

Welcome to Parallel Session:

Stress Management & Suicide Prevention

Stress Management and Suicide Prevention Panel: How to build resilience for yourself and support people you care about



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National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BIOENERGY, CLIMATE, AND ENVIRONMENT
FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY
YOUTH, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY
FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

NIFA

USDA Response/Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Program

Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services

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USDA Response/Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Program (FRSAN)

- Brent Elrod, USDA NIFA

Challenges

- Agricultural work is one of the most hazardous professions, with risk of injury, disability, and death higher than most other career paths ([International Labor Organization](#)).
- Financial performance varies across farm size. Most small farms have an operating profit margin (OPM) in the red zone ([America's Diverse Family Farms](#), Economic Research Service, 2019).
- Farmers and ranchers are experiencing more than 50% reduction in net farm income since 2013 ([Farm Bureau](#), 2018).

Challenges

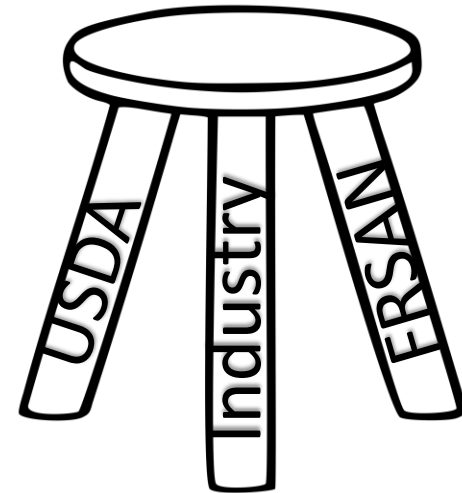
- Farmworkers have greater risk for poor self-rated physical health and elevated depressive symptoms (Grzyacz, J., et. al., [*Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*](#), 2014).
- Poor mental health among farmers has consequences for farming: Lower rates of adoption of new technology, products, and policies (Hounsome, B., et. al., [*Agricultural Systems*](#), 2006).

Challenges

- Research shows that people in rural areas are more likely to take their own lives (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/ss/ss6618a1.htm).
- There were 14 billion-dollar weather disasters in 2018 (\$91 billion) and another 14 such disasters in 2019 (\$45 billion) – for a combined total of \$136 billion in losses (<https://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/weather-disasters.html>).
- Factor in tariffs and a global pandemic interrupting [labor](#), [production](#), and [food supply chains](#).

NIFA, Land-grant University, Cooperative Extension Service, & Partner Responses

- Farm Service Agency Training & Technical Assistance
- Farm State of Mind (American Farm Bureau)
- <https://www.fb.org/initiative/farm-state-of-mind>
- Farmer Stress (American Psychological Association)
- <https://www.apa.org/events/farmer>
- [Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network \(FRSAN\)](#)





FRSAN Legislative Authority

- Section 7522 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, 7 U.S.C. 5936, authorizes NIFA to establish a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network as follows:
- “The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall make competitive grants to eligible entities described in subsection (c) to establish a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network that provides stress assistance programs to individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations.”



FRSAN Program Purpose

- To establish a network that connects individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations to stress assistance programs.
- The term “farmer” is used in the broadest sense and may be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, workers, business owners, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers.



Program Goal

- To establish a nationwide Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network that provides stress assistance programs to individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations on a regional basis.
- 4 regions covering all US states and territories
- 4-year periods of performance (FYs 20-23)



Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FYs 20-23)

<p>Northeast Region: National Young Farmers Coalition Leslie Rodriguez info@youngfarmers.org</p>	<p>Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont West Virginia, District of Columbia</p>
<p>Southern Region: University of Tennessee Heather Sedges hsedges@utk.edu</p>	<p>Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands</p>
<p>North Central: University of Illinois Josie Rudolphi josier@illinois.edu</p>	<p>Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin</p>
<p>Western Region: Washington State University Don McMoran dmcmoran@wsu.edu</p>	<p>Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas</p>



Program Components

- Network members must initiate, expand, or sustain programs that provide professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral for other forms of assistance as necessary through:
 - Farm telephone helplines and websites;
 - Training, including training programs and workshops
 - Support groups; and
 - Outreach services and activities, including the dissemination of information and materials.

FRSAN – State Departments of Agriculture (FRSAN-SDA)

State Departments of Agriculture received funding in FY21 to **expand or sustain stress assistance** programs for individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations, including:

1. Programs that use funds to initiate, expand, or sustain programs that provide professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral for other forms of assistance as necessary through the following:
 - A. Farm telephone helplines and websites;
 - B. Training, including training programs and workshops, for the following:
 - i. Advocates for individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other occupations relating to agriculture; and
 - ii. Other individuals and entities that may assist individuals who-
 1. are engaged in farming, ranching, and other occupations relating to agriculture; and
 2. are in crisis;
 - C. Support groups; and
 - D. Outreach services and activities, including the dissemination of information and materials.
2. any State initiatives in existence as of December 27, 2020 and identified in the State Plan that provide stress assistance for such individuals.



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NAAN/ GFRAS Panel



WRASAP

Western Regional Agricultural
Stress Assistance Program

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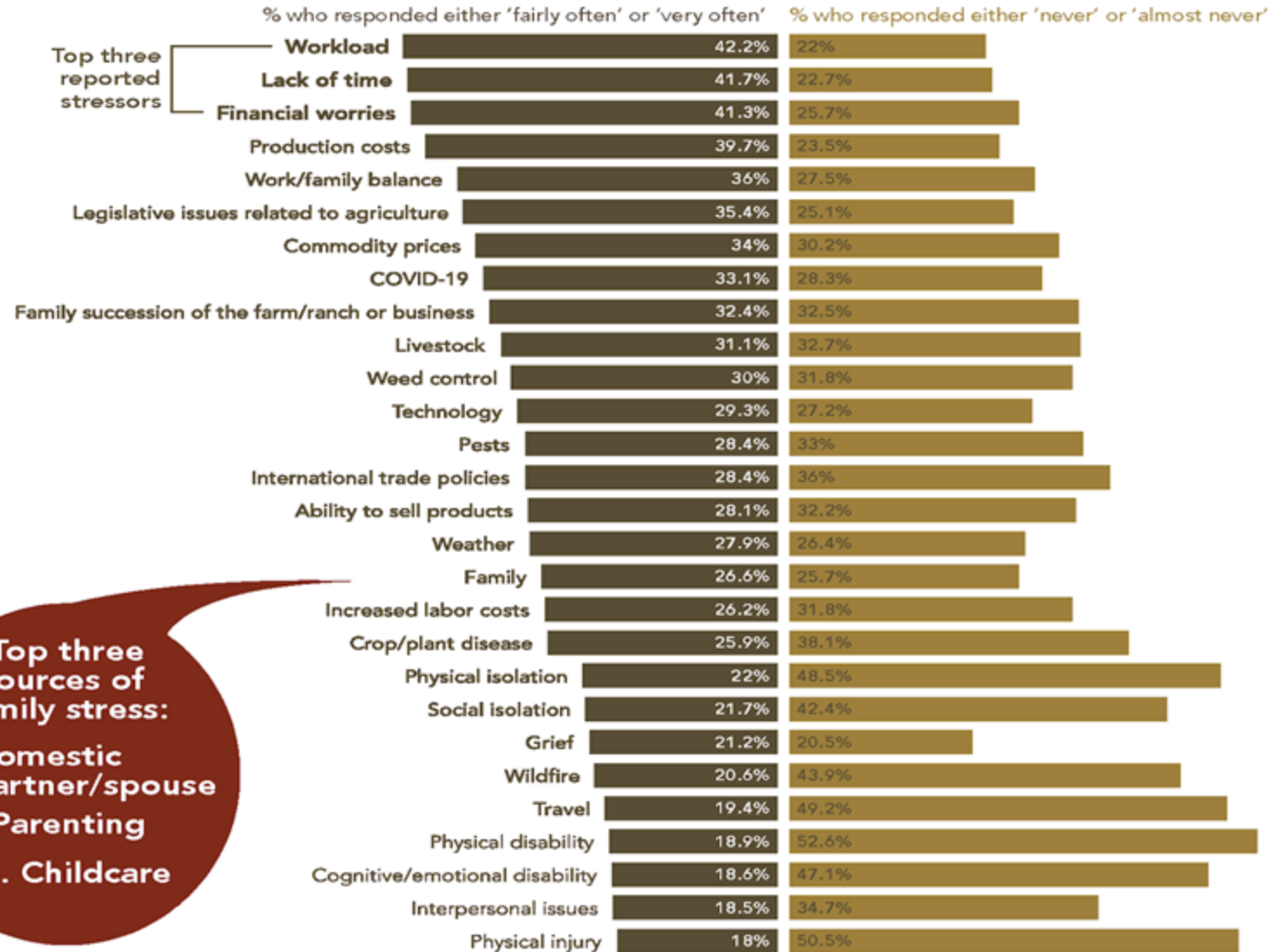
Washington State University - Skagit County Extension

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<https://farmstress.us/>

What do you think are the top stressors for Farmers?

Stressors Within the last year, please indicate how often the following led you to experience stress?



Top three sources of family stress:

1. Domestic partner/spouse
2. Parenting
3. Childcare

Farmers in the Western US have told us that their top stressors are:

- Workload
- Financial worries
- Lack of Time

What are the implications of these stressors?

What do you think are some of the challenges in Agricultural Communities?

Agriculture is a Stressful Occupation

Production

- Weather
- Yields
- Pests and Diseases
- Animal Health
- Long Hours
- Equipment Breakdowns
- Injuries

Financial

- Fluctuating Market Prices
- High Costs
- High Debt Loads
- Tariffs
- Bankruptcy

Operational

- Multigenerational Farm Succession
- Family Dynamics
- Work/Life Balance
- Off-Farm Occupation

Barriers facing Agricultural Communities

- Access to care
- Isolation
- Finances
- Trauma (physical and emotional)
- Chronic Pain
- Exposure to Chemicals
- Substance Misuse/Abuse
- Access to Lethal Means
- Stigma

“We Get It From All Sides”

-A quote from a Washington State Farmer

How many of these Challenges are outside of the Farmer or Farm Workers Control?

- Mental Health professionals are trained to work with factors that their clients can control
- Very few mental health professionals have a farming background or are trained to understand the unique challenges of Farmers or Farm Workers

What Do You Think are the primary indicators of Farm Stress?

Indicators of Farm Stress

Are you or someone you know experiencing:

- Change in Routine
- Decline in the care of farm and/or livestock
- New or increased financial pressures
- Loss of interest in hobbies/activities
- Desire to give away prized possessions
- Change in mood
 - Anxious
 - Agitated
 - Angry

“You Are Not Alone”

<http://www.farmstress.us/>

Farm Aid Resource Line
1-800- FARM-AID (327-6243)



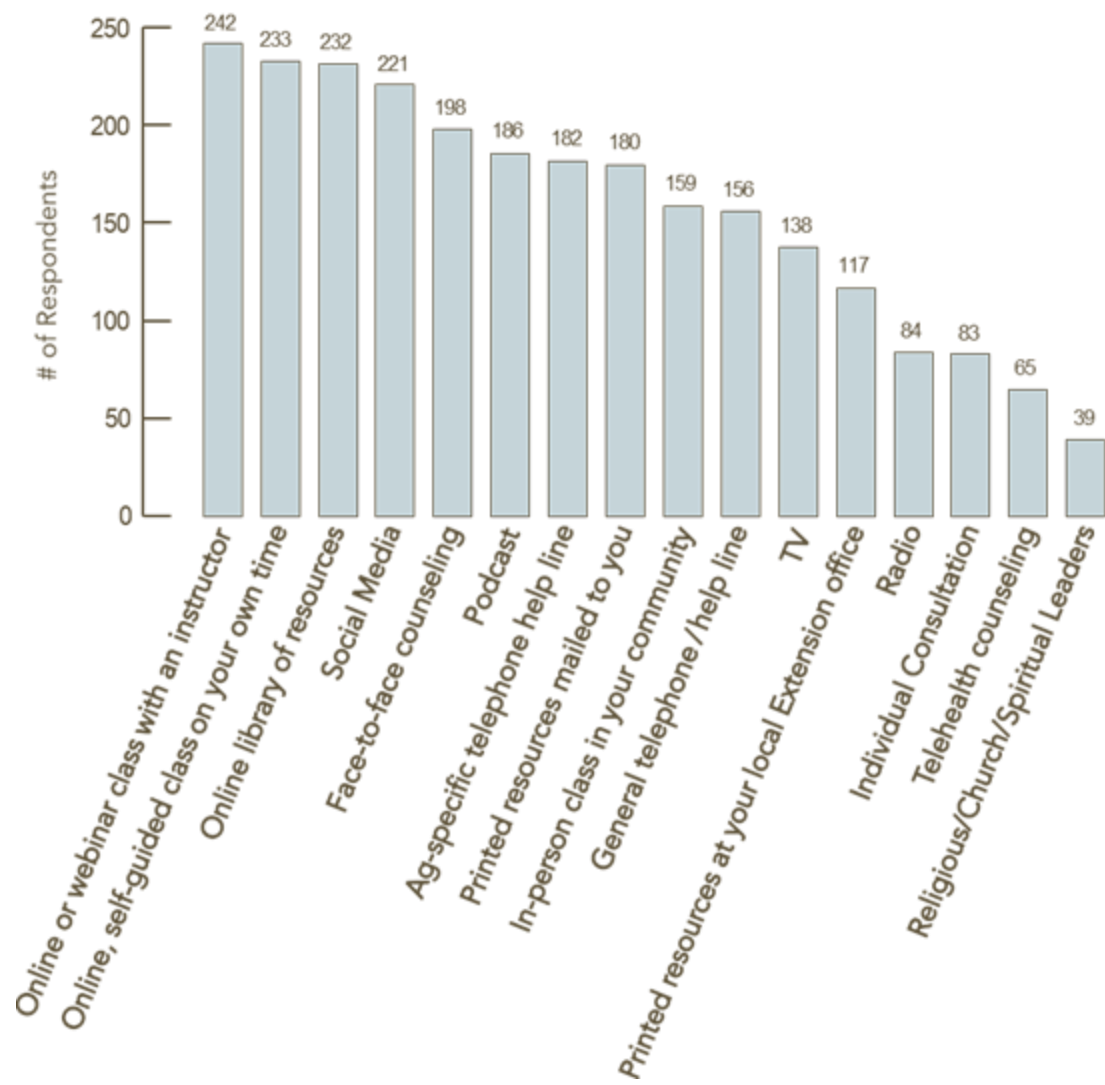
What are your stressors?

- **Connect with your body to locate your “stress center”**
 - **Breathe**
 - **Gratitude**
 - **Share with others**

What do YOU do to relieve
STRESS?

- Share it

How do you think that Farmers want to receive information about services available to them?



This answer is very specific to the culture and geography of the Farmer

Thank you!

