

Friday 19 June 2009

PR/097/09

Men urged to consider their mental health

The NSW Farmers' Association is encouraging rural men to take a greater interest in their mental health during Men's Health Week this week.

NSW Farmers' Association Rural Affairs Committee Chair Sarah Thompson says that rural men are becoming more aware of mental health issues; however more still needs to be done.

"We are beginning to see that men in rural communities are increasing their awareness and understanding of mental health issues, which is a very welcome step forward," Ms Thompson said.

"Men in rural areas are most at risk of mental health issues, with ongoing and prolonged drought causing a spike in depression, anxiety and stress.

"Studies have shown that the rate of suicide among male farmers is almost 50 per cent higher than the average in rural communities, primarily due to drought and social isolation.

"This is compounded by the fact that other health issues are also higher in country areas, with rural people more at risk of heart disease, diabetes and cardiovascular disease due to a shortage of services," Ms Thompson said.

According to Ms Thompson, Men's Health Week provided the opportunity for these issues to be highlighted, so that all people in rural communities, be it men or women, become aware of the signs and symptoms of mental health issues.

"Work continues to reduce the stigma of mental health issues, so that rural men and their families feel comfortable seeking help when it is needed most," Ms Thompson said.

"This can only be achieved with a joint approach, where all people know what to look out for and how to help their friends, families and communities through tough times," Ms Thompson said.

The NSW Farmers' Association has been at the forefront of rural mental health activities for the past four years, having established the NSW Farmers' Mental Health Network in 2005. This Network brings together many of the organisations that operate in the area of mental health to ensure the sharing of ideas and the effective use of resources.

The Network has run a total of 35 Mental Health Information Sessions across the State in the past 12 months to raise awareness of rural mental health issues.

Men's Health Week commenced on Monday 15 June and will conclude this Sunday 21 June.

Contact:

Ruth Redfern (Media Officer) 0429 990 218

If you no longer wish to be on our mailing list simply [click here](#) to unsubscribe. If you are having difficulty unsubscribing from this page please email us on media@nswfarmers.org.au and we will remove you from our lists.