy both in Australia and globally.

Blue Green Algae.....no shark attack!

Katrina Rainsford, Farmer, Veterinarian & Councillor, VIC

Aim: To provide a risk management approach for parents, coaches, trainers and clubs to minimise health risks of blue green algae whilst enjoying surface water activities.

Background: In December 2011 Lake Hamilton Rowing regattas were cancelled. The rowers are devastated, and Lake Hamilton is listed by Rowing Victoria as being closed due to Blue Green Algae blooms. Southern Grampians Shire Council places signs warning individuals to avoid any contact with water, through diving, swimming, fishing and boating. Signs are similar to Shark Warnings.

Discussion: The public and community organisations take the risk of undertaking activities involving contact with potentially toxic water. Local clubs baulk at the public risk of holding an event whilst there is a health warning on the lake and peak bodies do provide direct support or advice.

Blue Green Algal Toxins are known to cause a variety of conditions such as liver damage, skin and eye irritation, respiratory failure, diarrhoea and vomiting through hepatoxins, neurotoxins and lipo-polysaccharides causing skin irritation. However there is a lack of information on exposure and post exposure management of specific contact cases with Blue Green Algae toxins to inform public decisions and manage risk.

Impact on Rural Communities: Water sports are very important to the quality of life of rural communities, promoting safe exercise, economic benefits and community interactions. However, more recently local economies have been regularly impacted by Blue Green Algal blooms in lakes, waterways and rivers.

The Way Forward: With further climate variability blue green algal blooms will be seen more frequently and widely. Developing specific activity based policies, procedures, training and hazard identification need to be implemented. This presentation will discuss a way forward with new and modern approaches to risk management to be utilised when working with the hazards associated with Blue-Green Algal blooms.

CONCURRENT SESSION 4C:

Chronic Disease and Healthy Lifestyles – Feast or famine

“Active Farming” study: Improving farmers’ management of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions

Mark Newell, Henrike Milne, Cate Mercer-Grant, National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), **Ananda Chandrasekara, Susan Brumby**, NCFH & Deakin University, VIC

Farming is a physically demanding profession where a significant number of musculoskeletal disease and traumatic injuries can occur. Studies revealed that about one third of agricultural workers experienced body pain, musculoskeletal diseases or related illness. Also arthritis sufferers can incur significant out-of-pocket expenses in the management of their condition. The aims of this study are firstly to ascertain the baseline data, quality of life and



health status including medications and out of pocket costs of farmers with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, and secondly to assist participants in their management of arthritis.

Methods: A telephone interview of a group of 100 consenting farmers currently suffering from arthritis or related musculoskeletal diseases will occur, identified by their reporting of arthritis or body pain during their prior participation in a Sustainable Farm Families™ program. Information collected will include basic demographics, details of farming activity, insurance and benefits, smoking, alcohol, health care, medications and questionnaires relating to quality of life and arthritis impact. Participants will then be asked to complete a diary for 2 months to record current medications and all health care including associated out of pocket expenses. After 2 months a follow up interview will occur and selected participants will be invited to participate in focus groups to further explore the effect of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions on farmers' lives.

Results: To date, over 70 participants have enrolled, completed questionnaires and have commenced diary completion. Final details of recruitment, interim results of questionnaire data collected and the outcomes of any focus groups held will be presented.

A pilot study of practice nurse (PN) pap testing initiatives: An evaluation of their impact on cervical screening activity in Grampians general practices

Christine Hallinan, University of Ballarat, VIC

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable and curable of all cancers, particularly if women are screened for precancerous cervical cells. Since the implementation of the Australian National Cervical Cancer Screening Program (NCCSP) in 1991, the incidence rate of cervical cancer has declined dramatically, from a peak in 1993 of around 11 per 100,000 women, to a rate of 4 to 5 per 100,000 women in 2009. Mortality due to cervical cancer has also decreased since the introduction of the program, and currently the Victorian mortality rate for cancer of the cervix is around 1.0 per 100,000 women; one of the lowest mortality rates globally. Of Victorian women diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer during 2008, at least 81% had either had no Pap tests or were lapsed screeners prior to their cancer diagnosis.

Reforms to increase access to general practice preventive health services included initiatives promoting cervical screening activity, and initiatives to ensure

practice nurses (PNs) had capacity to undertake preventive services such as Pap-testing. Despite these reforms the most recent recorded rates of two yearly Pap test participation in the Western Grampians region ranges between 53.4 and 54.8%, which is almost 8% lower than the overall participation rate (60.7%) and is about 16% lower than the highest recorded two yearly participation rate (69.2%) for Victorian women aged between 20 and 65. This study undertook a complex mixed method evaluation of general practice Pap incentives to determine the main general practice barriers to PN cervical smear screening in the Western Grampians region of Victoria from 2005-2011.

The Western Grampians region is an area bounded by the South Australian border, Hopetoun to the North, Maryborough to the East and Casterton to the South. The region is classified in terms of remoteness by the ASGC-RA classification system as both Outer Regional and Remote (with the exception of areas from Ararat to Stawell which is classified as Inner Regional). The lands within this region represent a geographic area that has a history in agriculture. The health of our farmers and of their family members is vital to the health and productivity of our farming communities. Preventive screening for cervical cancer not only supports female farmer health but also farm family health. Costs associated with morbidity and mortality due to cervical cancer includes personal, family and community losses that result in burdens that are physical, emotional, social and financial.

The mixed method evaluation comprised two major evaluatory stages, a clarificative stage followed by a summative stage. During the clarificative stage quantitative and qualitative data was gained from a literature review and data set analysis. The information gained at this stage was used to test assumption validity, inform early theory development and facilitate program logic model development. Throughout the summative stage, qualitative data collected from key informant interviews (n=14) was collected, coded, analysed and synthesised. This qualitative data was scrutinised for repeating and emergent themes that align with the theories developed in the clarificative stage. At this stage the data was also explored for anomalies that may indicate flawed assumptions or unintended outcomes which were not made explicit in the clarificative stage.

Factors such as: the general practice business case, practice nurse capacity - including workforce and access to education, general practice infrastructure constraints, cultural and professional mores as well as indemnity issues inhibit PN-Pap activity in the general practice arena.



There are large amounts of data available that depicts ‘what is happening’ in general practices, however multilayered policy instruments require complex, multilayered evaluations. This evaluation protocol delivers an evaluation that illuminates the mechanisms influencing PN cervical screening, with a focus on what works, for whom, how and why. This study incorporates into policy, a greater understanding of the complex contextual nuances of general practice, through the integration of evidence from GP stakeholders in the Grampians region.

Health in the saleyards – bringing the health professional to the farmer

Mark Newell, Adrian Calvano, Mark Atcheson, Elizabeth Lawrence, National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), VIC, **Susan Brumby, Ananda Chandrasekara,** NCFH & Deakin University, VIC

Introduction: Agricultural workers in Australia experience poorer health due to elevated rates of cancer, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and mental illness. They also can have reduced access to health services due to time constraints and motivation as well as distance, availability and cost of these services. The National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) has recognised this gap and has carried out free health assessments, staffed by qualified health professionals at two recent, well-attended and publicised agricultural events in Hamilton, Victoria: the Weaner Sales and Beef Expo.

Methods: Mobile facilities for confidential health assessment were set up at both events where attendees were invited for health screening. Following written informed consent, participants completed a questionnaire relating to general health and wellbeing, smoking and alcohol consumption, farm safety including chemical usage and protective equipment, and psychological distress (Kessler K10). Participant health screening was then undertaken: height, weight, vision and spot measurements of blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol. Following discussion with the NCFH health professional, participants were given a written “health passport” with these results, with instructions to visit their GP if these were abnormal, and also invited to attend the comprehensive NCFH AgriSafe clinics.

Results: Preliminary results: 152 screened (M 132, F20), mean age 55 (range 18-90), overweight or obese (BMI>25) 73%, hypertension (>140/90) 58.6%, raised random blood glucose (>6.5 mmol/l) 17.8%, raised random cholesterol 42%.

Clients with abnormal results were referred to their GP, especially for repeat blood glucose and cholesterol when fasting. Further results will be presented.

Discussion: The health assessments were well received, attracted considerable media and agricultural industry attention and for many participants was their first health assessment for some time. It was also rewarding for the health professionals working “out in the field”. Therefore further assessments are planned at similar agricultural events in the future.

What’s to gain from grains and legumes? A role for staple foods in chronic disease prevention

Michelle Broom, Grains and Legumes Nutrition Council, NSW

Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council (GLNC) is Australia’s leading independent voice for grains and legumes in health and nutrition. GLNC reviews nutrition science and consumer insights to develop evidenced based messages about the health benefits of grains and legumes in the diet. There is an ever increasing body of evidence that indicates whole grain foods, high fibre grain foods and legumes play a role in protecting against chronic disease. However, surveys undertaken by GLNC suggest Australians are reducing the amount of these staple grain foods in their diet while at the same time increasing their intake of foods that are linked to higher risk of chronic disease. The results indicate this trend may be driven in part by perceptions that avoiding grain-based foods helps with weight loss and management of gastrointestinal symptoms such as bloating. In addition, the survey shows very few Australians eat legumes on a regular basis, despite evidence indicating their value in disease prevention. This presentation will describe this trend with a focus on the rural community as well as give an overview of the benefits of including grains and legumes in the diet. It will also outline what GLNC is doing to communicate key messages to health professionals and to help the food industry develop consistent messages so Australians, including farmers, can make better grain and legume food choices.



Poster Abstracts *(in program order)*

Wednesday 19th September

LUNCH TIME SESSION: Guided Tour of Posters

Beyond the Potter Farmland Plan - a link to wellbeing...

Julia Schlapp, Michelle van Loggerenberg, RMIT University (Hamilton), VIC

Biodiversity is recognised as important for the health and wellbeing of the community (United Nations, 2008). This poster illustrates the link between involvement in long-term re-vegetation projects and the sense of wellbeing arising from such involvement. Findings are based on a Review of the Potter Farmland Plan (PFP 1984-1988). The purpose of the PFP was to demonstrate how farms could be laid out and operated from an ecological perspective to redress land degradation while simultaneously improving production.

Between 1984 and 2010 the 9 properties studied, planted 330ha of native vegetation, taking the coverage to approximately 2.5% of the land under current management (13084ha).

All participants in the PFP noted an unanticipated increase in wildlife, birds in particular (an increase in the number of species as well as the quantity of birds), but also wallabies and kangaroos: an unplanned additional benefit of the project's activities.

The Review established that in response to being involved, the awareness of the 'benefits of biodiversity' grew over the time that the PFP existed, and it appears to have continued to grow in the wider community since. Since management interventions to encourage native birds and animals happened to align with the management benefits of planting trees for stock shelter and reducing erosion, farmers were able to accept changes which increased farm vegetation in spite of a cost to the annual business budget. They also increasingly acknowledged the benefit of improved farm aesthetics.

Many landholders reported that involvement in the PFP gave them a sense of satisfaction while doing the work, with the result that particular areas of their properties also provide them with an enhanced sense of wellbeing.

Needlestick injuries in agriculture

Anne Taylor, Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support (PASS), TAS

Background: Farmers vaccinate thousands of animals in any one year. It is known through surveys that up to 80% of farmers and their workers have received a needlestick injury.

Objectives: To produce a DVD to educate rural workers on:

- The hazards of needlestick injuries especially when the vaccines are harmful to humans
- First Aid treatment

Results: The DVD, produced in 2011, was used as a teaching aid in workshops for farmers and their advisors when educating them about Ovine Johnes Disease and an effective program to control the spread of the disease.

The DVD runs for 5 minutes and 34 seconds.

Conclusion: The feedback from viewers indicates it is a useful tool and many have recommended their peers to view it.

Seeing into the future

Glenn Howell, Glenn Howell Optometrists, VIC, in partnership with the Vision Initiative

In 2009, almost 575,000 Australians aged over 40 were blind or had vision loss. As Australia's population ages, this number is predicted to reach nearly 801,000 by the year 2020.

Approximately 80 per cent of vision loss in Australia is caused by five conditions, all of which become more common as you get older. These are: Macula Degeneration (MD), cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and refractive error. The good news is around 75 per cent of vision loss is preventable or treatable.

Australian farmers are getting older, working longer hours and often work beyond retirement age exposing them to increased risks of eye diseases and other health conditions. As many eye diseases have no symptoms in their early stages regular eye tests are essential for early detection of these conditions to avoid unnecessary vision loss. This is particularly true for people over 40, those with diabetes, people with a family history of eye disease, smokers, and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.



Unfortunately, according to the Victorian Population Health Survey, in 2008 regional Victorians were less likely to have seen an eye health professional in the last two years compared to metropolitan Victorians. At times real or perceived difficulty in accessing health services in rural areas contributes to farmers not seeing health professionals as often as recommended.

Wearing a sunhat and sunglasses when outdoors, wearing protective eye wear, stopping smoking, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle are also key factors to prevent vision loss.

Regional Victorians are more likely to wear a sunhat and sunglasses outside compared to those living in metropolitan areas of Victoria. Unfortunately, over 50 per cent of regional Victorians who had not seen an eye health professional previously, were overweight and obese and were more likely to be current smokers compared to metropolitan Victorians.

If diagnosed early, many eye conditions can be controlled and good vision may be retained for life. Poor vision is linked to increased rates of falls and depression and early admission to nursing homes.

Waiting for symptoms to occur may be too late as vision loss can often go undetected. The aim of this presentation is to alert professionals and the public to simple preventive behaviours that need to be adopted to prevent avoidable vision loss.

This presentation will detail what farmers and their families can do to reduce the risk of preventable blindness and vision loss, advice on eye health and how to access appropriate eye health services locally.

Like crops, human lives grow from seed potential, nourished by available resources

Jan Watson, Journal Workshops, VIC

Like crops, human lives grow from seed potential, nourished by available resources. This poster draws upon the experience of using and teaching the Progoff journal method, a resource for conscious living and growing. Uniquely, it uses a whole-of-life approach, making connections within and beyond the individual, often boosting energy and creativity.

This method, though not well-known in Australia, is a well-established international program. It is psychological and secular. Concerned with meaning

and connection, it is therefore also spiritual. Anyone can use it , regardless of ethnicity, religion or cultural background. It is characterized by a high degree of structure and flexibility, by its meditative exercises, by its values of personal acceptance and authenticity and by Journal feedback, where the writer enters responses to what is already written, thereby developing it.

Structurally, four main sections of the journal, each with subsections, correspond to four aspects of living - (i) personal history, (ii) depth or symbolic experience, including dreams (iii) relationships with persons, works, the body, society and (iv) the ongoing search for meaning.

It has applications in health, in the agricultural workplace, in professional and personal development. My website has much further information www.growamoremeaningfullife.com.

Poverty alleviation of Nepalese farmers

Yuba Raj Shrestha, Center for Drinking Water, Agriculture Development & Environment Improvement (CDWADEI), Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepal, a tiny Himalayan mountainous, landlocked country lies between two giants of Asia; Tibet, autonomous region of China on the North; and India in the East, South and West. The population of Nepal is about 28,000,000, and more than 80% of the

Populations depend on agriculture.

The Center for Drinking Water, Agriculture Development & Environment Improvement (CDWADEI) has focused on the poverty alleviation of the farmers, but we are facing obstacles in our mission due to lack of financial support. After the establishment of our organization, we have succeeded to reduce the sum of communal farmers in the hill-side so far. We still have protected our mission to do such social services among the poor farmers of Nepal. For example, a healthy farmer always tries his best to grow healthy crops from the field. The condition of Nepali Farmers is still pitiable as they still use the traditional way of farming. In result, they can't harvest their crops in satisfactory gross. Their living is always in scarce. Some of them only collect the foods to feed to their family every six months. In this regard, we are planning to raise the awareness among the poor farmers in the remote area in Nepal.



We have ranked the poor farmers in Nepal in three categories: **Hardcore Poor Farmers:** Having food sufficiency for less than three months; **Medium Poor Farmers:** Having food sufficiency from three to less than six months; **Poor Farmers:** Food sufficiency for six to twelve months.

We are absolutely aware of farmer health and its importance in the behaviours which must be implemented in the society as they sow the healthy seeds from generation to generation. Human beings are mortal beings, but this doesn't allow us to become pessimist about the future. We must be optimist for the future generations and of course, 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' is the best way to survive in this World, smiling and happy.

The Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health – Précis

The Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health was developed and adopted at the National Centre for Farmer Health's inaugural conference 'Opening the Gates on Farmer Health' in Hamilton, Australia, 11-13 October 2010



Preamble

Farm families are part of, and create, physical and social determinants of health. Individuals, groups and communities around the world should respect farmer health and should work in responsible comprehensive ways to join knowledge, skills and capacity. To this effect, five areas of critical action are endorsed in the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health.

Value Culture

Farming has unique cultural attributes. There is a strong myth of a hard farmer ethos, but needs and responsibilities are varied across sectors and the land and water where farming happens. Farming is usually a life-long and intergenerational family career. Farmer identities depend on the close association between life and work. When farm work fails, health and well-being are compromised. Place and nature are important aspects of the cultural identity of farm families, and social and technological changes impact on the health and well-being cultures of farm families.

Live with work

Work-life balance has a unique meaning in farming communities. Farmer health programs value those differences and take a comprehensive approach. The cycles and determinants of health and well-being of humans, livestock and plants are connected. Farmer health programs must be hubs of interprofessional and interdisciplinary research and service delivery in which agri-science, veterinary, human health, natural and social care, create positive synergies for all. Pain, self-medication through alcohol and drugs, injury, cancers and preventable deaths need not be part of farm reality. These issues, and the resultant poor health outcomes, need to be de-normalised and equitable standards in health, research and social service delivery achieved.

Future-proof farm systems

The world continues to change and some of the determinants of farmer health have become more threatening. In order to future-proof farm systems it is critical to recognise and address the interface between social, economic and environmental capital. Successful farm systems and farmer health programs are built around capacities to monitor change and adapt flexibly. Sustainable future-proof farm systems integrate health, well-being and safety for all comprehensively in sustained, strong, planned and evidence based health promotion and service delivery.



Build skills and knowledge

A strong skills and knowledge base needs to be built, adapted, disseminated and implemented. The establishment of an international repository for farmer health interventions is critical. Training at all levels of the education system is critical, and universities should integrate such comprehensive approaches where appropriate. 'Skills and knowledge' are not the unique prerogative of experts. They are also experiential, and have strong roots in the work of communities, the public sector, and in NGOs. They all need to act wisely in the generation and dissemination of evidence, contributing to personal and systems-based health literacy and the basis of innovative research and development efforts.

Create political momentum

Political momentum for farmer health is building. It will move the debate forward. Advocacy and demonstration of integrated service delivery and sustainable farm development will support such political momentum. Community engagement and work with the media is critical. However, significant groups in society are disengaging from such participatory and empowered approaches to policy. This is observed, for instance, in groups of young farming men and women.

The way forward – The Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health

These inseparable five principles will enable us to move forward with a unified voice.

We undertake to:

- Empower ourselves and others to consider the health impacts (individual, family, community, and environment) of agricultural production and campaign to ensure that negative impacts on farmer health is recognised and not normalised as a byproduct of production.
- Understand the cycles (seasonal and biological) of farmer health and the relationship of farmers to nature whilst delivering quality farmer health programs to all.
- Defend and celebrate profitable and sustainable rural industries in global markets recognising and valuing the key role of farmers in providing food and fibre.
- Broaden the identity of farm men, women and communities beyond the 'life is work' ethos, and enable them to successfully meet their new challenges.
- Recognise that improving farmer health involves new relationships and the strengthening of old relationships across sectors and within sectors. Research, policy development and service delivery need to be developed in place, recognising the valuable interaction with communities. Go forth and sow and water the seeds of the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health into your work, workplace, community, governance or new policy.

Conference Sponsors *(in program order)*

'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' is proudly brought to you by



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The NCFH gratefully acknowledge the wonderful support of the following organisations

Platinum Sponsor

Regional Development Victoria



The Regional Growth Fund is the Victorian Coalition Government's \$1 billion commitment over eight years to drive regional development across the state. As part of the Regional Growth Fund, the Putting Locals First Program has been designed to realise the Coalition Government's policy of supporting the development of local solutions to address gaps in services and infrastructure in regional communities. The program recognises that local people have a role to play in addressing the challenges faced by their communities. The Victorian Government through Regional Development Victoria is happy to support 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health', aimed at educating and improving health in regional communities.

Major Sponsors

Department of Health (Barwon-South Western Region)



Department
of Health

The Department of Health – Barwon-South Western Region is proud to support 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' and the work of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) in improving health, well-being and safety for farming men, women and their families. We look forward to continuing a long and valuable relationship with the NCFH.



Grains Research Development Corporation

The Grains Research & Development Corporation is one of the world's leading grains research organisations, responsible for planning, investing and overseeing research and development, delivering improvements in production, sustainability and profitability across the Australian grains industry. GRDC is a statutory corporation, founded in 1990 under the Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989 (PIERD Act). It is subject to accountability and reporting obligations set out in the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 (CAC Act). The GRDC's portfolio department is the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).



Gold Sponsors

Iluka Resources Ltd

Iluka Resources Limited (ASX: ILU) is a major participant in the global mineral sands industry and is involved in the exploration, project development, production, sales and marketing of zircon and titanium products of rutile, ilmenite, leucoxene and synthetic rutile. Iluka has mining and processing operations in a number of largely agricultural communities including the Southwest and Northwest Victoria, Eucla Basin (South Australia), Western Australia and the United States, including a mineral separation plant in Hamilton, the home of the National Centre for Farmer Health's 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' conference.



National Centre for Dairy Education Australia

The NCDEA provides vocational education and training which meets the needs of the Australian dairy industry. Our courses are recognised by the dairy industry as driving the future of dairy education. We focus on future development, provide new thinking and are leaders in developing the capability of the Australian dairy workforce. The NCDEA is proud to support 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' and the National Centre for Farmer Health to assist in improving the health, safety and wellbeing of the agricultural workforce and their families.



Safe Work Australia

Safe Work Australia is an Australian Government statutory agency with the primary responsibility of improving work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements across Australia. Safe Work Australia is proud to support 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' and the work of the National Centre for Farmer Health in improving the work health and safety of rural workers and their families.



Silver Sponsors

Cotton Research and Development Corporation

The Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) invests in R&D on behalf of the Australian cotton industry. The Australian cotton industry is currently the fourth largest cotton exporter in the world. In 2011-12, a crop valued at approximately two billion dollars was produced on 1500 farms stretching from Central Queensland to the Victorian border. Cotton production is highly mechanised and consequently continuous improvement to farm health and safety practices is a paramount concern for cotton growers and the CRDC. The CRDC is therefore proud to support 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' and the work of the National Centre for Farmer Health in improving the work health and safety of rural workers and their families.



Wesfarmers Insurance Limited

WFI is a leading Australian farm and business insurance company. More than 90 years in the business has taught us that quality personal service is something our clients truly value. WFI is proud to support the National Centre for Farmer Health as they 'sow the seeds' on farmer health, well-being and safety.



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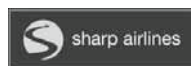
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Photography Competition Partner

Art4Agriculture



Art4agriculture's vision is for business, industry and the community to work alongside education authorities, schools and students to support the learning and development of young people and enable all young Australians to reach their potential. We have a whole of industry vision and collaborate and cross-promote widely through our diverse and extensive communications network. Art4agriculture is delighted to support the school category of this competition as we believe it is a perfect partnership fit to help us deliver our vision for young Australians.

Sponsors

Hamilton Camera City



Hamilton Camera City was happy to support this fantastic competition, helping photographers capture spectacular agricultural images, through the lens of a camera.

Hamilton Spectator and Western District Farmer



The Spectator Publishing Group is an independent, locally owned publisher and printer in Western Victoria with eighty employees in Hamilton, Portland and Casterton. Our community newspapers the Hamilton Spectator, Portland Observer, Casterton News and regional agricultural monthly the Western District Farmer all dominate their media market and are enjoying strong circulation.

Harvey Norman Computer Superstore



The photography competition has been a fantastic event for the rural community and the Hamilton district. The quality of entries were amazing, and Harvey Norman was happy to be able to print them for display in the exhibition. We look forward to seeing them in all their glory at the Hamilton Art Gallery from 29th August – 14th October, 2012.

Ivory Print

Photo competition sponsor and sponsor of the coffee table book 'In Focus – Celebrating Farm Life', available for purchase at the conference or at www.farmerhealth.org.au



Ivory Print are proud to offer our services and support in the printing and design of the coffee table book and this program. Ivory Print is a local family owned print shop with professional staff that can help with all your printing needs. Our fully qualified staff specialise in offset printing, digital printing and graphic design, which allows us to offer both large and small quantity print runs. Please call in and see Jan and the staff.

Livestock Intel

We support the robust systematic framework that NCFH uses to improve the health and productivity of the industry's most valuable asset... the farmer. We strive to achieve the same success in our business to improve the health and productivity of Livestock in Victoria through evidence based collaborative research, knowledge and experience.



LMB Linke Livestock

LMB Linke Livestock operates in Hamilton, Western Victoria as private stock and station agents. We provide expertise in the sale of all lines of livestock and we pride ourselves on the professional service and effective and high calibre auctioneering services in which we offer our extensive client base. Our team has expertise in specialist areas and are friendly and approachable.



Regional Landcare Program, Glenelg Hopkins CMA

Glenelg Hopkins CMA has a primary coordination and strategic planning role in Natural Resource Management within the catchment. The farmers and land managers which are the focus of the NCFH 'Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health' are the CMA's key partners in NRM, and their health assists with the vision for healthy land and water resources.



Rural Industries Skill Training Centre Inc

www.rist.com.au

Knowledge and Knowhow



Vision 2020 Australia

Managed by Vision 2020 Australia, the national peak body for eye health and vision care sector, the Vision Initiative is the Victorian Government's public health response to the *National Framework for Action to Promote Eye Health and Prevent Avoidable Blindness and Vision Loss*. The Vision Initiative aims to raise awareness of eye health and vision care among the Victorian population, educate health professionals to improve referral pathways across the full continuum of care and develop a sustainable platform of collaboration across eye health and vision care providers, government and other organisations.



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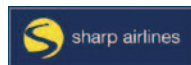


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