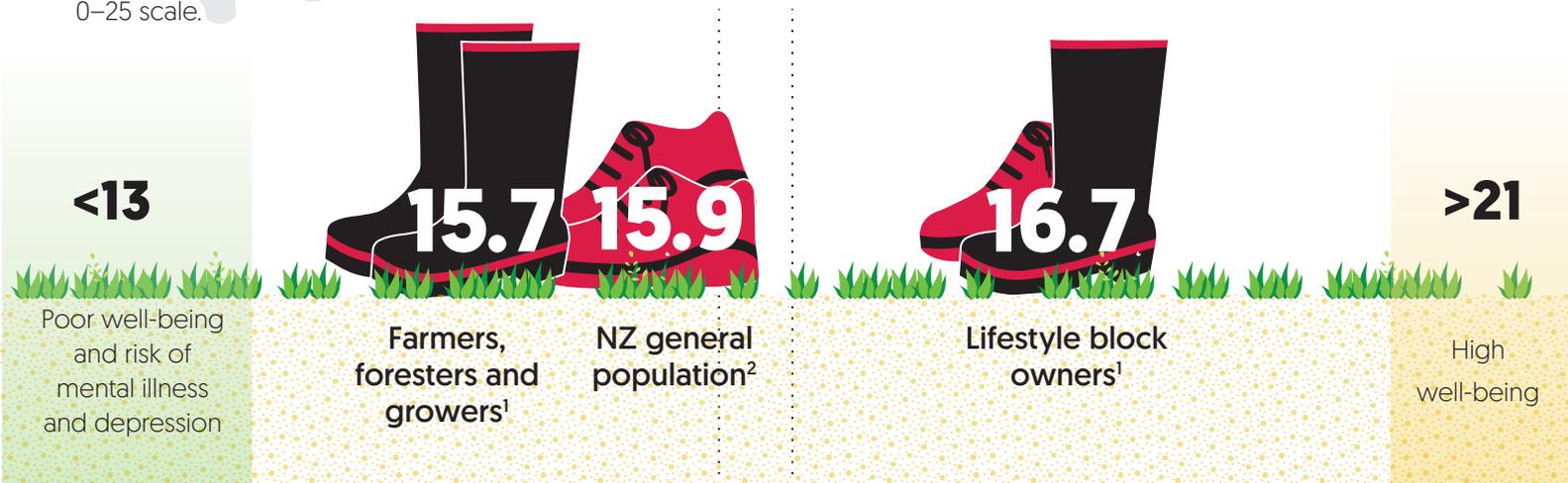


The Survey of Rural Decision Makers is a biennial survey of New Zealand's primary sector conducted by Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research since 2013. It covers commercial farmers, foresters and growers as well as lifestyle block owners from Cape Reinga to Rakiura.

Rural Well-being

We used the WHO-5 Index to evaluate the well-being of commercial farmers, foresters and growers and lifestyle block owners.

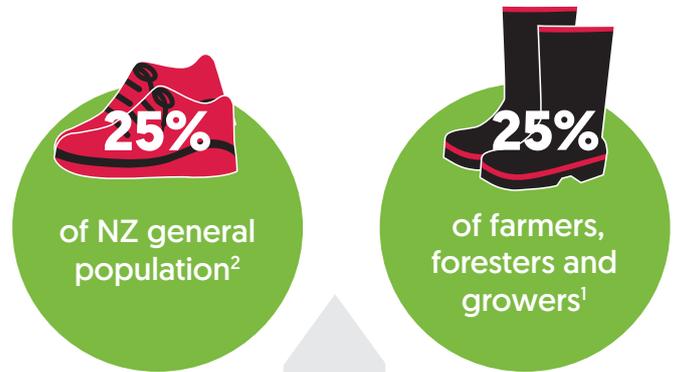
The WHO-5 Index was developed over 20 years ago to assess well-being, and has become the most common measure of well-being worldwide. It is based on a short questionnaire reflecting on the previous two weeks and is measured on a 0–25 scale.



For comparison, average scores for adults in the UK and France in 2015 were 16.0 and 16.2, respectively³.

At risk for mental illness and depression

While the share of commercial operators who fell below the threshold score of 13 was similar to the NZ population as a whole, there was considerable variation across sectors.



By sector:



¹ Stahlmann-Brown P 2021. Survey of Rural Decision Makers 2021. Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. DOI: 10.7931/3tcs-wb24

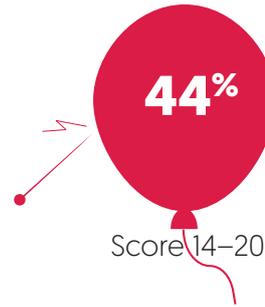
² IPSOS [2021]. Well-being amongst New Zealanders. <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/wellbeing-amongst-new-zealanders>

³ Sischka, P. E., Costa, A. P., Steffgen, G., & Schmidt, A. F. [2020]. The WHO-5 well-being index—validation based on item response theory and the analysis of measurement invariance across 35 countries. *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*, 1, 100020.

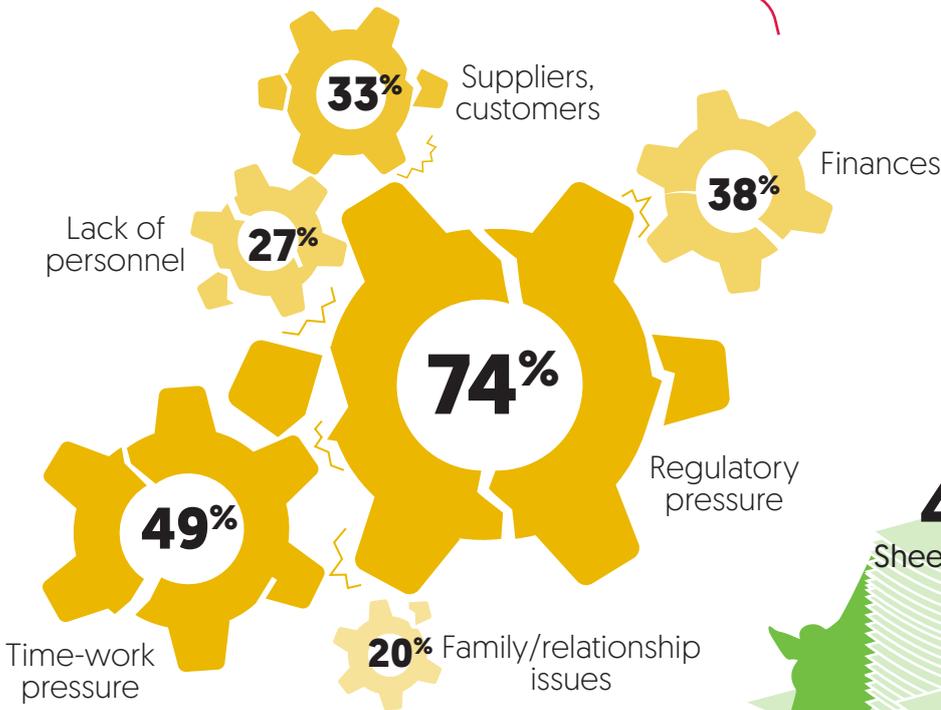
Stress

We asked farmers, foresters and growers how often they felt stress.

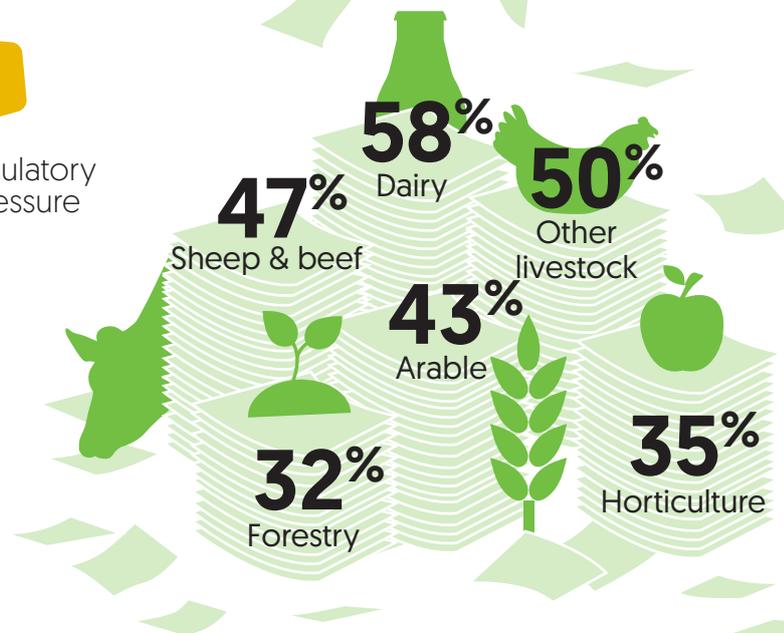
Percent of farmers, foresters and growers who reported stress (always, often or sometimes) by WHO-5 well-being score.



Primary causes of stress for commercial operators



Overall, the percentage of commercial operators who reported stress from regulatory pressure varies by sector.



Stress affects optimism

We asked how optimistic people were for the future of their operations.

Respondents answered on a scale from 0 [“not at all optimistic”] to 10 [“extremely optimistic”].

0



Those who are stressed are significantly less likely to be optimistic.

10

The Survey of Rural Decision Makers is designed to build a better picture of decision making at the farm level, tackling topics that cannot be easily addressed in official statistics or directly by organisations. It is a valuable resource for policy makers, regional councils, industry groups and businesses.

For further information, please contact Christine Harper: harperc@landcareresearch.co.nz or Pike Stahlmann-Brown: brownp@landcareresearch.co.nz

Further results will be added to our website as they become available:
www.landcareresearch.co.nz/srdm-2021



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