

"What we need most help with is farmer depression and mental health. Farmers are suffering."
Dave Maples, Executive Vice President of the Kentucky Cattleman's Association

Farmer Mental Health Initiatives Training, Research & Awareness

STARTING THE IMPORTANT CONVERSATION: SPONSORING SUICIDE AWARENESS QPR and ASIST TRAININGS

THE PROBLEM

FARMER'S EXPERIENCE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AGRICULTURAL WORK

Many uncertainties: Weather, market forces, labor shortages, crop failures...

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL BARRIERS TO GETTING HELP

- Rural and partially rural areas, where most farms are located, contain 68% of the nation's health professional shortage areas.
- 66% of the country's mental health professional shortage areas.
- Two in five farmers/farmworkers (46%) say it is difficult to access a therapist or counselor in their local community.
- Social barriers include conceptions of self-sufficiency, traditional perceptions of masculinity as well as mental health stigma found in agricultural communities.

91% OF RURAL ADULTS REPORT THAT MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT TO THEM AND/OR THEIR FAMILY.

75% STATE IT IS IMPORTANT TO REDUCE STIGMA ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN THE AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY.

FINDING SOLUTIONS: COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

Local Farmers, Agricultural Educators, Healthcare professionals in rural communities, Women in Agriculture members and others trained in QPR (Question-Persuade-Refer) talk about how important it is for farmers to speak to and support farmers and farm families with mental health challenges.

The Center has distributed thousands of outreach items including 50,000 Raising Hope farmer mental health awareness promotional items, 4000 Farmer Mental Health wallet cards, and 3000 Suicide Prevention Center resource cards in English and Spanish.

To address accessibility of mental health services, the Center has developed and prototyped a Peer-to-Peer app that will include mental health assessments, resources, and user-constructed support groups.

57 TOTAL NUMBER OF QPR TRAINERS

HEALTHCARE FIELDS

PRIVATE INDUSTRY

EDUCATION

2000 TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRAINED

LOCAL/STATE GOVERNMENTS

THE AG COMMUNITY QPR PROGRAM WAS RECENTLY TRANSLATED INTO SPANISH – MAKING QPR MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF OUR AG COMMUNITY!

IMPACT ON KENTUCKY

"...made me think a lot more about signs that you can see, about things that I could notice in students, in the future, in the classroom and small things that you can do to make yourself approachable and be that person that can be the trusted individual especially in a community that has so few of those that are trained in suicide prevention." Danny Prince, 2020 University of Kentucky Graduate

"Think of Us Because We Are Thinking of You"



The Kentucky Department of Agriculture along with the Future Farmers of America collaborated with the Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention to create a public service announcement reaching out to farmers and their families.



Two teens talk about losing a friend and farm families' struggles with suicide: "At the end of the day, it's about families. At the end of the day, it's about who we want to come home to."

Community Partnerships for Disaster Relief

Case Study: Extension Agent Requests Help with Mental Health Referrals After December 2021 Tornado
Partnership will provide:

SOUTHEAST CENTER
FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND INJURY PREVENTION

EKU EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
Psychology Clinic

- Telehealth services to farmers and farm families impacted by the tornadoes.
- McCracken County Extension Office access to private space and computers for telehealth.
- Training to agents on trauma-informed care.
- Training to agents on first-responder self-care.
- Research on how to address natural-disaster prompted trauma in agricultural communities.
- Training to ECU PsyD students on how to provide culturally-appropriate, effective agricultural community telehealth interventions.

Future Directions

- Stigma, mistrust and logistical barriers such as cost, proximity and availability of mental health professionals are common barriers among farmers and individuals in rural communities, with disparities particularly high among black farmers.
- Community Health Workers (CHW's) are individuals who are embedded in rural communities and are a resource to connect people to medical care, including mental health treatment.
- Will building mental health responsiveness capacities in CHW's improve referrals and reduce suicide rates among farmers? What unique cultural training is needed to increase the capacity of CHW's serving black farmers?
- Given the stigma and logistical barriers associated with mental health treatment as well as the high health and suicide disparities in rural communities, can CHW's act as a bridge between farmers and mental health services?

New to the grant is Dr. Fedewa, a licensed psychologist and Full Professor in the Counseling, School and Educational Psychology department, nationally accredited programs by the American Psychological Association and National Association of School Psychologists. Clinically, she is trained in Internal Family Systems and Somatic Experiencing, two evidence-based approaches for individuals and families that have experienced trauma. Her research is community-based and focuses on improving mental health and physical health outcomes of youth and families through health-based interventions in communities and schools. Dr. Fedewa has worked in hospitals, school systems, long-term care facilities and has a private mental health practice.

