



PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY RHANZ FOR IMMEDIATE USE, 12 January 2015

Rural health group alarmed by suicide report

Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand members are alarmed by a report (New Zealand Herald, January 12) about an increase in farmer suicide linked with increased economic stress due to the ongoing strength of the dollar and milk pay-out forecasts.

This comes on a background of information collected over several years showing spikes in suicide rates amongst farmers around times of economic pressure.

The Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand (RHANZ) is working with member organisations, led by Federated Farmers and alongside the mental health foundation to help increase awareness of the resources available to help rural people access help when they need it.

“GP services are willing and able to help people in any kind of need,” says Dr Jo Scott-Jones, RHANZ chairperson and rural GP based in Opotiki on the East Cape of the North Island.

“We need people to recognise when they are in trouble – poor sleep, moodiness, increased use of alcohol or other drugs, withdrawing from friends, aggression to family, neglect and poor treatment of animals can all be warning signs.”

The Rural Support Trusts are a great service – run by farmers for farmers they can be a first port of call when there is pressure, and will refer people on to their GP or other services if that is what is needed. Sometimes you just need someone who understands to talk to.

Help can be found on:
Rural Support Trusts 0800 787 254
Lifeline 0800543354
Suicide Crisis Line 0508828865
Depression helpline 0800 111757.

For more information contact RHANZ chairperson Dr Jo Scott-Jones on 027 475 0488.

Note to Editors:

The Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand was established in May 2012 and represents a united voice from across multiple rural sector organisations. Its aim is to provide solutions and influence policy affecting the health and wellbeing of rural communities www.rhaanz.org.nz.

Current members: <http://www.rhaanz.org.nz/membership/current-members/>