



SURVEY SNAPSHOT

Farmer & Crofter Wellbeing

An insight into farmer and crofter wellbeing in Scotland, using primary data captured by Farmstrong Scotland. Published March 2025.



This survey is vital for the future development of Farmstrong Scotland, and I would like to express my thanks to all those who completed it. Your comments and insights will help support farmer and crofter wellbeing.

**John Scott
Chairman**

About the survey

To understand its impact and to ensure that services are tailored to maximise results, Farmstrong Scotland has commissioned Scotinform Ltd to run a monitoring and evaluation programme from 2024 to 2026.

The first part of this work was an annual survey, completed in autumn 2024, by 569 farmers and crofters.

Designed by Scotinform, in partnership with the project advisory group (comprising of independent farmers/crofters), as well as input from the Farmstrong team, the survey incorporated the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) (© University of Warwick, 2006, all rights reserved). This is a 14-question scale that generates a mental wellbeing score from 14 to 70. It is used extensively in other measures of population wellbeing allowing for comparisons over time and with other data sets.

The report has made comparisons to the 2022 foundation research conducted for Farmstrong (an online sample of 592 farmers and crofters) and to the 2023 Scottish Health Survey, a statistical data set created by the Scottish Government that also measures wellbeing using WEMWBS.

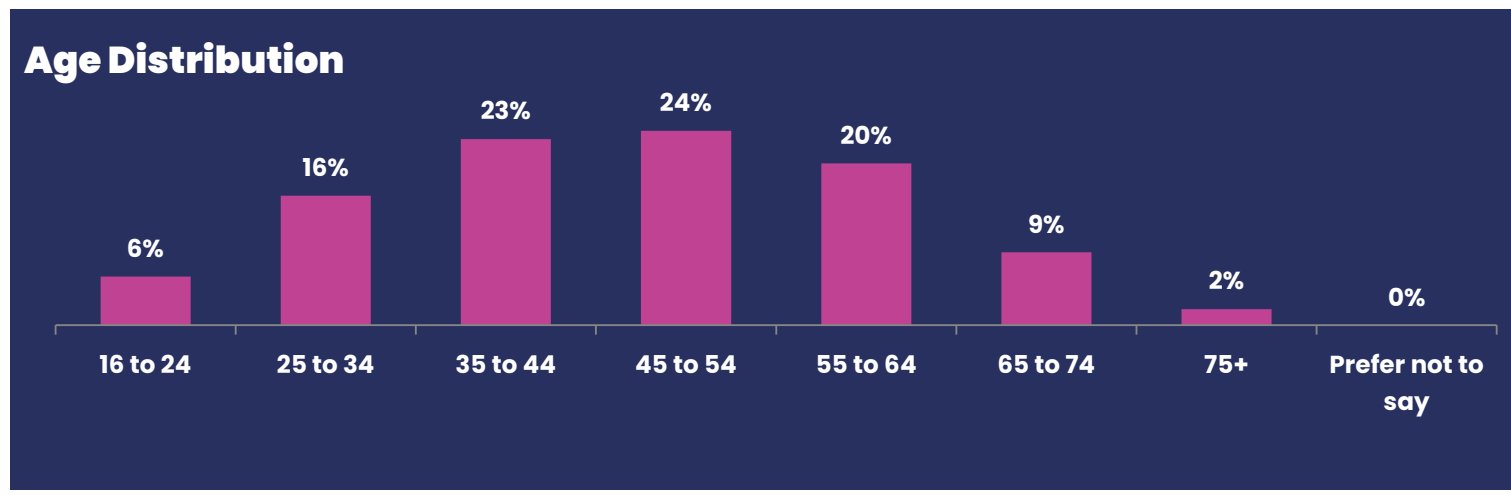
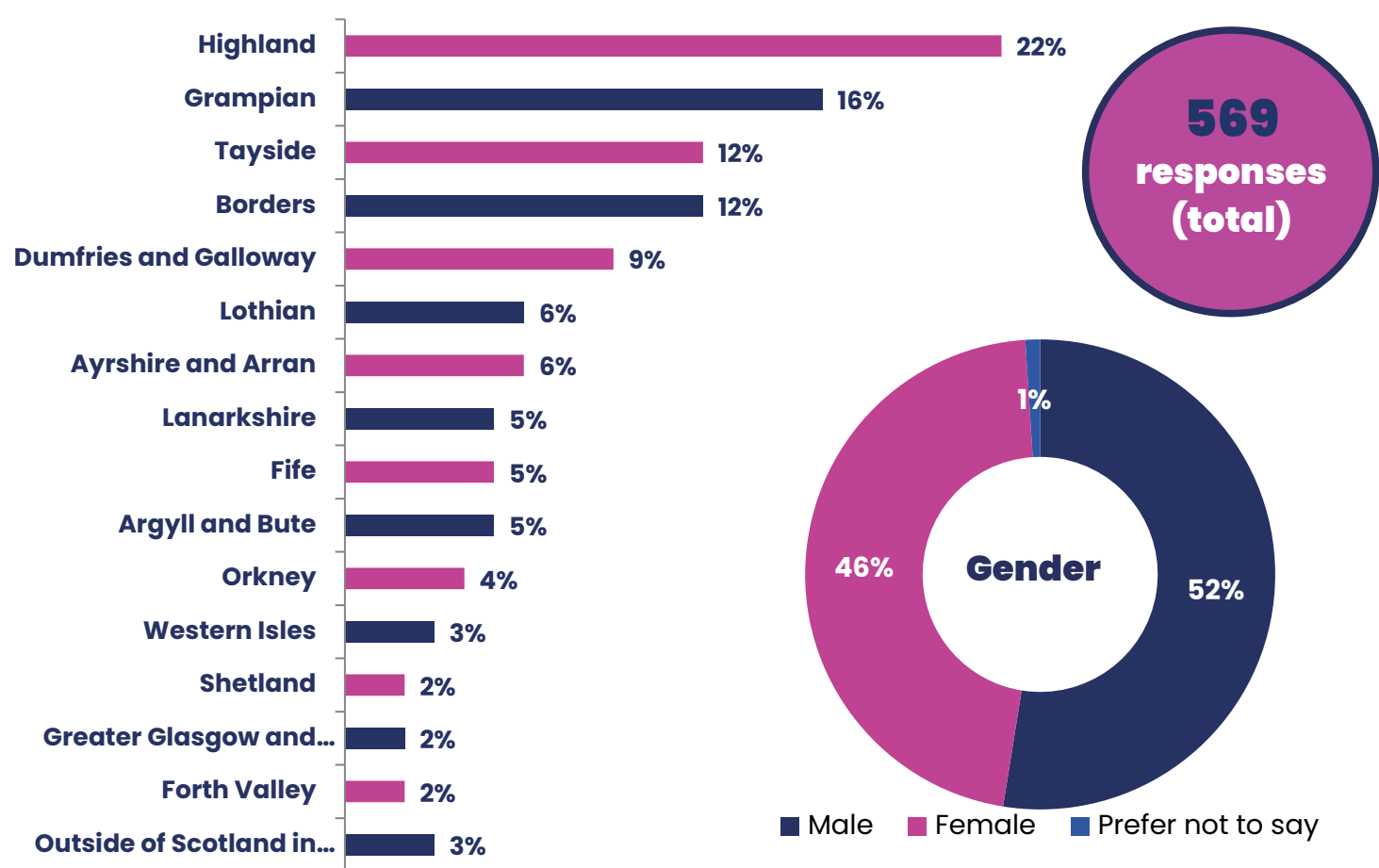
This document shares a snapshot of some of the data, and will be used to help inform and develop the Farmstrong Scotland Programme going forward.

For more information or to get in touch with Farmstrong Scotland, please contact Programme Director, Alix Ritchie.
alix@farmstrongscotland.org.uk



Respondents

The survey received a good distribution of all ages, genders and geographical locations, as shown below.



The findings

The data, covering the full sample (relating to general wellbeing, and to awareness of Farmstrong), have been weighted using data from the 2024 Agricultural Census to reflect national gender and age distribution. This step has been taken to try to make the sample more typical of the farming and crofting sector; however, we acknowledge that there is another variable – engagement with Farmstrong, or with people who are engaged with Farmstrong – that may also influence the data. Please note that this will likely have impacted on the awareness and engagement questions in particular.

More than **one-third** of respondents fell into the low wellbeing category.

When compared with the national population, the mean wellbeing score is lower for the farmer and crofter sample at every age range.

Every region in Scotland was represented and was broadly similar to the geographic profile recorded in the Agricultural Census.

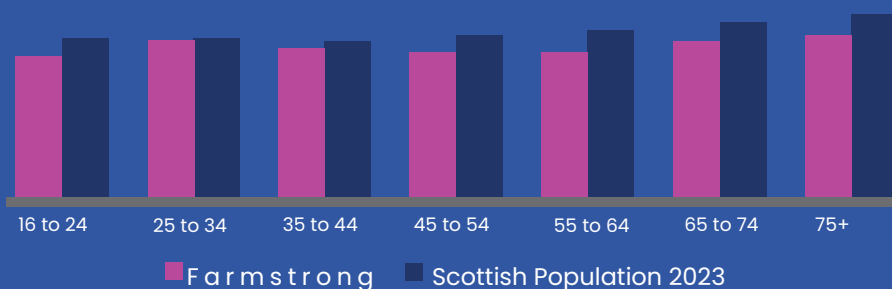
Wellbeing Score

When comparing the wellbeing score against that of the Scottish population, based on 2023 Scottish Health Survey data, farmers and crofters completing the Farmstrong survey showed a lower mean wellbeing score.

It is worth noting, that the Scottish Population data includes all sectors, and was not specific to agriculture and crofting, but this does provide an indication of how the sector is feeling.

Wellbeing by Age

Broadly, the mean wellbeing score increases with age. Young respondents report the lower scores in the sample, and those aged 65 or above scored above the average for the sample.



The budget

Although the UK Government budget fell within the data collection timeframe only 32% of respondents completed the survey after the budget. In addition, the WEMWBS scale used to measure wellbeing, asked respondents about their experiences in the past two weeks. Therefore, this survey does not serve to provide an accurate reflection of the budget on farmer and crofter wellbeing.

Ups and Downs of Crofting and Farming

26%

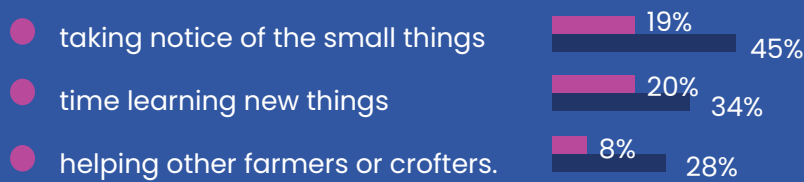
say that their ability to cope with the ups and downs of farming has got worse in the last year.

21%

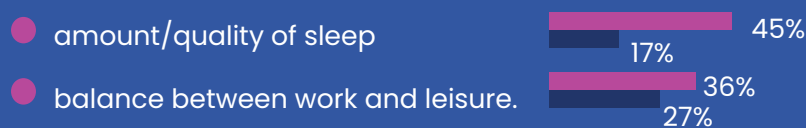
say that their ability to cope with the ups and downs of farming has got better in the last year.

Wellbeing Proxies in the past year.

The three measures that show an improved situation are:



Both sleep and balance between work and leisure showed a decline:



■ Got worse
■ Got better

Those surveyed were asked to rate how they felt about 12 wellbeing proxies over the past year. This data will be collected every year to build a better understanding of wellbeing trends.

Farmstrong Scotland Impact

62%

of those who had engaged with Farmstrong say that it has had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

Further analysis showed that the highest level of impact was reported by respondents who downloaded the "Stressed Out" resource with 93% reporting a positive impact.

Impact of Farmstrong

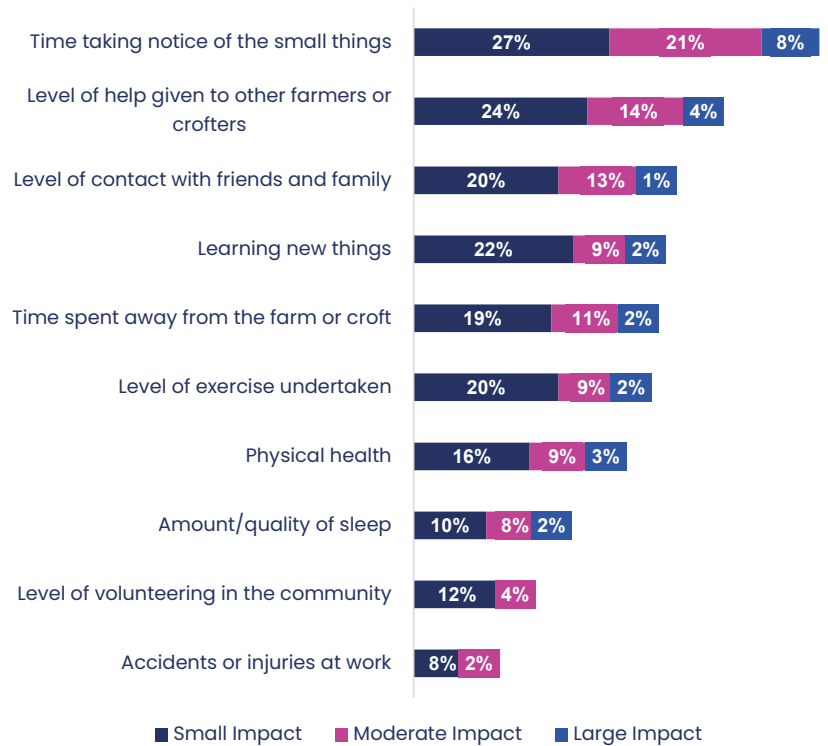
The data shows that respondents who have engaged with Farmstrong reported great improvements, compared to those who have not engaged, across eight of the ten wellbeing indicators.

75% of all respondents, and 61% of those who had not previously engaged with Farmstrong, expressed an interest in doing so in the future.

Respondents who have already engaged were enthusiastic about deepening the connection by joining local community events, becoming a Farmstrong supporter and even hosting an event.

Farmstrong is perceived as having made a positive difference in all measures.

Steps farmers are taking, and the impact to their wellbeing



75%
of all respondents, and 61% of those who had not previously engaged with Farmstrong, expressed an interest in doing so in the future.

The average wellbeing score for respondents who have engaged with Farmstrong was **slightly higher** than for those who had not engaged with Farmstrong.

67%
of respondents who had engaged with Farmstrong, reported a small, moderate or large positive impact.



2/3
of respondents who are aware of Farmstrong have engaged with one or more activities.

Areas of support or advice

The requested areas for further support and advice from respondents was addressing was addressing sleep quality, unsurprising given that 45% reported a decline in this measure, in the past year.

This was followed by wellbeing techniques, improving physical fitness and taking time off the farm or croft.



36%

Managing tiredness, fatigue and sleep (36%)

29%

Techniques to stop me worrying about work or to manage stress (29%)

28%

Improving physical fitness (28%)

26%

Taking time off the farm or croft (26%)

Farmstrong Future

This survey is vital for the future development of Farmstrong Scotland, and I would like to express my thanks, on behalf of the wider Farmstrong team, to all those who completed it, promoted it and shared it with their wider networks. It's quotes like the two noted below, that reinforce the value and importance of the charity.

The findings from this survey, the foundation research, and future surveys will inform the development of the programme and ensure that services are tailored to meet the needs of the Scottish agricultural and crofting community.

Over the next year we will be using the wider set of results from the survey to release additional insights and create further resources.

This is key for our future fundraising campaign, to ensure that Farmstrong can continue to grow and develop to help our most important asset - it's people.


The key take home from this research is that, although farmers and crofters are reporting wellbeing levels slightly below the national average, those who had engaged with Farmstrong said it had helped them improve their wellbeing. Our aim is to reach more farmers and crofters so they can also benefit from participating in the Farmstrong programme.

If you require any more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Alix Ritchie

Programme Director - Farmstrong Scotland

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“Farmstrong lets you know that if you are feeling a little down about stuff that there are others out there experiencing low days too - and that helps in itself - knowing we are not alone.”

Respondent

“It's so refreshing to hear other people and their stories. Makes you feel encouraged to take your health more seriously, and to talk about it. Thank you very much.”

Respondent

Live Well, Farm and Croft Well



FARM STRONG

Scotland

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📍 www.farmstrongscotland.org.uk

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