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Rural Industries Research and
Development Corporation



RIRDC Completed Projects in 2009 - 2010 and Research in Progress as at June 2010

RIRDC Publication No. 10/097

A photograph of a fishing boat on the water. A man in a dark jacket and cap is visible, looking up at a large blue fishing net that is being hoisted. The background shows a clear blue sky and a distant shoreline.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP FOR
FARMING AND FISHING HEALTH AND SAFETY

RIRDC

Innovation for rural Australia



Australian Government

**Rural Industries Research and
Development Corporation**

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP FOR FARMING AND FISHING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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and Research in Progress as at June 2010**

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Foreword

RIRDC produces Research in Progress summaries of continuing projects and those completed during 2009-2010. Our intention is to provide stakeholders with early access to the results of ongoing and completed work to inform their decisions, and inform researchers of results to shape research directions.

The Collaborative Partnership for Farming and Fishing Health and Safety Research in Progress June 2010 contains short summaries of continuing projects as well as those that were completed during 2009-2010. This Program aims to undertake R&D and research application activities that improve the:

- Physical health of farming and fishing workers and their families
- Mental health of farming and fishing families
- The safety of the work environment and practices in farming and fishing industries.

This report is an addition to RIRDC's diverse range of over 2000 research publications which are available for viewing, free downloading or purchasing online at www.rirdc.gov.au. Purchases can also be made by phoning 1 300 634 313.

Craig Burns
Managing Director
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

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Completed Projects - FFHS-To improve the safety environment and work practices in farming and fishing industries

Project Title	Interventions for best practice health and safety behaviour change - Stage 1
RIRDC Project No.:	PRJ-004599
Start Date:	26/06/2009
Finish Date:	30/06/2010
Researcher:	Lyn Fragar
Organisation:	The University of Sydney
Phone:	02 6752 8212
Fax:	02 6752 6639
Email:	lfragar@health.usyd.edu.au
Objectives	<p>To support the Collaborative Partnership for Farming and Fishing Health and Safety to achieve its three objectives relating to safety, physical and mental health in the farming and fishing industries by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identification of all research and project evaluation reports of farm and fisheries safety, health and mental health programs of relevance to Australian farmers and fishers2. Review of the strength of evidence for effectiveness, and findings of relevance to achieving changed behaviour3. Defining with the Collaboration the form in which features of effective interventions should be presented in order to inform Stage 2 of this Project4. With the Collaborative Partnership, establishment of an informal Australian Farm and Fishing Health and Safety Research Network of rural research institutions to develop research capacity in this field, and assist these to tender for projects in Stage 2.5. Submission of a review report of that describes the features of effective interventions that maximise behaviour and practice change towards improved farming and fishing physical and mental health and safety, and that provides the information and resource base for Stage 2.
Background	<p>Safety and health of the people engaged in agricultural and fishing production has been of concern to Australian governments and relevant industries for over two decades. This research report extends the evidence base regarding effective interventions and adoption in relation to the farming and fishing industries. Specifically, it aligns with the objectives of the Collaborative Partnership for Farming and Fishing Safety addressing physical and mental health, along with the safety environment and work practices. The findings of this report will assist the Collaborative Partnership for Farming and Fishing Safety to undertake the necessary work that will inform a program of farm and fishing health and safety programs that are underpinned by “best practice”.</p>
Research	<p>Building on two earlier reports completed in 2008, a follow-up literature review was completed as a desk study.</p> <p>Findings were tabulated as an updated review that included a list and description of all programs included in the reviews, by intervention type, along with exclusions and reasons for exclusion; for each program the level of evidence for outcomes; and for each reported program, a description of key features of effectiveness contributed by each report.</p> <p>A workshop was hosted with the Program and Advisory Committee of the Collaborative Partnership for Farming Fishing Health and Safety.</p> <p>Recommendations were developed for the Collaborative Partnership for Farming Fishing Health and Safety.</p>
Outcomes	<p>This study has identified relevant promotion and extension programs. It identified the strengths of programs in attracting participation, in raising awareness and knowledge and in driving behaviour change on farm or fishing enterprises. It has endorsed 10 key principles that should underpin safety</p>

promotion programs to optimise the likelihood of adoption. Future research should focus on:

1. Reviewing, monitoring and setting benchmarks and priorities for action
2. Formal support to and evaluation of national campaigns and programs
3. Grain auger guarding and retro-fitment
4. Quad bike safety
5. Helmet wearing promotion program
6. Safety of older farmers program
7. Setting the Research and Development agenda for the fishing industries.

Implications

The major recommendations are directed to the Collaborative Partnership for Health and Safety in Farming and Fishing in the first instance and include:

1. That the Collaborative Partnership consider the findings and recommendations of this report and, develop a national strategic plan for effective promotion of safety on Australian farms.
2. That the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, in association with the Collaborative Partnership, consider the findings of this study and develop capacity to support development and maintenance of a national plan for fishing safety.
3. That the specific research and development corporations develop an annual plan of promotion of safety to members, ensuring timely advice in relation to seasonal production activity.
4. That the industry agencies actively support national single-issue safety campaigns.
5. That the Collaborative Partnership prepare a paper to be submitted to, the Minister for Health and Ageing to indicate the importance of inclusion of farming and fishing populations in preventive health programs to be delivered by Primary Health Care Organisations and state-based programs. Mechanisms to ensure inclusion will need to be defined.
6. That the Collaborative Partnership support programs aimed at improving mental health literacy, access to mental health services and management of business stress in the farming and fishing sectors.
7. That the ACAHS revise its draft Guideline for achieving change on farms.

Publications

Will be prepared.

Research in Progress - FFHS-To improve the physical health of farming and fishing workers ad their families

Project Title	Sustainable Farm Families- Future Directions
<p>RIRDC Project No.:</p> <p>Start Date:</p> <p>Finish Date:</p> <p>Researcher:</p> <p>Organisation:</p> <p>Phone:</p> <p>Fax:</p> <p>Email:</p>	<p>PRJ-003083</p> <p>30/05/2009</p> <p>31/03/2011</p> <p>Susan Brumby</p> <p>Deakin University</p> <p>(03) 5551 8460</p> <p>(03) 5572 5371</p> <p>susan.brumby@wdhs.net</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The Sustainable Farm Families - Future Directions (PRJ-003083) focuses on extending our understanding of the initial SFF program implemented in the broad acre industry (2003-2006) in a longitudinal study. To note this was a recommendation of the report Living Longer on the Land – an economic evaluation of the Sustainable Farm Families Program undertaken by Boymal et al (2007).</p> <p>We will focus on the following objectives by revisiting the ten original groups (Clare, Hamilton x 2, Swan Hill, Benalla and Horsham) of the SFF program and (Wee Waa, Dalby, Ayr and Ingham for Cotton and Sugar) assess the health, (physical and mental) and safety status of the 192 (expecting 160 available) participants to further extend the understanding and efficacy of the SFF program post commencement within these industries.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •To consider the long term benefits (health gain, equity and empowerment) from the SFF program on the individual, the farm the family • •To measure and evaluate if their clinical improvements have been maintained and to gather evidence about their morbidity or mortality • •To evaluate the acquired skills, knowledge and change in behaviour associated with completing the first program • •To communicate project findings to both participants and industry.
<p>Current Progress</p>	<p>Sustainable Farm Families - Future Directions (PRJ-003083) focuses on extending our understanding of the initial SFF program implemented in the broad acre industry (2003-2006) in a longitudinal study.</p> <p>All partner contracts with La Trobe University and Farm Management 500 have been signed off and ethics approval granted. The project has written the year 5 / 6 workshop and manual chapters which included respiratory health and pesticides as well as focus groups on climate. All original participants have been contacted via email, phone or letter. In some cases all three methods have been used.</p> <p>Ten workshops have been held in all the nominated locations and were completed by week ended May 14, 2010. Some participants are being further followed up to assist in collecting their physical assessment data. Response and participation rates have been high with workshops well attended and supported. The Cotton programs in Wee Waa and Dalby were affected by the southern Queensland flooding and state of emergency. However, all participants have received a newsletter and articles and promotion have been undertaken through Farm Management 500 and the Cotton Research Development Corporation in particular.</p>

Project Title	
Staying healthy: Behaviours and services used by farmers and fishers	
RIRDC Project No.:	PRJ-003524
Start Date:	19/09/2008
Finish Date:	13/07/2012
Researcher:	Sue Kilpatrick
Organisation:	Deakin University
Phone:	03 5563 3138
Fax:	03 5563 3081
Email:	pvcrr@deakin.edu.au
Objectives	<p>The project's objective is to investigate the process by which farmers and fishers achieve and maintain good physical and mental health in 'difficult times' (defined in Background section). Research questions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do farmers and fishers stay healthy in difficult times?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What behavioural choices do they make that protect/enhance their health?• What is the influence of availability, nature and location of services?• What other factors, including attitudes influence their decision making process?2. What would help farmers and fishers to stay healthy in difficult times?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What individual level information, resources or actions would assist?• What community level infrastructure or actions would assist, including, but not limited to, health and wellbeing services?
Current Progress	<p>Five study sites representing five different industry areas selected, with input from the project reference group: Kerang, Vic (mixed farming); western Bland Shire, NSW (grains), St George, Qld (cotton), Ingham, Qld (sugar) and Jurien Bay, WA (fishing).</p> <p>Audit of health and wellbeing services in each site conducted. Interview participants recruited from each site, and interviews conducted from Feb to April 2010.</p> <p>Selected participants agreed to keep health journals for three months - this data collection is ongoing.</p> <p>Literature review ongoing.</p>

Research in Progress - FFHS-To improve the safety environment and work practices in farming and fishing industries

Project Title	OH&S Baseline data survey of Australian Fishing Industry
RIRDC Project No.:	PRJ-005591
Start Date:	09/04/2010
Finish Date:	30/10/2010
Researcher:	Kate Brooks
Organisation:	KAL Analysis Pty Ltd
Phone:	03 9917 2665
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Email:	Kate@kalanalysis.com
Objectives	<p>The objective of research project is to provide a frame of reference for the data analysis; a thorough analysis of the existing data in the context of interventions; a detailed comparison of State data where interventions have and haven't occurred to quantitatively identify the effectiveness of them; and to inform the industry of the status of Fisheries OHS over the last 12 years, the effect of interventions, and to identify what further actions are necessary to either investigate ongoing problems or address awareness lapses amongst industry participants.</p>
Current Progress	<p>The initial literature review has been completed, identifying State and Federal government reports, government research, industry reports and academic research into Australian fishing and commercial vessel occupational health and safety issues.</p> <p>The review confirmed that, while fishing and agriculture are in the top three most hazardous industries in which to work, and that 80% of accidents that occur in commercial fishing are not covered by any OHS or workers compensation agency, the OHS status of the industry has been improving in the last ten years. It identified the key factor in 70% of fatalities as being the low level of adoption for wearing PDFs (Personal Flotation Devices or lifejackets) at all times while away from the dock. In regard to injuries, the key factor is most commonly identified as the lack of training emanating from a culture that does not value workplace safety. Other factors were also identified, but were of lesser importance in the hierarchy of contributing factors, such as alcohol and fatigue.</p> <p>The review also identified interventions that are indicated as likely to have had an effect on the incidence of fatalities and injuries in the industry. Seven events or factors which, to varying degrees, were identified that can reasonably be expected to have had some effect on the OHS status of the industry. These included legislative events (introduction of quotas and safety legislation), establishment of OHS strategies and codes of practice, and industry communications programs.</p>

Research in Progress - FFHS-To improve the safety environment and work practices in farming and fishing industries

Project Title	OH&S Practices on Australian Farms
RIRDC Project No.:	PRJ-005593
Start Date:	13/04/2009
Finish Date:	31/08/2010
Researcher:	Milly Lubulwa
Organisation:	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
Phone:	6272 2069
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Objectives	<p>To conduct a telephone survey to collect information on current practices of farms aimed at improving the physical and mental health of farm workers and their families.</p> <p>Specifically the main objectives of the project are to collect information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the adoption of OH&S practices on agricultural farms;• the extent of knowledge possessed by farm operators about OH&S practices;• the proportion of farm workers exposed to OH&S hazards; and• the incidence of mental health risk among farm managers and workers. <p>The main objective of the proposed survey is to collect data from farm operators on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical health, including incidence of injuries, accessibility of health services and the proportion undertaking an annual health check.• Mental health, including social inclusion and incidence of pressure/stress.• Safety, including measurement of OH&S management practice uptake, incidence of injury and death, and exposure to known hazards. <p>The survey will also obtain data on the characteristics of farms and farm managers, including enterprise type, number of households on farm, number of residents by age group and number of workers. The questionnaire will be finalised in consultation with RIRDC.</p>
Current Progress	<p>Fieldwork for the survey began in April 2010 and was completed in June 2010. The target sample for the 2009 survey was 700 farms across Australia. Of these, 651 have been successfully completed:</p> <p>New South Wales: design - 144, completed - 139 Victoria: design - 100, completed - 98 Queensland: design - 149, completed - 133 South Australia: design - 81, completed - 79 Western Australia: design - 88, completed - 78 Tasmania: design - 79, completed - 75 Northern Territory: design - 72, completed - 49 Australia: design - 713, completed - 651</p> <p>Preliminary estimates have been generated by state and by industry and are ready to be sent to RIRDC in the form of excel tables on 30 June 2010. Any other requirements for analysis or reporting may be identified after further discussion with RIRDC. We will be generating final estimates when benchmarks are received from the ABS and weighting is conducted. Any additional responses that come in will also be incorporated at this time. It is expected that final estimates will be provided to RIRDC by the end of July.</p> <p>It is recommended that estimates at this stage be treated as preliminary, pending the weighting process.</p>

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RIRDC is a partnership between government and industry to invest in R&D for more productive and sustainable rural industries. We invest in new and emerging rural industries, a suite of established rural industries and national rural issues.

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