

# Western District Health Service



GARDINER FOUNDATION



Sustainable Dairy Farm Families Newsletter is produced in collaboration with the above partners.  
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- Remember to keep your action plans active in your mind as we expect to hear about the progress you have made when we return to each of the areas in 2007.
- It's never too late to address these!



Welcome to the 2006 edition of the Sustainable Dairy Farm Families newsletter.  
 In 2006 we returned to all 11 Dairy Farm Families sites, where we revisited the learning's from year one and built new learning's with the focus on depression, anxiety and swapping the gender bender workshops.

A total of 180/210 (86%) of participants returned with Wodonga the outstanding example having 100% returns - Corryong a close second.  
 We would like to acknowledge the great work that producers did over the year - building chemical storage, running around stock as opposed to riding motorbike, taking a holiday, making high fibre food

choices, wearing better sun protection and importantly following up on referrals. In this newsletter we show some of the changes (good and not so good) that have occurred. We look forward to seeing everyone and if you did not make it in year 2, we still look forward to seeing you back in year 3.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and in spite of the seasonal challenges keep up your focus on good health, wellbeing and safety. We all wish you a Happy Christmas!

Sue, Stu, Ann and Michelle



*Congratulations Wodonga 100% return rate, can we do it three years in a row???*

**Upcoming workshop Dates 2007 (to be confirmed)**

Melbourne:	30th of March
Warrnambool:	2nd of May
Cobden:	3rd of May
Colac:	4th of May
Warragul:	5th of June
Trafalgar:	6th of June
Leongatha:	7th of June
Shepparton:	4th of July
Kerang:	5th of July
Corryong:	18th of July
Wodonga:	19th of July

**Stressed???**  
 Remember that stress comes in many forms including rashes, insomnia, illness and agitation. Be aware of your body and acknowledge stressful times. Revisit the techniques from Chapter 6, "Stress" in your SDF Resource Manuals.

5 minutes in the morning...  
 ...or 5 months off the farm

PROTECT YOUR FARM'S BUILT UPGRADE ASSET. YOU.

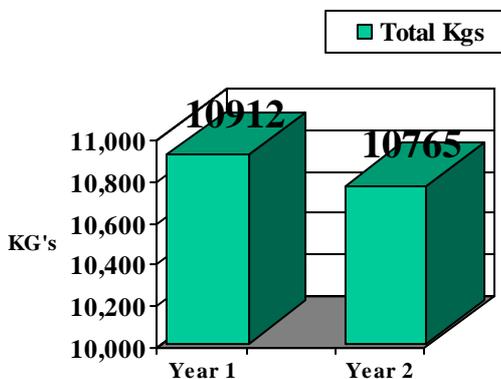
# Results from year 2 data

Body mass index (BMI) is used to estimate your total amount of body fat. It is calculated by dividing your weight in kilograms by your height in metres squared (m<sup>2</sup>). A score of over 25 indicates an overweight status and over 30 obese.

Our results from year two indicate that there has been 147kgs lost by the 127 participants that had a BMI score of overweight or obese. **Well done!!!**

We encourage all participants to get into the healthy BMI range by managing their 30 minutes of exercise five times a week and maintaining a healthy diet!

**Total Body weight for all participants with an overweight or obese BMI**



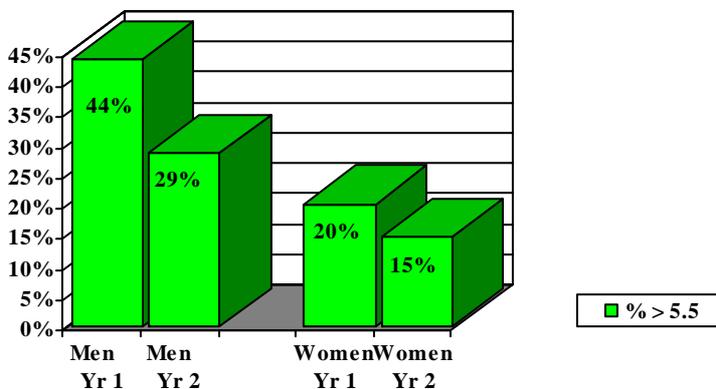
**Risks of being overweight and physically inactive**

If you are overweight (BMI over 25) and physically inactive, you may develop:

- Cardiovascular (heart and blood circulation) disease
- Gall bladder disease
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Diabetes
- Osteoarthritis
- Certain types of cancer, such as colon and breast cancer.

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

**Percentage of dairy participants with fasting cholesterol over 5.5mmol from year 1 to year 2.**



**Cholesterol**

Cholesterol levels showed a reduction from year one to year two. The average cholesterol level was 5.06mmol in year one and has now dropped to 4.76mmol. The graph (left) shows a decrease in levels for people who had greater than 5.5 mmol (at risk) and have moved into the healthy range. These are good results as a few people reduced their levels but are still just above 5.5mmol. Remember reducing your intake of saturated fat is best for lowering your cholesterol level. Saturated fat is found in animal fats, dairy (choose lower fat options) coconut, palm oil - often used in takeaways and commercially prepared biscuits.

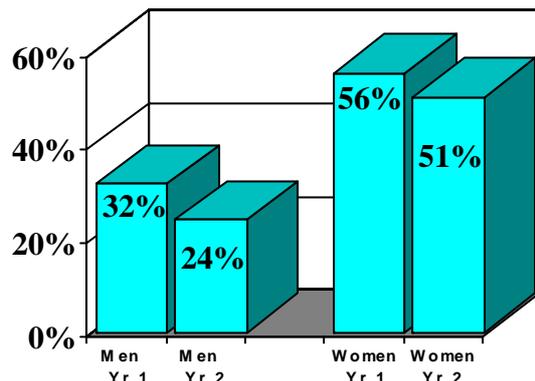
**Body fat distribution and health risk** [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

A person's waist circumference is a better predictor of health risk than BMI. Having fat around the abdomen or a 'pot belly', regardless of your body size, means you are more likely to develop certain obesity-related health conditions. Studies have shown that the distribution of body fat is associated with an increased prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease. Our results from the year 2 data indicated that women who had a waist circumference of greater than 88cms have on average lost 2.10cms each off their belts. The men who had a waist circumference of greater than 102cms however have bettered the women with an average loss of 3.71cms each.



As the graph shows, there has been an encouraging decrease in waist circumference, with people moving into the healthy range..... it will be great to see the final results next year! Keep it off!

**Percentage of participants with a waist measurement of high risk  
Men >102cms Women >88cms**



## Alcohol: How is it affecting your health?

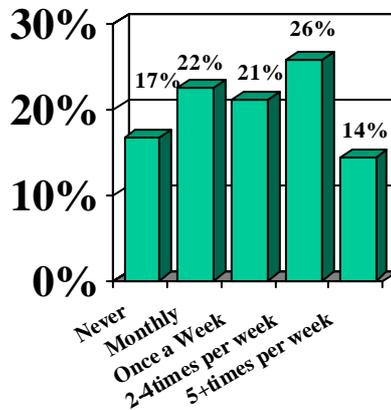
Results from the first year of the SDFP project included some interesting information regarding alcohol consumption. The Australian government alcohol guidelines state that men should avoid having more than six standard drinks and women should avoid having more than four standard drinks on one occasion. Results from year one assessments indicated that 41% of men were drinking more than six standard drinks on one occasion at least monthly. Whilst 12% of women reported to drink at high risk levels of six or more standard drinks on one occasion. Drinking at these levels can cause serious effects to your long and short term health including :

- Cirrhosis of the liver
- Brain damage and memory loss
- Increased risk of male impotency

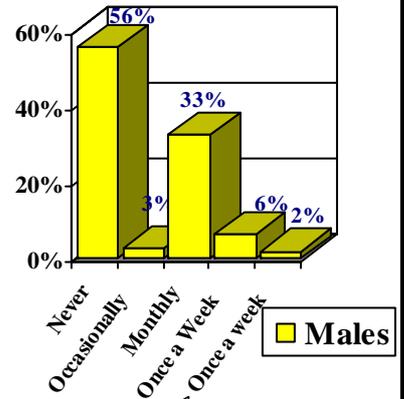
Increased stress can lead people to drink higher than usual amounts of alcohol. Please take it easy over the next few months particularly with the added seasonal stress of climate, families and Christmas festivities.

In the lead up to our final workshop we suggest all drinkers to drink at moderate levels (1-2 drinks per occasion & 2 non-drinking days per week). Drinking at moderate levels has been shown to have positive effects on prevention of coronary heart disease and stroke incidence.

**How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? (all participants year 1)**



**How often do you have more than six standard drinks on one occasion?**



Keeping track of how many alcoholic drinks you have is important. Men should avoid having more than 6 and women more than 4 standard drinks on any one day. Here are some examples of how many standard drinks are actually in what you're drinking:



\* NSW, WA, ACT = Middy; VIC, QLD, TAS = Pot; NT = Handie/Pot; SA = Schooner  
 NHMRC [www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au](http://www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au)

## Worlds first cervical cancer vaccine now fully funded

The Cancer Council Australia have welcomed the announcement that the Australian Government will fund the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. HPV is a sexually transmitted infection usually affecting women between 20-24. Almost all irregular pap smear results are the cause of HPV. In 98% of cases the HPV will clear itself, if however it persists and is left undetected it can cause cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine (Gardasil) prevents infection of two of the many strains of HPV. The vaccinated strains cause approximately 70% of known cervical cancers. As this vaccine does not protect against all types of cancer-causing HPV, pap tests will still be required every 2 years even for vaccinated women. The vaccine will be available to women aged 12-26 years of age, with a school based vaccine program to possibly commence by April 2007. <http://www.health.gov.au/>



## Surviving the drought. How are we managing?

Your health is the most important asset to you, your family, your farm

Farmers are at risk of poor health, suicide and farm accidents. Don't let this be you or someone you know

Of crucial importance is to:

1. Have a plan
2. Set critical dates
3. Continue your educational & social activities
4. Have a strategy for recovery

**The top five tips for health and wellbeing during tough times:**

- Do something for your health everyday: e.g. get off the farm / go for a walk / listen or play music / ring a friend / read a book
- Exercise - a little and often, it goes a long way
- Include other people in your day
- Don't 'bunker-in', get off the farm for a day
- Seek health assistance—don't wait

**We found the following useful:** 24 hrs Mensline - Call 1300 78 99 78 24 hrs Lifeline - Call 13 11 14

24 hrs Kids Helpline - Call 1800 55 1800 Parentline - Call 132 289 [For parents with children 0-18years]

Sustainable Farm Families drought management website - [www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au/drought.html](http://www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au/drought.html)



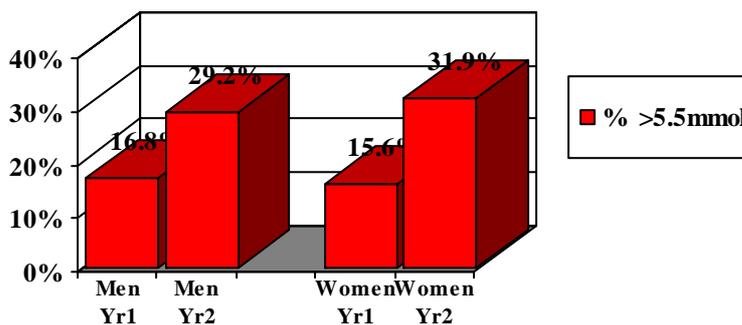
I'm a farmer. At least I used to be until I was diagnosed with skin cancer. My whole world changed from that moment on. Weeks of chemo, long stays in hospital, I even had to get my son back to run the farm. It's been real tough on the whole family. If I have one message for farmers, it would be that it's not worth it to put things off and put themselves and their families through what we've been through. If you work outside, *always* wear a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, sunglasses and regularly apply sunscreen". **Les Colman**



## Diabetes: The Silent Epidemic.

In pre-diabetes blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. Pre-diabetes has no warning signs or symptoms. Each year, in your early morning assessments we tested your fasting blood glucose and people greater than 5.5mmols were referred for further follow up and/or diet advice. Remember the glycaemic index in Diet and Nutrition? As you can see in the graph on the right more participants blood sugars have gone into the pre-diabetic range of over 5.5mmols. Research from the US, Finland and China show that moderate weight loss, and exercise reduce the risk of pre-diabetes developing into type 2 (mature onset diabetes) and help reduce your blood glucose levels. If you are one of these people finding out about your blood sugar level gives you a chance to make some changes. In 2007, we talk about diabetes in more detail.

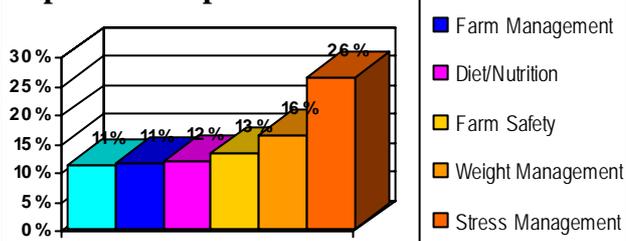
Percentage of participants with fasting blood sugars over 5.5 mmols



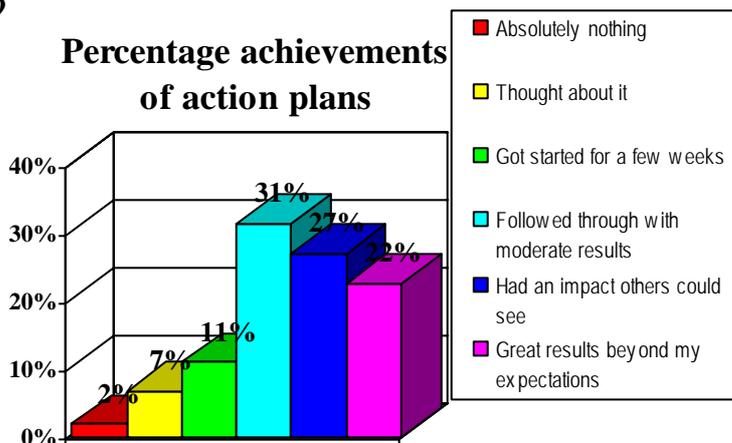
## Action Plans: How did you rate?

Our summary from the action plans indicated that stress and weight management along with farm safety were the priority of most participants. In our second year workshop, all participants were asked to review their action plans and give themselves an achievement rating on their progress. These ratings have revealed that 80% of participants action plan choices showed moderate to great results beyond expectations, whilst only (2%)

### Top six action plan choices



### Percentage achievements of action plans



had no action taken. We look forward to seeing how your current action plans have progressed at the final workshop in 2007! Till then, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy new year and remember to slip, slop, slap!

PROTECT YOUR FARM'S MOST IMPORTANT ASSET. YOU.



Slip on sun-protective clothing



Slop on SPF 30+ sunscreen



Slap on a hat



Seek shade when possible



Slide on some sunglasses



www.sunsmart.com.au