

Link between Aspects of Diminished Farmer Wellbeing and Injuries

Executive Summary

August 2019

Introduction

- This research aimed to understand the relationship between aspects of diminished farmer well-being and farmer injuries.
- The aspects of diminished well-being were identified in Farmstrong research with farmers, based on what they said had negative impact on their wellbeing , such as feeling fatigued or exhausted, and having too much to do with too little time.
- The report integrates the findings of three phases of research: a brief literature review, 25 qualitative insight interviews and a phone survey with 500 recently injured farmers.

Key Findings

- Almost six in ten (58%) reported that at least one of the listed aspects of diminished wellbeing was a contributor to their most recent injury and these injuries accounted for two thirds of ACC farmer claim costs.
- Almost a quarter (24%) reported aspects of diminished wellbeing were a 'major' contributor to their injury and these injuries accounted for 30% of ACC farmer claim costs.
- Sixteen percent reported that aspects of diminished wellbeing were a 'major' contributor to a more serious injury (one that had a moderate or large impact on their ability to work).
- The most frequently mentioned aspects of diminished wellbeing which were major contributors to injury were:
 - Having too much to do and not enough time (11%)
 - Feeling fatigued or exhausted (8%)
 - Lack of sleep or poor quality sleep (6%)
 - Challenges coping with the ups and downs of farming (5%)
 - Feeling in need of a break away from the farm (5%)
- The insight research has assisted in understanding the ways in which these aspects of diminished wellbeing contribute to farmer injuries. Farmers deal with injury risks all the time, but diminished wellbeing results in farmers doing something they wouldn't normally do, or failing to avoid a risky situation that they normally would have successfully avoided.
- Those aged under 35 years (35%) and dairy farmers (31%) were more likely than others to report aspects of diminished wellbeing being a major contributor to their injury.
- Those who had engaged with Farmstrong were less likely than others to report a wellbeing issue being a 'major' contributor to a more serious injury (where the injury had a 'moderate' or 'large' impact on their ability to work).

- Thirty percent had gone back to work earlier than recommended, and this level was higher for those who reported that aspects of diminished wellbeing were a 'major' contributor to their injury.
- Just over half of the farmers (53%) said they would have been willing to give a possible online programme a go if it was sent to them while injured (they were told the programme could be used to identify their top injury risks and to develop their own plan for managing them).
- Sixteen percent reported that at the time of their injury there was less than the usual number of people working on the farm for that time of year. On these farms the rate at which aspects of diminished wellbeing were a major contributor to the injury (32%) was almost three times the level on farms without personnel shortages (11%).

Limitations of the research

- The time period between the injury and the interview/survey may have affected farmers' ability to accurately recall the contributors to the injury.
- It may be that those who chose to take part in the research differed from those who chose not to take part.

Conclusions

This research has confirmed and quantified the extent to which aspects of diminished wellbeing are contributing to farmer injuries. That the injuries where these aspects of diminished wellbeing were 'major' contributors accounted for 30 percent of ACC farmer costs, and that farmers are one of the highest cost sectors for ACC, reflects the significance of these findings.