

# The USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN): A Panel Discussion

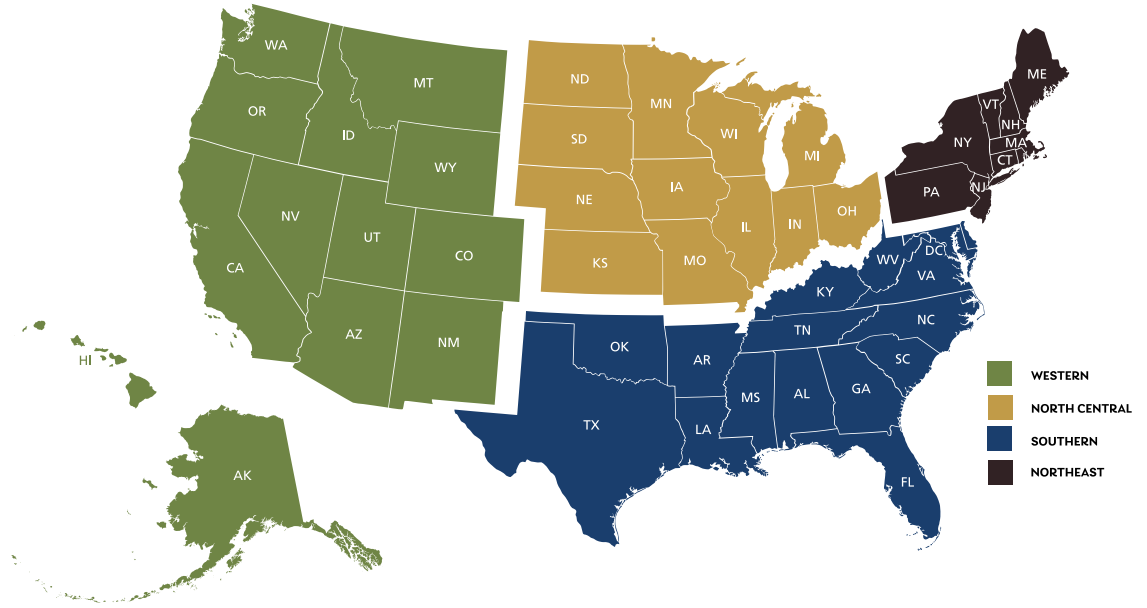
Don McMoran, Josie Rudolphi, and Tesha Humphrey



North Central  
Farm and Ranch  
Stress Assistance Center

# Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network

- Funding opportunities and attention to farm stress has increased.
- 2018 Farm Bill authorized funding for 4 regional farm stress assistance networks.





# North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center



# NC FRSAC – Center Activities

## Interest Groups

- Identify and develop resources for specific agricultural audiences and on specific topics
  - Farmworkers
  - Farm youth and families
  - Mental health and suicide prevention
  - Women producers
  - Agribusiness and farm financial decision making
  - Healthcare providers

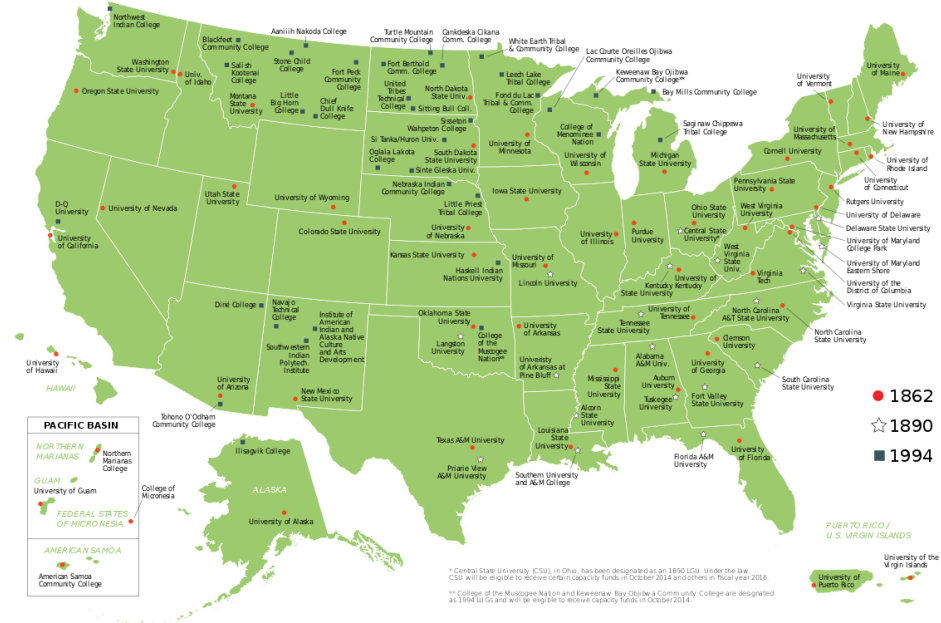


# NC FRSSAC – Center Activities

## NIFA LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

### Historically Black Colleges and University and Tribal Colleges Advisory Board

- 22-member advisory board
- Quarterly meetings
  - Identify needs
  - Share programs and resources
  - Support project initiatives



# NC FRSSAC – Small Grants Program

## **Supports stress assistance for underserved agricultural communities.**

- Projects up to \$3,000
- Priority to proposals focusing on farmers, ranchers, and/or farm workers who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ+); young and beginning farmers, ranchers, and/or farm workers, including first generation; and farmers, ranchers, and/or farm workers with disabilities.
- Proposals reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- Application information: <https://farmstress.org/grants-2021/>



# Questions and Comments

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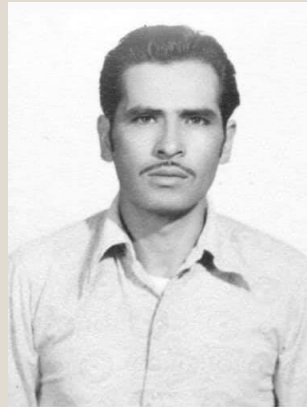




# Farm Stress and Agriculture Suicide Prevention

March, 2022

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**
- **8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death**

# Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Data



- 54% had no known mental health condition
- Suicide is the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

## National Crisis Lines



**In Crisis?  
Text HELLO to 741741**

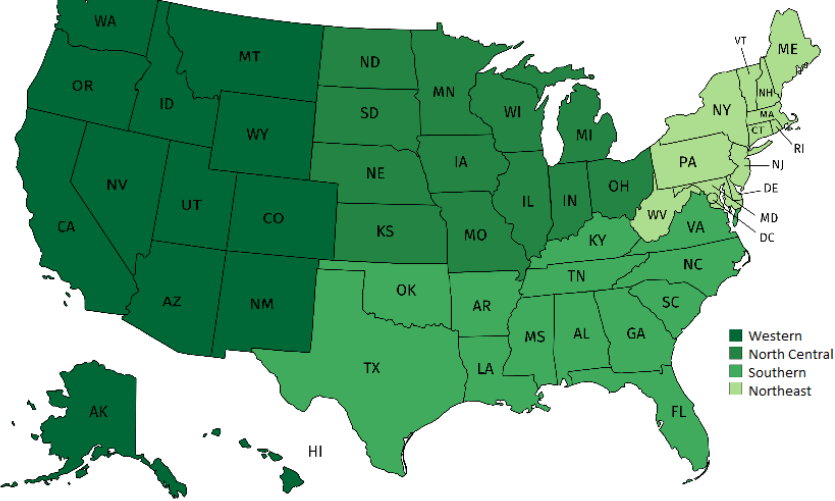
CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Free, 24/7, Confidential

# Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Round 2



## 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

# Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network



## 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.

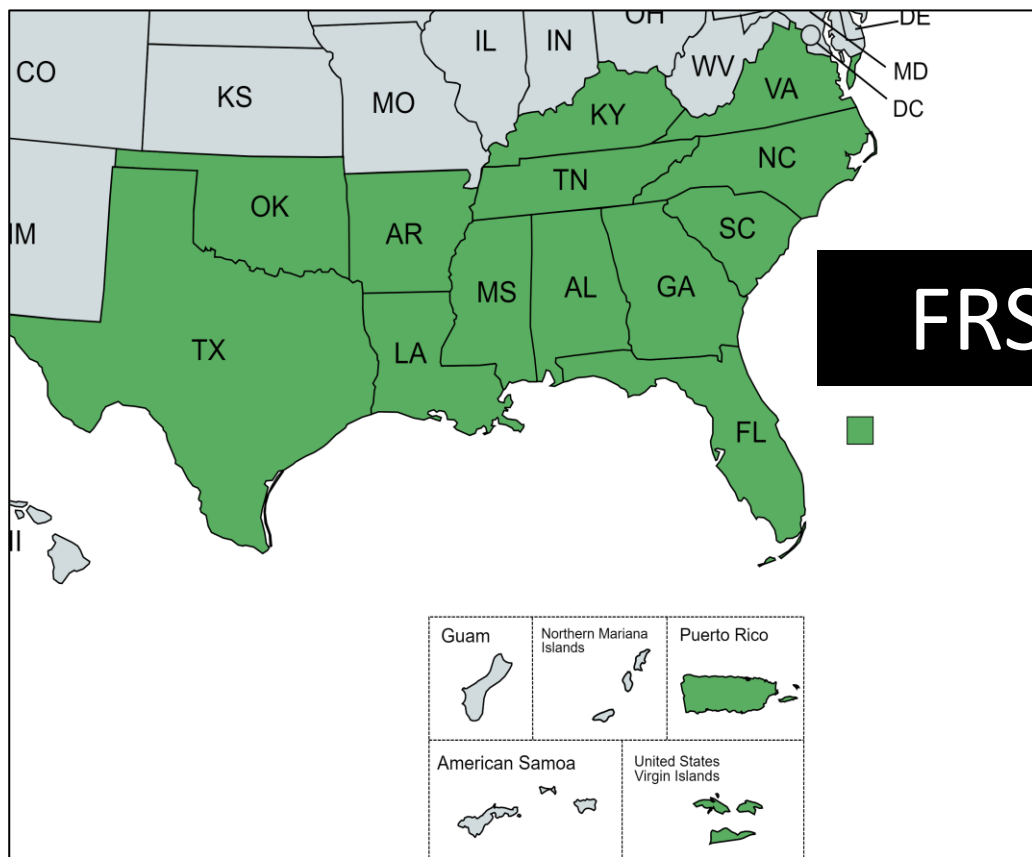
Then he really opened up and was oddly very specific about the challenges that he was facing. I gave him the names of the counselors. He promised me he would call and make an appointment. Later he contacted me and told me that our meeting meant a lot to him, and that it helped. His wife contacted me 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

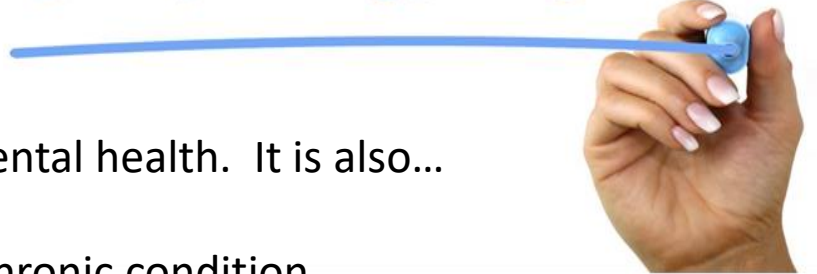
- Don McMoran
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- County Director
- WSU Skagit County Extension
- [dmcmoran@wsu.edu](mailto:dmcmoran@wsu.edu)
- Julie Jesmer
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## FRSAN Southern

A primary goal for this project is to shift thinking from a state-specific focus to a regional focus. All state activities will filter through established Action Teams as outlined in the following slides. This will allow for increased accessibility and collaboration and decrease duplication of services.

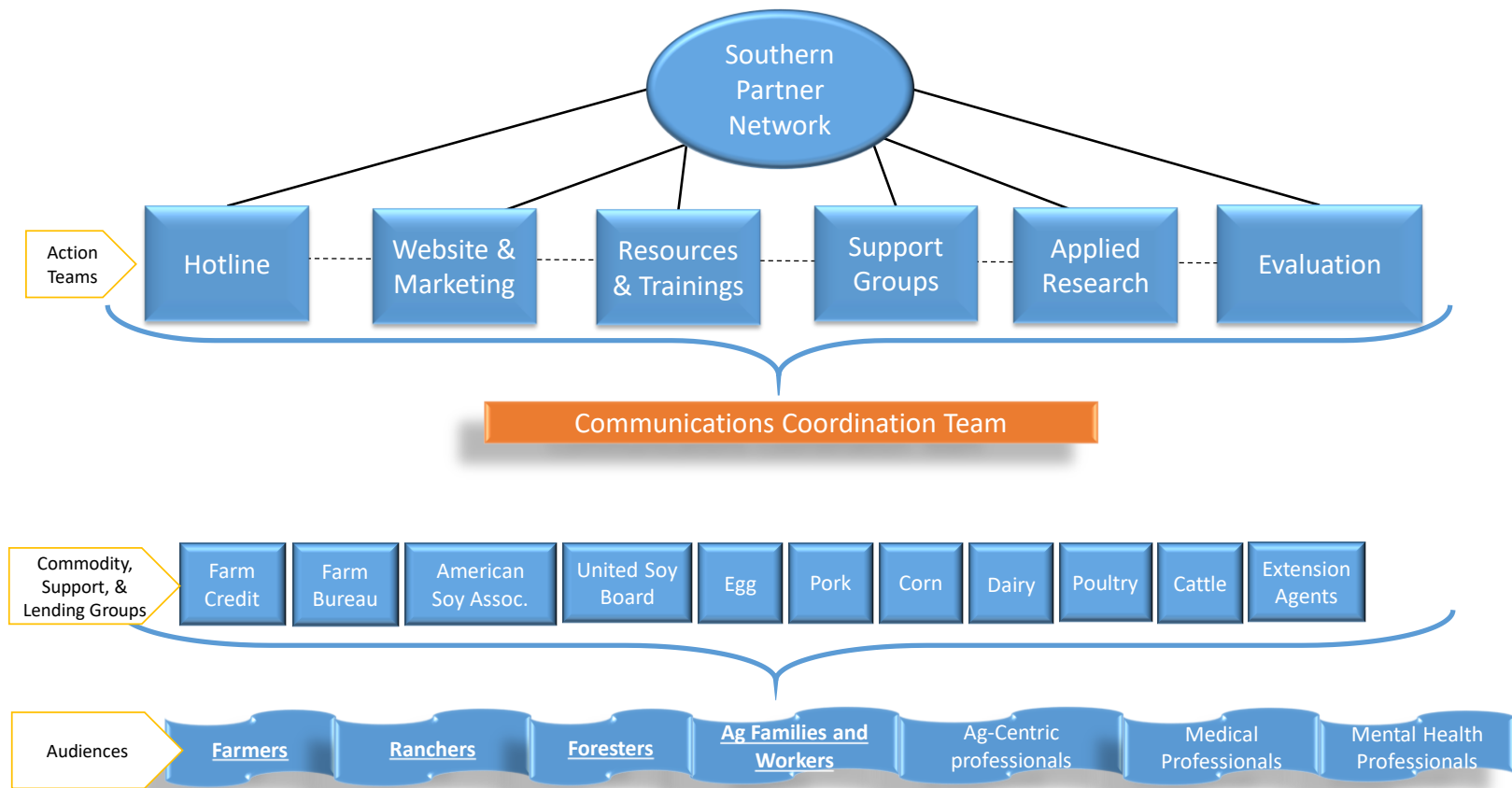
# STRESS

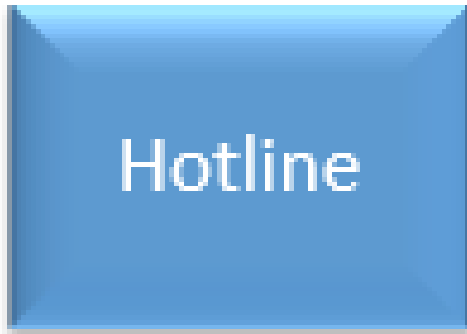


Stress is not just mental health. It is also...

- Dealing with a chronic condition
- Adjusting to a new disability
- Dealing with finances related to health changes

FRSAN is dedicated to building strong networks and improving **ACCESSIBILITY** to resources and support, which YOU know is the heart of AgrAbility.





### Hotline Partners:

- Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA (RAFI)
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives
- Intertribal Agriculture Council
- National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association



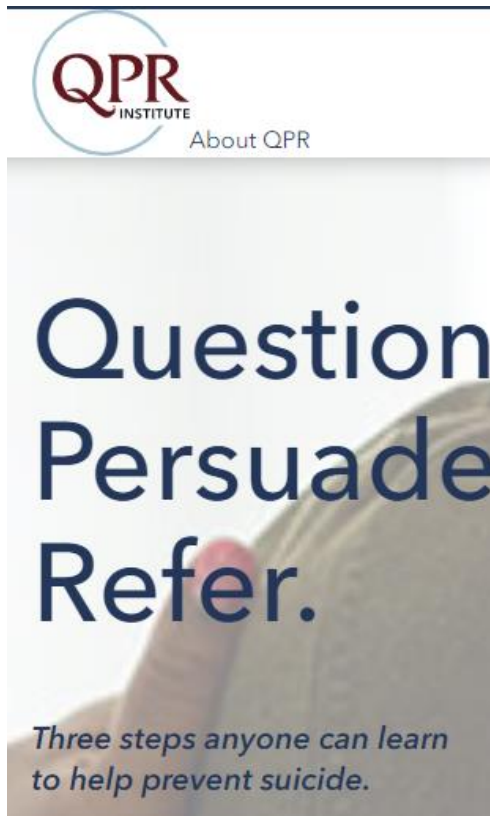
## Website & Marketing

- Public Relations, Marketing, Website Development Firm
- Infrastructure building to house hotline materials, resources, trainings, support groups, research, data, etc.
- Network Building

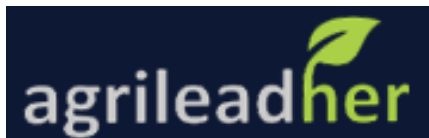


## Resources & Trainings

- Curate content related to Farm, Ranch, and Forester Stress
- Identify gaps including accessibility
- Create resources and trainings
- Develop searchable database by area, commodity, need, etc.
- Build sustainable partnerships with organizations that provide resources and training (such as AgrAbility)



- Extension Agents
- Ag Educators
- Ag adjacent professionals



# Support Groups





## Applied Research

- Accessibility to current research findings
- Opportunities for publications and presentations about farm and ranch stress and options to mitigate effects



## Evaluation

- Develop baseline measures
- Measure economic impact



## Contact Information

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