

Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities

HMF702



HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities is a twelve-week online postgraduate unit offered by the School of Medicine at Deakin University and the National Centre for Farmer Health.

The unit aims to provide an overview of the social, environmental, health promotion and policy determinants of health and wellbeing in rural and remote communities in Australia and internationally. A growing body of evidence shows that the more remote a community is, the poorer the health outcomes experienced by its people. Agricultural workers, their families, and communities endure limited access to essential health services, lower health literacy and higher rates of workplace injury and lifestyle disease than their town-based and urban counterparts.

Further compounding 'life on the land' is an ageing and diminishing workforce required to work harder for longer in a time of changing agricultural practices, increasing corporatisation and global food insecurity; all the while dealing with the stress of tightening financial pressures, climate variability, natural disasters and succession. If the picture of health in rural and remote Australia isn't complicated enough, agricultural communities face reduced access to community-level wellbeing initiatives and are underrepresented in health policies. HMF702 aims to distill the key aspects of these issues.

Unit information

Offered through the National Centre for Farmer Health and Deakin's School of Medicine in Trimester 2, this unit will be delivered wholly online between July and October. All assessment and tutoring will be completed off campus using CloudDeakin. Further information about this unit, and the application form for a small number of scholarships, is available at:

www.farmerhealth.org.au.

Why study this unit?

The most important attribute of a sustainable and productive agricultural industry is a healthy agricultural community. HMF702 will focus on the environmental, social and community stressors that are negatively impacting the wellbeing of today's rural and remote communities.

The unit will highlight the importance of improving the physical and mental health of rural and remote workforces to the productivity of primary industries and agribusiness. You will gain the skills and knowledge to positively influence the physical, mental and social health of high-risk rural populations.

Career opportunities and professional accreditation

This unit opens possibilities in a variety of exciting career paths in health provision, health management, health promotion, agricultural productivity and rural policy. HMF702 provides you with a strong foundation in agricultural health, sustainability and community wellbeing with a focus on providing both the knowledge and skills relevant to the above career paths. HMF702 represents 1 credit point towards a postgraduate qualification at Deakin University (depending on course rules) and offers continuing education and professional development points relevant to a number of professions. HMF702 is of further benefit to health professionals seeking to become a health provider for AgriSafe™ Australia.

Who can study this unit?

HMF702 is a core unit of the Graduate Certificate of Agricultural Health and Medicine H522. Conducted entirely online in Trimester 2, this unit may also be taken alone or as an elective in a number of Deakin's postgraduate courses. HMF702 has been specifically designed to appeal to multidisciplinary graduate-level students from public health, health promotion, social work, nursing, medical and agricultural backgrounds. The curriculum encompasses materials relevant to postgraduate-level students, farmers, rural health professionals, health professionals, allied healthcare providers, social workers and policy makers.

'I found the unit to be informative and thought provoking. The topics discussed each week assisted me to develop knowledge and skills in the speciality of Agricultural Health and Medicine.

I would recommend for anyone interested in improving the health, wellbeing and safety of their agricultural community to study this course and become empowered to create healthy and sustainable agricultural communities.'

Tam Phillips
RN AgriSafe Clinician



Study areas

This unit will cover the following topics:

- social determinants of rural health
- remote health service provision and workforce shortages
- natural disaster recovery in agricultural communities
- roles of rural health professionals
- agricultural health literacy
- decision making in rural emergencies
- impact of climate on health
- health impact of disease outbreak and quarantine
- rural and remote health planning and policy
- mental wellbeing in rural communities
- social dislocation and rural networks
- sustainable Farm Families
- health promotion in rural communities
- metabolic syndrome
- lifestyle disease
- remoteness and gender health
- alcohol misuse
- health of minority workforces in agriculture
- food security
- rural nutrition.

What you'll get out of it

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- recognise and describe the social determinants of health that contribute to poor physical and behavioural health outcomes in the agricultural workforce, nationally and internationally
- explain the environmental, economical and health service constraints experienced in farming communities and how these influence physical and mental health
- discuss the role climate variability plays in the health and wellbeing of rural and remote communities
- examine the underlying attributes of successful health policies, health promotion and community-level interventions in agricultural settings
- critically evaluate literature surrounding the role of lifestyle disease on rural morbidity and mortality
- employ online communication technologies to investigate and address agricultural and rural health population problems.

Unit fees

HMF702 is a full-fee unit offered through the School of Medicine at Deakin University. For more information on tuition fees, visit deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=HMF702.

Admission requirements

This unit has no prerequisites. It has been developed to complement HMF701 Agricultural Health and Medicine, offered in Trimester 1, although both units can be undertaken as a stand-alone unit of study. HMF702 Healthy and Sustainable Agricultural Communities is available to all postgraduate-level students or interested professionals from agricultural, medicine, health, social work, education, governmental and policy backgrounds.

How to apply

Applications for this unit can be made through Deakin University's online application portal deakin.edu.au/apply or via mail through the Unit Chair. If you would like further information about this unit or the application process, please visit www.farmerhealth.org.au or contact the Unit Chair.

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