

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2020

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Hoeven, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Merkley:

As you continue to consider the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you support funding for programs that provide our nation's farmers with critical support and mental health resources. We thank you for your leadership in providing \$10 million for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) in the FY20 appropriations package and request that you support robust funding for this critical effort, as authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Farming is a high stress occupation, and recent reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have found that farmers and other individuals who work in agriculture experience a high rate of suicide. The 2018 Farm Bill took an important step in addressing the needs of farmers, and included the bipartisan *Facilitating Accessible Resources for Mental health and Encouraging Rural Solutions for Immediate Response to Stressful Times (FARMERS FIRST) Act* to provide funding for local mental health resources and expand access to stress reduction strategies and suicide prevention programs for people who work in agriculture.

In the FY19 appropriations bill, Congress took the important step of including \$2 million for a pilot program address the high suicide rates among farmers. With this funding, agriculture and rural organizations created four regional centers that are working to map rural stress needs, identify new partners, and scale training and services needed. In the FY20 appropriations package, members from both sides of the aisle built on this progress, providing \$10 million for the FRSAN. We are encouraged by the support from the Committee, and anticipate continued stakeholder interest to help scale this program and achieve full implementation.

Agriculture is an essential force in our nation's economy and our farm families keep their rural communities strong. Congress has clearly recognized the need for farmers to have access to mental health resources that respond to the challenges they face. We request that the FY21 appropriations bill reflect the challenges that farmers are facing and the stressors that they experience during difficult years by providing robust funding for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network as outlined in Section 7412 of the 2018 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Susan Collins
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Cory Gardner
United States Senator

Agriculture Group Letter Table
AG_Baldwin_Group_200406-031628[LetterID 3612]

ID	Sub	Request Project Location	Request Project Name	Request (\$000)
27471	AG Group	[Title I]/[National Institute of Food and Agriculture]/[Extension Activities] [Member Staff] - Erin Dugan Erin_Dugan@Baldwin.senate.gov 202-224-4054	Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network [Member's Request (text)] - Robust Funding	\$0

Appropriations Request Database

Request ID: 27471	
Project Location:	[Title I]/[National Institute of Food and Agriculture]/[Extension Activities]
Member/s:	Baldwin, Tammy(D-WI); Bennet, Michael(D-CO); Booker, Cory(D-NJ); Brown, Sherrod(D-OH); Collins, Susan(R-ME); Cramer, Kevin(R-ND); Duckworth, Tammy(D-IL); Durbin, Richard(D-IL); Gardner, Cory(R-CO); Grassley, Chuck(R-IA); Hassan, Margaret Wood(D-NH); King, Angus(I-ME); Klobuchar, Amy(D-MN); Sanders, Bernard(I-VT); Sinema, Kyrsten(D-AZ); Smith, Tina(D-MN); Stabenow, Debbie(D-MI); Tester, Jon(D-MT); Wyden, Ron(D-OR)
Request Type:	Group
Justification:	<p>As you continue to consider the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you support funding for programs that provide our nation's farmers with critical support and mental health resources. We thank you for your leadership in providing \$10 million for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) in the FY20 appropriations package and request that you support robust funding for this critical effort, as authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill.</p> <p>Farming is a high stress occupation, and recent reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have found that farmers and other individuals who work in agriculture experience a high rate of suicide. The 2018 Farm Bill took an important step in addressing the needs of farmers, and included the bipartisan Facilitating Accessible Resources for Mental health and Encouraging Rural Solutions for Immediate Response to Stressful Times (FARMERS FIRST) Act to provide funding for local mental health resources and expand access to stress reduction strategies and suicide prevention programs for people who work in agriculture.</p> <p>In the FY19 appropriations bill, Congress took the important step of including \$2 million for a pilot program address the high suicide rates among farmers. With this funding, agriculture and rural organizations created four regional centers that are working to map rural stress needs, identify new partners, and scale training and services needed. In the FY20 appropriations package, members from both sides of the aisle built on this progress, providing \$10 million for the FRSAN. We are encouraged by the support from the Committee, and anticipate continued stakeholder interest to help scale this program and achieve full implementation.</p> <p>Agriculture is an essential force in our nation's economy and our farm families keep their rural communities strong. Congress has clearly recognized the need for farmers to have access to mental health resources that respond to the challenges they face. We request that the FY21 appropriations bill reflect the challenges that farmers are facing and the stressors that they experience during difficult years by providing robust funding for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network as outlined in Section 7412 of the 2018 Farm Bill.</p>
Proposed Bill Language:	
Member's Request:	\$0
Enacted Level:	\$10,000
Intended Country:	
Project Name:	Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network
Subcommittee:	AG
Staff Contact:	Erin Dugan Erin_Dugan@Baldwin.senate.gov 202-224-4054
Proposed Report Language:	
Member's Request (text):	Robust Funding
President's Request:	\$8,000