Agriculture and rural health—Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry – Australia perspective

Melanie Fisher, Allan Curtis, Stephen Hostetler, Ron Cullen, Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry – Australia

The health and prosperity of rural and regional Australia depend on the health and sustainability of the agricultural sector. The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia (AFFA) provides services to the agricultural, food, fisheries and forest industries, and addresses the challenges of natural resource management. This symposium provided information on some of the products and services provided by AFFA, and explored some of the social aspects of Australian agriculture, especially in relation to drought and its effects on rural communities, families and individuals. Information was provided on AFFA’s “Social Atlas”, small rural town water supply issues, current social research, and the empowerment of local communities through programs such as the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.