

April 30, 2025

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Andy Harris  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture  
House Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairmen Hoeven and Harris, and Ranking Members Shaheen and Bishop:

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 funding FRSAN at no less than the fully authorized level of \$10 million.**

FRSAN is a program that supports a service provider network that connects individuals and their families engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations to stress assistance programs and resources. Four regional centers established through FRSAN are increasing access to farm stress services across the United States by coordinating efforts to serve the unique needs of the populations in each region. Services provided or coordinated through FRSAN include telephone helplines and websites, training programs and workshops, support groups, and outreach services.

Since its inception, FRSAN has helped increase interest in and understanding of mental and behavior health among farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers, while helping decrease stigma associated with these topics among these populations. Mental and behavioral health practitioners say that farmers and farmworkers are increasingly seeking care from mental health professionals and have found it easier to talk to loved ones about mental health.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, there remains a strong and urgent need for FRSAN. A recent study found that both stress and depression levels are higher among farmers and ranchers than people working in non-farm occupations.<sup>2</sup> There are multiple, persistent drivers of stress in our nation's farming communities, including the significant financial risk involved in agriculture, volatile markets, and heavy debt loads.

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<sup>1</sup> Allee Mead, "Hopeful Forecasting: Farmers Showing Increased Interest in Mental Health Resources." Rural Health Information Hub, June 14, 2023. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/rural-monitor/farmer-mental-health>.

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Food and Agriculture. "Understanding and Addressing the Stress Faced by Nation's Farmers and Ranchers," May 2023. U.S. Department of Agriculture. <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/about-nifa/impacts/understanding-addressing-stress-faced-nations-farmers-ranchers>.

Recent challenges in the farm economy,<sup>3</sup> such as rising costs of production, falling commodity prices, and high interest rates will only compound and intensify the impacts of stress on farmers and ranchers. Furthermore, more than 60 percent of rural residents live in areas with mental health professional shortages.<sup>4</sup> FRSAN is essential for serving populations where the need is great, and resources are limited.

**As the Subcommittees develop the FY 2026 agriculture appropriations bill, we urge you to continue funding FRSAN at no less than \$10 million.** This funding will be critically important in improving the wellbeing of farmers, ranchers, and their families.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Psychological Association Services  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
Farm Aid  
Farm Credit Council  
Farmer Veteran Coalition  
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA 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 Organic Coalition  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Rural Health Association  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
Organic Farmers Association  
Organic Trade Association  
Rural Minds  
U.S. Cattlemen's Association  
USA Rice

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. (2025, February 6). Farm sector income & finances: Farm sector income forecast." <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-sector-income-finance/highlights-from-the-farm-income-forecast>.

<sup>4</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration. "First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025 Designated HPSA Quarterly Summary." Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statistics. December 31, 2024. Bureau of Health Workforce. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.