



# Farmstrong Scotland

WHAT MOVEMBER'S INVESTMENT  
IN FARMSTRONG SCOTLAND ACHIEVED

MOVEMBER FUNDED PROJECT 2023-2026



MOVEMBER® INSTITUTE  
OF MEN'S HEALTH  
MOUSTACHES LOVE RESEARCH





“  
Farmstrong has  
made me realise  
that it is not selfish  
to look after myself.  
”

Scottish Farmer, 2025

# Acknowledgements

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## ABOUT MOVEMBER

Since 2003, Movember has challenged the status quo,  
shaken up men's health research, and transformed  
the way health services reach and support men –  
taking on prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental  
health, and suicide prevention with unwavering  
determination. Movember has raised well over  
\$1 billion for men's health, thanks to a passionate  
network of Mos. These critical funds have delivered  
more than 1,000 men's health projects around  
the world. Championing new research, cutting-edge  
treatments, and healthy behaviours. To learn more,  
please visit [Movember.com](https://www.movember.com)

## ABOUT THE MOVEMBER INSTITUTE OF MEN'S HEALTH

Building on a 20-year legacy of investment in men's  
physical and mental health, The Movember Institute  
of Men's Health launched in 2023 and has ambitious  
goals to enhance quality of life for millions of men  
worldwide. Uniting global experts in the field of men's  
health, the Institute will accelerate research and  
translate it into tangible, real-world outcomes.





# Executive Summary

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Three years ago, Movember and Scotland’s farming community came together around a shared belief: that farmers deserved a programme built for them. £700,000 later, Farmstrong Scotland is an independent charity, with a proven model and measurable wellbeing gains. This is what your donations made possible.

## THE INVESTMENT

Movember funded Farmstrong Scotland as part of our core mission: reaching men where conventional health services fail to land. Farming is one of the clearest examples of where that gap proves fatal. Male farm workers in the UK are roughly twice as likely to die by suicide than the male national average. Yet Scotland’s farming and crofting community had no dedicated wellbeing programme, only telephone support, counselling and crisis services.

Movember had already backed this model once before. In 2014, we provided catalytic funding for Farmstrong New Zealand; a decade later, 83% of engaged NZ farmers attribute wellbeing improvements to the programme. When Scotland’s farming community signalled its appetite for something similar, Movember provided the founding investment: £350,000 over three years, matched pound-for-pound by Scottish fundraising to bring the total budget to £700,000. It brought a programme, a methodology, an evidence base – and, in August 2024, an independent Scottish charity.

## THE APPROACH

Farmstrong Scotland launched in 2023, built on extensive pre-launch research with Scottish farmers that confirmed both the need and the design principles. The programme was not designed to replicate clinical services. It was designed to shift culture: to make wellbeing feel as practical and relevant as any other aspect of running a farm. Its approach is peer-led, agriculturally grounded, and delivered through the channels farmers already trust including podcasts, case studies, events and online tools, with a deliberate focus on low-effort, self-directed formats that can be accessed privately, at any hour, without anyone else needing to know.

The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS) provided the governance infrastructure for the programme’s development, while a Governance Group of farmers, sector leaders and rural professionals, many of whom had been working voluntarily on the initiative since 2019, supplied the agricultural knowledge and networks no external funder could provide. Farmstrong Scotland became an independent Scottish charity in August 2024.

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WHAT WE LEARNT

Independent evaluation by Scotinform, including two survey waves with over 900 farmers and crofters, alongside qualitative interviews, has built a credible evidence base. In less than two years of operation, Farmstrong Scotland has achieved the following:

26%

Awareness of Farmstrong among farmers with no prior connection to the programme – in under two years, in one of the hardest-to-reach communities in Scotland.

50%

Of those aware have engaged with at least one Farmstrong activity – awareness is translating into use.

80%

Of engaged participants report a positive impact on their health and wellbeing (up from 67% in 2024) – the programme is working, and working faster as it embeds.

8 of 8

Wellbeing domains show statistically significant improvement among engaged participants, up from 1 of 8 in 2024 – the compounding effect of sustained engagement is now measurable.

83%

Would recommend Farmstrong to another farmer or crofter – peer recommendation is the programme’s most powerful growth engine.  
  
Stakeholder organisations across government, sector bodies, charities and research confirm Farmstrong fills a gap no other programme occupies – the sector has validated the model, not just individual users.

“The work on mental mindset on the farm has changed the way I look at things.”

Scottish Farmer, 2025

Trust is the foundation of everything: Farmstrong works because it feels authentic, delivered by people who understand farming life. The biggest barrier for those who are aware but not yet engaged is time: formats that are low-effort, mobile-accessible and private, outperform everything else. The hardest-to-reach group (older, more isolated farmers) remains a priority; in-person presence through Blether Together Live events, farm walks, and presence at agricultural shows is the most effective route to farmers outside the digital network.

WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT COMES NEXT

Farmstrong Scotland is already demonstrating measurable results at a scale and speed that compares favourably with the early years of Farmstrong New Zealand.

The significance of this transfer goes beyond Scotland. In 2014, Movember seeded Farmstrong New Zealand with catalytic funding. A decade later, it has measurably shifted how an entire country’s farming sector thinks about wellbeing, with 83% of engaged farmers attributing improvements directly to the program. In 2022, Movember applied the same logic to Scotland: a different country, a different farming culture, an entirely different policy context. Within two years, the same early-stage patterns are visible.

That is not a coincidence. It is proof of a transferable blueprint for reaching hard-to-reach men through the communities and occupations they already inhabit – not just in farming, and not just in Scotland.

Farmstrong Scotland has now met the fundraising target that completed the Movember matched-funding agreement – a milestone that marks the end of the founding partnership phase and the beginning of a new one. The charity enters 2026 as an independent organisation with a proven model, a growing audience, and an urgent need for the Scottish agricultural sector and its public institutions to step up as the next generation of funders. The blueprint has been tested and validated. What happens next is a question of political and sectoral will. Behind every percentage point in this report is a farmer who is doing better than they were. That is what this investment made possible, and what continued support will protect.







# The Landscape: Why We Focused on Farmers and Crofters

Farming is one of the most demanding occupations in Scotland. Long hours, physical risk, financial precarity, isolation and the relentless uncertainty of weather and markets combine to create conditions that wear people down over time. Yet for many in the sector, admitting to struggle remains deeply uncomfortable. Many farmers and crofters are tied up in a culture of self-reliance, stoicism and a reluctance to be seen as anything other than coping.

This is not a new problem, nor a uniquely Scottish one. A growing body of international research has documented the toll that farming takes on those who do it. Studies from Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Ireland and across the UK consistently identify the same cluster of pressures: long hours worked alone, financial stress and debt, the blurring of work and family life across generations, the weight of regulatory and policy demands, and an isolation that is simultaneously geographic, social and emotional (Daghagh Yazd et al., 2019; Niles & Stahlmann-Brown, 2025; Nye et al., 2025). Norwegian research has shown that farmers exhibit higher levels of anxiety than their non-farming siblings which points to occupation, not upbringing, as the driver (Torske et al., 2016).

The evidence confirms this toll closer to home too. A 2022 Samaritans survey found that men in rural communities are among the least likely in the UK to seek support when struggling: only 43% said they would reach out, compared with 51% of urban men and 60% of rural women (Samaritans, 2022). Pre-launch research conducted to inform Farmstrong Scotland's design found that awareness of available support was patchy and access lower still. Despite over 80% of Scottish farmers surveyed knowing of one of Scotland's most established agricultural crisis support charities, only 11% had ever accessed its services (Lamont, 2023).

As a men's health organisation, Movember exists to reach men where standard health interventions struggle to land. Farming is an example of where that gap proves fatal. Male farm workers in the UK are roughly twice as likely to die by suicide as the wider male population (Office for National Statistics, 2017). UK survey data has consistently found higher levels of psychological distress among farmers than the general population, with male respondents particularly affected (Thomas et al., 2003; Hounscome et al., 2011). The pattern is not unique to Britain: Norwegian, Australian, Canadian, French and Finnish studies have each identified elevated rates of mental ill-health in farming populations relative to other occupations. Men in agriculture are also widely recognised as a 'hard-to-reach' group for conventional health services, owing to rural isolation, adherence to traditional masculinity norms, and a culture in which stoicism is prized and help-seeking is rare (Brew et al., 2022). For an organisation built around reaching the men least likely to ask for help, farmers were a natural, and urgent, population to serve.

# The Initiative: Farmstrong Scotland

## A CULTURE THAT MAKES HELP-SEEKING HARD

The research is equally clear on why this challenge persists. Barriers to seeking support are both practical and cultural (Grant, 2023). Limited time, poor access to services, and patchy digital connectivity all play a role. But the deeper obstacles are attitudinal: stigma, fear of judgement, a perceived need to ‘deal with it yourself’, and a professional identity built on endurance and self-sufficiency.

In rural and island communities, close-knit networks can be seen as a positive and a negative. On the one hand providing care and support, on the other amplifying fears about confidentiality with the worry that seeking help means everyone will know (Skerratt et al., 2017). Nationally, the Samaritans identified stigma, not knowing who to turn to, and lack of awareness of available support as the three biggest barriers for rural communities (Samaritans, 2022).

Existing services were also poorly positioned to bridge this gap. Many only intervened at crisis point, which missed the majority of people who were struggling below that threshold and inadvertently reinforced the message that help was only for those at rock bottom. Terms like ‘mental health’ or diagnoses like ‘anxiety’ and ‘depression’ can feel extreme and therefore irrelevant to people who are simply finding things hard.

Yet the evidence also pointed to where change was possible. When asked directly what had helped them manage the stresses of farming, respondents to the 2022 survey commissioned to inform Farmstrong Scotland’s design gave answers that were strikingly consistent (Lamont, 2023). Two methods emerged above all others: talking and getting away from the farm.

Talking with family, with neighbouring farmers, with people outside agriculture who could offer a different perspective. Getting off farm, even briefly for an early morning run, a Sunday afternoon away from the yard, an evening with friends. The simplicity of these answers is itself telling. The things that helped most were not clinical interventions; they were the ordinary acts of human connection and recovery that farming life too often crowds out. Farmers were more likely to engage with support that came from within their own community, delivered by people who understood agriculture. Anonymous, self-directed tools accessible from a phone without requiring anyone else to know, were preferred over formal health services. Agricultural events, marts and discussion groups were identified as trusted spaces where conversations about difficult topics could happen naturally. And younger generations were showing signs of greater openness, shaped by broader cultural shifts in how mental health is discussed.

This combination of a clear and documented need, well-understood barriers, and emerging evidence of what works was the foundation on which Farmstrong Scotland was built.

“It’s very difficult as farmers are generally proud people who don’t like to admit their issues.”

Farmer Consultation Participant, 2026

## FROM AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND TO SCOTLAND: A PROVEN MODEL TAKES ROOT

The story of Farmstrong Scotland begins not in the Highlands but in Aotearoa New Zealand. In late 2014, Movember provided catalytic funding for an ambitious experiment: a population-level wellbeing programme designed specifically for farmers and growers. The programme launched publicly on 3 June 2015 as Farmstrong New Zealand, founded in partnership with rural insurer Farmers Mutual Group and the Mental Health Foundation, with ACC joining as a strategic partner the following year.

The idea was straightforward but radical in context: rather than waiting for farmers to reach crisis point, Farmstrong would meet them where they were, in the language they understood, with practical tools and real stories from people who shared their way of life. Peer-to-peer support. Evidence grounded in lived experience. Wellbeing as a farming practice, not a weakness.

Ten years on, Farmstrong New Zealand has demonstrated measurable impact at scale. In 2025, 23% of all farmers, growers and farm workers (approximately 20,000 people) attributed some level of improvement in their wellbeing to the programme (Wylie & Associates, 2025). Among those who had ever engaged with Farmstrong, that figure reached 83%. The model proved that cultural change in agriculture was possible, measurable – and, Movember believed, transferable.

Having backed the New Zealand programme from the start, Movember saw in Scotland an opportunity to test whether the model was truly transferable – whether a peer-led, occupation-specific approach could take root in a different country, a different farming culture, a different policy context, and produce the same results.

Movember provided the founding investment for Farmstrong Scotland: a three-year commitment of £350,000, matched pound-for-pound by fundraising from Scotland’s agricultural sector to bring the total programme budget to £700,000.

The structure of that investment was itself a deliberate design choice. Movember’s contribution was front-loaded – heavier in the early phases to give the programme the resource it needed to establish itself, reducing over time as Scottish fundraising was expected to grow.

10 years

Of Farmstrong New Zealand.

83%

Of engaged New Zealand farmers attribute wellbeing improvements to Farmstrong.

~20,000

New Zealand farmers impacted annually.



This reflected a considered view, grounded in evidence that initiatives which plan for financial sustainability from the outset are significantly better placed to achieve it than those which treat future funding as a problem to solve later. By requiring matched fundraising from day one, and by structuring Movember’s own contribution to step down over time, the investment model was designed to build the habits, relationships and sector ownership that a self-sustaining programme would need before the founding funding ran out. Movember provided evaluation oversight and also funded programme management and international convening through Gerard Vaughan, Farmstrong NZ’s programme director, who brought the hard-won lessons of a decade in New Zealand directly into the Scottish programme’s design and early delivery.

## THE SPARK THAT LIT THE FLAME

The path to Farmstrong Scotland began with a journey in 2018. New Zealand farmer Doug Avery, whose own story of mental health struggle and recovery had become central to Farmstrong NZ’s peer-led approach, came to Scotland to share his experience. More than 2,000 people turned out across 14 events to hear him. The turnout proved a need – Scotland’s farming community wanted these conversations; they just needed a way to have them.

It was Doug who suggested looking at Farmstrong as the model for Scotland. A steering group formed, bringing together farmers, rural leaders and agricultural decision-makers from across the sector with a shared commitment to building something that would genuinely serve Scottish farmers and crofters. The group worked as volunteers for two years before any dedicated resource was in place. In 2021, the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS) and Movember agreed to come on board as pilot funders. A year later, Redesign Rural Fund support secured the programme’s first project coordinator, and Scottish Rural Network funding launched the foundational research in partnership with RHASS, Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) and the National Rural Mental Health Forum.

Over the following years, the group undertook extensive pre-launch research: an evidence review drawing on international literature, a quantitative survey of Scottish farmers, and qualitative focus groups to test assumptions and co-design the programme with its intended beneficiaries.

That research confirmed both the need and the opportunity. It also generated clear design principles that shaped everything Farmstrong Scotland became.

## BUILT ON EVIDENCE, DESIGNED FOR FARMING

The evidence review commissioned ahead of launch synthesised local research on farmer wellbeing into a set of clear conclusions about what works (Grant, 2023).

**Its findings remain the design DNA of everything Farmstrong does:**

**Focus on wellbeing, not mental illnes:** language and framing that feels relevant to people who are coping but struggling, not just those in crisis.

**Peer-led delivery:** farmers trust other farmers; ambassadors and champions who share their own stories reduce stigma more effectively than clinical voices.

**Agricultural specificity:** support that understands the rhythms, pressures and culture of farming life, not generic mental health content repackaged for the sector.

**Soft entry points:** reaching people through trusted industry organisations, events and gatherings rather than requiring them to actively seek help.

**Online and self-directed tools:** accessible from any device, at any hour, without anyone else needing to know; designed for time-poor, outcome-oriented people.

**Clear signposting, but at arm’s length from crisis services:** complementing rather than duplicating existing support.

These principles were not invented for Scotland; they had been validated across ten years of Farmstrong New Zealand. They are also not specific to farming. They are the blueprint: the conditions under which hard-to-reach men in any occupational community can be reached, before crisis, through the language and spaces of the community itself. Scotland’s contribution was to test whether that blueprint held in a new context.

## BRINGING FARMSTRONG TO SCOTLAND

Farmstrong Scotland launched in 2023. From the outset, the programme was designed to preserve the essential fidelity of the Farmstrong New Zealand model, the core ingredients that had driven a decade of measurable impact, while being tailored and adapted to meet the needs of Scotland’s farming and crofting communities. That balance between fidelity and local adaptation was not incidental. It was the founding principle. Farmstrong NZ was explicit that involving farmers and crofters in co-designing the programme was critical to its success: if users have been involved in shaping what is offered, they are more likely to use it, talk about it, and benefit from it.

Practically, the process involved undertaking an evidence review to confirm the approach would be equally applicable, and the co-design process with Scottish farmers shaped how the program would be expressed in a specifically Scottish context. That process of adaptation without dilution, preserving the essential ingredients while making the programme genuinely Scottish, is itself proof of the blueprint’s transferability. The model did not simply travel; it took root.

Governance was built with the same care. RHASS, Scotland’s largest rural charity and standard-bearer for the farming sector for over 230 years, served as the legal entity overseeing the programme’s development, providing financial accountability, operational infrastructure and the institutional credibility the programme needed to establish itself quickly. Movember sat on the Governance Committee, contributing fundraising capability, programme management expertise, independent evaluation oversight, and a direct connection to Farmstrong programmes internationally.

The Farmstrong Scotland Governance Group, a mix of farmers, sector leaders and rural professionals, many of whom had been working voluntarily on the programme’s development since 2019, brought the agricultural knowledge, networks and passion that no external funder could supply. Together, these three pillars gave the structure and support to move at pace from concept to delivery, and Farmstrong Scotland successfully established its own independent status as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation in August 2024. The programme is delivered by a small, knowledgeable staff team, many with farming backgrounds themselves, overseen by a strategic board. Its resources include podcasts, a website wellbeing hub, case studies, practical tools, events and community gatherings. All of it rooted in the belief that the most powerful advocates for farmer wellbeing are farmers themselves.





# Intended Impact

Movember funded Farmstrong Scotland as a population-level prevention programme. The ambition was not to treat illness but to shift culture, to move wellbeing from a topic that farmers avoid discussing to one that feels as normal and practical as managing livestock health or soil condition.

Our investment was designed to achieve four interconnected outcomes across the farming and crofting community in Scotland:

- Increased awareness of wellbeing and its importance to farming life — normalising conversations and reducing stigma around mental health.
- Deeper knowledge and skills — equipping farmers and crofters with practical habits and strategies to manage the ups and downs of their working lives.
- Measurable improvements in wellbeing — tracked through validated measurement using the WEMWBS scale<sup>1</sup>.
- A stronger, more resilient sector — one where peer support, self-care and help-seeking are embedded in farming culture rather than treated as signs of weakness.

Underpinning all of this is a commitment to working preventatively: reaching people before crises develop, meeting them in the spaces and networks they already inhabit, and building the kind of trust that only comes from genuine farmer-led delivery.

Farmstrong is not a crisis service. It is a long-term investment in cultural change to improve the health of the community.

“Farmstrong Scotland will enable the rural community to learn how to improve their own wellbeing which — in turn — will help them to farm and croft better. Learning how to build up resilience for when times are tough is a key element of Farmstrong Scotland; making sure farmers and crofters have some coping strategies in their wellbeing account to draw on.”

Alix Ritchie, Farmstrong Scotland  
Programme Director, October 2023

1. WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) is a validated mental wellbeing assessment that is used extensively by the government for population health surveys including the Scottish Health Survey.





# Evaluation Approach

From the outset the approach was evidence based, and implementation has continued to be led by evidence through monitoring and evaluation. Independent research firm Scotinform was engaged to conduct a two-year programme of monitoring and evaluation from August 2024, using the evidence-building approach that had underpinned Farmstrong New Zealand's success.

The evaluation was designed to assess awareness, engagement, programme impact and stakeholder value.

It drew on four sources, each contributing a different layer of evidence:

- Wave 1 quantitative survey: autumn 2024, 569 responses from farmers and crofters across Scotland.
- Wave 2 quantitative survey: autumn 2025, 418 responses, supplemented by face-to-face fieldwork at agricultural marts in Dalmally, Stirling, Huntly, Oban and Lanark, and at AgriScot in Edinburgh.
- Qualitative consultation: spring 2026, 51 in-depth responses from farmers and crofters sharing detailed experiences in their own words.
- Stakeholder in-depth interviews: spring 2026, 19 interviews with representatives from organisations including NFU Scotland, RSABI, the Scottish Government, SAC Consulting, RHASS, Movember and others.

## REACHING A HARD-TO-REACH POPULATION

Consulting the farming and crofting sector on wellbeing is genuinely difficult. The stigma and privacy concerns that make this work so necessary also make research challenging. Early attempts to distribute paper surveys in agricultural stores and marts met with reluctance, with some participants asking the sales staff distributing surveys to stop, feeling they were being identified as needing support.

In response, the research methodology was continuously adapted. Digital distribution through Farmstrong's own networks proved more successful than expected, generating strong online responses. For the second year, professional fieldworkers were deployed at marts and AgriScot. While resource-intensive, this approach successfully reached audiences beyond the Farmstrong network, with only 26% of face-to-face respondents already aware of the programme.

An independent Advisory Panel of two farmers and one crofter supported Scotinform throughout the project, reviewing survey design, distribution approaches and findings. All data was weighted to reflect the age and gender profile of the Scottish agricultural population.

These methodological challenges are themselves informative. They reflect the very barriers Farmstrong exists to address. They also demonstrate that, even in research, meeting farmers where they are requires patience, adaptability and trust.





# The Change That Was Created

## GROWING AWARENESS

Building awareness of any new programme takes time, particularly in a sector wary of outside intervention. The best available estimate, drawn from face-to-face fieldwork with farmers who had no prior connection to Farmstrong, puts awareness at 26% of the farming and crofting population by 2025. For a charity that had been operating for less than two years at the point of that research, this represents a significant reach.

Among those who had engaged with Farmstrong, understanding grew substantially over the evaluation period: the proportion who felt they knew a lot about the programme doubled from 10% to 21%, reflecting both increasing familiarity and the programme's deepening presence in agricultural networks.

Importantly, stakeholders across the sector confirm that awareness of wellbeing as a legitimate topic of conversation has increased noticeably since Farmstrong launched. That shift in culture, harder to quantify than survey scores, may be the most significant early achievement.

## STRONG ENGAGEMENT AMONG THOSE REACHED

Among those aware of Farmstrong, engagement is consistently high. In both 2024 and 2025, half of those who had heard of the programme had engaged with at least one activity. The range of channels grew from 11 in 2024 to 15 in 2025, and engagement with every channel increased year-on-year, suggesting not just wider reach but deeper involvement.

The most common entry points were the website, podcasts and case studies. All formats that allow people to engage privately, in their own time, without the pressure of being seen to seek help. This matters in a sector where stigma remains real.

# 26%

Awareness among those surveyed in field.

# 50%

Of those aware have engaged with Farmstrong.

# 88%

Of previously engaged participants want to continue.

# 83%

Would recommend Farmstrong to another farmer or crofter.

# 80%

Report positive impact on health and wellbeing (2025)\*

\*up from 67% in 2024



MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON WELLBEING

Overall, the farmers and crofters participating in the Farmstrong surveys reported on average lower levels of wellbeing than the Scottish National average.<sup>2</sup> In 2025, the mean WEMWBS score for the survey sample was 46.51. This is below the national average for Scotland in 2024 of 48.5. It is slightly above the 2024 survey figure of 46.27.

The clearest measure of Farmstrong’s success is its impact on the people who engage with it. In 2025, 80% of those who had engaged with Farmstrong reported a positive effect on their health and wellbeing – up from 67% in 2024. This reflects a programme rapidly establishing its impact.

Those who had engaged with Farmstrong were statistically more likely than those who had not to report improvements across a wide range of wellbeing measures – an association that, while not establishing causation, is consistent across all eight domains: work-life balance, ability to cope with farming’s ups and downs, contact with family and friends, physical activity, volunteering, taking time to notice the world around them, time away from the farm, and physical health. In 2024, only one of these impact measures reached statistical significance. By 2025, all of them did. That step-change is considerable and speaks to the cumulative, compounding effect of sustained engagement.

That question – whether the model transfers – is now answered. Farmstrong New Zealand showed the same trajectory at this stage of its development: modest early population scores, strong participant-level impact, and a gradual compounding effect as cultural exposure accumulated. Scotland is tracking the same curve, but faster.

2. Important to note that a limitation of the methodology is that majority of the sample was collected through Farmstrong Scotland networks, so may not be representative of the broader farming and crofting population.

SHIFTING ATTITUDES AND BUILDING NEW HABITS

Behind the numbers are real changes in how people think and behave. Participants consistently described a shift in their relationship with self-care: recognising that it is not selfish to look after themselves; feeling more comfortable discussing mental health with peers; understanding that their own wellbeing is fundamental to the success of their farm and family.

“I previously spent regular time on exercise, volunteering and trying to be off farm, but usually this felt like a guilty pleasure... Farmstrong has helped me rationalise that these activities are important in their own right.”

Farmstrong Participant, 2025

Alongside attitude change, Farmstrong is also generating tangible behaviour change. Participants describe starting new exercise routines, improving their work patterns, seeking professional support when they previously would not have, and using Farmstrong’s Five Ways to Wellbeing framework as a regular practice.

“After the event I spoke to the doctor about depression.”

Farmstrong Participant, 2025

THE TOOLS THAT WORK

Specific resources deliver particularly strong results. The ‘How’s It Going?’ self-assessment tool and the ‘Stressed Out’ resource both generated 100% positive impact ratings among users. The ‘Snoozing Success’ sleep resource scored 99%. The Spotify playlist scored 94%. Blether Together Live events, Farmstrong’s in-person community gatherings, scored 93%. These are not modest figures; they reflect tools and formats that genuinely resonate with the community they serve.

Sleep remains the most pressing unmet need, with a third of respondents reporting a deterioration in sleep quality over the past year. Stress management, work-life balance, time off farm and balancing work with family follow closely.

VALUED ACROSS THE SECTOR

Farmstrong’s impact extends beyond the farmers and crofters it directly reaches. Across 19 stakeholder organisations spanning government, sector bodies, charities, financial institutions and research organisations, the programme is viewed as a credible, distinctive and necessary addition to Scotland’s agricultural support landscape.

Stakeholders describe Farmstrong as filling a gap that no other organisation occupies: preventative, peer-led, practically focused, and culturally embedded in agricultural life. Its farmer-led model is seen as its defining strength, the thing that makes its wellbeing messages land where others’ do not.

“Farmstrong has achieved significant impact in a short time. Their passion, visibility and commitment have been remarkable.”

Stakeholder Consultation Participant, 2026







# What We Learnt

Two years of evaluation and consultation have generated a rich body of learning about Farmstrong's impact in Scotland. Several themes stand out.

## THE BLUEPRINT IS TRANSFERABLE

The most significant thing this evaluation confirms is not any individual metric. It is the finding that a peer-led, occupation-specific wellbeing model, developed and proven over ten years in New Zealand, can be successfully transferred to a different country, a different farming culture, and a different policy context – and produce measurably similar results within three years of operation.

Stakeholders with knowledge of both programmes note that strong leadership, genuine co-design with the farming community, and a willingness to adapt the model's expression (while preserving its essential ingredients) were the critical factors. The ten-year New Zealand evidence base provides both the validation for what Scotland has done and a compelling vision of what sustained investment can achieve: a sector where 83% of engaged farmers attribute improvements in their wellbeing to the programme, and where that cultural shift is visible in population-level data.

For Movember, this learning carries implications beyond farming and beyond Scotland. If the blueprint works here, the question becomes: where else does it apply?

## TRUST IS THE FOUNDATION OF EVERYTHING

Farmers and crofters engage with Farmstrong because it feels authentic. The programme is designed by and for people who understand farming life. Stakeholders and participants consistently point to Farmstrong's tone, its farmer-facing staff, and its grounded approach as the reason it succeeds where generic mental health messaging fails. That trust is hard to build and easy to lose. It must be protected.

## FLEXIBLE, LOW-EFFORT FORMATS MATTER

The main barrier to engagement for those who are aware of Farmstrong is time. Farming doesn't have off-peak hours, and any additional demand on attention competes with an already full schedule. The most successful formats - podcasts, online resources, brief tools like *'How's It Going?'* – can be accessed on a mobile phone, at any hour. Events that bring people together in person work well for those who can attend, but digital channels remain essential for rural and remote access.



## THE HARDEST-TO-REACH NEED THE MOST SUPPORT

All contributors to the evaluation acknowledged a 'hard-to-reach' group: older, more isolated farmers and crofters who are least likely to engage with digital content, most resistant to discussing wellbeing, and simultaneously most likely to be struggling. This group cannot be abandoned. The consensus from evaluation evidence is to maintain consistent, stigma-free presence in the spaces these individuals do still frequent – to 'leave the gate open' and to trust that over time the cultural shift will reach them too.



## IN-PERSON PRESENCE IS POWERFUL

Blether Together Live events, farm walks and presence at major agricultural shows generate some of the strongest engagement scores in the evaluation. When Farmstrong shows up in a familiar, informal agricultural setting, conversations happen that would not happen anywhere else. This is particularly important for reaching farmers outside the digital network, but it requires investment and careful handling. As informal social spaces in agriculture have declined over the past fifty years, the basket of trusted in-person settings has shrunk; marts remain valuable but are one channel among several, not the primary one. Broadening in-person presence to include discussion groups, young farmer networks, farm advisory touchpoints and agricultural shows is the strategic priority for the next phase.

## EVIDENCE-INFORMED FROM THE BEGINNING

Consultation at the beginning, monitoring and evaluation throughout, has been one of the most important strategic dimensions of this investment. Initial consultations identified the model was transferrable, and the approaches to use with farmers and crofters. The monitoring, particularly WEMWBS data, provides comparison points that are credible to policymakers, funders and health professionals. The qualitative research gives voice to the real experiences behind the numbers. Together they have built an evidence base that is already demonstrating measurable outcomes.





# Conclusion

Farmstrong Scotland is already demonstrating impact at a scale and speed that compares favourably with the early years of the Farmstrong New Zealand programme – a programme Movember also seeded, and which is now ten years into changing how an entire country thinks about farmer wellbeing. In New Zealand, three years of similar early results were followed by a decade of deepening cultural change: a sector that now discusses wellbeing as part of farming practice, where 20,000 farmers annually attribute improvements to the programme, and where the model has influenced national policy conversations on rural mental health. That is the trajectory Scotland is on. The work of the next ten years begins now.

“My heartfelt thanks go to the team at Movember for believing in Farmstrong, and working with us to develop our strategy, monitoring and evaluation, and fundraising activities.”

John Scott, Chair, Farmstrong Scotland,  
December 2025

What is at stake is worth naming plainly. This report opened with the evidence that men in farming are roughly twice as likely to die by suicide as the wider male working population. That statistic has not changed. What has changed, in two years, is that a growing share of Scottish farmers now have access to a trusted, peer-led programme that meets them where they are, speaks their language and is measurably improving their wellbeing. Farmstrong Scotland has now met its founding fundraising targets, formally closing the Movember matched-funding partnership with a full £700,000 raised and deployed. That milestone is cause for celebration – and a moment of decision.

With Movember’s seed phase complete, the programme’s future rests on the Scottish agricultural sector and Scotland’s public institutions. The ask is specific: continued investment in programme delivery and in-person community engagement to reach the farmers still outside the digital network; co-funding from the Scottish Government and major agricultural sector partners, using this evidence base to make the case; and a long-term commitment to the independent evaluation that gives the programme its credibility with policymakers and health professionals. Movember backed Farmstrong Scotland because we believed it was possible to reach the hardest-to-reach men through the communities they already inhabit. The evidence shows it is. The question now is whether Scotland will give it what it needs to reach every farmer who needs it.

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