

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

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

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin, Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Hoeven:

As you continue to consider the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) 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 FY21 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 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 by including 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.

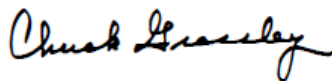
In the FY19 appropriations bill, Congress took the important step of including \$2 million for a pilot program to address the high suicide rates among farmers. With this funding, agriculture and rural organizations created four regional centers that are working to map rural stress needs, identify new partners, and scale training and services. In the FY20 and FY21 appropriations packages, members from both sides of the aisle built on this progress by fulling funding FRSAN at \$10 million. We urge you to provide robust funding for FY22 and anticipate continued stakeholder interest to help scale this program and achieve full implementation.

In the FY21 appropriations bill, Congress took the additional step of urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to prioritize proposals from regions that have seen high levels of farm

bankruptcies, auctions and other signals of severe economic distress when reviewing award applications for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network program. We encourage you to continue this direction moving forward to help target funding to those most in need.

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 FY22 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,



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/

Tom Carper
United States Senator



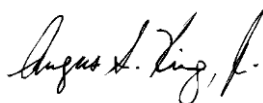
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



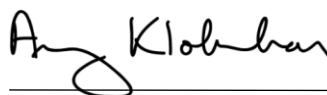
Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



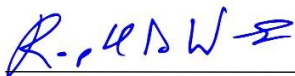
Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, MD
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator