

April 20, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
House Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin and Chairman Bishop, and Ranking Members Hoeven and Fortenberry,

We, the undersigned agriculture, rural, and mental health professional organizations representing millions of members across the country, thank you for your leadership in providing strong funding for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) in recent appropriations packages. **We urge you to continue this important work by fully funding FRSAN for FY 2022.**

The purpose of FRSAN is to establish and fund a service provider network that connects individuals and their families engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations to stress assistance programs. Funding thus far has been used to create four regional centers that are coordinating efforts to serve the unique needs of their respective populations. These centers evaluate the needs in their regions, and then develop and implement training and services to address farm stress issues.

The need for FRSAN funding is greater than ever given the immense stress caused by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a Morning Consult poll conducted in December 2020<sup>1</sup>, two in three farmers or farmworkers say the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their mental health. And farmers and farmworkers are 7 percent more likely than other rural adults to say stress and mental health have become more of a problem in their community in the past year. Thankfully, approximately 90 percent of farmers and farmworkers surveyed also say it is important to reduce stigma about mental health in the agriculture community, a role already being played by FRSAN-funded projects.

Even once the pandemic has been defeated, the need to address farm stress will persist. There are many reasons for ongoing farm stress and mental health challenges, including volatility in the farm economy, the financial risk involved in agriculture, weather unpredictability, and a changing climate. Moreover, 60 percent of rural residents live in areas with mental health professional shortages. Continued funding is essential as the FRSAN regional centers continue to develop their networks and programming to serve populations where the need is great, and resources are often limited.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.fb.org/files/Impacts\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_on\\_Rural\\_Mental\\_Health\\_1.6.21.pdf](https://www.fb.org/files/Impacts_of_COVID-19_on_Rural_Mental_Health_1.6.21.pdf)

**As the Subcommittees develop the FY 2022 agriculture appropriations bill, we urge you to fully fund FRISAN at \$10 million.** This funding will be critically important in meeting the mental health needs of farmers, ranchers, and their families.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Agri-Women  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Psychological Association  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Farm Aid  
Farm Credit Council  
Farmer Veteran Coalition  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Farmers Union  
National Grange  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Rural Health Association  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
Organic Trade Association  
Rural and Agriculture Council of America  
Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA  
Rural Coalition  
Sustainable Food Policy Alliance  
United States Cattlemen’s Association  
USA Rice