



*The Worshipful Company of Farmers*


HEALTH AND WELLBEING FORUM

NOVEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> 2025

STARTING @ 2PM

*Inspiring, encouraging and developing excellence in the management and leadership of UK agriculture*

<https://farmerslivery.org.uk/>



# 'Don't take my breath away'

Raising awareness of agricultural lung health through partnership



Dr Rebecca Orr, GP & Chair of Forum  
Mr Kevin Doherty, CEO Rural Support  
Dr Bryan Monson, Dep CEO of Health and Safety Executive NI  
Worship Company of Farmers Health and Wellbeing Forum  
14th November

**NI** Agri-Rural  
Health Forum

# PLAN

**RURAL SUPPORT  
CO-ORDINATOR**

**ORIGIN OF NI ARHF  
THE PROBLEM, WHY AND HOW**

**OCCUPATIONAL LUNG DISEASE  
STATISTICS AND WHERE THIS FITS**

**ENGAGEMENT  
PRINCIPLES AND CONTENT  
FEEDBACK**

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**



### Farm Business & Finance



Developing a strong farm business by increasing knowledge and management skills.

- **Managing the Farm Finances**
- **Business Planning**
- **Animal Health & Welfare**
- **Environmental Issues**

[+ Read More](#)

### Health & Wellbeing



Managing the external influences that can affect your health and wellbeing and change it positively.

- **Emotional Health**
- **Physical Health**
- **Family & Personal Relationships**
- **Bereavement & Loss**

[+ Read More](#)

### Future Planning & Succession



Establishing a farm family plan to ensure effective transfer of responsibilities and assets.

- **Farm Succession Planning**
- **Life Stage Planning**
- **Crisis Planning**

[+ Read More](#)

### Social Farming & Innovation



Providing and gaining support to feel connected whilst promoting positive health and wellbeing.

- **NI Agri-Rural Health Forum**
- **Social Farming Support Service**
- **Loneliness & Isolation**
- **Social Connections**

# NI Agri-Rural Health Forum



What We Do / [Support Hub](#) / [Social Farming & Innovation](#) / NI Agri-Rural Health Forum

→ [Social Farming Support Service](#)

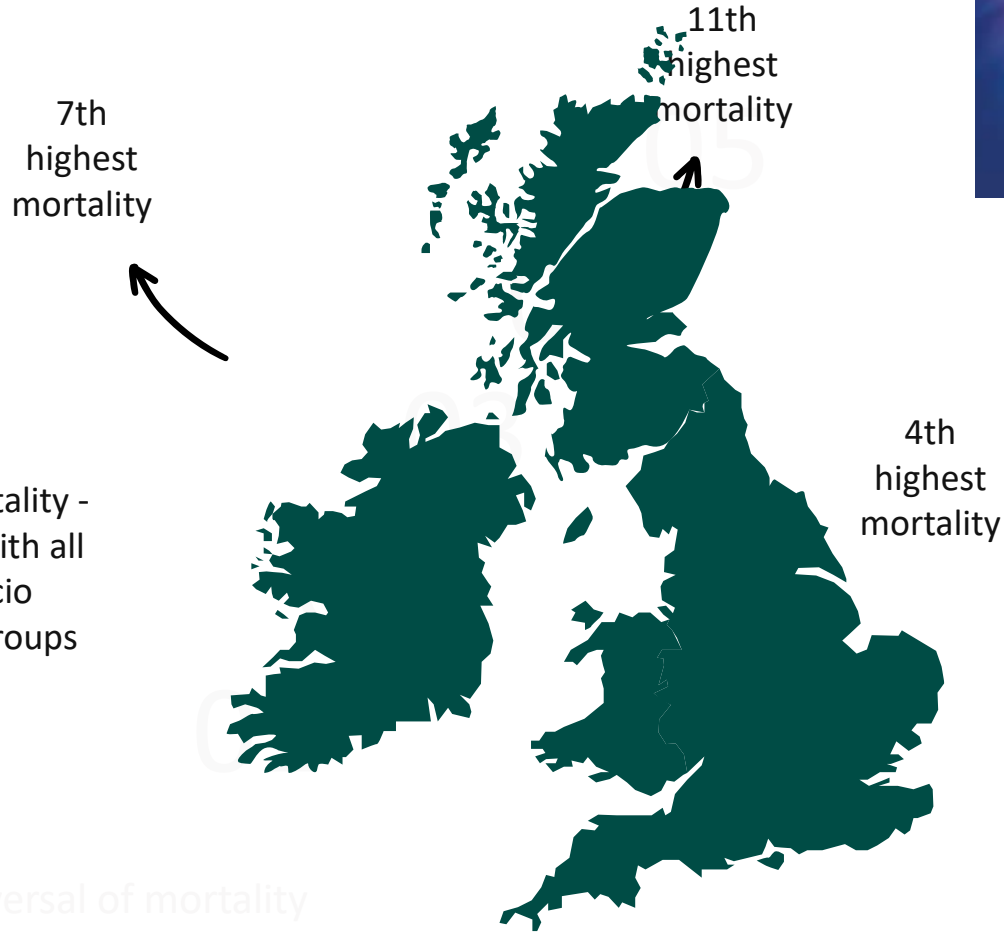
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## NI Agri-Rural Health Forum

# THE PROBLEM...



'Human capital' and specifically workforce health and wellbeing is identified as one of six key factors contributing to health disparity.

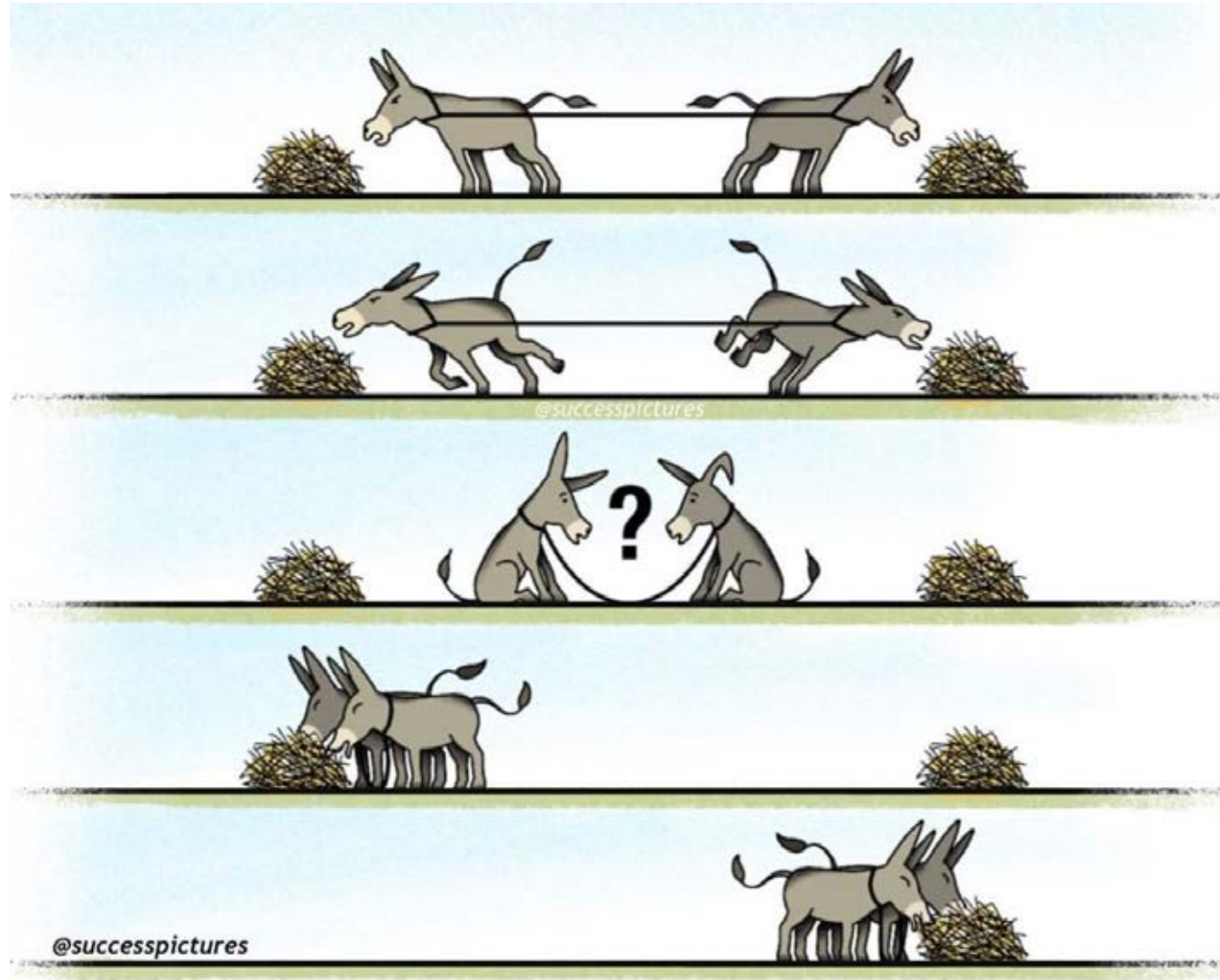


Highest mortality - compared with all other socio economic groups

“reversal of mortality trends compared to 1980s and 1990s”



# THE PROBLEM...



MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE PRESENT  
GENERATION WITHOUT COMPROMISING  
THE ABILITY OF FUTURE GENERATIONS TO  
MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS



Brundtland Report 1987 (UN)



# ONE HEALTH

UNIFYING APPROACH THAT AIMS TO  
SUSTAINABLY BALANCE AND OPTIMISE  
THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE, ANIMALS AND  
ECOSYSTEMS.

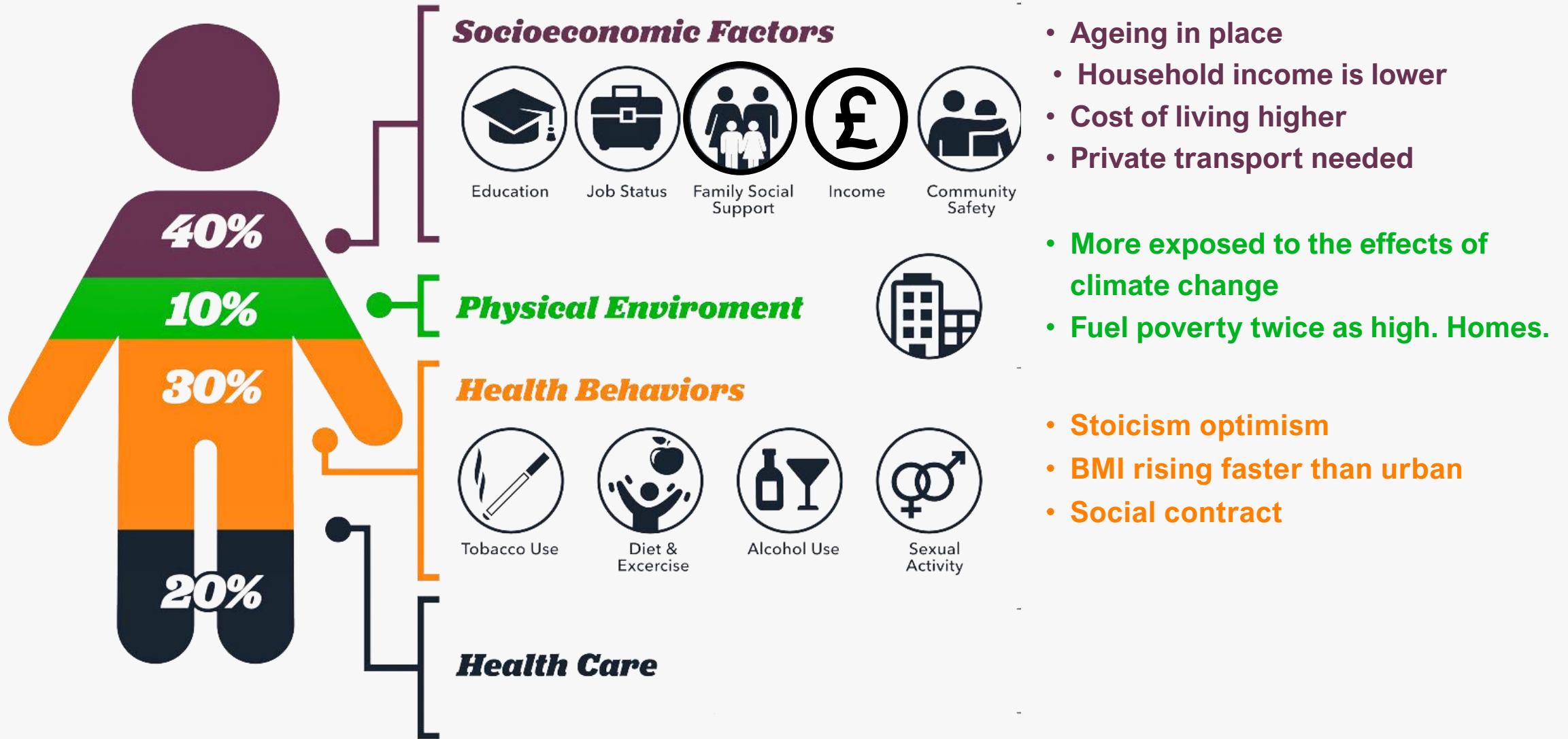
World Health Organisation



# SUSTAINABLE RURAL ONE HEALTH

“Rural health research needs to prioritise and utilise a One Health perspective as an approach to reducing the burden of illness, disease and disability in rural areas.”

# DETERMINANTS



Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement. Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (2014).

Urban-rural disparities in old-age mortality vary systematically with age: evidence from Germany and England & Wales, Ebeling et al 2022

Skinner T. One health the future of rural health? Aust J Rural Health. 2022

NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC). Rising rural body-mass index is the main driver of the global obesity epidemic in adults. Nature (2019).

\*Health Survey NI Trend Tables (n=3556) . DEARA Key Rural Issues September 2020. Business Services Organisation.

# NI Agri-Rural Health Forum

Danske Bank



Rural Support

UnitedFeeds

[www.ufeeds.com](http://www.ufeeds.com)



Public Health Agency



Ulster Bank



Healthy Living Centre Alliance



HSC Northern Health and Social Care Trust



CHESTNUTT ANIMAL FEEDS

ALWAYS AT THE TOP



Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster



Food Group

Farm Families Health Checks

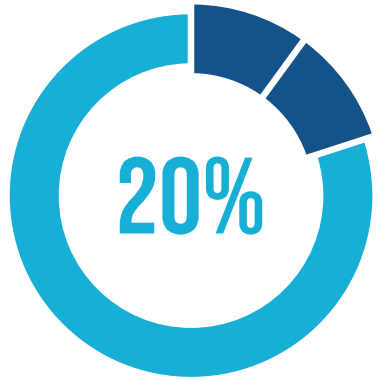


hсени  
CONTROLLING RISK TOGETHER



NFU Mutual  
INSURANCE | PENSIONS | INVESTMENTS

# WHY?



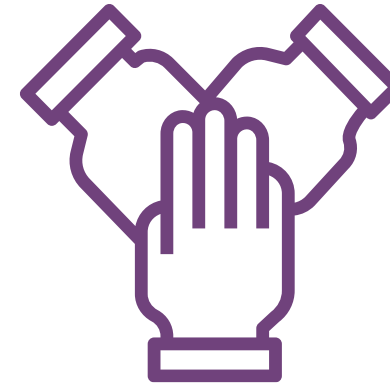
Wider socio-economic determinants of health



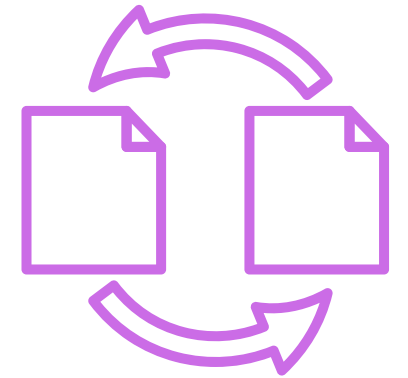
Facilitating farmers



Relationships



Right people  
Equal voice



Avoid wastage

# Occupational Health risks to Farmers

## RISKS

- Dusts & Particulates
- Chemicals
- UV Exposure
- Zoonotic agents
- Asbestos
- Handling and Lifting
- Noise & Vibration
- Working Hours

## Outcomes

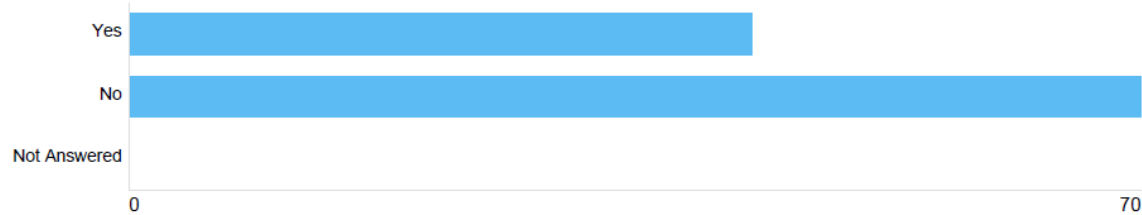
- COPD
- Cancers
- Respiratory Sensitization
- MSD's
- Noise Induced Hearing Loss
- Acute Chemical Toxicity
- Dermatitis
- Lepto, Weils, RMF, eColi, Crypto, Orf, Brucillosis,

*A recent EU-OSHA review stated that over **60 %** of agricultural workers report having a **limiting chronic disease** and high levels of cardiovascular disease (CVD). According to an EU survey from 2012, workers from the agriculture sector were more likely than those in any other sector to report that their work affected their health (Eurofound, 2012). Eurostat (2010) also reported that work-related health problems occur more often in the 'agriculture, hunting and forestry' sector along with in the mining and quarrying sector than in any other sector.*

# Farmers Occupational Health Survey

Question 9: Do you have any current ailments which are work related?

Work related illness yes/no



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	43	38.05%
No	70	61.95%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

- **Musculoskeletal disorders** 33.63%  
(including neck, back, shoulder or arm issues)
- **Lung issues** 2.65%
- **Skin problems** 4.42%  
(including skin cancers, rashes, dermatitis or other)

# Respiratory Conditions – research



12% of Irish Farmers exhibit obstructive spirometry, a key indicator of COPD, higher than in the general population.



Specific condition 'Farmers Lung' or allergic alveolitis.



THOR database indicates that the prevalence of Asthma is higher than that in the general working population.



- Most conditions related to inhalation of dusts and particulates.
- Poor understanding of the use of PPE in the sector.
- Farmers do not go to their GPs with early symptoms

# Resources

**ARE YOUR LUNGS AT RISK?**

Are you breathing in substances at work?  
 How will it affect your health?  
 How can you protect yourself?

Scan the QR code below for more information.

Every workplace has **health risks**  
 Find out how to reduce them

Occupational Lung Disease | hseni | Workplace Health

**ASTHMA+ LUNG UK**  
 NORTHERN IRELAND

Farm Safety Partnership

Agri-Rural Health Forum

**Don't take my breath away...**

To find out more scan the QR code or visit [asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://asthmaandlung.org.uk)

Looking after your lungs long term is important, if you experience any of the following have a word with your GP and tell them you work on a farm.

- feeling breathless
- wheezing
- coughing up phlegm
- chest tightness or pain
- coughing up blood
- a cough that does not get better, or which gets worse

Turn over...

**Chemicals and dusts can damage your lungs.**

**Here are a few things you can do to protect yourself.**

- Keep doors and windows closed when using farm vehicles with enclosed cabs
- Work upwind of dusty activities
- Ensure good ventilation in enclosed areas
- Use vacuum cleaners to remove dusts or wet down dusts before sweeping if vacuum cleaners can't be used
- Use a properly designed dust mask (FFP3)
- Use pelleted or granular products rather than powders

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hseni | Agri-Rural Health Forum | Turn over...

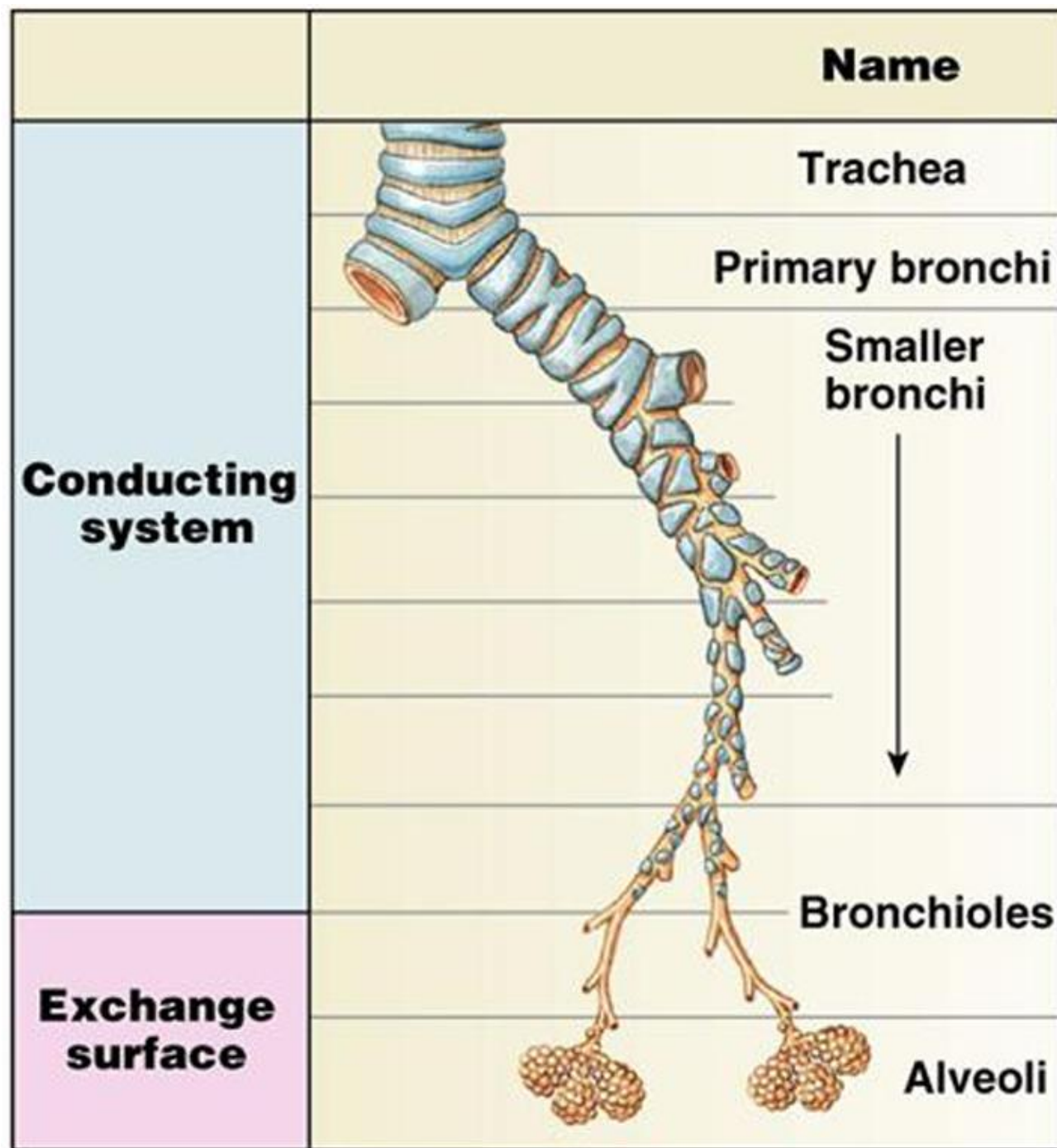
**MANAGING DUST IN AGRICULTURE**

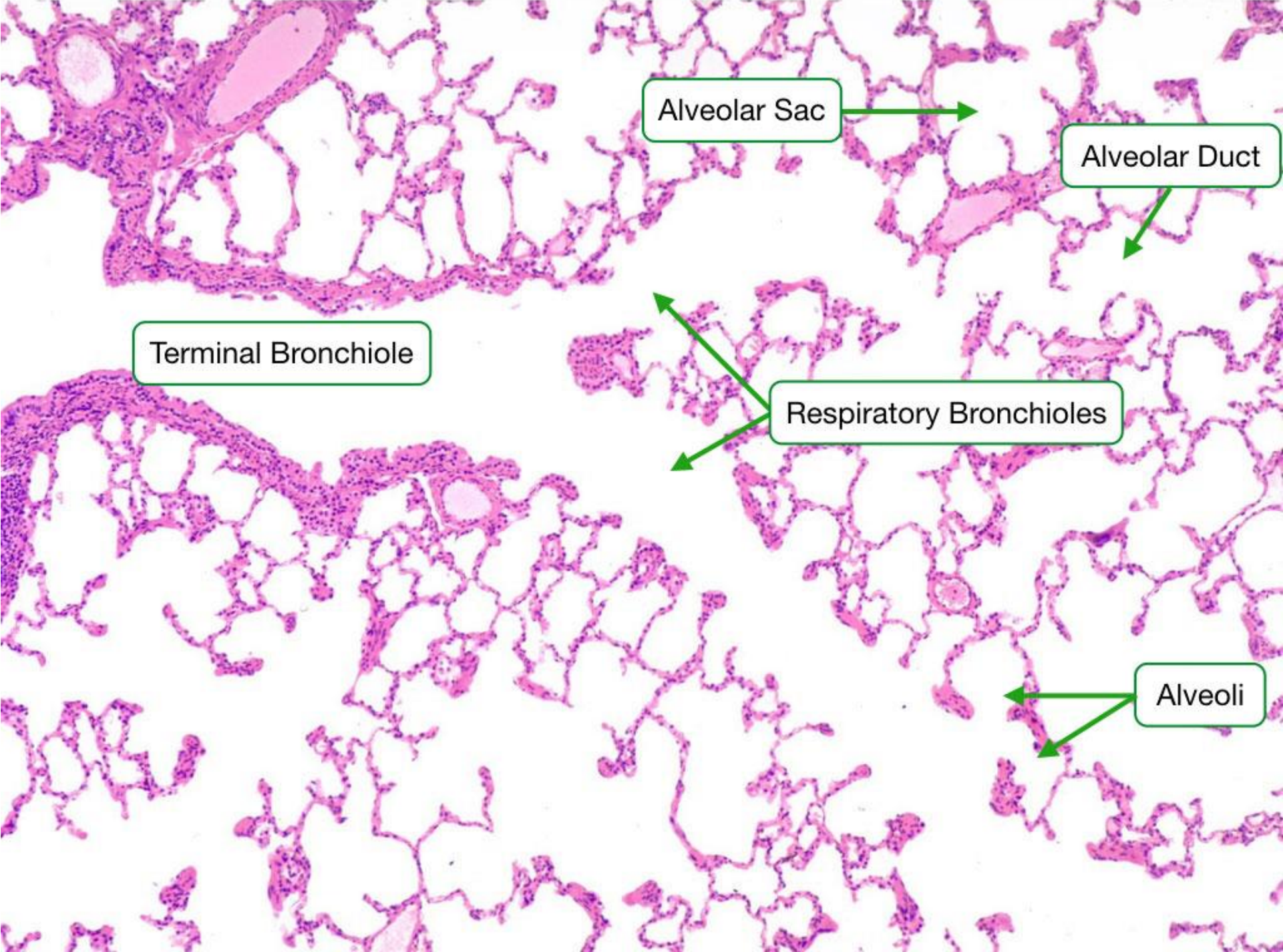
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Alveolar Sac

Alveolar Duct

Terminal Bronchiole

Respiratory Bronchioles

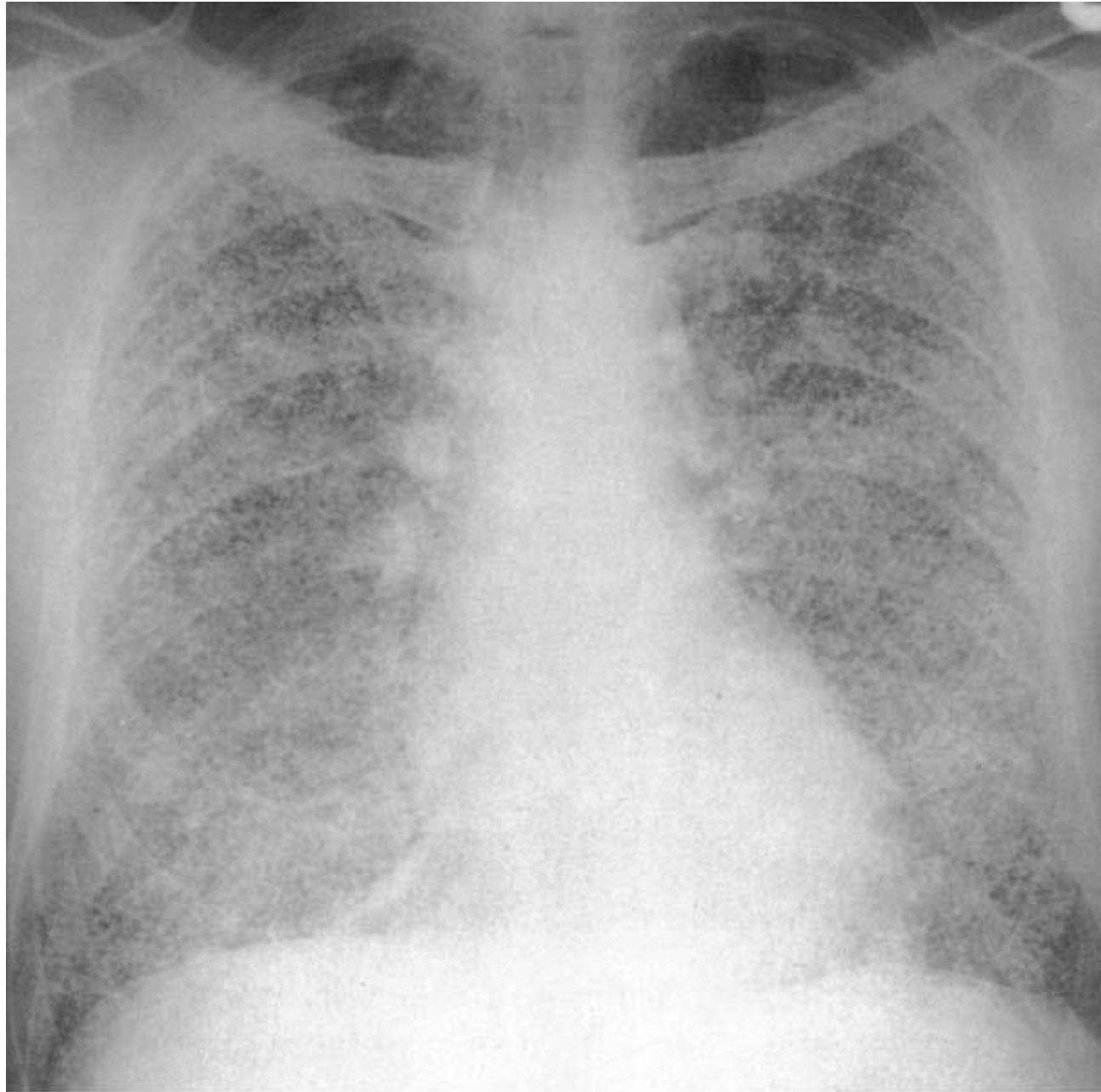
Alveoli

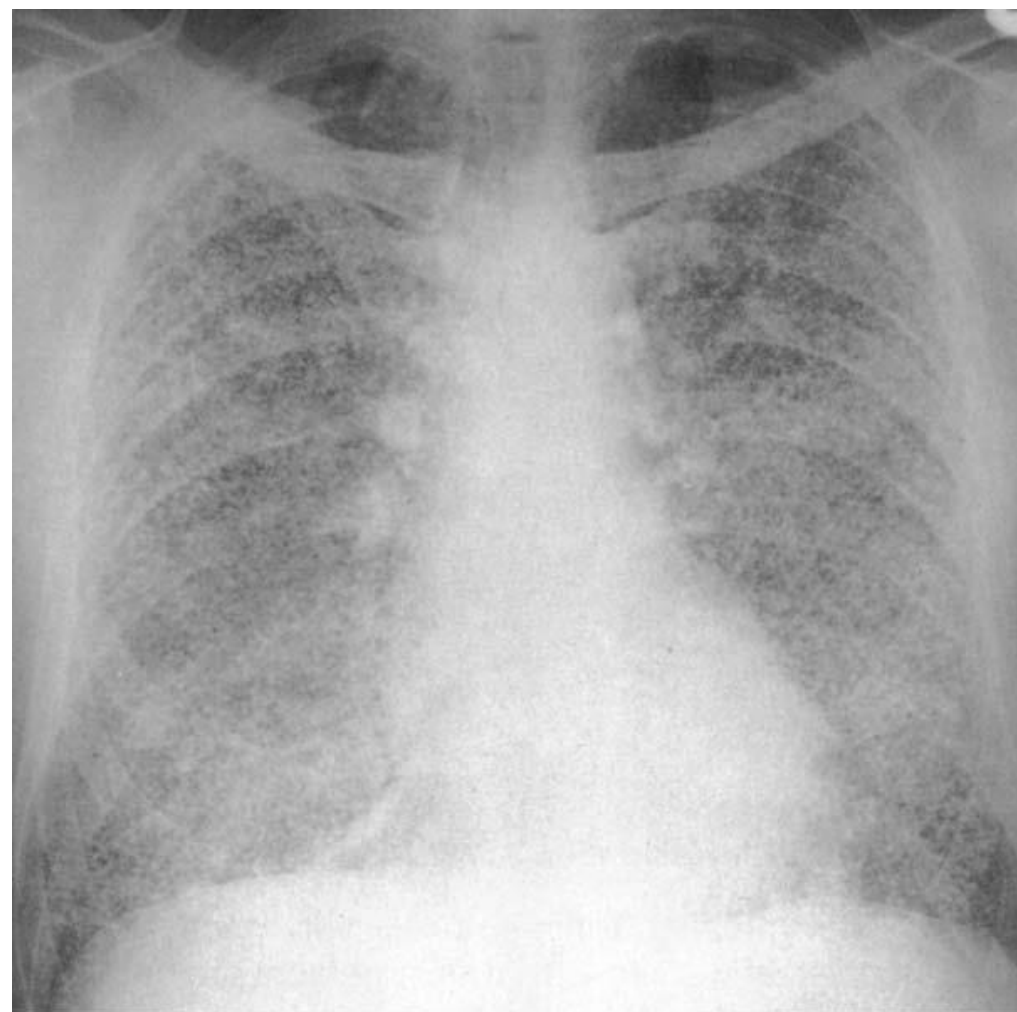
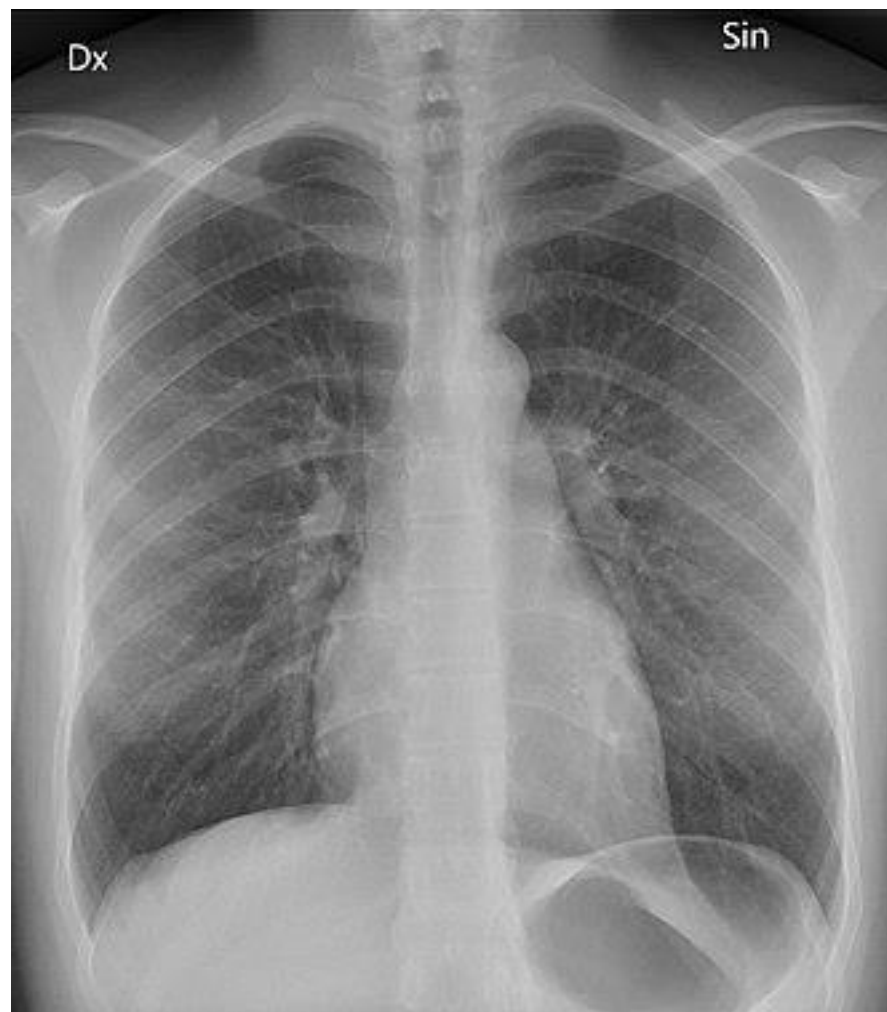
Lung surface area= up to 1500 sq ft

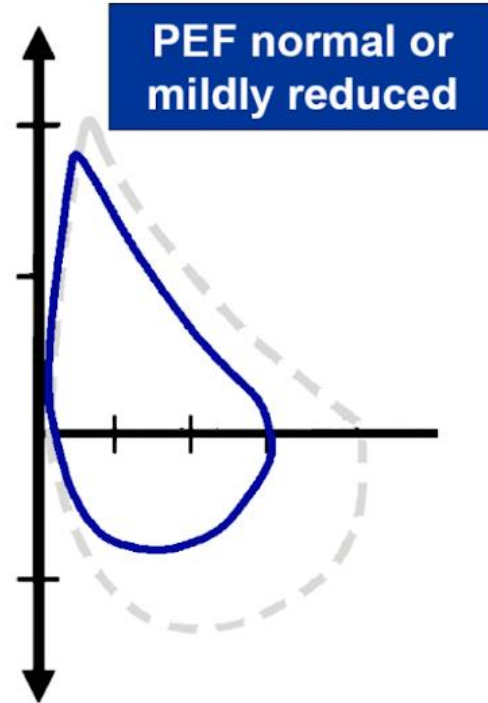
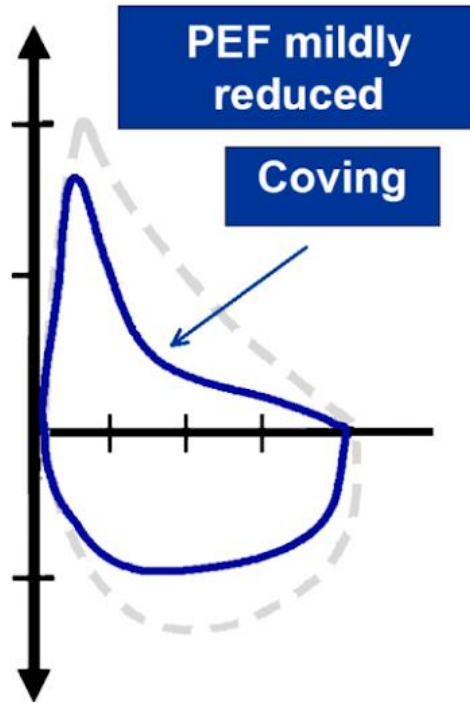
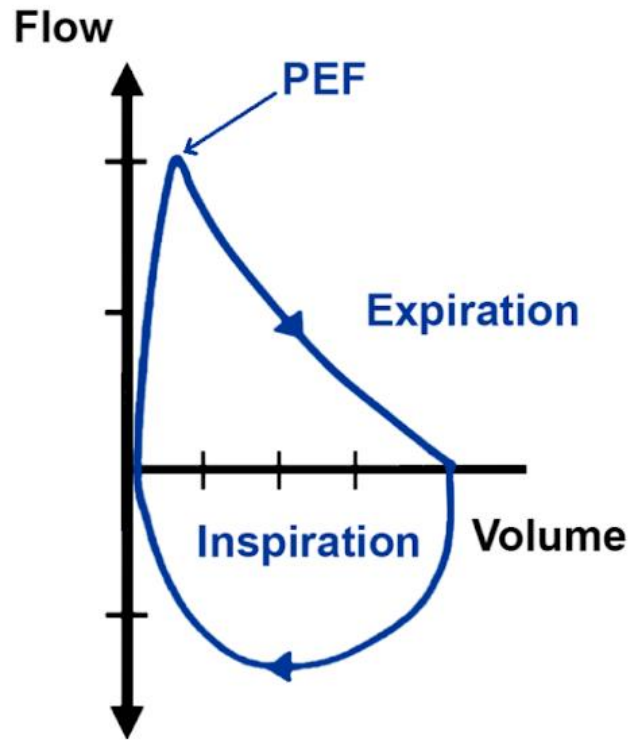
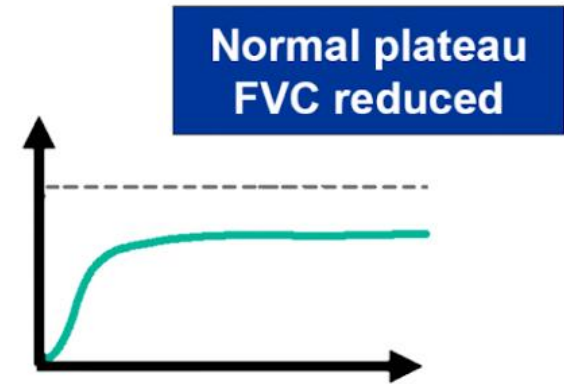
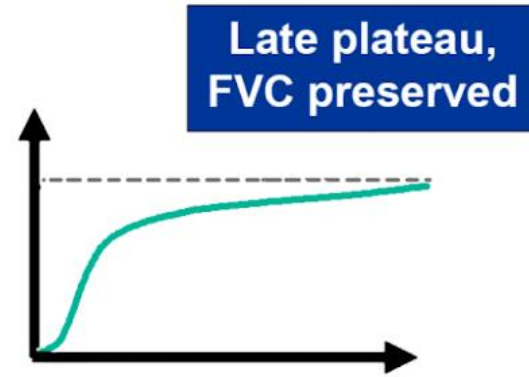
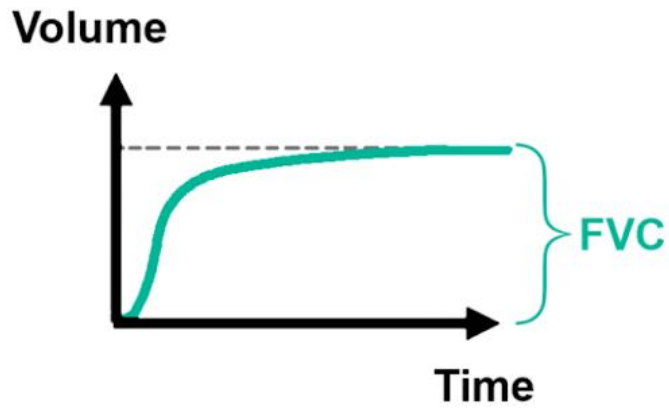


6 bale trailers





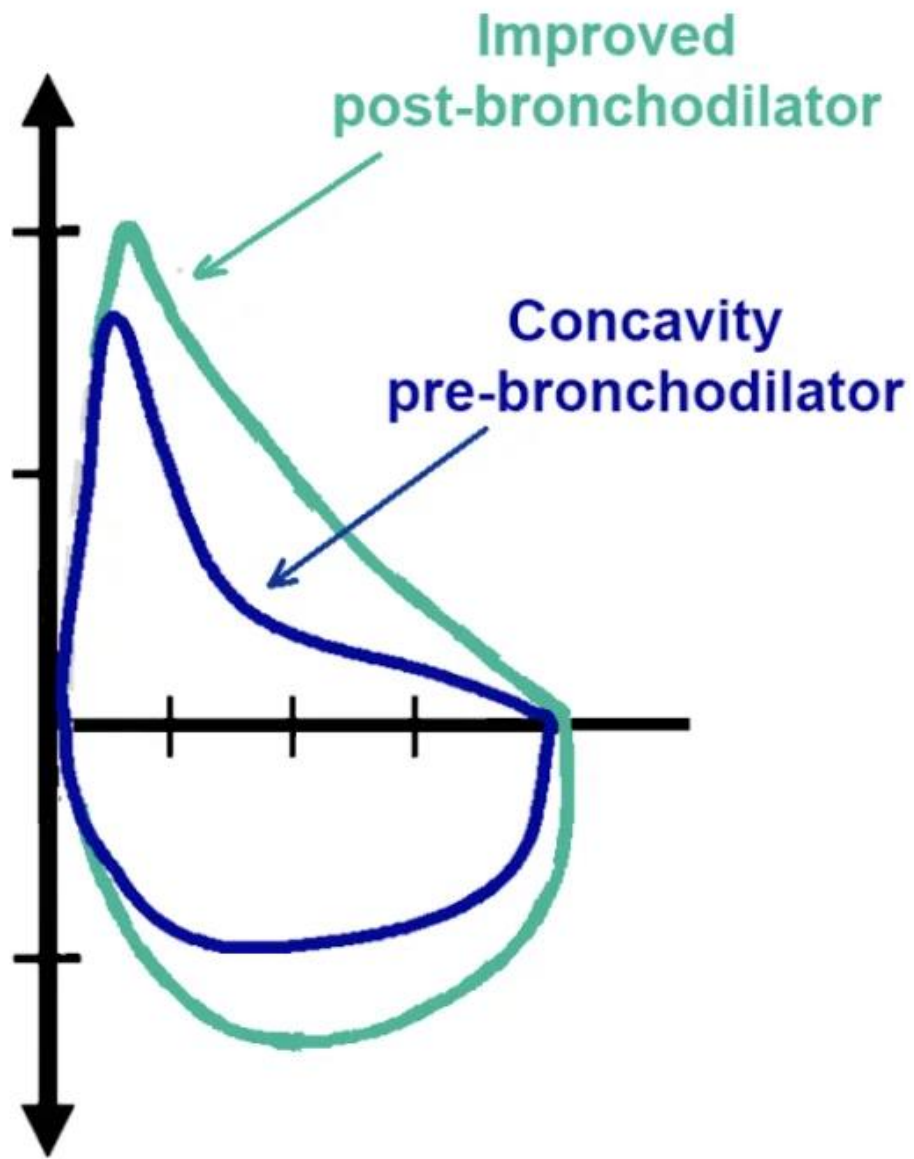




Normal

Obstruction

Restriction



Asthma



NI Agri-Rural Health Forum

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Turn over...

DATA



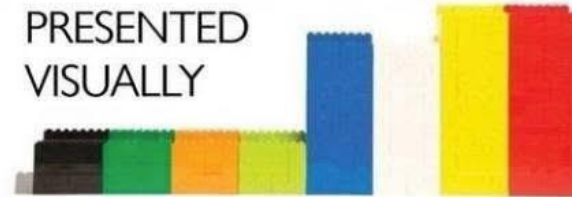
SORTED



ARRANGED



PRESENTED  
VISUALLY



EXPLAINED  
WITH A STORY



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FEEDBACK**

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**



“We build too many walls  
and not enough bridges”

Sir Isaac Newton



Further Information



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✉ @rebecca0rr



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

**N** Agri-Rural  
Health Forum

 @rebeccaOrr

 rorr13@qub.ac.uk

 @Dr Rebecca Orr

# Yellow Wellies Update 2025



Stephanie Berkeley





# MENTAL RESILIENCE

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# November in a nutshell

01

Budget, a major cause of concern for many, especially IHT.

02

Livestock, feed is an issue still and dropping milk prices for dairy farmers.

03

Weather, disease, future finances and farm viability.

# Why does this matter?

- Sensitivity is high with these issues; some will be affected more than others.
- Stress and challenges to family farms is a real possibility, for some YFC may be their only escape from that.
- Older members may also have their own thoughts and concerns about ongoing challenges, and the stress may also impact on them in different ways as well.

# Suggestions to help

- Try to avoid discussing the budget if it is making people uncomfortable or reluctant to engage, some members might be using YFC socials as an opportunity to avoid the pressures at home.
- It is an emotive topic, and while to some it may not seem extreme, there may be members at events who are facing significant hassle from it, so bear in mind others may be more emotional (angry, sad or upset) than you.
- Succession is already a challenging topic for families to discuss, for the moment, it may be appropriate to treat the budget in a similar fashion.

# If you have concerns.

- We all know farmers are (relatively) terrible at opening up and would much rather muddle on through with a stiff upper lip.
- Some things you can look out for if you are worried about somebody includes:
  - Changes in behaviour/mood.
  - Reduced/lack of engagement
  - Tiredness, fatigued or just general apathy
  - Anxiety and sudden mood swings
  - Outbursts, of any sort.

# Supporting Members

- This next month has the capacity to be really, really challenging for some.
- As YFC members, and indeed those closest to our policy work, we are probably more aware than some about what goes on at a policy level.
- We should be engaging at a group and regional level to ensure any rumours or speculation is avoided where possible and signpost resources which may support members.



*The Worshipful Company of Farmers*

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING FORUM

[HTTPS://FARMERSLIVERY.ORG.UK](https://farmerslivery.org.uk)

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