



Farming: The Highs & Lows

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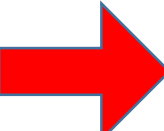
Feeling Down on the Farm Initiative

The Pressures of Farming

- High debt levels
- Volatile prices & schedules
- Volatile weather
- Intense work load
- Nutrient & water limitations
- Health & Safety regulations
- Staff issues & turnover
- Isolation
- Public perceptions
- Farming in a “fishbowl”



Building Resilience is Key



Increased Awareness of Signs of Ill Health Needed



Developing Plan of Support

Rural Statistics

1. DairyNZ Health Pitstop Data

- 14% farmers reported high/very high total burnt out scores
- 32% reported pain that interfered with their work (backs, knees, shoulders)
- 57% male farmers have high blood pressure
- 73% classed as overweight 28% obese
- 41% all farmers have high cholesterol (referred to GP)
- Disease (cancer, cardiovascular, diabetes, respiratory) all highest for rural populations

Rural Statistics

2. Suicide Statistics (Walker, 2012; Tipples and Greenhalgh, 2012)

- 25 rural deaths per year (19.5/100000, 50% higher than urban population)
- Estimated 20-180 attempted suicides/yr
- No. 2 behind motor vehicle related deaths, **twice** that of farm vehicle deaths
- Peaks in spring (August) and Autumn (Feb-May)

My Role Currently

- To support & work collaboratively with the Rural Support Trust Coordinators, providing case consultation or 1:1 support to farmers.
- To provide training about mental health to the farming community e.g. discussion groups
- To provide training & workshops to rural professionals
- To build better support channels in the community, e.g. GPs, DHB, utilising other people for practical support.
- To have a presence at rural public events to highlight awareness & support.

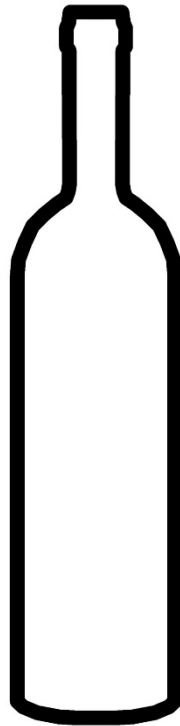
Barriers to Getting Help for Farmers

- Isolation
- Geography – to seek & receive help.
- “The Bloke thing”
- Stigma- still relatively conservative in some circles.
- Lack of understanding & recognition of ill health signs
- Lack of appropriate support- people with the right skills but who also get farming pressures and general culture.

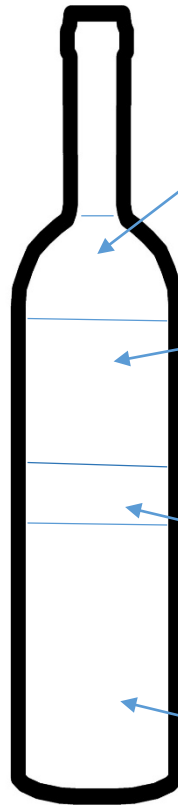
Training for Farmers & Rural Professionals

- Resilience & Wellness in Farming
- Signs of Stress, Depression & Suicide risk
- How to Help-
 1. Listening.
 2. Support Plan.
 3. Urgent Plan
- Lines of Support- Rural Support Trust, GP, DHB & resources

Your Coping Bottle



Your Coping Bottle



Outbreak of campy-

Drought season:
overstocked, reduced
profit + feeding out
earlier. No days off for
4 months.

Tractor blew up – big
cost, increase OD

Financial pressure

Your Coping Bottle



Other Resources

- [Rural Support Trust 0800787254](http://RuralSupportTrust.org.nz)
 - [Coping with Stress brochure](#)
- www.farmstrong.co.nz
- www.depression.org.nz/rural Helpline 0800 111 757
- www.thelowdown.co.nz (good for younger ones)
- www.mentalhealth.org.nz

Future Directions

- National Initiative - \$500,000 towards Rural Mental Health.
- 50/50 Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) & Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa NZ (RHAANZ) linking to existing Rural Support Trusts
- 10-12 Regional Facilitators (MPI)
- 10-12 Clinical Champions (RAANZ)
- Increased utilisation of the RST 0800 number (0800787254) to triage.

Goal

- **To Improve mental health outcomes for the rural population**
 - Reduced rates of suicide
 - Increased awareness and acceptance of MH in rural sector
 - Increased numbers accessing support- RST, GP & support services.
 - Identification & access to support providers who have understanding of rural pressures & culture.
 - Improved collaboration between urban providers & rural providers.

Summary and Questions

