

Two Year Report on Farmstrong

June 2015 to June 2017

Introduction



I am from a farming family so I know first hand the many pressures farmers deal with. Like farming, playing professional sport also has its ups and downs. That's why making a habit of looking after your wellbeing is so important. It helps you perform at your best and you can also draw on it when you are under the pump.

That is what Farmstrong means when it says 'live well, farm well'

I know developing these habits can be a challenge, particularly when we are busy. That's where Farmstrong can help. The programme contains a ton of practical tips and advice from farmers and others designed for busy farmers.

I have really enjoyed my first year as a Farmstrong Ambassador and reading through this two-year report I am impressed with the start we have made. I'm looking forward to what more we can do to spread the message and encourage more farmers to find out what works for them and "lock it in".

SAM WHITELOCK
Farmstrong Ambassador

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A WORD OF THANKS

The Farmstrong team would like to thank everyone who has participated in and supported Farmstrong during its first two years.

About Farmstrong

Farmstrong is a nationwide rural wellbeing programme for farmers and growers to help them live well to farm well. Our aim is to increase the uptake of wellbeing behaviours so that farmers, growers, their teams and families get the most out of life and work.

Why does New Zealand need a rural wellbeing programme?

Farmers and growers told us that they have systems to look after their land, stock and equipment, but not much in place to look after themselves. Organisations working in the farming and rural sector told us that the time was right to work together on solutions to address this. In 2015 Farmstrong was born.

How can you do this?

Research shows that adopting small, daily and weekly habits such as taking breaks and having time off, eating well, talking things through with others, staying connected with friends and family, regular physical activity and using healthy thinking strategies to solve problems all contribute to increasing your wellbeing. Having these habits in place means that when you're under the pump you have them to help get you through. It's a case of every little bit helps.

The core idea behind Farmstrong

Farmers and growers are the most important asset on the farm. Developing small but regular habits that increase your wellbeing means you will have plenty to draw on during challenging times. These habits also help you perform at your best.

What Farmstrong offers

Farmstrong can help you identify areas you want to work on and lock in changes you want to make. We collaborate and partner with individuals and organisations to educate, inform, inspire and motivate.

We meet people where they are at and offer practical ways to improve their wellbeing. We do this through:



sharing farmers stories about what works for them, supported by tips and advice from research and wellbeing science.



tools and resources delivered via our website and face to face at agriculture events, workshops and educational forums.



events and initiatives that help farmers stay connected and have breaks such as comedy shows and fitness challenges.

Farmer to Farmer

Right at the beginning when Farmstrong was still an idea, we asked 400 farmers what the biggest barriers to their wellbeing were. Here's what they told us:



47% how to achieve better work life balance



35% how to manage tiredness and fatigue



34% how to get the best out of employees



31% how to manage stress



29% how to stop worrying about work all the time.

They also told us they were interested in what other farmers were doing to help manage these things. These insights have shaped Farmstrong's approach. That's why we have developed tools and resources, and shared farmers stories about how to:

- have breaks and time off to avoid burnout and stay on top of things
- sleep well to help manage fatigue
- eat well to provide the energy you need to get through the day

- connect with family and friends to help keep perspective and solve problems
- get regular physical activity so your body can perform at its best
- practice healthy thinking strategies to manage your emotions in difficult situations.

We use our website and social media platforms to share resources. Through our partnership with Farmers Weekly and via other rural media channels we share farmer stories and helpful tips. We've organised educational workshops, attended agriculture field days and supported rural music and comedy shows, fitness challenges and other local initiatives. This has created opportunities for farmers to participate in Farmstrong, connect with each other, improve their wellbeing and pass on what they have learnt to others in their families, farming business and community.

Website

The Farmstrong website is the online portal for all things Farmstrong. Here farmers can access a wide range of stories, tools and resources to help improve their wellbeing. A Twitter feed carries the latest news about upcoming events.

OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS

»» 121,984

PEOPLE HAVE VISITED THE FARMSTRONG WEBSITE

OF THE TOTAL NUMBERS OF VISITORS

»» 16% [23,478]

REVISITED THE WEBSITE ONE OR MORE TIMES

ON AVERAGE THAT IS OVER

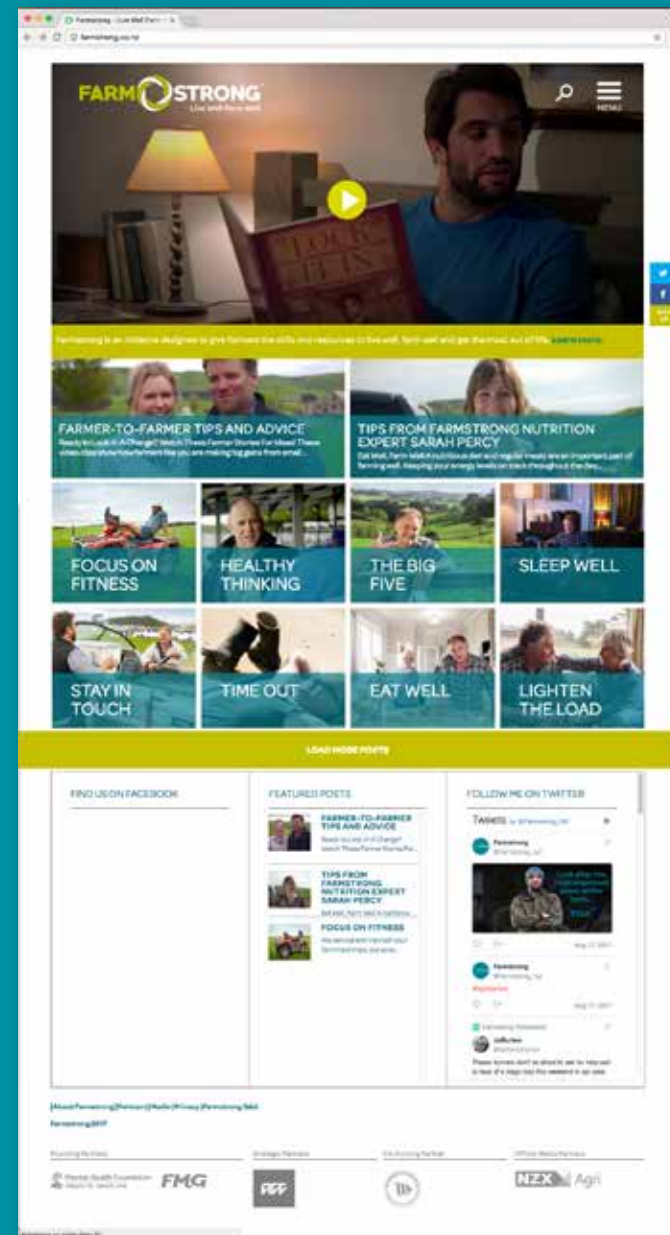
»» 1,000

NEW VISITORS EACH WEEK

WHEN VISITING THE WEBSITE

»» 8,574

PEOPLE SPENT 5 MINUTES OR MORE ON IT



farmstrong.co.nz

Social Media

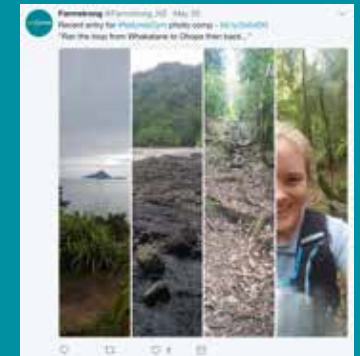
Farmstrong's social media platforms enable two-way conversation with famers and their families. Activities on Facebook and Twitter include regular reminders of events, competitions and giveaways, quick tips and links to videos on key topics like sleep, nutrition and exercise, and interviews.

Farmstrong has built up a following through social media. It currently has:

 **8,335** FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

 **1,673** TWITTER FOLLOWERS

 **296,200** VIEWS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA OR ON YOUTUBE OF OUR FARMSTRONG VIDEOS



Resources

All our tools and resources are produced and designed with input from farmers. This helps them be practical and relevant. We also seek input from topic experts to ensure that our tips and advice are based on the latest science.

Our suite of resources includes: farming stories and educational material in video and print, podcasts, brochures, flyers, posters and other merchandise. These can be accessed via the website and are used in Farmstrong workshops and events.



Examples of Resources



Healthy Thinking

Dr Tom Mulholland features in a series of video clips about the importance of regular health checks and healthy thinking strategies for farmers under the pump.



Eating Well

Nutritionist Sarah Percy explains how 'fuelling up' with the right food and staying hydrated are essential for maintaining energy levels to get through a busy day on farm.



Regular Activity

Dana Carver and Ian Handcock share insights about keeping 'farm fit' - finding activities that you love - cycling, walking, hunting, fishing, diving, team sports - and making them a regular part of your week.



Sleeping Well

Sleep expert Matt Beattie in an interview with John McBeth offers advice on how to get a better night's sleep and answers farmers questions about sleep and fatigue in a podcast.



Avoiding burnout

Sheep and Beef farmer and Clinical psychologist Sarah Donaldson explains what stress and burnout is, the effect it can have on body and mind and offers practical advice on how to prevent it.

Healthy Thinking Workshops

Managing your emotions during day-to-day farming challenges is a skill that can be learnt.

Farmstrong has rolled out Healthy Thinking workshops around the country in partnership with medical doctor and healthy thinking educator Dr. Tom Mulholland. During these sessions farmers learn how small changes in the way you think will prepare you for unexpected challenges ahead. Looking after the 'top paddock between your ears' also has a positive impact on your family, staff and business.

Over the last two years, **45** Healthy Thinking workshops were attended by **1,496** farmers, growers and rural professionals.



“ The Farmstrong workshop is gold. ”

DAIRY FARMER
MARTON

“ It gets people talking and thinking. You need that commitment to keeping yourself well because the farming environment can be bloody challenging. ”

DAIRY FARMER, HAWKES BAY

“ Dr. Tom had so much to offer. I came back and passed on the tools to the guys who work here. ”

BULL STUD MANAGER, HAWKES BAY

“ The workshop was really positive. Now I use the Healthy Thinking tools in my day to day farming. ”

FARM MANAGER, WHATAWHATA

Agricultural Field Days

Farmstrong takes its messages to where farmers go. It makes a marquee appearance every year at National Agricultural Fielddays at Mystery Creek. This event attracts 130,000 people over four days. This is our chance to connect with farmers and talk about the issues that matter to them. We also organise a range of activities to raise awareness about our wellbeing topics.

Farmstrong also has regular presence at other agriculture field days; including the Canterbury A&P Show, Southern Agricultural Field Days Waimumu, Central Districts Field Days and Northland Field Days in Dargaville. At the last three National Fielddays, as well as the 100's that we talked to, 576 signed up and competed in Farmstrong movement challenges, 702 received a 10-minute neck and shoulder massage and 485 played Mindball (a focus and relaxation game).



Good things we've supported

Here are a few examples of some community events and challenges we've supported.



Supporting communities under the pump

Farmstrong partnered with the Rural Support Trust to offer performances of the hugely successful Sons of a Bitch comedy show for flood-affected farmers from Waikato and earthquake-hit farmers in the top of the south and north Canterbury.



Win Sam for a Day

Wairoa Farmer Andrew Powdrell won a Farmstrong competition to host Farmstrong Ambassador Sam Whitelock. Sam spent a day in town coaching kids rugby, attending a livestock auction and talking to local farmers about looking after their wellbeing.



Handy Landys

Farmstrong help sponsor the Handy Landys (contingent of Lincoln students) who volunteer their time and labour to help farmers 'under the pump' in the Canterbury region.



Promoting The Big 5

At Mystery Creek Fieldays in 2017, a giant wall display featuring Farmstrong Ambassador Sam Whitelock promoted the Big 5.

Ladies Night

Celebrity chef Annabelle White hosted 14 Ladies Nights which helped promote Farmstrong wellbeing advice for rural women.

Fit4farming Cycle Tour

The Farmstrong Cycle Challenge gave farmers the chance to get off the farm, get on the bike and get their heart rate up.

Woolshed Music and Comedy Tour

Messages about taking time off and connecting with others came to life in rural communities around the country thanks to Farmstrong's Woolshed Music and Comedy tour. Musician Mel Parsons and actors Amelia Dunbar and Emma Newborn transformed working woolsheds into show spaces for an unforgettable night of entertainment and laughter. The shows are also a great opportunity to promote Farmstrong's key messages about wellbeing. Farmstrong has hosted 46 Woolshed Music and Comedy shows attended by 6,943 people.



“It’s a wonderful show, absolutely hilarious.”

“It was out of this world. We couldn’t stop laughing.”

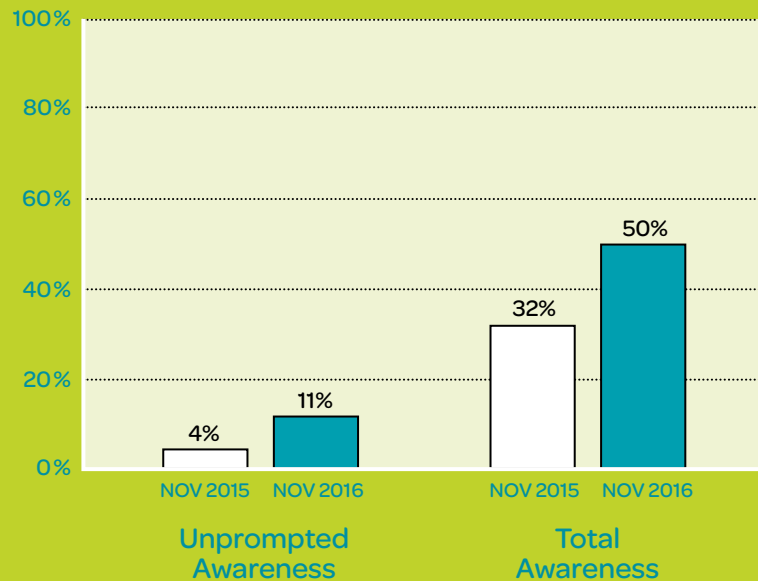
“I’d recommend it to anyone. It’s just so funny.”

Media Coverage

30 media outlets and publications have run 966 Farmstrong stories on TV, radio and print. As a result, 50% of farmers surveyed reported that they are aware of Farmstrong.

Media have covered high-profile Farmstrong events, our workshops and farmer stories.

Farmer & Growers (Owners)
Awareness of Farmstrong



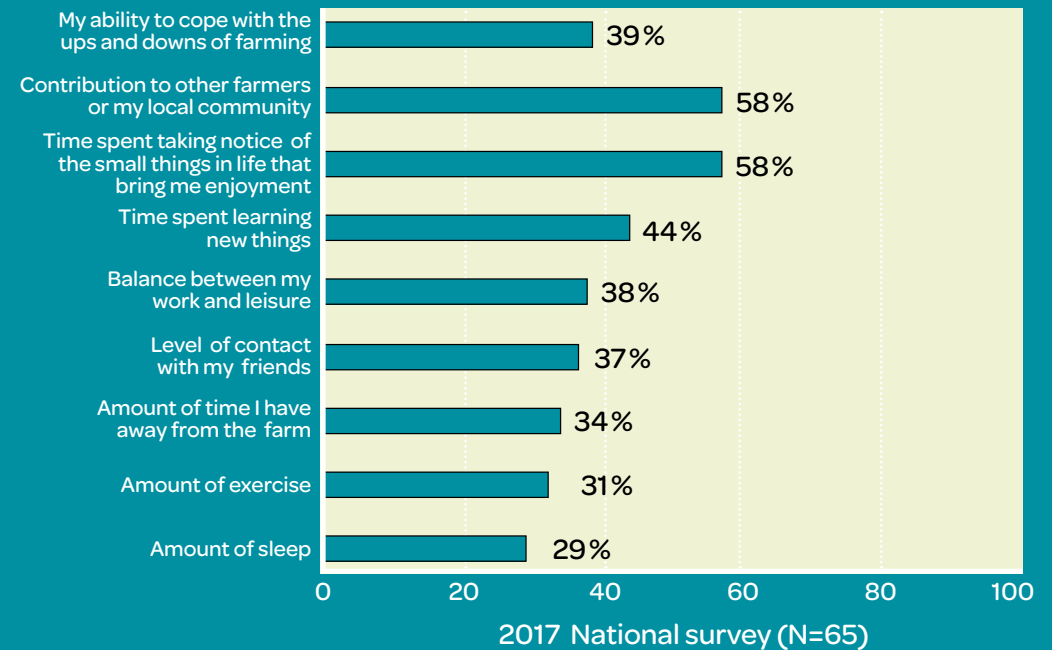
Impact results

Improvements participants attributed to Farmstrong

In our 2017 survey we asked farmers for the first time what change they attributed to their participation in Farmstrong. The following results are based on the 65 farmers who had participated in Farmstrong and also completed the survey.

- Three quarters of the 65 farmers in the 2017 national survey who had engaged with Farmstrong attributed improvement to Farmstrong on at least one of the nine dashboard measures.¹ This equates with 5,850 farmers.
- Twenty percent reported improvement on one or two measures, 21% on three or four and 34% on five or more.
- 39% of Farmstrong participants reported improved 'ability to cope with the ups and downs of farming' when they thought was a result of their involvement with Farmstrong or Healthy Thinking.
- The greatest numbers reporting some level of improvement were for:
 - 'Contribution to other farmers or my local community' (58%)
 - 'Time spent taking notice of the small things in life that bring me enjoyment' (58%)

Improvements attributed to Farmstrong/Healthy Thinking?



¹ The small sub-sample of 65 Farmstrong participants has a margin of error of +/- 12%.

Impact results CONTINUES

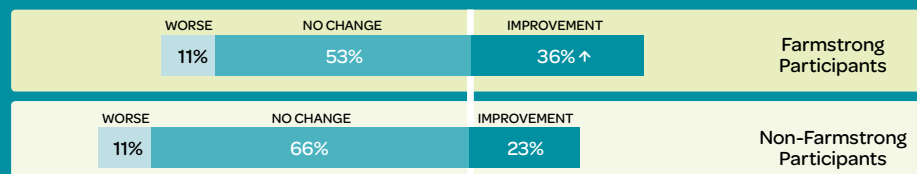
Farmstrong Dashboard Results 2016/17

Farmstrong uses a Results Based Accountability (RBA) Framework to report on progress. This measures how much we have done, how well we have done it and the impact it had so we can tell if farmers, their teams and families are better off.

The following results are from our annual surveys that measure nine indicators of Farmstrong impacts. They are measured by farmer perceptions of changes in their behaviours over the last 12 months. Comparisons are between those who have and have not participated in Farmstrong (based on 115 participants and 789 non-participants from combined 2016 and 2017 surveys). The survey is done through phone interviews from a national random sample of farmers, mostly who are owners.

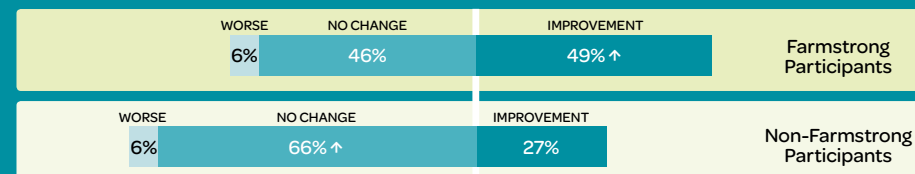
Ability to cope with the Ups and Downs of Farming

Farmstrong participants vs. others



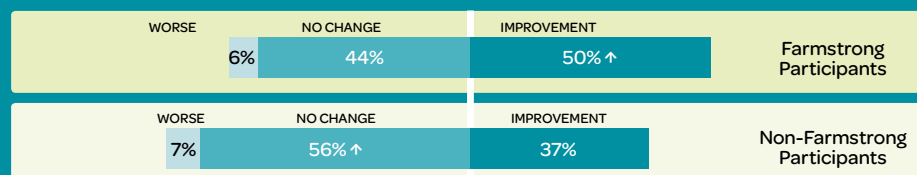
Contribution to other farmers or my local community

Farmstrong participants vs. others



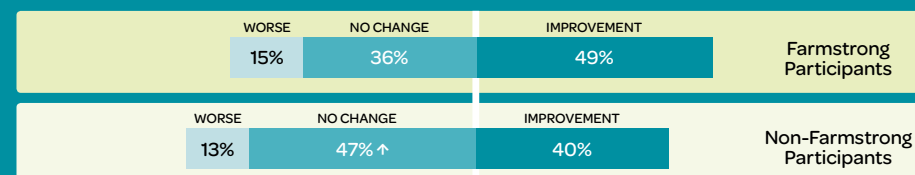
Time spent learning new things

Farmstrong participants vs. others



Time spent taking notice of the small things in life that bring me enjoyment

Farmstrong participants vs. others



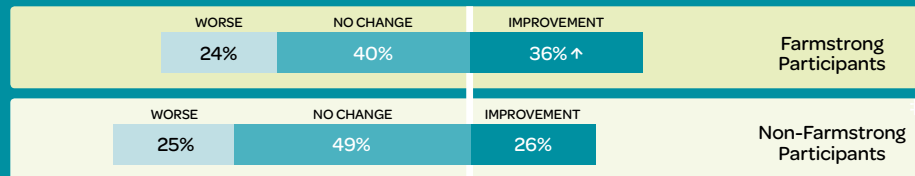
↑ Denotes higher level for participants compared with non-participants, which is statistically significant.

Impact results CONTINUES

Farmstrong Dashboard Results 2016/17

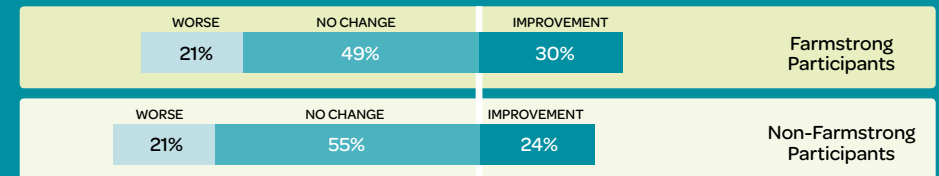
Amount of time away from the farm

Farmstrong participants vs. others



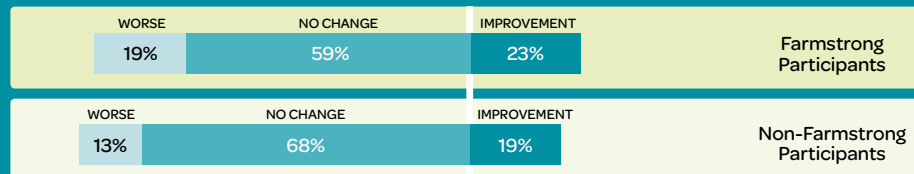
Balance between work & leisure

Farmstrong participants vs. others



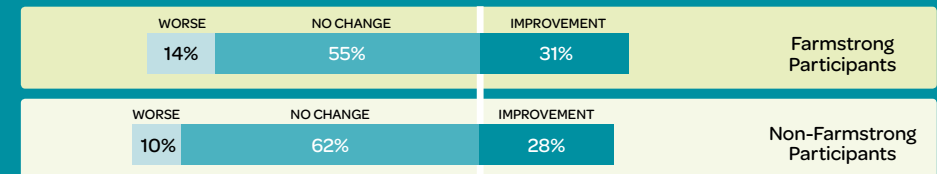
Level of contact with friends

Farmstrong participants vs. others



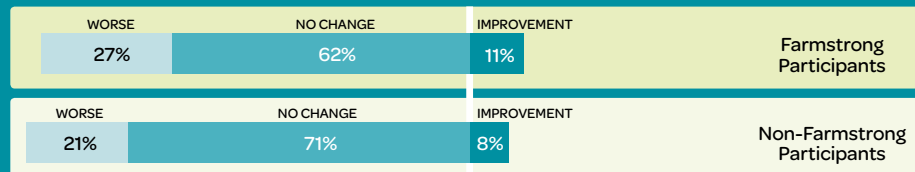
Amount of exercise

Farmstrong participants vs. others



Sleep

Farmstrong participants vs. others



↑ Denotes higher level for participants compared with non-participants, which is statistically significant. The sub-sample of 115 Farmstrong participants has a margin of error of +/- 9%, while for the non-participants it was +/-3.5%.

The Next Three Years (2017–2020)

Over the next three years we will:

- Extend Farmstrong's reach to more farmers and farm workers. We will motivate an increasing number of rural men and women to start and continue regular wellbeing habits.
- Get wellbeing tools and resources onto farms, into rural communities and agribusinesses so they are shared widely and used as part of day-to-day farming routines.
- Continue to organise and support events that improve wellbeing so they become an established part of the rural calendar.
- Work together with supporters on ideas and ways to share our messages, tools and resources.
- Collaborate with more organisations so Farmstrong continues as a sustainable quality-driven rural wellbeing programme.
- Continue to monitor progress so we can report on awareness and improvements in the wellbeing of farmers.





farmstrong.co.nz

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