

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

Thank you for providing \$2 million in appropriations for a farm stress pilot in the fiscal year 2019 appropriations bill. We urge you to build upon your work by fully funding the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) for fiscal year 2020.

Farming is a high-stress occupation. Financial risk, volatile markets, unpredictable weather, and heavy workloads can all place a significant strain on farmers', ranchers', and farmworkers' mental and emotional well-being. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that farmers have a much higher rate of suicide than the general population. This is exacerbated by the fact that 60 percent of rural residents live in areas that suffer from a shortage of mental health professionals.

Due to the prolonged downturn in the farm economy, many farmers are coping with even greater stress. Net farm income in 2018 was nearly 50 percent less than it was in 2013. While current projections indicate a slight increase in 2019, a significant rebound could be years away.

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized a provision to provide grants to extension services, state departments of agriculture, nonprofit organizations and other entities to provide stress assistance programs to farmers, ranchers, farmworkers, and other agriculture-related occupations. Eligible programs include farm helplines and websites, training programs and workshops, outreach services, and home delivery of assistance. The recently passed appropriations bill provides \$2 million for a pilot of the program, creating an on-ramp to full program implementation.

As the Subcommittee develops the FY 2020 appropriations bill, we urge you to fully fund FRSAN at \$10 million in 2020. This funding will be critically important in meeting the needs of farmers and ranchers as they endure increasing financial and mental stress.

Sincerely,




Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



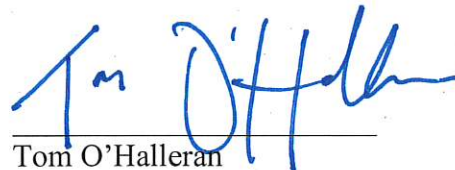
Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress



Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress



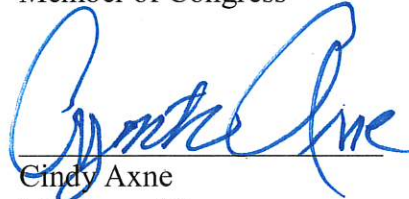
Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



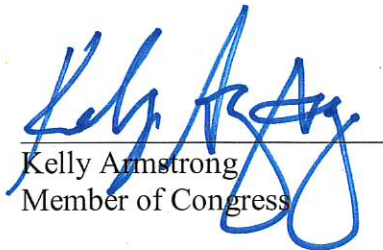
Cindy Axne
Member of Congress



Jim Hagedorn
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



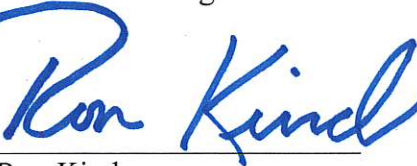
Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress



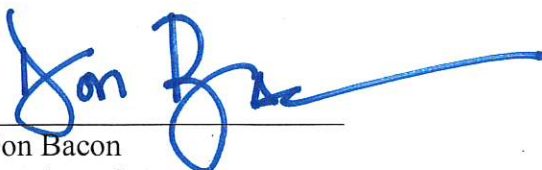
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Dusty Johnson
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Ron Kind
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Don Bacon
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David Scott
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Steve Watkins
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Glenn "G.T." Thompson
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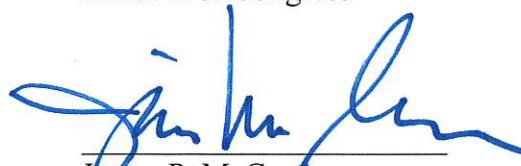
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