

Government Funding Boost for Rural Mental Health



At the 2015 New Zealand National Agricultural Fielddays, the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister of Health jointly announced a one-off government funding injection of \$500,000 to support mental wellbeing in rural communities.

There is growing awareness of the importance of mental health for farmers and those who live in rural communities. Anecdotal evidence and analysis of mental health statistics reveal that rural communities have high rates of burn out and stress, which have the potential to lead to depression and other forms of mental illness. The aim is to enable rural health professionals to support rural communities to be better able to cope with the ups and downs of farming. The focus is on community-based and farmer-to-farmer support.

What is this new funding going to achieve?

This one-off funding injection is focused on the prevention and early intervention of rural mental health in rural areas.

The Ministry of Health will work closely with Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand and District Health Boards to train more rural health professionals, business networks and communities to tackle depression. This one-off funding will boost the skills of health professionals such as GPs, nurse practitioners and pharmacists working in rural areas.

It will also allow greater coverage of training for people with specific farming-related jobs, such as vets, farm consultants and stock agents, and will strengthen links between Rural Support Trusts and health professionals.

The funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is for “on the ground” support. It will increase the capacity of Rural Support Trusts to work directly with farmers and their families by training more co-ordinators and facilitators.

Strengthening Rural Support Trusts

Rural Support Trusts are there to help people and families in rural communities experiencing hardship or who need advice or support. Their services are free and confidential. During an adverse event Rural Support Trusts provide an important coordinating role. They are there to help rural people to get the advice and support they need. The support provided by Rural Support Trusts is focused on farmers helping farmers. Each Rural Support Trust is in touch with and responsive to their region’s specific needs.

In collaboration with Dairy NZ and Beef + Lamb NZ, up to 100 support people will be trained to work for Rural Support Trusts, providing guidance and support to farmers around the country. They will be able to recognise and refer those who need support. These trained part-time workers and volunteers will help connect farming families with the wide variety of mental health, financial and advice services already available.

The objective is to increase rural communities’ capacity and capability to respond to increased farmer stress. Putting in place a strengthened support network via the Rural Support Trusts will minimise the numbers of farmers at risk.

Where to go for help and support

Rural Support Trusts

www.rural-support.org.nz 0800 787 254

FURTHER SUPPORT

In an emergency call 111. If the matter is not a crisis but still serious contact your GP and get an immediate appointment.

Technical support

Beef+Lamb NZ

www.beeflambnz.com

DairyNZ

www.dairynz.co.nz/tactics

Federated Farmers

www.fedfarmers.org.nz

Emotional support

Depression information

www.depression.org.nz/rural

Depression helpline

0800 111 757

Farmstrong

www.farmstrong.co.nz

Your local GP

Healthline: 0800 611 116

Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

For young people

Youthline: 0800 376 633 or free txt 234

www.thelowdown.co.nz

www.commonground.org.nz

www.sparx.org.nz

