



By Chris  
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## MPI targets mental health in young farmers

Bootcamps and wellbeing events part of new initiative funded by New Zealand ministry for primary industries

**A** new initiative is being funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to help improve the wellbeing of young people in rural communities.

NZ Young Farmers has been allocated NZ\$40,000 to organise events in 7 regional areas featuring guest speakers, activities, and skill-building sessions.

"It's important we continue our efforts to give people the skills to look after their wellbeing, manage stress and to recognise and openly talk about mental health," said MPI's director of rural communities and farming support, Nick Story.

NZ Young Farmers has a network of 70 clubs, which provide an opportunity for young people to make friends, network, upskill and socialise.

One of the wellbeing events being held is a 6-week bootcamp at Longburn in the Manawatū starting on 8 June 2021.

"Winter is a great time for a bootcamp to help build farmers' fitness ahead of calving and lambing, which is a busy time on-farm. It also gives us an opportunity to share wellbeing tips, such as nutritional advice, to help our rural community get through," said NZ Young Farmers member Kate Stewart (pictured left).

"The training programme is being overseen by young Taranaki dairy farmer Kane Brisco, who's well known for founding the Farm Fit bootcamp."

Other events are planned for Kaihu, Opuawhanga, Waiharara, Hamilton, Gisborne, Pahiatua, Lincoln, Timaru, and Gore.

"The mental and physical wellbeing of young people is a big focus of our organisation and essential for the ongoing viability of many rural communities," noted NZ Young Farmers chief executive Lynda Coppersmith.



"This programme will increase awareness of the wellbeing support and resources available and give young people the confidence to access them."

Provisional figures released by the chief coroner show 654 people died in New Zealand from suicide in 2019-20, and almost one third (205 people) were under the age of 30.

These events aimed at harnessing the resources and expertise of existing wellbeing support providers, such as Farmstrong, Rural Support Trusts, and the award-winning Good Yarn workshops.

MPI was allocated NZ\$1.1m last year to deliver extra wellbeing support services over 3 years to complement those provided by Rural Support Trusts.

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