

Farmstrong Fifth Year Monitoring Report: Executive Summary

Prepared for
Farmstrong

August 2020

Allan Wyllie MSoc Sci, PhD



Wyllie & Associates

www.wylliea.co.nz

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

- Farmstrong was publicly launched on 3 June 2015 and this monitoring report assesses changes in key measures over the first five years, to June 2020.
- The Farmstrong mission is to: Improve the wellbeing of people working in farming and growing.

RESEARCH METHOD

- National telephone surveys of farmers have been undertaken since 2015. The usual sample size is 450.
- Also included is monitoring data collected by the Farmstrong team, such as use of the website and social media, reach via print media and numbers attending Farmstrong events.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Good progress being made

This is a very positive report for Farmstrong, as evidenced by the following results:

- There were marked increases in awareness in the last 12 months, including a 6% increase in unprompted awareness of Farmstrong (to 24%) and a 10% increase in total Farmstrong awareness (to 71%). When recall of 'well known rugby player Sam Whitelock talking about things to help farmers cope with the ups and downs of farming' was included, the level was 87%, which was an 8% increase.
- The percentage of farmers who had ever engaged with Farmstrong continued an upward trend – now 31%. These survey results equate with approximately 20,600 farmers and farm workers who have ever participated and 18,100 in the last year.
- There was a continued upward trend in the proportion of farmers attributing some level of wellbeing improvement to Farmstrong – now 22% of all farmers. This is one of the strongest pieces of evidence of the impacts of Farmstrong, as this is the farmers themselves attributing causality to the impacts of Farmstrong in their own lives.

These positive results are likely to be linked to a tripling of the number of Farmstrong videos viewed in the last 12 months (up from 108,216 to 328,454) and FMG gifting Farmstrong some of their advertising slots during the TV weather report. The Farmers Weekly articles also play a key role, with a new question identifying them as the most cited form of engagement with Farmstrong. This was mentioned by 23% of farmers, followed by 'radio, TV, or newspaper' (18%), Facebook (8%), e-newsletters (6%) and 'field days or local agriculture event days' (5%).

Importance of multiple forms of engagement with Farmstrong

Three or more forms of engagement was associated with greater levels of improvements attributed to Farmstrong. As these results were based on relatively small numbers, it will be important to repeat the question next year, to confirm the findings. While these results can't establish causality, it is likely

that reinforcement of messages from multiple sources will increase the chances of behaviour change. The importance of using multiple channels is well recognised in the Farmstrong five year plan.

Utilising multiple forms of engagement is consistent with farmers being busy people who are unlikely to go looking for information, such as on the website. The more opportunities which are provided for them to come across (bump into) Farmstrong communications and initiatives, especially in bite sizes that they can quickly take in, the more likely it is that they will receive enough of this to result in improvements in their wellbeing.

Mixed findings for website

There have been good improvements on key website measures following the September 2018 upgrade. Unique website visitors are now 13% above the May 2018 levels. Numbers visiting for at least five minutes (time to have potentially impactful engagement) were up 21% on 2018.

However only two percent of farmers had used the website in the last 12 months and the level was less than one percent for men. There is a need to consider how this finding fits with the communication and marketing plan for 2020-2025 emphasising 'Maintain, develop and sustain the website as the "go to" resource for all things Farmstrong'.

Reduction of Injuries

This report provides further evidence in support of Farmstrong playing a role in reducing the amount of time farmers' work is impaired by injury. An increase in the proportion attributing a 'moderate' or 'large' improvement to Farmstrong on this item was the only significant change among all ten items asked about. This increase was despite farmers overall reporting a worsening on this measure over the last 12 months. Those who had not engaged with Farmstrong were more likely than others to report an increase in the amount of time their work was impaired by an injury. Further evidence of the positive influence of Farmstrong was those who had three or more forms of engagement with Farmstrong being more likely to attribute Farmstrong with an improvement in the amount of time their work was impaired by an injury.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to provide multiple forms of engagement with Farmstrong
- Review the role of the Farmstrong website in the overall strategy
- Repeat the sources of engagement question in future surveys, to build up a larger sample size