



Farm Stress

Farming can be an incredibly high-stress occupation. Unpredictable weather, crop disease, volatile markets, risk of injury, overwhelming work loads, and social isolation are just a handful of the stressors that family farmers and ranchers cope with on a daily basis. At the same time, many farmers and ranchers don't have access to assistance when they need help. They may not have the financial resources for a lawyer, making it challenging to resolve disputes. Additionally, many farm families lack access to mental health services. In fact, 60% of rural Americans live in areas with mental health professional shortages. This is alarming considering the fact that, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), farmers have a higher rate of suicide than any other occupation.

Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)

FRSAN was authorized as a 2008 Farm Bill program, but it has never been funded. It was meant to provide farmers with affordable stress assistance programs. It would have provided funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to state departments of agriculture and cooperative extensions for helplines and websites, training for farm advocates, support groups, outreach services and activities, and home delivery of assistance.

Certified Agricultural Mediation Program (CAMP)

The USDA provides funding for state-run mediation programs, which help resolve disputes, including lending by USDA or commercial banks, farm program eligibility and payments, conservation programs, wetland determinations, grazing disputes, pesticide applications, and crop insurance. Mediation programs can help producers handle matters within their means, avoiding legal fees and litigation, shortening the time to resolve disputes, and potentially avoiding bankruptcy.

Farm Stress in the Farm Bill

The 2018 Farm Bill must provide resources to help family farmers and ranchers effectively manage stress. Congress can do this if they:

- ✓ **Reauthorize FRSAN** and provide adequate funding so that it fulfills the needs of farmers and ranchers coping with stress.
- ✓ **Fully fund CAMP** so that farmers and ranchers have access to necessary mediation services.