

# How Farmstrong impacts farmer behaviour, to improve wellbeing

Report prepared for  
**Farmstrong**

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# 1 SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

- A Farmstrong Monitor survey in May/June 2021 identified 22% of farmers who attributed some level of improvement to Farmstrong and 10% who attributed at least one 'moderate' or 'large' improvement.<sup>1</sup>
- The objective of this qualitative research was to understand more fully how Farmstrong is impacting on farmers to improve their wellbeing.

## RESEARCH METHOD

- Forty-one of the farmers who attributed improvements to Farmstrong in the May/June survey participated in qualitative phone interviews in September/October 2021.
- This number represented 87% of those who agreed to be re-contacted and 44% of those who did attribute change to Farmstrong in the May/June Monitor survey.

## MAIN FINDINGS

- **The primary way in which Farmstrong is impacting the farmers is through repeated exposure to the key messages.**
- **Other contributors were:**
  - **Providing communications which resonate with farmers**
  - **Farmers seeing the value in what is being communicated**
- **The triangulation of these qualitative findings with the Monitor data provides increased evidence of the effectiveness of Farmstrong.**
- **This research has provided a lot of information on the way in which Farmstrong is contributing to improvements on the nine different wellbeing measures.**
- **When asked to rate how interested they were in hearing about things from Farmstrong, where a rating of 10 is 'really enthusiastic' and 0 is 'having no interest at all', the mean and median rating was 7, with just over a quarter giving a rating of 9 or 10.**
- **There were higher levels of interest from beef/lamb farmers than dairy farmers, with females also being higher than males.**
- **Thirty-seven percent had at some point in time recommended Farmstrong to others, but for most of these it had only been once or twice. The level was higher for females (55%) and beef/lamb farmers (48%).**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The rationale for these recommendations is outlined in the Discussion chapter which follows.

- **Continue the current strategy to reach farmers as often as possible, to reinforce the key messages**

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<sup>1</sup> This was measured across nine wellbeing categories.

- Consider whether there should be more effort to encourage farmers to tell others about Farmstrong and share Farmstrong communications with them.

## 2 DISCUSSION

This section presents the researcher's interpretation of the implications of the research findings and the conclusions to be drawn from these.

### Increased evidence of the effectiveness of Farmstrong

The triangulation of these qualitative findings with the Monitor data provides increased evidence of the effectiveness of Farmstrong. The Monitor data has identified the extent to which farmers are attributing Farmstrong with improvements on the wellbeing measures. The qualitative research has strengthened the evidence in two ways: by providing a greater understanding of the **nature** of the impacts Farmstrong is having; and **how** it is happening.

The comments from the farmers on the way in which they believe Farmstrong is contributing to their improved wellbeing provide strong evidence for the validity of the results from the Monitor. These comments have identified key Farmstrong messages which farmers have taken on board and used to make improvements in their lives.

This qualitative research has identified the delivery strategy that is the key mechanism by which the change is being achieved. Repeated exposures to the key messages through multiple channels has been a key part of the Farmstrong strategy since its inception and the research has confirmed that it is working.

The recent Monitors have included a question to identify the different channels farmers have used to engage with Farmstrong communications in the previous 12 months. They have shown that there is a marked increase in the levels of improvement attributed to Farmstrong when there is engagement with four or more of the different channels. The Monitor questions do not extend to measuring the frequency of engagement with each channel, but the qualitative findings suggest that it is the frequency of engagement that is probably more key than the number of channels. However, using a range of channels does increase the likelihood of an increased frequency of engagement, so number of channels engaged with might be considered a reasonable proxy for frequency of engagement. The delivery of the messages via different channels (for example, the contrast between articles in Farmers Weekly versus a stand at agricultural field days) does allow for the messages to be presented in a mix of ways that may well contribute to a greater cumulative impact. However, whether this is the case cannot be established from this research.

### Higher attributions of improvements to Farmstrong in the interviews than survey

When the Monitor question asking how much, if any, improvement was due to Farmstrong was repeated at the beginning of the qualitative interviews, there were some notable differences in what the farmers reported, when compared with the answers these same farmers gave in the survey. The key question when considering this disparity is which data is most likely to reflect the real situation. One possible explanation for the higher levels in the qualitative interviews is that the farmers knew this interview was specifically about Farmstrong (the Monitor survey begins with questions on another farming topic) and may have felt a conscious or unconscious desire to provide the answers that they thought Farmstrong would most want to hear. Another possible explanation is that they thought a little more about their responses in the interview context and thereby gave more accurate responses. The key point is that in the interviews they were then asked to describe the ways in which Farmstrong had contributed to the improvements. While the focus tended to be more on the 'moderate' and 'large' improvements, there was very little indication that the ratings given were overstated. There

were only one or two cases where this seemed a possibility. This would suggest that the levels reported in the Monitors are probably conservative, in terms of reflecting the positive impact Farmstrong is having.

### **Greater impacts with beef/ lamb farmers**

This qualitative study reinforces the findings from the 2021 Monitor, that Farmstrong is having a greater impact with beef/lamb farmers than dairy farmers. This was reflected in the ratings for interest in Farmstrong and the proportions who had told others about Farmstrong.

### **Encouraging peer advocacy for Farmstrong**

The responses to the question about level of interest in receiving information about Farmstrong generally reflected a moderate to high level of interest. However none had become advocates for Farmstrong, in terms of telling others about it with any frequency. While acknowledging that these are busy people, this is still perhaps something which Farmstrong could encourage some more.

Linked to this is the relatively low use of the Farmstrong website, with its wealth of useful information and impactful videos. If there was more effort to encourage farmers to use the website, they may become more aware of the value it offers and they may be more likely to perceive this as a good thing to recommend to fellow farmers.

### **Representativeness of those interviewed**

Not surprisingly, those who agreed to interviews and completed them were more likely to have reported higher levels of improvements due to Farmstrong, both in terms of the number of wellbeing items where they reported improvements and the extent to which they reported 'moderate' or 'large' improvements. This is in comparison with those who also reported some improvements, but declined to be re-contacted for further Farmstrong research, or who could not be contacted by the researcher for an interview. Given the purpose of this qualitative research was to understand the way in which Farmstrong is contributing to these reported improvements, it was not a problem that there was this 'bias' in the sample.

### **Significance of this research**

It is not often projects are funded for long enough and with sufficient budget to achieve measurable behaviour changes by the time research and evaluation funding ceases. To be able to measure these improvements due to Farmstrong quantitatively via the Monitors and now confirm the validity of the Monitor results via research with those reporting improvements is a rare opportunity. By reporting the farmers' perceptions of how Farmstrong has contributed to these improvements, this research provides a rare opportunity to identify the way in which a successful initiative is working.

### **Limitations of the research**

The sample for this qualitative research came from farmers who participated in the Farmstrong Monitor survey. These farmers were selected from a panel which contains over 15,000 farmers/growers. They are mostly farm owners and therefore under-represent non-owners, particularly younger persons, working on farms and in horticulture. However, there are still sufficient

young people in both the Monitor and this qualitative research to suggest that the younger people are particularly open to change and taking on board the messages Farmstrong is communicating.



## 3 INTRODUCTION

### Background

The most recent annual Farmstrong Monitor survey in May/June 2021 identified that 22% of the surveyed farmers (equating with approximately 14,900 farmers/growers/farm workers) attributed some level of improvement to Farmstrong<sup>2</sup> and 10% who attributed five or more improvements (from the list of nine items). There were 10% (approximately 6,500) who attributed at least one 'moderate' or 'large' level of improvement to Farmstrong and 5% who attributed three or more improvements at this level.

### Research objective

The objective of this qualitative research was to understand more fully how Farmstrong is impacting on farmers to achieve this change.

### About Farmstrong

Farmstrong was publicly launched on 3 June 2015.

Mission: Improve the wellbeing of people working in farming and growing

Vision: A rural New Zealand that adapts and thrives in a constantly changing world

Call to action: “Find out what works for you then lock it in.”

Key messages

- The most important asset on any farm is the farmer, their family and the farming workforce.
- Farmstrong is about wellness not illness. Investing in your wellbeing helps you through the ups and downs of farming. It will also mean you're better placed to look after your family, your team and it's good for business.
- Farmstrong shares practical information and tools to support small but important habits that help you live well to farm well

Ways in which farmers/growers engage with Farmstrong

- Attending workshops, webinars, visiting Farmstrong at fielddays and local Ag events
- Accessing resources and blogs on the Farmstrong website and via social media
- Reading articles and sharing their stories via Farmstrong on radio, TV and in Farmers Weekly and other print media

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<sup>2</sup> Either 'small', 'moderate' or 'large'

## 4 METHOD

Qualitative phone interviews were undertaken with 41 farmers who had attributed improvements to Farmstrong in the May/June 2021 Farmstrong Monitor survey and agreed to be re-contacted. Of the 47 farmers who agreed, 41 (87%) completed interviews. The others were unable to be contacted after at least eight attempts; there were no refusals. In total 94 farmers from the Monitor survey qualified to be interviewed, but 47 advised at the end of that survey that they did not want to be re-contacted for the additional research. With the other six who were unable to be contacted by the researcher, this meant that 41 out of 94 were interviewed, which represented a 44% response rate.

When the researcher rang them they were assured participation was voluntary and their names would not be included in the reporting (the full explanation is included in the Contact and Questionnaire in Appendix A). They were also advised that they would go in a prize draw of \$300 to go to their favourite charity or local good cause. They were advised that they could be sent an information sheet (see Appendix B) which provided further information about the research, but only three requested it.

The phone interviews were undertaken between 20 September and 22 October, 2021. Dr Allan Wyllie did all the interviews, analysis and reporting. The interviews lasted between five and 30 minutes, most typically being between 12 and 15 minutes. With the farmers' consent, the interviews were audio-taped.

### Sample representativeness

Analyses were undertaken to compare the 41 who completed the qualitative interviews with the 53 who were eligible, but either declined at the end of the Monitor survey to be re-contacted, or were unable to be contacted by the researcher

The sample completing the interviews was a reasonable match to those who did not complete interviews on many of the measures, particularly the key one of farm type. Perhaps not surprisingly, those agreeing to an interview and completing it were more likely to have reported higher levels of 'moderate' or 'large' improvements due to Farmstrong in the Monitor survey and to feel they knew 'a lot' about Farmstrong.

Other statistically significant differences were as follows:

- The interviewed sample over-represented those aged 55 to 64 and under-represented those aged 65 years and over.
- The interviewed sample over-represented those in the Upper South Island and under-represented those in the Upper North Island.

Although not statistically significant, there were indications of differences for the following (it takes very large differences to be statistically significant with such small sub-sample sizes):

- More females in the interviewed sample
- The interviewed sample being more likely to have used the Farmstrong website in the previous twelve months

Tables showing these comparisons are included as Appendix C.

## 5 MAIN FINDINGS

### PROCESSES BY WHICH FARMSTRONG IS IMPACTING

#### Repeated exposure to the key messages

The primary way in which farmers report Farmstrong is contributing to their improved wellbeing is through repeated exposure to the key messages. Occasionally farmers were able to report a specific time when they decided to take action in response to a specific communication, but most reported it just being a cumulative process.

*'I always read his [Sam] articles and think what he is saying is bang on.... I identify the areas I need to address.... Fairly common themes – four or five points that make a big difference... they are emphasised on a regular basis ... It's good - it inculcates it into your thinking'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'Every time I hear something about Farmstrong, I'm thinking a bit more differently'* (45-54 year old male arable farmer).

*'Kind of everywhere, which is kind of cool... articles that pop up without having to look for it.... Someone chipping away, saying you need to do that'* (45-54 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

*'When you have ideas reinforced, it helps you gravitate in a certain direction'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

One farmer who had participated in a Dr Tom Farmstrong workshop some years ago and *'remember[s] a lot from that'*, commented: *'See it [Farmstrong] from time to time and it jogs the memory of doing the course'* (55-64 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

One noted that by providing the 'frequent reminders', *if there was some timing that suited her better, she 'made the effort to do it then'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

*'It's good seeing it regularly in different media – it's quite powerful'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

In relation to taking notice of the small things that bring pleasure, one commented: *'I probably know it already, but it [Farmstrong] reminds you'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'It provides more clarity in dealing with problems... makes you more aware to do things you knew about ... it prompts you... it gives you confidence to do them'* (55-64 year old male beef and forestry farmer).

A few specifically noted that once they had become familiar with the value of Farmstrong, they now read the articles. One commented: *'Traditionally I would have flicked past – I'm a skimmer. I now make a point of reading it and taking in what they have to say'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

## Specific communications or occasions which trigger action

A few farmers reported specific communications or occasions when Farmstrong led to change. For one it was an article that stimulated discussion with his two sons and they *'came to the collective decision that we all needed to take more time and be more appreciative of the environment and be more aware of small things'*. He had also read a Farmstrong article about doing something he had never done before and as a result of this article: *'I took my wife all around the North Island on a motorbike... I pushed myself into extending my normal boundaries... I had to convince my wife... It was a lot of fun'* (55-64 year old male beekeeper).

One farmer had read a Farmstrong article that mentioned breathing and she *'tried it and it really helps'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

An under 45 year old female contract milker had attended a talk by Gerard Vaughan (the Farmstrong co-ordinator) at a dairy leader forum where they worked in groups to identify the things that are important to you and that you need to make time for. For her it was *'hanging out with my friends more'*. She noted that she already had a great group of friends, but the session with Gerard *'cemented the things that needed to be important to me'*.

Another had a daughter whose group had done a school project on depression and raised money for Farmstrong as part of this. It was her telling him about Farmstrong that got him to have a look at the Farmstrong website (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

One reported the greatest impact from a Farmstrong magnet on their fridge. *'As I go to get something it makes me stop and think about doing more [of what Farmstrong promotes]. It makes me remember that things may not be as bad as I thought'* (under 45 male sharemilker).

## Communications which resonate with farmers

Other **farmers sharing their stories** was a key contributor to the messages resonating with farmers.

*'Reading some of the articles and thinking this is what I'm going through. By reading someone else's experience it helps'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

A farmer, who had severe depression twice, noted how Farmstrong made him more aware that others have been through similar things. It made him feel a lot better knowing that – he felt less shame. He cited an article he had just read of a farmer who was doing cows hooves and just felt he couldn't carry on. This resonated so strongly with him that he *'just about choked up... brilliant, taking some of the guilt away, I just take my hat off to everyone involved in Farmstrong'* (65 plus years male beef/lamb and dairy grazing farmer). He added later in the interview that if Farmstrong had been around before he 'crashed', he might have taken more measures to deal with it.

*'Hearing stories of what farmers have been through - you realise you've been like that sometimes'* (under 45 male dairy farmer).

## Farmers seeing the value in what is being communicated

These farmers who had reported wellbeing improvements due to Farmstrong clearly perceived the Farmstrong communications as providing important messages and useful strategies for addressing wellbeing issues. The value was sometimes linked to the perception that Farmstrong was providing a positive voice, when so much was negative and difficult for farmers. The perceived value will become

apparent in the comments below relating to each wellbeing issue, but the following are some other examples.

*'Farmstrong is a good inspirational thing, so I've tried to do more [of what Farmstrong is promoting]... The whole premise of focusing on mental health and all the rest of it. Overall farmers are very disconnected.... More awareness that everyone is sort of struggling... you don't feel so bad... the fact that it's a bit more talked about... People get broken when they think they're not normal... is very isolated... if you feel it's a weakness rather than just par for the course... being able to step back a bit'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

*'Farmstrong has brought issues farmers are dealing with out in the open more... talking about it... you're not the only one feeling sometimes depressed and pissed off with everything'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer). He felt it was *'absolutely helpful'*.

*'Farmstrong definitely makes people more self-aware of where they're at – their own headspace... looking inwardly a bit more'* (under 45 years female beef/lamb).

One farmer noted that Farmstrong gives people options: *'Farmstrong has an overarching umbrella – you can cherry pick'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer). He felt more supported knowing Farmstrong was there and that he could tell others that help is there.

## Impacts for each area of wellbeing

Farmstrong includes nine wellbeing issues in the Monitor questions. Those reporting improvements for an item were asked about the ways in which Farmstrong had contributed to that improvement.

### Level of contact with my friends

Response to this item often overlapped with the 'contribution to other farmer or local community' item, in that they often talked about communicating more with neighbours and others in their community, not just their friends.

A frequent message farmers were attributing to Farmstrong was to have more focus on keeping an eye on your neighbours and *'being more there for them'* (under 45 male dairy farmer). One farmer commented: *'I communicate with anyone I'm worried about... make time to catch up with them'*. He cited the example of young farmer who he noticed *'looked terrible'* so he rang him and his neighbours that night. Three weeks later this young farmer thanked him, when he was feeling a lot better (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

One who mentioned *'the latest campaign: It matters, stop and have a natter'*, noted that *'farmers can be quite isolated and so busy'*. As an example of the impact from Farmstrong, he reported that twice in the last week he had pulled up on the road and talked with other farmers, whereas he would *'never have done this previously'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

Another commented that he was having: *'A bit more conversation on how people are coping and what's on their minds'*. This same person also noted that: *'All my neighbours want to come down to help me dock – this probably wouldn't have happened before people were so aware of others' wellbeing'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'Ringin' friends more, seeing them more than in the past. Making the effort when you wouldn't have in the past'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

There was some perception that Farmstrong was contributing to a greater willingness for farmers, particularly men, to talk about their problems: *'People are more prepared to talk about their problems now... men talking openly; they are finding it not as hard to talk about these things.... I think Farmstrong has done a good job'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

One farmer, who was going through a marital break-up watched the Farmstrong website and *'realised the need to reach out'*. She noted that on the farm it's so easy to *'just carry on'*. She tries to get off the farm and spend more time with friends, but has variable success *'particularly at this time of the year'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

One, who now takes time out to text and talk to his friends and family to find out how they are, commented that he was never quite sure if it was for them or him. He later added that he does get isolated and he now makes sure that: *'I chew the fat when I see neighbours on their farm... It's important for people doing it hard to know they are not out there by themselves – that others have similar problems'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

One mentioned the challenge of *'remembering to do it [connect with friends]'* and would sometimes make herself do it at the time, *'even though I'm not 100% organised for it'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

*'Stop and chat more often. I realise it's a two way thing – sometimes for myself and sometimes because I wonder how others are'* (55-64 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

A common message mentioned in relation to Farmstrong was that it: *'Makes you think that it's not all that bad – maybe someone is worse off than you are'* (under 45 male sharemilker). This often got mentioned in relation to 'level of contact with friends', but also in other parts of the interview.

### **Amount of exercise**

Although one of the wives had initiated an on-farm one hour session over the summer with a trainer, it took reading Farmstrong six months later for the farmer who was interviewed to decide that *'this was probably a good thing to do'*. He reported that it had *'helped out quite a lot. It helps mentally knowing you can do the exercises – I could hardly do sit-ups at the beginning'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

A farmer, who was very aware from Farmstrong of the importance of exercise, went to a local heated pool for swimming and also did yoga and meditation. If she had a day in the office, she normally went for a walk. She was *'aware that my mental health is better when I do exercise'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

Taking on the Farmstrong message that exercise is good, one farmer had a goal of finding a yoga class this year. He had been unable to find the time last year due to a labour shortage (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

Another farmer, who was already fit and very active, still found *'the detail from Farmstrong on the type of exercise was useful'* (under 45 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'The importance of retaining muscle mass and staying strong as you get older'* was a specific message that one farmer had taken from 'Sam's messages' (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

## **Contribution to other farmers or local community**

A lot of these farmers noted that they were already very involved in their local communities prior to Farmstrong.

A farmer who ran the local farm discussion group noted that Farmstrong *'keeps me motivated [to run the group]... even just seeing the Farmstrong logo reminds me to organise events'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

One felt Farmstrong had contributed in his getting involved in a local group on the *'Three Waters challenge'*, whereas in the past he *'probably wouldn't have bothered'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer). He felt a *'bit empowered'* that they were speaking up. This same person had been part of an initiative to restart the local Federated Farmers branch, based on a new concept of being fifty percent social, involving families and wives. He noted that Farmstrong was discussed as a reason to do this.

One farmer, who had been through difficult times, found that helping others in similar circumstances had *'helped me get over it'* (55-64 year old male beef and chicken farmer).

Another noted that *'focusing more on community stuff takes your mind away from farming – it does do you a lot of good'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

A farmer, who took a load of hay to a friend experiencing drought in another region, *'got just as much buzz out of feeling like I helped'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

Another, who felt that *'overall farmers are very disconnected'* was aware that this is one of the things Farmstrong is addressing. He reported that during Covid little groups of them have been *'having small picnics in the pine trees'* (45-54 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

Another commented that checking out how people are, *'extended to those living in rural communities who weren't farmers, such as the person renting the house down the road'* (55-64 year old male beef and forestry farmer).

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

While there were the expected comments relating to taking more notice of nature, children and such like, there were also other less expected reasons that responses to this item were based on.

One example was better communication with his children (teens and older): *'Being conscious of the kids... communicating with them better... talking about the farm, so it's not all on one person's shoulders'* (45-54 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

Another example was: *'Take some time to have a think. Instead of just focussing on the big things going wrong, focus on what small things are wins'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

For one it was: *'Not worrying about a lot of the stuff that I would have in the past – not sweat the small stuff'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

Another commented: *'It highlighted that balance is important and variation in what you do. It's good for the headspace if you've got a change of scene that is maybe not financially or responsibility driven... just chose to do it'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

*'If you're mindful of the small things, having the next and best thing is not so important'*. This way of thinking had changed this farmers family's way of thinking about retirement and succession planning:

*'The days when you took on large debt and worked seven days to reduce it... discussion on does it have to be this way... quality of life is important'* (55-64 year old male beekeeper).

For one farmer taking notice of the small things related to *'watching my kids more – they're not going to be there for ever.'* He linked this to *'the Farmstrong interviews on Facebook... 'Makes you realise you need to spend more time with them'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

*'Taking time out and realising personal health and wellbeing are very important. If you get too stressed you're not helping yourself or others around you'*. This farmer later mentioned: *'Taking time out to feel better – it only has to be a moment, such as a walk around the garden'*. She had also found it very helpful *'learning to say No to some things - acknowledging you can't do everything'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

*'I'll now stop and look at the sunsets, sunrise, cloud formations – sun rays coming through. Focus more on the positive things around us. Springtime is a sign of new life – ducklings, the cherry blossom is fantastic – taking notice of nature'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer). He suggested that Farmstrong could *'push more'* that *'sometimes of the year it's almost a privilege to be on the land'*, but he added that it needs to be promoted at times *'when you're not so under the pump that you don't have time to stop and notice'*.

*'Being more mindful big time – being aware of nature and what's going on. Taking the time to focus on the small things'*. This farmer gave the example of watching a chicken and its egg with her child and added that *'a lot of stuff can wait till the next day'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

*'Watching dogs being idiots with each other, watching how kids interact with friends... walking around the farm and really looking at the cattle, looking at what's in the grass'* (55-64 year old male beef and chicken farmer).

*'Aware to take time to take a few deep breaths'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

One noted that following Farmstrong's *'encouragement'*, he was *'just noticing more things'*. He felt that as a result of Farmstrong he was *'more easy going'* and doesn't *'worry too much these days'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

A farmer, who now had to work less on the farm and was spending more time helping his wife in the garden, felt that *'it helps both of us in our relationship'*, noting that Farmstrong has *'pointed out that the little things do matter'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

Another thinks a bit more about looking after himself. *'It's still a terrific industry to be in – but you can forget to enjoy it'* (45-54 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

### **Time spent learning new things**

*'Learning new things is a very big part of it – to extend things a bit, rather than stand still'*. This farmer said he was *'embarking on all sorts of things here and it creates more interest and challenge'*. He felt that managing anxiety was important; that it was a natural part of taking on new challenges: *'You should feel a bit of something firing in you, but learning not to bite off too much, so that you can get to the reward.'* He also commented that *'by helping yourself, you can help others as well'* (45-54 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

A farmer, who was very busy running a farm on her own, had still put herself on a te reo course and *'pushed the comfort level – it keeps the mind fresh, it challenges the mind-set'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).



One farmer had taken up a Massey course to assist him with succession planning, but had to stop it due to a labour shortage (55-64 year old male dairy farmer 26). Another was learning French because of Farmstrong - he wants to work in France one day. He saw *'picking up new things'* as *'being part of an awareness that farming is not everything - there is life outside of it'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'[Farmstrong is] making you aware that not everything is about farming... having hobbies and other things not directly related to farming... take your mind off the daily grind... I'm learning quite a lot about nutrition and also learning knitting'*. She also reported having *'got into a bit of regenerative agriculture ... meeting a whole lot of new people... quite exciting'* (45-54 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

*'Good to be open to new ideas... it can sometimes make things easier.... It's quite nice getting ideas off others – it's easy to get into a totally independent groove'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

### **Amount of sleep**

Those who attributed Farmstrong with improving their amount of sleep sometimes reported an increased awareness of the importance of getting enough sleep.

*'Realising how important sleep is. I used to pride myself with getting four to five hours sleep a night, but I now realise [from Farmstrong and other sources] it's not healthy'* (under 45 male dairy farmer).

One farmer, who was aware from Farmstrong that eight hours sleep is critical, reported that if she had to *'get up at night for a possum'*, she *'might change the alarm'*; she wouldn't have done that previously. She was also more mindful during the day if she has not had enough sleep and tried *'not to react to things'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

A couple commented on liking the 'Sam sleep ads'. One noted that *'sleep is a hot topic within health and wellbeing at the moment'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

### **Amount of time I have away from the farm**

One woman, running the farm by herself, recognised from Farmstrong that getting time off the farm was a big problem for her, *'but there was quite a simple solution'*. *'If you're not aware of it, you don't realise it. It's not until you do it that you realise how good it is'*. She now tries to get off the farm once a week. She *'comes back more refreshed and energised. If you stay on the farm you always see everything that needs doing, everything that's falling apart'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer)

*'[Farmstrong] says get away and think about something else. I've tried it and been away a few times – it's really good'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

*'Realising you need time away from the farm. You can get stuck in a rut. The same applies for staff – making silly mistakes due to tiredness.... I either give them an hour off, or try to give them one to two days off'* (under 45 year old male dairy farmer).

One farmer, who reported that *'Farmstrong has made me more aware of how vital it is to take breaks'*, reported having organised someone to look after the farm at Christmas, noting *'this is rare'* (55-64 year olds male beef/lamb farmer).

Another felt that the message from Farmstrong, coupled with pressure from his wife and mother and mates had resulted in *'a little bit of improvement'* (45-54 year old male beef/lamb farmer). He had spent ten days sailing with a friend last summer and had never done that before.

*'Farmstrong makes you feel you can go away – it does feel good when you come back [having had the break]'* (45-54 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

Another, who was *'making a point of it [getting away from the farm]'* due to Farmstrong, reported that it *'had a very positive impact'* (55-64 year old male dairy grazing).

One farmer who felt they were being more successful at getting time away, being aware of how important it is, commented: *'I just realised today that we should record the days we have away'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

For some, the improvement in this was linked to their getting older, moving into retirement and having others taking over some of their work, so they are having to spend less time working on the farm.

### **Balance between my work and leisure**

*'Understanding that family comes first and making time for them...being aware of what they go through – farmers can be difficult to live with'* [this farmer was clear that Farmstrong had made him aware of this] (under 45 male dairy farmer).

*'Even with the kids I try not to always talk farm at the dinner table'*. When this farmer goes for a walk she is *'clear that the walk is for leisure, not mustering'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

*'Getting away from the farm and balancing life out made a real difference. Hunting, sport with the kids – it's been really good'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

*'Taking a look at life and where you want to head... Taking time out and doing these things'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

*'Often finish early now – don't try and cram everything into one day'* (under 45 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'I used to feel guilty if I was away doing something else, but I now realise it will still be there when I go home.... enjoying what I'm doing a lot more'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

One farmer had structured his work so he spent three days on one farm and two on the other, but had two days to spend with his family in weekends when his son came home from boarding school (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

Another noted that if his wife and family wanted to do something, he would now do it, whereas he wouldn't before (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

### **Ability to cope with the ups and downs of farming**

If farmers had already talked about ways in which Farmstrong was contributing to improvements in other areas, they often noted that the combined impacts of these were contributing to their *'ability to cope with the ups and downs of farming'*. As shown from the farmer comments below, there was a strong focus on strategies to cope with difficult times.

*'You can lose sight of it in the heat of the moment. The general feeling [from Farmstrong] is that there's another day - you can't do everything – you've just got to accept that'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'It's been a bit of a moderate year and I try and think about what I've read and suck it up and think another years coming next year, or another day or week is coming'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

One farmer reported having taken several lessons from Farmstrong: we can control our emotions; there are some things out of our control; not over-reacting: *'Say shit what happened, how do I deal with this and come up with a plan'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

*'You've got to control the controllables – there's a lot of stuff you can't control... Farmstrong makes you think along these lines – it puts perspective on the reality of what you can control'* (45-54 year olds male beef/lamb farmer).

One farmer used the term *'not sweat the big stuff'* in relation to not spending time trying to deal with the big things that feel beyond your control, but to focus on things which you feel you can have some control over. *'General awareness not to sweat the big stuff so much, to be able to feel that things will come right... I'm now able to put it to one side at night and when I'm off the farm... Even on the farm I have processes to break it down to smaller time periods to focus on .... Feel more in control'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

*'You can't let things build up – there's a lot of things out of your control. Doing other things takes your mind off. Mentally are a lot better off for it'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

This item also produced a broader range of comments than just how to address stressful situations. One farmer felt that: *'The contribution of a whole lot of little things have improved our resilience'*. More specifically he noted: *'We do it much better now [as a family] ... at the end of each day we look at the positives – things we're thankful for... we automatically get into the habit of looking at things positively'*. He also later mentioned that they were *'identifying our values and working to satisfy these'* (under 45 year old male beef/lamb farmer). He thought the source of having a focus on positives may have been a pamphlet Farmstrong gave out at a Federated Farmers conference or AGM.

*'Makes me think about what I am doing to keep myself in a good place... I often think I need to stop and enjoy that moment... I keep thinking of the five things I should be doing to keep myself well – the 5 speech bubbles [from Farmstrong]'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer). She also mentioned addressing *'where you spend your time thinking – the focus of your thinking'*.

*'There is more communication now. You know that when things get tough you can talk to each other'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer). He acknowledged *'definitely doing more of this'* and felt that it was *'partly a result of Farmstrong'*. He reported having a very good friend who was struggling with depression and he *'checks in on him all the time'*.

One farmer who reported a 'small' improvement in 'mental resilience' due to Farmstrong noted that: *'Farmstrong reinforces that the whole package helps to build your confidence that you will be stronger and better. The farm is not going to fall apart if you take a day off'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

Another, who also worked with the Regional Support Trust, felt that both that and Farmstrong had a key role: *'So farmers understand and have their stories told... farmers understand they're not on their own'* (55-64 year old female dairy farmer).

## Contextual issues

Some of the farmers had experienced personal mental health issues, which had contributed to their interest in Farmstrong. Others had been impacted by suicides of people they knew.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION FROM FARMSTRONG

Farmers Weekly was a key source, with almost all the farmers mentioning it. Many mentioned it by name, but others just said it was a 'farming magazine', or some similar description. Several farmers said they looked through most of the publication.

There was some mention of 'The Country' radio programme with Jamie McKay. One commented that: *'He's always talking about Farmstrong – he often has someone on talking about it'* (55-64 year old male beef/lamb farmer).

Several farmers mentioned that having Sam featuring in communications assisted in drawing attention to them. One commented: *'I don't know how strong Farmstrong would be without Sam – I've got a lot of respect for him – he's a natural leader... If his photo wasn't with the article I might not even look at it'* (65 years and over male winegrower).

*'Sam being the front man is a master-stroke – he draws a lot in'* (under 45 years female beef/lamb farmer).

Some farmers were not users of social media, while a few others mentioned not liking it.

One felt the ads on TV build awareness, but you don't get a lot of information out of them.

One perceived that *'Farmstrong has cranked up its efforts over the last two years – farmers are under a lot of pressure'* (45-54 year old male dairy farmer).

A few mentioned keeping pamphlets that contained useful information.

One woman specifically mentioned the logo as identifying Farmstrong material: *'Regularly seeing the logo in various bits and pieces that float around'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

## Use of Farmstrong website

The Farmstrong Monitor surveys show that use of the Farmstrong website in the previous year is relatively low compared with other sources of information on Farmstrong. The findings from this qualitative study were consistent with that.

One farmer, who had previously looked at the website, went back and *'looked at it properly' after 'three months of hell, to see how it could assist... I thought it was time to start reaching out'* (55-64 year old male beef and chicken farmer).

Another reported having *'looked it up when I was feeling really bad... it was helpful'* (55-64 year old female beef/sheep farmer).

Part way through the interviews we began asking those who had never used the website whether they were aware of it. There were a few who did not know of its existence. After being asked about use of the website, two non-users realised during the interview that it would probably be a good place to look.

One reported reading *'everything Farmstrong had online'* as part of a project he was doing for Young Farmers about mental health. In work he does with the Rural Support Trust he sees *'a lot of the young ones struggling more... they've not got the back-up or lifetime experience'* (55-64 year old male dairy farmer).

## HOW QUESTION RATINGS COMPARED IN INTERVIEW VERSUS SURVEY

The first table below shows that the farmers attributed improvements to Farmstrong on more items in the interviews than these same farmers did in the Monitor survey. They also reported more items with 'moderate/large' improvements which they attributed to Farmstrong. As these comparisons are with the same group of farmers, significance testing is not appropriate; any difference is the real difference. However, to assist with ease of interpretation, the largest differences are denoted by double ++ or -- and other larger differences by + or - sign.<sup>3</sup>

NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO FARMSTRONG	Sample completing qualitative interviews (41) %	Monitor response of sample completing qualitative interviews (41) %
<b>Any level of improvement</b>		
1-2	10 --	27
3-4	19	24
5 or more	71++	49
<b>'Moderate' or 'large' level of improvement</b>		
1-2	29	34
3 or more	54++	32
<b>At least one 'moderate' or 'large' improvement</b>	83	66↑

The table which follows shows the differences for the individual wellbeing items asked about.

<sup>3</sup> The ++ for the interviewed sample are at least 40% higher than their survey level. The -- are where the surveyed level is at least 40% higher than the level for the interviewed sample. The + and - indicate changes which are at least 30% different.

LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO FARMSTRONG	Sample completing qualitative interviews (41) %	Monitor responses of sample completing qualitative interviews (41) %
<b>Level of contact with friends</b>		
Any level of improvement	83++	56
Moderate/large improvement	39	34↑
<b>Amount of exercise</b>		
Any level of improvement	22- -	39
Moderate/large improvement	12- -	22↑
<b>Contribution to other farmers or local community</b>		
Any level of improvement	59	54
Moderate/large improvement	32	34↑
<b>Time taking notice of small things in life that bring enjoyment</b>		
Any level of improvement	66-	88↑
Moderate/large improvement	37	41↑
<b>Time spent learning new things</b>		
Any level of improvement	53	54
Moderate/large improvement	29	27
<b>Amount of sleep</b>		
Any level of improvement	36	29
Moderate/large improvement	12	10
<b>Amount of time away from the farm</b>		
Any level of improvement	48	44
Moderate/large improvement	24++	10
<b>Balance between work and leisure</b>		
Any level of improvement	65++	44
Moderate/large improvement	31++	15
<b>Ability to cope with ups and downs of farming</b>		
Any level of improvement	86+	63
Moderate/large improvement	49++	22

## HOW WELL QUESTION RATINGS REFLECTED THE COMMENTS MADE

In most cases, the ratings given seemed consistent with the nature of the how they described the way in which Farmstrong had impacted them. There were one or two where the ratings seemed too high, but this is a subjective assessment by the researcher.

A relatively small proportion of the farmers reported that they had difficulty differentiating what was due to Farmstrong versus other sources of similar information. One or two farmers seemed to be answering for the combined impacts, even after the researcher had asked them to try and answer for what they thought just the Farmstrong impacts might have been. The researcher was very conscious of checking that impacts reported were seen to be a result of the Farmstrong initiative. Checking this only led to one or two changes in the level of improvement attributed to Farmstrong.

As most of the farmers had several of the wellbeing items where they attributed 'moderate' or 'large' improvements to Farmstrong, little information was obtained for those items where there were only 'small' improvements. Some noted that the comments they had made on the 'moderate' and 'large' improvement items also often applied to the 'small' improvements; that they had nothing else they

could add about the way Farmstrong was contributing to the 'small' improvements. The other factor which limited information about the 'small' improvements was the need to avoid making the interviews too long, so they were often not asked about at all.

Some of those who reported only, or mostly only 'small' improvements, were unclear about the way in which Farmstrong had contributed to their reported improvements, but several of this small group were still able to comment on the link back to Farmstrong.

## ROLE OF FARMSTRONG IN RELATION TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Given other organisations and initiatives are also contributing to farmer wellbeing, questions were asked to identify awareness of these and the perceived role of Farmstrong in relation to them. Quite a few could not name any other organisations or initiatives. The most mentioned was Rural Support Trust. Those who did mention others, tended to think that Farmstrong was taking the leading role. A few mentioned that Farmstrong was taking a leading role in the area it was dealing with and Rural Support Trust was taking a leading role in other ways. A few also, who had a stronger interest in their health and wellbeing, mentioned that that Farmstrong is reinforcing messages they are obtaining from other sources beyond farming.

One farmer had a period of being in 'a bad place' and had received support from several organisations, but despite these other inputs, she was very clear about the key role Farmstrong had played and was grateful Farmstrong was there. *'Farmstrong gives you the tools to work your way through it – you can get through it'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

## INTEREST IN FARMSTRONG

To try and get some sort of sense of what sort of emotional connection people feel with Farmstrong, they were asked to rate how interested they were in hearing about things from Farmstrong, where a rating of 10 is 'really enthusiastic' and 0 is 'having no interest at all'. The table below shows that for all 41 farmers, the mean and median rating was 7, with 27% giving a rating of 9 or 10. There were higher levels for beef/lamb than dairy, with females also being higher than males.

RATING FOR INTEREST IN FARMSTRONG	Mean	Median	9-10 rating
Dairy (n=14)	6.2	5	14%
Beef/lamb (n=19)	8.2	8	42%
Horticulture/Other (n=8)	6.5	6	13%
Male (n=30)	6.9	7	20%
Female (n=11)	8.0	8	36%
All farmers (n=41)	7.2	7	27%

## RECOMMENDATION OF FARMSTRONG TO OTHERS

Thirty-seven percent had at some point in time recommended Farmstrong to others, but for most of these it had only been once or twice. The level was higher for females (55%) and beef/lamb farmers (47%).

As might be expected, those who had more interest in Farmstrong were more likely to be recommending it; those who made recommendations to others had a mean rating of 8 for interest in Farmstrong, with 40% of them giving a 9-10 rating.

RECOMMENDED FARMSTRONG TO OTHERS	%
Dairy (n=14)	29
Beef/lamb (n=19)	47
Other (n=8)	25
Male (n=30)	27
Female (n=11)	55
All farmers (n=41)	37

## PERCEIVED GOALS OF FARMSTRONG

Most of those interviewed had an accurate perception of the goals of Farmstrong, with a focus on enhancing farmer wellbeing and resilience and helping them cope with stress. Some mentioned preventing suicide and, to a lesser extent, depression, but they also often mentioned the wellbeing focus as well.

## FINAL COMMENTS

Those who made any final comments often mentioned with a good job Farmstrong was doing, as typified by the following example.

*'It's really good for New Zealand farmers – things have improved a lot'* (under 45 year old female dairy farmer)

One farmer suggested that Farmstrong produce a 'wheel of choice', with a range of actions people can take, such as 'walk away', 'take 5 breaths'. She had seen children using these wheels at school, but felt farmers would like it, as they get a calendar for vaccinating sheep, which has a wheel you spin, and she had *'seen it being used in lots of households'* (under 45 year old female beef/lamb farmer).

Another suggested raising awareness of farming among non-rural people, *'making them realise farmers have issues like the rest'* (45-54 year old female beef/lamb farmer).



## APPENDIX A: CONTACT AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

### EXPLORING FARMSTRONG IMPACTS

#### Contact introduction

My name is Allan Wyllie and I am the researcher for Farmstrong. A few months ago you took part in a farmer survey which included some questions about Farmstrong and at the end of the survey you agreed to be phoned to see if you would be willing to do a short interview. Have you got a minute now for me to explain a bit about the research and if you are willing we can set an appointment time for a phone interview?

The purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of the nature of the impact Farmstrong is having with farmers. The research will be confidential and no names will be included in the reporting. It will probably take about 10-15 minutes. Those who complete the interview will go in a prize draw of \$300 to go to your favourite charity or local good cause. I realise it is a really busy time of the year, but I could do the interview at any time that suited you, including evenings and weekends. It is entirely your choice as to whether you take part in this research and you can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason. I can send you an information sheet if you would like further details about it.

Would you be agreeable to us setting up an interview, or do you want to wait until you have read the information sheet before making a decision? We could do the interview now if that suited you?

**Set time and date:** .....

**Check if they want an information sheet record email address:** .....

## EXPLORING FARMSTRONG IMPACTS

### Interview guideline

Thanks for agreeing to do this interview. I would like to tape record the interview in case I need it to assist with analysis, but I will be busy writing down your answers as we talk. No one else will hear the tape and it will be wiped at the completion of the study. Are you agreeable to the recording? Yes/No

Do you have any questions before we begin?

### Demographics

Code gender: Male/ Female

(.25) Q1a. What sort of farming do you do?

1. Dairy
2. Beef/lamb
3. Horticulture
4. Other (specify)

(.25) Q1b. Which of the following age groups do you fall into?

1. under 45
2. 45-54
3. 55-64
4. 65 years and over

(2) Q1c. For each of the following how much, if any, improvement for yourself do you think is a result of what you've heard from Farmstrong, Sam Whitelock or Healthy Thinking?'

	None	Small	Moderate	Large improvement due to Farmstrong
Level of contact with my friends				
Amount of exercise I do				
Contribution to other farmers or my local community				
Time spent taking more notice of the small things in life that bring me enjoyment				
Time spent learning new things				
Amount of sleep				
Amount of time I have away from the farm				
Amount of time my work was impaired by an injury				
Balance between my work and leisure				
My ability to cope with the ups and downs of farming				

*If no improvements, thank and end interview*

### Identifying what has contributed to the improvements attributed to Farmstrong

*Ask for each of improvements, beginning with 'large' and 'moderate' improvements*

Q2a. You mentioned a large/moderate/small improvement due to Farmstrong for ..... What was the nature of the engagement you have had with Farmstrong, or the knowledge you got from Farmstrong that you feel contributed to this improvement?

*Ask if a specific event:* Q2b. What was it about this engagement/knowledge that made you take notice/ respond in the way you did?

*(Make sure that I understand what was motivating)*

Q2c. What was your source or sources of this knowledge – how did you hear about it?

Q2d. In what ways has Farmstrong contributed to this improvement – are there specific things it has impacted on?

Q3a. Apart from what you have already mentioned, what other places do you get your information on Farmstrong from?

Q3b. Have you ever got information from the Farmstrong website?

Q4a. Do you think there are any other organisations and initiatives which are also contributing to improving farmer wellbeing? Which ones?

Q4b. What role do think Farmstrong is taking in this change process – how would you see the Farmstrong role compared with the others in terms of improving farmer wellbeing?

Q4c. It can be difficult to work out how much improvement is due to Farmstrong and how much is due to other initiatives. Do you think the level of improvement you attributed to Farmstrong in the early question is still accurate in terms of it being the level of improvement that is just due to Farmstrong? *Go back and show changed answers, if this is required*

### **Exploring emotional connection**

*Ask all (if time)*

Q5a. How interested are you in hearing about things from Farmstrong? On a scale of 0 is having 'no interest at all in Farmstrong' and 10 is 'really enthusiastic about hearing from Farmstrong', what rating would you give yourself?

Q5b. Have you told anyone else about Farmstrong or encouraged anyone to look at their resources?

### **Perception of Farmstrong goals (Ask if time)**

Q6. Finally, what do you think the purpose of Farmstrong is – what is it trying to achieve?

Q7. That's all the questions I have – do you have any final comments you would like to make.

Q8. *Ask if might be useful case study:*

As you know, Farmstrong provides case studies on farmers sharing their strategies that work for them. They want to have more case studies of people sharing with others the benefits they have got from Farmstrong. Would you be agreeable to me passing on your contact details, so they could contact you if they wanted to, to discuss you being part of a case study? Yes/No

Thanks so much for giving up your precious time to do this interview.

## APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SHEET

### EXPLORING FARMSTRONG IMPACTS

#### Information Sheet Dated 20 September, 2021

<b>What is this research for?</b>	The purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of the nature of the impact Farmstrong is having with farmers.
<b>Who will be conducting this research?</b>	Farmstrong have asked Wyllie & Associates, an independent research agency, to conduct the research. Farmstrong is funded by ACC, FMG insurance and donations from the public.
<b>What is involved?</b>	If you agree to take part, Allan Wyllie from Wyllie & Associates will undertake a phone interview with you, at a time and date that suits you. It should take about 10-15 minutes. If you are agreeable, the interview will be audio-taped to assist with the analysis and then wiped at the end of the project. Those who complete the interview will go in a prize draw of \$300 to go to your favourite charity or local good cause.
<b>Do I have to take part in the research?</b>	Your participation in this study is entirely your choice.  You are free to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose not to take part</li> <li>• Withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason.</li> </ul>
<b>Will Wyllie &amp; Associates use my contact information for anything else?</b>	No, Wyllie & Associates will only use your contact information for this study, and will not give it to anyone else. These details have been provided by Infield International who undertook the survey where you agreed to being re-contacted for further research on Farmstrong.
<b>Will my response be confidential?</b>	Yes. Wyllie & Associates will report summarised results, with examples to illustrate points. If they thought there was any chance that you could possibly be identified in one of the examples, they would send this to you to check whether you wanted any changes made before it was included in the report.  Wyllie & Associates must follow the Professional Code of Practice of the Market Research Society of New Zealand.
<b>What are my rights?</b>	You have the right to choose whether you want to take part or not, without this choice affecting This will not affect the service or support you receive from Farmstrong, ACC or FMG.  If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study you may wish to contact a Health and Disability Advocate, by telephoning 0800 555 050, or emailing <a href="mailto:advocacy@advocacy.org.nz">advocacy@advocacy.org.nz</a> .
<b>Has this research been approved by an ethics committee?</b>	Under the rules of the New Zealand Health and Disability Ethics Committee, this type of research does not require ethical approval.
<b>What if I want to find out more about it?</b>	If you have any questions about the study, please call the lead researcher Allan Wyllie on 027 623 9999 or email him at <a href="mailto:allanwyllie2@gmail.com">allanwyllie2@gmail.com</a>  If you'd like to talk to someone at Farmstrong, please call Gerard Vaughan on 027 8992260.

## APPENDIX C: SAMPLE REPRESENTATIVENESS TABLES

The tables below compare the 41 who completed the qualitative interviews with the 53 who were eligible but either declined at the end of the Monitor survey to be re-contacted or were unable to be contacted by the researcher. Statistically significant differences (at the 95% confidence level) are shown with an upward arrow for the higher level. It takes very large differences to be statistically significant with such small sub-sample sizes. Commentary on these findings is included in the Methods chapter.

TYPE OF FARM	Sample completing interviews	Eligible persons not completing interviews
	(41) %	(53) %
Dairy	34	36
Beef/sheep	46	58
Horticulture/Viticulture	7	6
Cropping/Other	12	0

GENDER	Sample completing interviews	Eligible persons not completing interviews
	(41) %	(53) %
Male	71	81
Female	29	19

AGE	Sample completing interviews	Eligible persons not completing interviews
	(41) %	(53) %
Under 45 years	24	20
45 to 54 years	17	19
55 to 64 years	49↑	28
65 years and over	10	32↑

REGION	Sample completing interviews	Eligible persons not completing interviews
	(41) %	(53) %
Upper North Island	20	40↑
Lower North Island	37	36
Upper South Island	27↑	9
Lower South Island	17	15

INCOME (before tax)	Sample completing interviews	Eligible persons not completing interviews
	(39) %	(51) %
Under \$200K	15	18
\$200K to under \$500K	21	33
\$500K to under \$1m	28	22
\$1m plus	36	27

NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO FARMSTRONG	Sample completing interviews	Eligible persons not completing interviews
	(41) %	(53) %
<b>Any level of improvement</b>		
1-2	27	40
3-4	24	19
5 or more	49	42
<b>'Moderate' or 'large' level of improvement</b>		
1-2	34	19
3 or more	32	15
<b>At least one 'moderate' or 'large' improvement</b>	66†	44

LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO FARMSTRONG	Sample completing interviews	Eligible persons not completing interviews
	(41) %	(53) %
<b>Level of contact with friends</b>		
Any level of improvement	56	38
Moderate/large improvement	34†	11
<b>Amount of exercise</b>		
Any level of improvement	39	26
Moderate/large improvement	22†	8
<b>Contribution to other farmers or local community</b>		
Any level of improvement	54	49
Moderate/large improvement	34†	11
<b>Time taking notice of small things in life that bring enjoyment</b>		
Any level of improvement	88†	60
Moderate/large improvement	41†	17
<b>Time spent learning new things</b>		
Any level of improvement	54	32
Moderate/large improvement	27	11
<b>Amount of sleep</b>		
Any level of improvement	29	17
Moderate/large improvement	10	6
<b>Amount of time away from the farm</b>		
Any level of improvement	44	34
Moderate/large improvement	10	11
<b>Balance between work and leisure</b>		
Any level of improvement	44	53
Moderate/large improvement	15	6
<b>Ability to cope with ups and downs of farming</b>		
Any level of improvement	63	43
Moderate/large improvement	22	13

KNOWLEDGE OF FARMSTRONG	Sample completing interviews (41) %	Eligible persons not completing interviews (53) %
Nothing	2	6
A little	37	66†
A moderate amount	44	26
A lot	17†	2

FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT WITH FARMSTRONG IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS	Sample completing interviews (41) %	Eligible persons not completing interviews (53) %
Farmstrong website	34	17
Facebook	34	30
In Farmers Weekly newspaper or another farming magazine	76	81
At Fielddays or at a local agriculture event day	24	19
In a farm discussion group	12	4
At a Farmstrong workshop or webinar	5	2
On radio, TV or in a newspaper	61	64
In an e-newsletter	29	17
Another sort of event in local community	10	6
At a conference	7	6
At any other places	2	6