

March 25, 2026

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 connecting farmers and their families to stress assistance and mental health resources. Four regional centers established through FRSAN are increasing access to farm stress resources across the United States by coordinating efforts to serve the unique needs of the populations in each region. Services supported through FRSAN include telephone helplines and websites, training programs and workshops, support groups, and outreach services.

Since its inception, FRSAN has played an important role in spreading awareness and understanding of mental and behavioral health among farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers, while decreasing stigma surrounding these topics among these populations. In recent years, mental and behavioral health providers say that farmers are increasingly seeking care from mental health professionals.¹ While these are positive developments, there remains a strong and urgent need for FRSAN.

Farmers and ranchers face significantly higher rates of stress and depression than the general population.² There are many inherent and persistent drivers of stress in our nation's farming communities, such as the significant financial risk involved in agriculture, volatile markets, and heavy debt loads. Farmers have been facing severe economic challenges for the last several years with record-high input costs and falling

¹ 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>.

² Scheyett, Anna & Edeh, Jude. "Suicide Prevention and Stress Management in Farmers: The Overlooked Role of Farm Finances." Journal of Mental Health Disorders. 5. 35-39. 10.33696/mentalhealth.5.034.

commodity prices.³ Farm bankruptcies have increased considerably since 2024, and the number of U.S. farms has shrunk by nearly 15,000 in each of the last two years,⁴ further accelerating decades-long trends.

These are glaring warning signs not just for the farm economy, but also for the health and wellbeing of our nation's farmers and ranchers, as the current economic conditions will only compound and intensify the levels and impacts of farm stress. Furthermore, more than 60 percent of rural residents live in areas with mental health professional shortages.⁵ FRSAN is essential for serving populations where the need is great, and resources are limited.

As the Subcommittees develop the FY 2027 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,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Psychological Association Services
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
Farm Aid
Farm Credit Council
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 Farmer Veteran Coalition
National Farmers Union
National Grange

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Economic Research Service. (2026, February 5). "Farm sector income & finances: Farm sector income forecast." <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-sector-income-finances/farm-sector-income-forecast>.

⁴ USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service. (Feb. 2026). "Farms and Land in Farms: 2025 Summary," <https://esmis.nal.usda.gov/sites/default/release-files/795776/fnlo0226.pdf>.

⁵ Health Resources and Services Administration. "First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2026 5 Designated HPSA Quarterly Summary." Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statistics. December 31, 20254. Bureau of Health Workforce. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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 Farming Research Foundation
Organic Trade Association
Rural Minds
United States Cattlemen's Association
USA Rice