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Media Release

Lots of laughs at Farmstrong Comedy Shows from Umawera to Gladstone

More than 1800 people have turned up in the last three months to check out Farmstrong hosted comedy shows in their rural communities, from Umawera in Northland down to Gladstone in the Wairarapa.

Farmstrong, in partnership with the Rural Support Trust have run 12 Bitches Box shows and three comedy shows, featuring four of New Zealand's unique comedic talents.

Farmstrong spokesperson Gerard Vaughan was able to head along to the Bitches Box show in Gladstone earlier in the month and reflected on the event.

"The Bitches Box has made a real name for themselves in our rural communities and we had people turning up for the fourth time, having enjoyed previous iterations of the show in recent years.

"Their humour is spot on and it was great to be in a community hall full of warmth and laughter on the cusp of the winter months."

The Bitches Box, along with Farmstrong's other comedy shows are designed to give farmers and growers the opportunity to take time off farm and to connect with their friends and others in their communities.

"When talking to people at these events we heard the same thing over and over, to connect and talk to others when the times are tough before things turn from bad to worse. With the days getting shorter and colder, I really encourage anyone finding things tough at the moment to do just that. Whether that be someone close and trusted or through Rural Support Trust" Gerard concluded.

More than \$25,000 from ticket sales went back to the community groups running the BBQs and will go on to support local community initiatives.

Farmstrong extended thanks to all the regional Rural Support Trusts, FMG, MPI, Silver Fern Farms and all the community members who got involved and supported these events.

Ends

About Farmstrong

Farming is a job with a unique set of challenges. Many are hard to predict or control. They range from climate events like drought and flood to fluctuations in commodity prices, changing government legislation and new technology.

Along with these external factors, come the demands of running any business – financial and production planning, managing cash flow, hiring and managing staff, succession planning etc. These pressures aren't going to disappear so it's vital that farmers develop the skills and resilience to cope.

Research shows many farmers are great at looking after their equipment and stock, but, like other NZers, they can neglect their own wellbeing. As an industry, we can't afford to let these pressures reach the point where they damage productivity and affect the lives of families. Farmstrong is an initiative to help farmers, growers and their families to cope with the ups and downs of farming by sharing things they can do to look after themselves and the people in their business.

In 2023, 14,000 farmers and growers increased their wellbeing thanks to Farmstrong.