



Farm Stress and Agriculture Suicide Prevention

August 10th, 2021

What's Your Why?



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Sept, 2020 Washington State AgrAbility Program

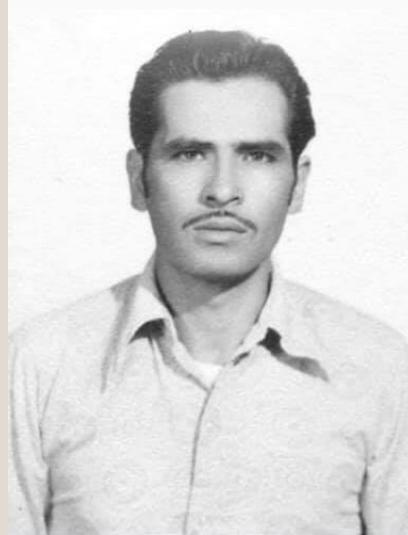
Practical solutions for farmers and farm workers
experiencing difficulty working due to physical or mental
health barriers



Washington State AgrAbility Program

- Partnerships-WATAP & NWAFF
- Outreach
- Spanish Translation
- Lending Library
- Low Interest Loans

1996



February 2019



CDC Reported Data

National

- **47,000 people died by Suicide in 2017**
- **Farmers 2-3 times the national average**
- **Rates increasing year over year**

Washington State

- **17.5 deaths per 100,000**
- **Rural areas are 24% higher**
 - **21.2 per 100,000**
- **8th leading cause of death**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Data



- 54% had no known mental health condition
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for 15-24 year-olds
- Self Reported Suicidal Thoughts:
 - Ages 18-25: 10.5%
 - Ages 18 and up: 4.3%

Agriculture is a Stressful Occupation

Production

Weather
Yields
Pests and Diseases
Animal Health
Long Hours
Equipment
Breakdowns
Injuries

Financial

Fluctuating Market
Prices
High Costs
High Debt Loads
Tariffs
Bankruptcy

Operational

Multigenerational
Farm
Family Dynamics
Work/Life Balance
Off-Farm Occupation

Barriers Facing Rural Communities

Access to care

Isolation

Finances

Trauma

Chronic Pain

Exposure to Chemicals

Substance Abuse

Access to Lethal Means

Stigma



In Crisis?
Text HELLO to 741741

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Free, 24/7, Confidential

WSU Skagit Agricultural Suicide Prevention Pilot Program

Washington State
Department of Health
House Bill 2671

March 2019- Current



Report to the Legislature

Improving
Behavioral Health &
Suicide Prevention
in the Agricultural
Industry:

*Task Force Findings &
Recommendations*

DECEMBER 2018
HOUSE BILL 2671



Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Round



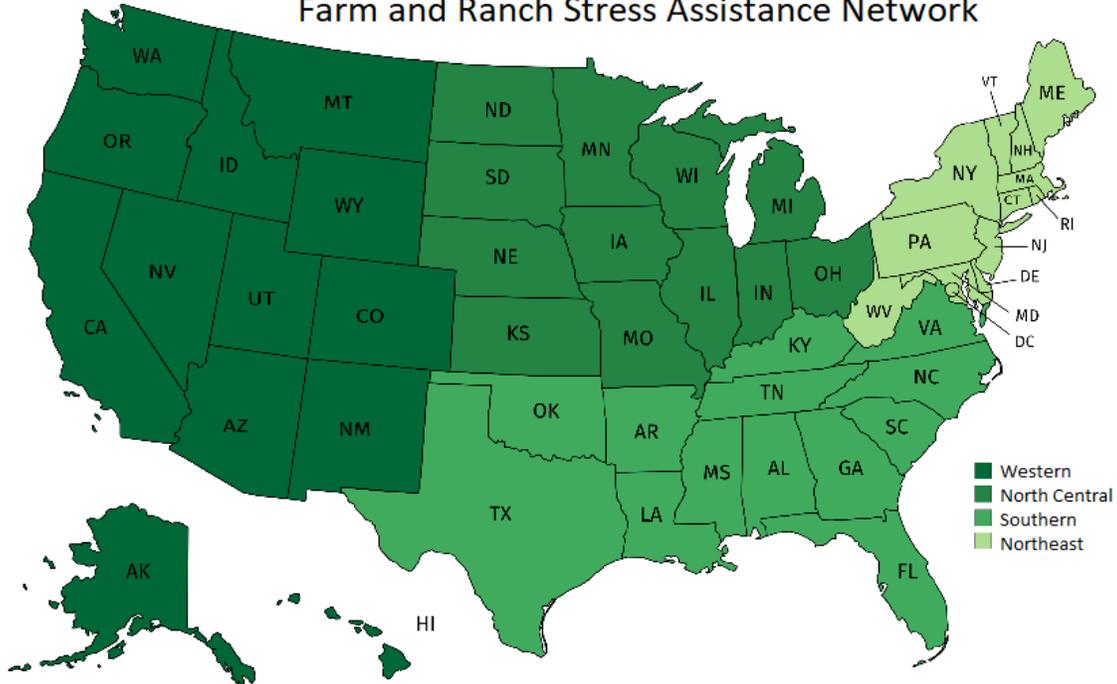
- *Establish a diverse, regionally-representative **network** of member organizations.*
- *Develop a **clearinghouse** of farmer assistance programs in the region.*
- ***Educate** individuals/team in your region about FRSAN activities and how they can access resources*

Target Audience:
Farmers in Washington &
Oregon State

Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Round



Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network



North Central: Iowa State University
David Brown: p: (515) 294-0860 c: (515) 298-1505
dnbrown@iastate.edu

Southern: AgriSafe Network
Natalie Roy: p: (985) 845-1116
nroy@agrisafe.org

Northeast: Nat'l Young Farmers Coalition
Martin Lemos: p: (518) 643-3564 x709
martin@youngfarmers.org

Western Region:

- 13 States
- 4 Territories
- 10+ Languages

Major Partners:

- Land Grant Universities
- Montana State University
- Farm Aid
- National AgrAbility Program

Approach

- **Baseline Analysis**
 - Farm Stressors
 - Ideal Resource Delivery
- **Network**
 - Identify Aligned Stakeholder Organizations
 - Leverage Resources
 - Collaboration and Problem Solving
- **Outreach**
 - Curriculum Development and Evaluation
 - Peer to Peer Support
 - Community Trainings
- **Direct Services**
 - Clearinghouse of Resources
 - Farmer Support Hotline



Regional SRAP Partners:

- Alaska AgrAbility Project
- California AgrAbility Project
- Colorado AgrAbility Project
- New Mexico AgrAbility Project
- AgrAbility of Utah Project
- Washington State AgrAbility Project

WRASAP Services 2021



Farmer Resource Hotline

1-800-FARM-AID

1-800-327-6243

Farmstress.us

- Clearinghouse
- Minigrants
 - Professional Development
 - Translation
 - Outreach

Look for signs

Are you or someone you know experiencing:

- Change in routine
- Decline in care of farm and/or livestock
- Change in mood (anxious, agitated, angry)
- New or increased financial pressures
- Loss of interest in hobbies/activities
- Gifting of prized possessions



Don't be afraid to act



I am probably not atypical in that I find the topic of suicide in ag an uncomfortable topic that I shy away from. I am normally an outgoing and very “reach out kind of a guy” but not for this topic. There is just something about, some stigma or taboo. However, I was a speaker on an agenda where Skagit County Extension Director Don McMoran gave a presentation on the topic including things to be on the look out for. This was on a Friday this past mid March. On Wednesday of the following week I was meeting with some growers and one grower mentioned to me that the grower that I was going to visit next needed some cheering up as he seemed “down.” I met with the person and within the first ten minutes he was talking about wanting to get out of agriculture and was saying some down things. I pointed out that he seemed in a dark place and that I was concerned about him. Asking him pointedly if he was having some problems triggered an outpouring of negativity and a description of his problems. We talked some more and later we concluded our meeting he seemed better and we each moved on. Emotional outreach like this is not something that comes natural to me so part of me just wanted to exit the scene.

As I drove away and processed what just happened, I call this person’s wife and talked in general about what happen. She expressed some serious concerns about his situation and their situation. After that happened I called Don McMoran and told him that what happened. He encouraged me to get more involved. Although I was an hour in to a five hour drive home, I turned around and went back to talk to this guy. I started looking for him and found him, in a place he should not have been in (do not draw conclusions). I told him that I wanted to talk. He said he could not as he had something to do. I told him I would wait until he could talk. He gave me a time and location in about half an hour. In the mean time I called someone who knew a mental health counselor. I talked to that person and got some names of counselors. I met with the grower and had an even more pointed conversation and laid out my concerns. I pointed out the several signs that Don had mentioned and said that in 30 minutes of talking with him, he touched a half dozen.

Then he really opened up and was oddly very specific about the challenges that he was facing. I gave him the names of the counselors. He promised me he would call and make an appointment. Later he contacted me and told me that our meeting meant a lot to him, and that it helped. His wife contacted me and said that it made a difference. I have kept in touch with the grower and he is coming over with his wife to visit up in a few weeks. He made the call and made an appointment with a counselor.

I have no idea what the outcome would have been had I not turned around and gone back. Do not care to think about it. I do know that if Don had not given that talk I doubt I would have turned around.

Thank you Don.

Contact Info

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