

Support for the FARMERS FIRST Act

“The continued slump in milk prices is creating both economic and emotional stress for dairy farmers, which is why we support the continuation of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network and the FARMERS FIRST Act, sponsored by Senators Baldwin and Ernst. We hope to see it move forward as part of the 2018 Farm Bill.” – **Jim Mulhern, President and CEO, National Milk Producers Federation**

“Farmers are facing uncertain times and need adequate services to deal with this mounting stress in the industry. The resources provided by Senators Baldwin, Ernst, Moran, and Heitkamp’s FARMERS FIRST Act provide tools farmers need to manage these difficulties, allowing them to connect with all the resources at their disposal. I thank the Senators for introducing this vital legislation,” – **Jon Doggett, Executive Vice President, National Corn Growers Association**

“With net farm income cut in half over the last five years, rural stress levels are dangerously high. We cannot afford to lose one more farmer. This bill is a crucial first step to create a strong safety net for America’s family farmers,” **said Farm Aid executive director Carolyn Mugar.** “We urge Congress to come together and act immediately in a positive and preventative way to get help to the countryside. Farmers and the future of our food depend on it.”

“For those in rural areas seeking mental health services, they face two giant obstacles: availability and accessibility. In 55% of all American counties, most of which are rural, there is not a single psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker. The Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) could help support agricultural workers and their families in rural communities by providing at-home resources for mental health services. As rural communities and economies struggle to come back from the Great Recession, many in the agriculture industry who have experienced little recovery are at higher risk of substance abuse and suicide. We applaud the bipartisan work of our rural health advocates in introducing legislation to provide a key resource for those at risk.” – **Jessica Seigel, National Rural Health Association**

“The National Farm Medicine Center shares the goals of FARMERS FIRST Act co-sponsors in wanting to increase access to mental health care for the farm and ranch populations, who are subject to such unpredictable and unfavorable economic and environmental stressors.” – **Josie Rudolphi, PhD, National Farm Medicine Center**

What are farmers saying?

“Farming and ranching is a highly stressful occupation. As the downturn in the farm economy worsens, many producers are finding themselves in a state of crisis. The FARMERS FIRST Act would provide farmers with the support they need to weather tough times. NFU has long advocated for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, and we applaud the efforts of Senators Baldwin, Ernst, Heitkamp, and Moran to expand the program and set a funding target. We urge Congress to reauthorize FRSAN and provide it with robust funding in the next Farm Bill.” – **Roger Johnson, President, National Farmers Union**

“This is an issue that unites all farmers and ranchers, regardless of age. We're thrilled to see that it's uniting Congress as well, and we applaud the introduction of the FARMERS FIRST Act. We all share a responsibility to support the men and women that feed our communities and ensure that they have the resources they need to weather stress and emotional crisis.” – **Andrew Bahrenburg, National Policy Director, National Young Farmers Coalition**

"This help for struggling farmers cannot come fast enough," **said Darin Von Ruden, President of Wisconsin Farmers Union.** "Farmers are facing the triple threat of unpredictable weather, low prices, and consolidating supply chains that creates tremendous stress and uncertainty in their lives. The organizations that are out there helping farmers want to do more, but they are limited by a lack of resources. We appreciate Senator Baldwin's attention to this truly life-and-death issue."

“With the current situation of farmers working below their cost of production, we are seeing a resurgence of financial and emotional stress and an increasing rate of farmer suicide, similar to the farm crisis of the 1980’s. There is a desperate need for the Federal Government to provide tools to stabilize farm income and ensure financial security for farmers and farm workers, since financial stress is the driving force in farmer depression and suicide. Re-establishing the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network can provide help for farmers who are suffering and contemplating suicide as their only way out,” – **Jim Goodman, National Family Farm Coalition board president and organic dairy and beef farmer from Wonewoc, Wisconsin**

“Last fall, we traveled across Kansas and Iowa to report on the suicide crisis on America’s farms. In December, our story was published in the Guardian to overwhelming response from farmers, consumers, and legislators determined to prioritize the wellbeing of America’s agricultural workers. We are proud supporters of The FARMERS FIRST Act, introduced by Senator Baldwin and her co-sponsors, Senators Ernst, Heitkamp, and Moran. This bi-partisan effort will re-authorize and fund the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN), which will provide life-saving assistance to America’s farmers and farmworkers. We extend our gratitude to the farmers, family members, and advocates who bravely shared their stories with us around kitchen tables and in the cabs of pickup trucks. We especially want to thank Dr. Mike Rosmann, whose 40-year career has informed and inspired the FRSAN, and who has long maintained that farmers and their wellbeing are our most important agricultural natural resources.” – **Debbie Weingarten and Audra Mulkern, founders of the Female Farmer Project and authors of *The Guardian* article [Why are American farmers killing themselves in record numbers?](#)**

Support for the bill

National Milk Producers Federation
National Corn Growers Association
National Farmers Union
Farm Aid
Female Farmer Project
National Rural Health Association
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural

American Soybean Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Cotton Council
National Young Farmers Coalition
Rural and Agricultural Council of America
U.S. Cattlemen's Association
Wisconsin Farmers Union