

Media Release

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Farmstrong supports around a thousand people a week

Rural wellbeing programme Farmstrong has exceeded expectations in its first year - supporting on average around 1000 people each week to live well and farm well.

Farmstrong released 'Making it Happen' today – an annual report-style document which showcases the programme's first-year reach, impact and successes.

Highlights include Farmstrong's website which has received 51,451 unique visitors in the first year – reaching around 1,000 people a week.

"We're absolutely rapt with the way Farmstrong is tracking. We knew we'd make an impact for farmers and growers, but we couldn't have dreamed it would gain this much momentum so quickly," says Farmstrong's Gerard Vaughan.

Other highlights from the report include:

- 6,205 Facebook followers and 1,100 on Twitter
- 31 Healthy Thinking workshops attended by 1,122 farmers, growers and agri-professionals
- 1,003 participants in the Farmstrong Challenge, travelling 633,216kms
- 22 South Island rural comedy shows – attended by 3,150 people.

"These results show that there's a very real need for this kind of support across farming and farming communities in New Zealand. Before we launched Farmstrong we asked farmers what they wanted from a wellbeing programme – and we're delivering on their requests with a focus on topics such as sleep, nutrition, exercise and ways to get off the farm more.

"We've done a heck of a lot in our first year. There's the Healthy Thinking workshops, to support emotional fitness, a cycle tour and physical challenge to promote getting active, and a woolshed comedy tour to encourage people to get off the farm.

"We've had former All Blacks join us – with Ian Kirkpatrick and Matt Cooper riding part of the Cycle Tour, rural broadcaster Jamie Mackay's generously lent his time and name to the programme as has John McBeth, and having Sam Whitelock recently come on board as an ambassador has been the icing on the (healthy) cake.

"While it's great having people like this get right behind Farmstrong what's been humbling are the thousands of farmers and growers around the country who we've met and supported in the last 12 months.

"People from all sorts of backgrounds and farming types have given up their time to stop their day to day work and think about themselves, their family and staff and look at ways to improve their emotional and physical fitness. It's about locking in good behaviours

when things are going well and using that as a bank to draw on when the tough times arrive.

“We want to pass on a big congratulations and thank you to everyone who has gotten involved and taken something from Farmstrong. For us the most important asset on the farm is the farmer – and we'll continue to deliver farmer-led programmes, initiatives and resources to support farmers with this.

“The great thing is that we're just getting started. We have a stack of great initiatives on the horizon and are keen to share these with all Kiwi farmers – to help even more people live well and farm well,” says Mr Vaughan.

A copy of 'Making it Happen' can be found [here](#)

For more information please contact:

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Farmstrong's first year initiatives:

Healthy Thinking Tours

With the support of medical doctor and author Dr Tom Mulholland, Farmstrong has – and is continuing - to host free Healthy Thinking workshops across the country. These are two to three hour sessions for farmers, growers and rural professionals and promote the importance of physical and emotional fitness.

Farmstrong Fit4Farming Cycle Tour

In March and April this year a core peloton of 20 riders rode 1,400kms from Ngatea to Bluff to highlight the positive impact physical activity can have on wellbeing. Along the way a number of guest riders joined the peloton including former All Blacks Ian Kirkpatrick and Matt Cooper.

During the ride the peloton stopped at five rural and provincial locations to host a community day which encouraged farmers and growers to get off the farm for a few hours, connect in with others and take part in a fun exercise activity.

Farmstrong Challenge

In support of the Cycle Tour, Farmstrong ran a challenge on its website encouraging farmers and growers to pledge a distance they were willing to exercise, either by; running, cycling, swimming or walking and to enter that distance on the site and commit to it. The rationale behind the Challenge was that people are more likely to carry out a promise if they publicly declare it.

Comedy Tour

Farmstrong sponsored the 'Sons of a Bitch – and Mel Parson's' South Island Comedy Tour. The content was rurally focused and shows were hosted in woolsheds. Humour plays a big part in looking after your wellbeing and the shows

a great fit for Farmstrong. The North Island Tour begins on the 19th of October and runs to the 13th of November.

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