

# Western District Health Service

August 2005

Winter 2005



*Sustainable Farm Families newsletter is produced in collaboration with the above partners. For further information please phone Sue Brumby Principal Investigator or Stu Willder Principal Researcher 03 55518450 Admin Support—Ann Curran*

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## Another year passes by!!!

Welcome everyone to the third newsletter for the Sustainable Farming Families research project. We are well into the year now and have revisited all groups for the second time. We have been amazed at the feedback, positive reassessment and quality action plans that have been presented so far. We are astounded at the efforts many have gone to in altering their lifestyles to optimise their health, family life and farm business.

A special thanks to all the facilitators from Farm Management 500 who continue to assist in the delivery and coordination of the program.

Sue, John and Stu have traveled high and wide over the last few months and Sue recently presented a paper of the preliminary results at the 8th National Rural Health Conference in Alice Springs. She did remember to

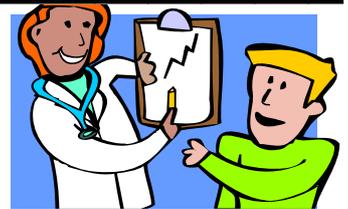
slip, slop, slap whilst up there and the health and agricultural industries were interested with the preliminary results for the SFF project. We hope this newsletter assists in keeping you informed on our progress over the three years and we encourage you to give us feedback on any relevant topics or concerns.

Based on the success of SFF, we have been working with the Victorian Dairy Industry across ten locations and have just completed year one with 193 dairy farmers participating.

In this newsletter we look at the results from the second year of assessments and the topics for the final year of the project.

*See you soon.*

*Sue & Stu*



## Points to remember

- Please remember to fast from 10pm prior to your physical assessment
- Don't forget your manuals for the education session
- Wear comfortable clothing for the day
- Come with an open mind

**LIFELINE'S  
JUST ASK -  
1300 131 114**

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service Lifeline's Just Ask is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit <http://www.justask.org.au>

## Year two feedback to date

The competition is on!!!!!! As is the truly Australian way, all of the groups we have revisited have been quite competitive in their health assessments and are keen to know how the other groups have gone. Significant weight loss, girth reduction and cholesterol lowering were noted. Along with this came some great action plan reports on farm safety measures and major lifestyle changes.

There have definitely been some champions in each group with one in particular in Clare SA who lost over 10 cm in waist circumference!!!!!! Not a bad effort for the year and this individual has significantly reduced risk for diabetes, heart disease, cancer and injury. Well done!!



## From the Professor

What great results we have seen in the overall health status of our farming families after two years. Well done! This is truly inspiring. What has impressed me has been the way in which participants have reported their achievement on action plans - which I expect are changing yet again as you meet your health and safety goals for year two. The great majority of participants reported changes 'which others could see' and 'which exceeded their own expectations'. It goes to show that with goals based on a clear understanding of the

benefits they bring there is much we can all do to improve our family health.

There is much in the media these days on healthy living that can assist us to meet our goals. What is important is to understand how these strategies relate to us – our personal health characteristics and the things we need to do – so that we take full advantage of what they have to offer. As always our health professionals suggest that when we adopt new healthy living practices, this should be based on a complete understanding as to how

new foods, different exercise regimes, and so on, might impact on us. This is the spirit in which the SFF project is conducted and I encourage you to use the health system to learn more about the right healthy living choices for you and your family.

Best wishes with this years goals!  
Professor John Martin.



## Waist size as a predictor of diabetes type 2 risk

### Waist size as a predictor of diabetes type 2 risk

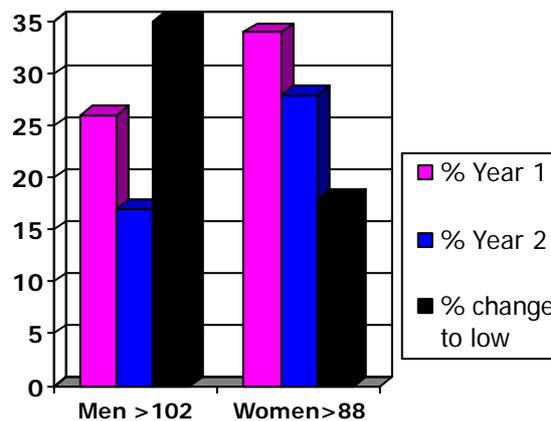
#### Men

- Yr.1 26% of men >102 cm
- Yr.2 17% of men > 102 cm
- % improvement 35 %

#### Women

- Yr.1 34% women >88 cms
- Yr.2 28% women >88 cms
- % improvement 18 %

Note: % improvement is the % of people that moved from over the benchmark in Year 1 to under the benchmark in Year 2.



Waist size is a significant indicator for diabetes risk.

There was significant improvement in both males and females who had a waist size over 102 and 88 respectively. This reduction has now reduced the significant risk for diabetes in the future.

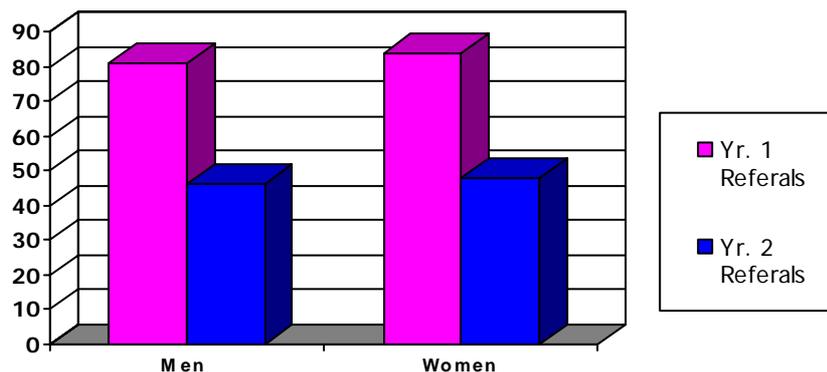
## Referrals to Health Professionals (GP's, Dieticians, Naturopaths, Counsellors, CHN, Continnence)

There was a significant reduction in the need for referrals of participants in the second year as shown in the graph below. Both males and females nearly halved their need for referral which indicates a significant improvement in initial health indicators picked up in the first year.

## Referrals to Health Professionals

### Referrals to Health Professionals

- 81% men year 1
- 45% men year 2
- 84% women year 1
- 48% women year 2



## Below are some helpful tips for all!!!

### Check-up anyone?

Ref [www.LifescrIPThealthadvantage.com](http://www.LifescrIPThealthadvantage.com)

You're healthy. At least, you think you are. No chronic aches or pains, no congestion or fever, no undue changes in appetite, sleep or mood. As far as you can tell, you're the picture of good health. Do you still need to schedule that annual check-up? According to a majority of doctors in a new nationwide survey, yes, you do. The survey, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, found that 65% of physicians believe that an annual physical exam is a health necessity for all adults, healthy or otherwise. A wide majority of doctors in the survey agreed that routine physicals can help improve early detection and prevention of many serious conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, and numerous cancers.

### Risky Business!

Ref [www.LifescrIPThealthadvantage.com](http://www.LifescrIPThealthadvantage.com)

Carrying too much fat in the abdominal area not only increases your risk of cardiovascular disease, it also increases the chance you'll be disabled in your later years. According to a study presented at the annual North American Association for the Study of Obesity meeting, being obese makes it difficult to perform even the most simple of daily tasks, like doing chores around the house or running errands. A BMI of over 30 indicates obesity.

### Projected Timetable for Year Three

7.00am – 8.15am:	Individual Fasting Health Assessments
8.15am - 8.45am:	<b>BREAKFAST</b> and Reflection on learning's and impact on farming families from year 1&2
8.45am – 9.30am:	Participants Individual presentations from Action Plans
9.30am – 10.15am:	Refresh and revisit learning's from year 1 &2 program.
10.15am – 10.30am:	<b>Morning tea</b>
10.30am – 11.30am:	Physical Activity- A guide for Farming Families
11.35am – 12.15pm:	Focus group discussion- Impact of SFF on farming business
12.15pm – 1.00pm:	<b>Lunch</b>
1.00pm – 2.00pm:	CPR and basic life support
2.00pm – 2.45pm:	Focus group, questions and sustainability.
2.45pm – 3.00pm:	<b>Afternoon tea</b>

### What's install for year three???

Well it's just around the corner and we are starting the planning process for year three. We are looking at doing a session on physical activity, CPR and obviously discussing how you are all going with your action plans!!!! We are also interested in how this project has changed your farming business decisions and your farming practices. Let your local FM500 facilitator know if there are any other topics you would like covered and we will try to accommodate. Remember that physical assessments will be repeated!!!!

### FARM INJURIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

As pointed out in numerous studies, including Australia, farming is one of the most dangerous occupational activities with a well-recognized high severity in terms of morbidity and mortality. A extract from a recent report from the EU is below.

"Figures concerning the burden of these injuries in the United States show a high mortality rate of 22 deaths per 100,000 farm workers, while in the EU countries (EU15) the corresponding rate is 13 per 100,000 farm workers. A more striking impression makes the fact that these numbers are comparable to those concerning motor vehicle accidents in the general population, which are considered to be the injuries responsible for the highest public health burden (16 deaths per 100,000 US citizens and 11 deaths per 100,000 EU citizens, respectively). Concerning the morbidity associated to farm activities, it has been reported that each year one in three farmers will sustain an injury. Use of modern machinery in farming increase the severity of these injuries, whereas children are exposed to increased hazards (heavy machinery, pesticides, etc)." EU.

Department of Epidemiology, Athens University Medical School, Center for Research and Prevention of Injuries (CE.RE.PR.I), Athens, Greece. July 2004