
SUPPORT FOR FARMERS FIRST ACT OF 2023

“The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) applauds Senators Baldwin and Ernst for their leadership on ensuring access to mental health care for rural agricultural communities. The Farmers First Act of 2023 supports the continuation of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, expanding the network of rural providers to deliver critical services to farming and ranching populations.” – **Alan Morgan, Chief Executive Officer of the National Rural Health Association**

“FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative greatly appreciates the work of Senators Tammy Baldwin and Joni Ernst in addressing the mounting mental health crisis within the agricultural community. Farmers are particularly at risk for stress related mental health issues due to many unpredictable factors within their profession, and the issue is compounded by limited access to mental health care in rural areas. The Farmers First Act will help to expand the resources that farmers may need in times of crisis.” – **Jeff Lyon, General Manager of FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative**

“We are grateful to Senators Tammy Baldwin and Joni Ernst for championing this effort to ensure that there is increased funding available for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance network through the life of this next Farm Bill. Many reasons exist for ongoing farm stress and mental health challenges for farmers and farm workers. Continued FRSAN funding is essential as the regional centers continue to develop their networks and programming to serve populations where the need is great, and resources are often limited.” – **David Howard, Policy Development Director of Young Farmers**

“Despite commendable efforts by Congress and the Administration to facilitate innovative means of extending mental and behavioral health services to underserved areas, access to these services remains a challenge in many rural and agricultural communities. The Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network program has served as a literal lifeline to many of these communities and a critical resource in extending access to those in farm communities experiencing a crisis. We thank Senators Baldwin and Ernst for their leadership in ensuring that rural communities remain a key part of the national discussion on mental health, and we urge Congress to pass the Farmers First Act quickly.” – **Katherine B. McGuire, Chief Advocacy Officer of American Psychological Association Services**

"Farming is a stressful job, even in good times, and rural residents often face unique barriers to seeking mental health care. FRSAN brings valuable stress assistance services and expertise to the farm and ranch communities most in need of resources. Farm Credit commends Senators Baldwin and Ernst for their leadership on the Farmers First Act." – **Todd Van Hoose, CEO and President of the Farm Credit Council**

“U.S. soy farmers have faced myriad challenges the past five years, including a trade war with China, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other international factors that, combined, have led to higher costs of doing business for farmers. These challenges are overt: The silent challenge many farmers face daily is their mental health—a crisis the American Soybean Association wanted to confront when it first launched the #SoyHelp campaign, including online farm stress resources, in 2020. Programs like ASA’s are steady drops in a bucket of support that add up, yet ongoing and increasing federal support is needed to lift the tide. The Farmers First Act of 2023 would continue the important work of increasing mental health resources for farmers through reauthorization of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network and the allocation of additional resources to support these efforts. ASA thanks Senators Baldwin and Ernst for their support in championing these issues on behalf of U.S. agriculture.” – **Daryl Cates, President of the American Soybean Association and soy farmer from Columbia, Illinois**

"Since it was funded in the 2018 Farm Bill, the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) has been an essential lifeline for farmers, ranchers and farmworkers, who face increased levels of stress and often lack access to mental health support services. Farm Aid enthusiastically supports the Farmers First Act of 2023, which continues the crucial work of the FRSAN to support and strengthen the agricultural workers we all depend upon. We are especially pleased that this bill increases funding to deepen support networks and increase outreach, as well as expand services to underserved farmers and agricultural workers." – **Hannah Tremblay, Policy & Advocacy Manager at Farm Aid**

“NASDA applauds this bipartisan bill that builds upon the work of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network to help individuals deal with extreme stresses facing agriculture by providing resources for tools like stress hotlines and web services. State agriculture departments hold close connections with farmers and ranchers while serving as the boots-on-the-ground to help overcome these issues. NASDA will continue our coordination with FRSAN regional offices to increase access to mental health resources.” – **Ted McKinney, CEO of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA)**

“Farming is a highly stressful occupation and rural areas suffer from significant mental health professional shortages. The Farmers First Act will help connect our communities with essential support and services to address farm stress and improve wellbeing. We thank Senators Baldwin and Ernst for their leadership on this issue and we urge Congress to reauthorize FRSAN with increased funding in the next farm bill.” – **Rob Larew, President of the National Farmers Union**

"Farmers face so many challenges, from unpredictable weather to consolidating supply chains, that create 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 immensely important issue." **said Darin Von Ruden, President of the Wisconsin Farmers Union**