

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to establish a farm and ranch stress assistance network, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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\_\_\_\_\_ introduced the following bill; which was read twice  
and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to establish a farm and ranch stress assistance network, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the [“\_\_\_\_\_ Act  
5 of 2018”].

6 **SEC. 2. FARM AND RANCH STRESS ASSISTANCE NETWORKS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

8 (1) agricultural work continues to be—

1 (A) highly stressful;

2 (B) characterized by uncertainty; and

3 (C) subject to—

4 (i) changing market conditions;

5 (ii) the unpredictable nature of weath-  
6 er; and

7 (iii) other factors beyond the control  
8 of agricultural producers;

9 (2) individuals working in agriculture have the  
10 highest overall suicide rate among all occupations;

11 (3) access to behavioral health care is often lim-  
12 ited among individuals working in agriculture due to  
13 time and geographical constraints; and

14 (4) agricultural workers are in need of special-  
15 ized behavioral health programs that are—

16 (A) affordable;

17 (B) available as needed; and

18 (C) carried out with understanding of con-  
19 cerns specific to agricultural work.

20 (b) FARM AND RANCH STRESS ASSISTANCE.—The  
21 National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching  
22 Policy Act of 1977 is amended by inserting after subtitle  
23 I (7 U.S.C. 3291 et seq.) the following:

1           **“Subtitle J—Farm and Ranch**  
2                           **Stress Assistance**

3   **“SEC. 1460. DEFINITIONS.**

4           “In this subtitle:

5                   “(1) AFFECTED INDIVIDUAL.—The term ‘af-  
6           fected individual’ means any individual engaged, as  
7           determined by the Secretary, in—

8                           “(A) farming;

9                           “(B) ranching; or

10                           “(C) another agriculture-related occupa-  
11           tion.

12                   “(2) COMMITTEE.—The term ‘Committee’  
13           means the Farm and Ranch Stress Assessment  
14           Committee established under section 1461A(a).

15                   “(3) NATIONAL NETWORK.—The term ‘national  
16           network’ means the National Farm and Ranch  
17           Stress Assistance Network established under section  
18           1461(b)(1).

19                   “(4) STATE NETWORK.—The term ‘State net-  
20           work’ means a State farm and ranch stress assist-  
21           ance network established under section 1461(a)(1).

22   **“SEC. 1461. FARM AND RANCH STRESS ASSISTANCE NET-**  
23                           **WORKS.**

24           “(a) STATE NETWORKS.—

1           “(1) GRANTS.—The Secretary, in coordination  
2 with the Secretary of Health and Human Services,  
3 shall establish a program under which the Secretary  
4 shall provide competitive grants to State depart-  
5 ments of agriculture, State cooperative extension  
6 services, and nonprofit organizations to carry out eli-  
7 gible cooperative programs described in paragraph  
8 (2).

9           “(2) DESCRIPTION OF ELIGIBLE COOPERATIVE  
10 PROGRAMS.—An eligible cooperative program re-  
11 ferred to in paragraph (1) is a program—

12                   “(A) established and carried out by a part-  
13 nership between—

14                           “(i) 1 or more State departments of  
15 agriculture, 1 or more State cooperative  
16 extension services, or 1 or more nonprofit  
17 organizations, as applicable; and

18                           “(ii) [entities providing appropriate  
19 services in the 1 or more States]; and

20                   “(B) the purpose of which is to establish  
21 a farm and ranch stress assistance network to  
22 provide stress assistance programs to affected  
23 individuals, including counseling and support  
24 (including behavioral health counseling and re-

1           ferral for other forms of assistance, as nec-  
2           essary) through—

3                   “(i) farm telephone helplines and  
4                   internet websites;

5                   “(ii) training for advocates for af-  
6                   fected individuals and other individuals or  
7                   entities that may assist affected individuals  
8                   in crises, including training programs and  
9                   workshops;

10                   “(iii) support groups;

11                   “(iv) outreach services and activities,  
12                   including the dissemination of information  
13                   and materials; and

14                   “(v) home delivery of assistance, in  
15                   any case in which a farm resident is home-  
16                   bound.

17                   “(3) USE OF FUNDS.—A competitive grant pro-  
18                   vided under this subsection may be used to enter  
19                   into a contract, on a multiyear basis, with a commu-  
20                   nity-based, direct-service organization to initiate, ex-  
21                   pand, or maintain an eligible cooperative program in  
22                   the State.

23                   “(b) NATIONAL NETWORK.—

24                   “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, in co-  
25                   ordination with the Secretary of Health and Human

1 Services, shall establish a National Farm and Ranch  
2 Stress Assistance Network to coordinate stress as-  
3 sistance programs on a national scale for affected in-  
4 dividuals, including through programs and activities  
5 described in subsection (a)(2)(B).

6 “(2) DIRECTOR.—The Secretary, in coordina-  
7 tion with the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-  
8 ices, shall appoint an individual in the Department  
9 of Agriculture to be the Director of the national net-  
10 work.

11 “(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Not-  
12 withstanding any other provision of law, there is author-  
13 ized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out ac-  
14 tivities through the national network and State networks  
15 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

16 **“SEC. 1461A. FARM AND RANCH STRESS ASSESSMENT COM-  
17 MITTEE.**

18 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after  
19 the date of enactment of the [\_\_\_\_\_ Act of  
20 2018], the Secretary and the Secretary of Health and  
21 Human Services shall establish an advisory committee, to  
22 be known as the ‘Farm and Ranch Stress Assessment  
23 Committee’.

24 “(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Committee shall consist  
25 of—

1           “(1) the Secretary (or a designee);

2           “(2) the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-  
3           ices (or a designee);

4           “(3) the Assistant Secretary of Health and  
5           Human Services for Mental Health and Substance  
6           Abuse (or a designee);

7           “(4) the Administrator of the Health Resources  
8           and Services Administration (or a designee);

9           “(5) the Director of the Centers for Disease  
10          Control and Prevention (or a designee);

11          “(6) the Director of the National Institutes of  
12          Health;

13          “(7) the Under Secretary for Rural Develop-  
14          ment (or a designee); and

15          “(8) 4 members, to be appointed by the Sec-  
16          retary, 1 of which shall be a representative of each  
17          of—

18                 “(A) affected individuals;

19                 “(B) behavioral health professionals;

20                 “(C) advocates for affected individuals;

21                 and

22                 “(D) as appropriate, other experts in occu-  
23                 pational stress and behavioral health among af-  
24                 fected individuals.

1       “(c) MEETINGS.—The Committee shall meet not  
2 fewer than 2 times each year.

3       “(d) REPORT.—

4               “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
5 the date of enactment of the [\_\_\_\_\_ Act of  
6 2018], the Committee shall submit to Congress and  
7 any other relevant Federal department or agency,  
8 and make publicly available, a report describing the  
9 state of behavioral and mental health in farmers and  
10 ranchers.

11               “(2) CONTENTS.—The report described in  
12 paragraph (1) shall include—

13                       “(A) an inventory and assessment of ef-  
14 forts to support the behavioral and mental  
15 health of farmers and ranchers by—

16                               “(i) the Federal Government, States,  
17 and units of local government;

18                               “(ii) communities that are comprised  
19 of farmers and ranchers;

20                               “(iii) healthcare providers;

21                               “(iv) State cooperative extension serv-  
22 ices; and

23                               “(v) other entities, as determined by  
24 the Secretary;



1           “(B) a description of the challenges faced  
2 by farmers and ranchers (including financial,  
3 medical, and other challenges) that may impact  
4 the behavioral and mental health of farmers  
5 and ranchers;

6           “(C) an evaluation of the impact of farmer  
7 and rancher suicides on—

8                   “(i) the agricultural workforce;

9                   “(ii) agricultural production;

10                  “(iii) rural families and communities;

11                  and

12                  “(iv) succession planning; and

13           “(D) an outline of a long-term strategy  
14 and recommendations based on best practices to  
15 appropriate Federal departments or agencies  
16 for addressing the challenges identified under  
17 subparagraph (B).”.