



Sustainable Farm Families

The Human Resource in the Triple Bottom Line



State Government Victoria Department of Primary Industries

State Government Victoria Department of Human Services



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ACTION PLANNING

Remember to keep your action plans active in your life as we expect to hear about the progress you have made when we return for the second year workshops in 2008-2009

A huge welcome to our farm families new to the program!

The last few months have been very exciting for Sustainable Farm Families, as we have been working with health services and agricultural groups to deliver the program across Victoria. This expansion of the SFF program has been funded through the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Human Services. As seen in the table to the right we have been having very good attendance rates for both farming men and women.

During this last year, the SFF team from Western District Health Service, Hamilton has been working with some fantastic health professionals and it is really exciting to see health services, agricultural groups, farm families, government and communities being enthused about the program across the state. Some of the industry groups that have been involved include groups such as the Country Fire Authority, Victorian Farmers Federation, Progress Associations, BestWool, Landcare and Horticultural networks to name a few. We would like to welcome these new partners to the program and look forward to their feedback.

SFF e-Care has been developed to help you stay on track after your SFF workshop. e-Care is an internet based program which has been developed to enable you to manage your own personal health, well-being and safety program for your farm family business. To date the program has been trialled successfully with farming men and women making use of some of the features.

The SFF Advisory Group has recently been reviewed and we welcome three farmer representatives on the group. They are Pam Oddie, Angus Howell and Jamie Ramage. Further details regarding the Advisory group is available on the SFF website.

As we finish writing this newsletter, rain is falling in Hamilton, I hope that this is widespread across Victoria and assists you in meeting your seasonal challenges. Keep up the great work – we have had tremendous action plans and we look forward to catching up with you soon.

Kind regards,
The SFF Team

Victorian Workshop attendance 2007- 08

Males	417
Age Range Years	18-79
Average Age	50.48
Females	336
Age Range	18-78
Average Age	48.52
Total Participants	753
Average group size	18.83



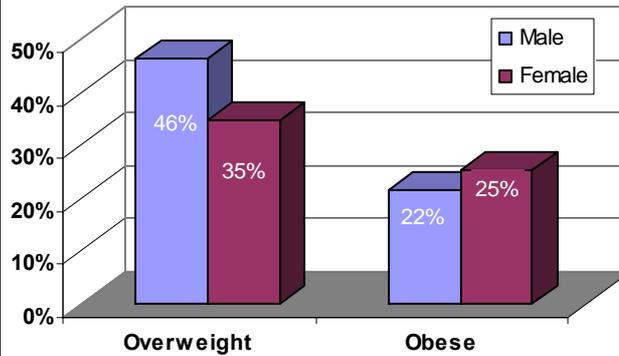
Postcards from Sustainable Farm Families Workshops

Preliminary Results from Year 1

Body mass index (BMI) is used to estimate your total amount of body fat.

Our results show that there were 68% of males either overweight (BMI \geq 25) or obese (BMI \geq 30) whilst there were 60% of women either overweight or obese. We encourage all participants to get into the healthy BMI range (less than 25) by managing their 30 minutes of exercise five times a week and maintaining a healthy diet!

Percentage of participants with overweight or obese BMI Scores (N=748)

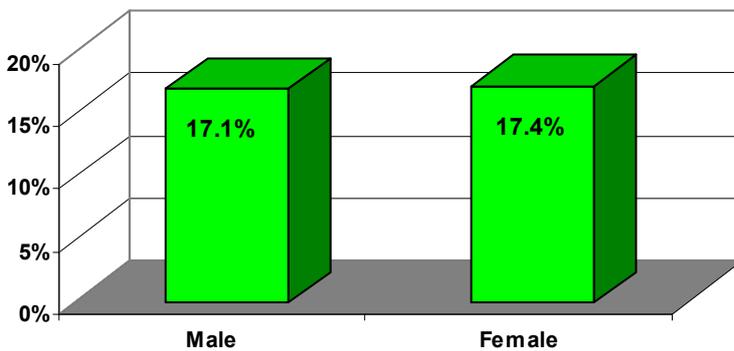


Risks of being overweight (BMI of 25+) and physically inactive include:

- 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.

Visit the Better Health Channel for further information at <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

Percentage of participants with fasting cholesterol \geq 5.5mmol (N=748)



Cholesterol

The graph to the left highlights the percentage of participants with total cholesterol levels of greater than 5.5mmol (risky). If you were a participant with a high cholesterol, remember to eat lean red meat and low fat dairy products to help reduce your cholesterol into the healthy range.

Medical specialists believe that levels above 5.5 indicate an increased risk for vascular disease such as heart disease and stroke.

Remember reducing your intake of saturated fat and physical activity is best for lowering your cholesterol level. Saturated fat is found in animal fats, dairy (choose lower fat options) coconut and palm oil (often used in takeaways and commercially prepared biscuits).

Body fat distribution and health risk

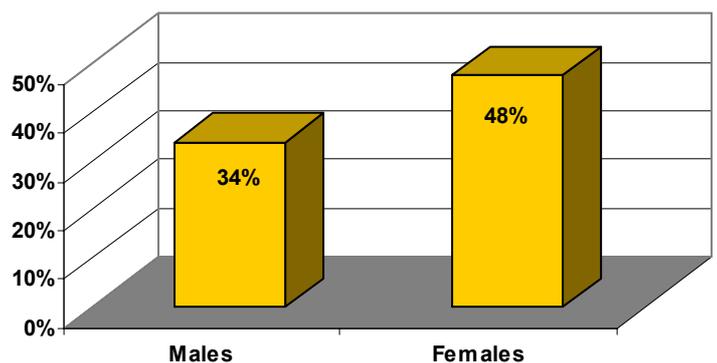
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

A person's waist circumference is also a predictor of health risk. 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, cardiovascular disease and more recently cancer.

A waist size of 88cms or more for women and 102 cms or more for men increases the risk of diabetes four fold as well as increasing risk for cardiovascular disease. However, many people remain unaware of the link between waist circumference and heart attacks.

The graph to the right indicates that 34% of men and 48% of women have an abdominal measurement of high risk. We look forward to seeing how these results change in our second year workshop. Remember, a healthy balanced diet with regular exercise is the only long term measure for reducing weight.

Percentage of participants with a waist measurement of high risk Men \geq 102cms, Women \geq 88cms (N=748)



Alcohol: How is it affecting your health?

Results from the first year of the 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 indicate that of men 63% and 35% of women were drinking at risky levels at least once per month (see graph to right).

Drinking at these levels can have serious effects to your long and short term health including:

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

Please take it easy over the next few months particularly with the added seasonal stress of climate and winter. In the lead up to our next workshop we suggest all drinkers to drink at moderate levels (1-2 drinks per occasion and a minimum 2 non-drinking days per week). Drinking at low levels has been shown to have positive effects on prevention of coronary heart disease and stroke incidence, reducing accidents and violence.

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:

1 30ml Spirit Nip 40% Alc./Vol
 1.8 180ml Average Restaurant Serve of Red Wine 12% Alc./Vol
 1 285ml MiddyPot® Full Strength Beer 4.9% Alc./Vol

* NSW, WA, ACT - Middy; VIC, QLD, TAS - Pot; NT - Hande/Pot; SA - Schooner

NHMRC www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au

	0.677	0.208	0.075	0.036	0.004	
	Never	Monthly	Once a we	2-4 times	5+ per week	
Males	0.395	0.302	0.169	0.09	0.035	
Females	0.677	0.208	0.075	0.036	0.004	
	Never	Monthly	At least weekly			
Males	0.368	0.31	0.316			7
Females	0.65	0.207	0.137			6
						5

KEEPING ON TRACK

Keeping on track of our new healthy living plan can be a bit difficult as we attend to the daily task of running our farms and families. How can you keep a record of relevant information to support your Sustainable Farm Families action plans? Of course it depends on what you have set out to achieve, but how about:

- A weekly reflection with the family over a healthy dinner on what you have achieved in the past week and what you might do differently next week.
- Keep a record of actual times of planned activity (walking, catching up with friends, personal phone calls etc).
- Take physical measures less frequently (weight, height if you need to grow!), and don't be preoccupied with them.
- Discuss how the farm safety changes are going, what you have learnt and what has worked well
- Most of all enjoy the modest challenges you have set and enjoy the time out from your busy schedule.

Good luck with your goals and challenges, we look forward to seeing how far you have all progressed in the next workshop!

Seasonal affective disorder (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

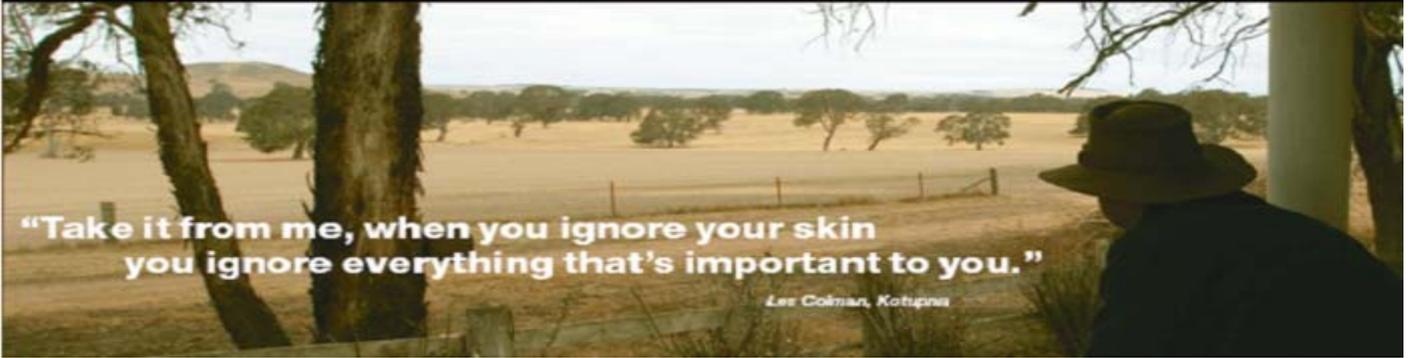
Some people suffer from depression during the months of winter and usually start to feel better in the spring, this is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The exact cause of SAD is unknown however doctors believe that the lack of sunlight alters the brain chemistry in some people. Australia has a fairly sunny climate so SAD is not as common as in Europe. Antidepressant drugs, psychotherapy and bright light therapy such as spending more time in the sun, taking regular exercise and holidaying in sunny climates during winter may be used to treat SAD.

Symptoms of SAD may include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Lack of energy and enthusiasm
- Weight gain
- Oversleeping
- Dietary changes
- Withdrawal from others
- Loss of libido.



If you are experiencing any of these symptoms please see your health professional. I



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**

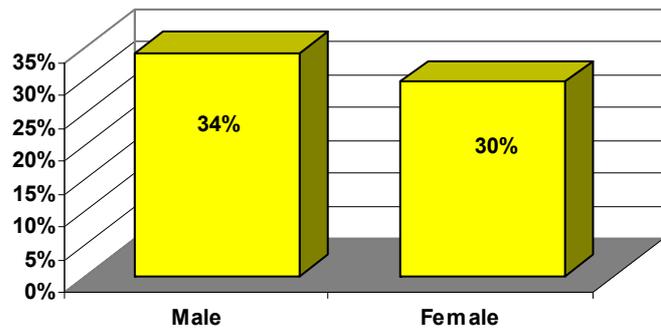


Diabetes: The Silent Epidemic.

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 test your fasting blood glucose and people greater than 5.5mmols are referred for further follow up and/or diet advice. Remember the glycaemic index in Diet and Nutrition?

The results from the fasting blood glucose levels show interesting statistics. From the graph it can be seen that there was a 34% incidence of 'risky' blood glucose levels for men and a 30% incidence of 'risky' blood glucose levels for women. Research shows 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.

Percentage of participants with fasting blood glucose levels $\geq 5.5\text{mmol}$ (N=748)



If you are one of these people, finding out about your blood sugar level gives you a chance to make some changes. In year 2 workshops, we talk about diabetes in more detail. Meanwhile, eat low glycaemic carbohydrates, watch diet, exercise more and read your food labels to make better choices!

In looking towards the May – June period we have a number of upcoming programs and we would encourage you to promote the program to your family, friends, employees and colleagues.

LOCATION	HEALTH SERVICE	DATE	CONTACT
Buchan / Orbost	Orbost Regional Health	20th/21st May	Gary Green – T: 5154 6648
Beechworth	Beechworth Community Health Service	20th/21st May	David Kidd – T: 5728 0200
Mildura (Irymple)	Western District Health Service	20 th /21 st May	Cate Mercer-Grant – T: 55518 508
Lilydale/ Healesville	Eastern Health	20th/21st May	Susie Radke – T: 5969 9932
Winchelsea	Hesse Rural Health Service	26th/27th May	Kam Benton – T: 5267-2202
Leongatha	Gippsland Southern Health Service	26th/27th May	Anna Langley- T: 5667-5524
Katamatite	Moirra H/Care Alliance	26th/27th May	Sue Crowther – T: 5871-0904
Mansfield	Delatite Community Health Service	28th/29th May	Jean McKinnon – T: 5736-6366
Shepparton	Western District Health Service	28th/29th May	Cate Mercer-Grant – T: 55518 508
Latrobe	Latrobe Community Health Service	3rd/4th June	Rachael Dooley – T: 5171 1440
Camperdown	South West HealthCare	11th/12th June	Sandra Poole – T: 5593 1892
Bendigo 1	Bendigo Community Health Service	17th/18th June	Dallas Coghill – T: 5448 1600
Birchip (Donald)	East Wimmera Health Service	1st July/2nd July	Bev Koops – T: 5477 7127
Yarram	Yarram & District Health Service	8th/9th July	Bec Tyler - T: 5182 0222
Seymour	Seymour Health	24th/25th July	Louise Sharkey – T: 5793 6185
Edenhope	Edenhope District Memorial Hospital	28th/29th July	Cath McDonald – T: 5585 9845