AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER STRESS: Western Region Aggregate Report

Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP) Baseline Survey Data

This baseline survey project is part of a larger USDA-funded grant initiative called WRASAP (to learn more visit farmstress.us). The aim of this survey is to better understand the types of stressors that agriculture producers are currently facing, as well as what types of stress management topics and dissemination strategies they would most prefer. These results will help to inform future WRASAP outreach and programming.
Western Region
agriculture producers completed the survey

796

Gender

395 Men
207 Women
1 Non-binary

42
Average age of respondents

Ethnicity

White 386
African American 35
Native American 79
Hispanic 18
Asian American 14
Bi-racial 20
Other 5

Marital Status

477 Married
66 Single
21 Divorced
19 Cohabitating
4 Widowed

Cover photo credit: Kate Seymore
3 of respondents indicated someone in their household works outside the farm/ranch.*

16 respondents have worked in agriculture

Highest Level of Education

- Bachelor’s Degree (190)
- Some College (176)
- High School Diploma/GED (71)
- Trade School/Associate’s (61)
- Doctoral Degree/Terminal Degree (33)
- 8th grade (13)
- Master’s Degree (67)

185 respondents did not respond to this question

Top 5 Cash Crops reported:

#1 Livestock (263)
#2 Cash grain (168)
#3 Animal specialty (132)
#4 Field crops (114)
#5 Poultry and eggs (94)

*most commonly in the field of Education
This survey utilized the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), a widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one’s life are considered stressful.

Based on their PSS scores, on average, agricultural producers throughout the Western Region are experiencing a **MEDIUM LEVEL** of stress (average PSS score = 18.3)

A medium level PSS score indicates the respondent is experiencing a moderate amount of stress, which could be impacting their sleep, physical health, mental health and/or relationships with other people.

**Perceived Stress Score (PSS)**

- **Low Stress** (0-13): 17.5%
- **Medium Stress** (14-26): 78.1%
- **High Stress** (27-40): 4.4%

Females averaged a higher PSS score than males (19.3 and 17.6 respectively).

Those who reported a high PSS responded they would be most interested to learn about financial, mental health, and problem solving topics to help manage/cope with stress.
Does ag producer stress vary by age group?

The oldest group reported significantly lower total stress levels than the younger group.

Does the number of crops produced on the farm/ranch affect ag producer stress?

One-way ANOVA was not significant (no differences between groups)
Within the last year, please indicate how often the following led you to experience stress?

Top three reported stressors:

1. Workload
   - % who responded either ‘fairly often’ or ‘very often’: 42.2%
   - % who responded either ‘never’ or ‘almost never’: 22%

2. Lack of time
   - % who responded either ‘fairly often’ or ‘very often’: 41.7%
   - % who responded either ‘never’ or ‘almost never’: 22.7%

3. Financial worries
   - % who responded either ‘fairly often’ or ‘very often’: 41.3%
   - % who responded either ‘never’ or ‘almost never’: 25.7%

Other stressors:

- Production costs: 39.7%
- Work/family balance: 36%
- Legislative issues related to agriculture: 35.4%
- Commodity prices: 34%
- COVID-19: 33.1%
- Family succession of the farm/ranch or business: 32.4%
- Livestock: 31.1%
- Weed control: 30%
- Technology: 29.3%
- Pests: 28.4%
- International trade policies: 28.4%
- Ability to sell products: 28.1%
- Weather: 27.9%
- Family: 26.6%
- Increased labor costs: 26.2%
- Crop/plant disease: 25.9%
- Physical isolation: 22%
- Social isolation: 21.7%
- Grief: 21.2%
- Wildfire: 20.6%
- Travel: 19.4%
- Physical disability: 18.9%
- Cognitive/emotional disability: 18.6%
- Interpersonal issues: 18.5%
- Physical injury: 18%

WRASAP has partnered with Farm Aid to expand Farm Aid’s stress assistance and referral hotline hours for the agriculture community in the Western Region. The hotline is 1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243).
To help you manage and/or cope with your stress, how interested would you be to learn about the following topics if the content was made available to you?

Respondents aged 18-32 were most interested in nutrition/cooking topics.

Respondents aged 33-48 were most interested in financial topics.

Respondents aged 49+ were most interested in retirement planning topics.

Women were most interested in succession planning.

Men were most interested in parenting.
In thinking about the topics from the previous question that you are interested in learning about, how would you be interested in receiving this information?
As the map below illustrates, the top preferred method of receiving information varied by state/territory:

Preferred methods of receiving stress-related information did not however, vary much by age group, as illustrated below:

**Ages 18 - 32**
- Social Media
- Face-to-face counseling
- General telephone help line

**Ages 40-48**
- Online self-guided class
- Social Media
- Online library of resources

**Ages 33-39**
- Online class with instructor
- Social Media
- Online library of resources

**Ages 49+**
- Online self-guided class
- Online class with instructor
- Printed resources mailed to you

Data illustrate most Western Region respondents prefer to receive information via an online or webinar class with an instructor.
This grant initiative also involves specific outreach and education projects. In order to gauge interest in some of the projects that have already begun, we asked ag producers throughout the Western Region how likely they would be to participate in such a project if it were made available in their communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Likely or Very Likely (%)</th>
<th>Unlikely or Very Unlikely (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn about stress management and mental health through a brief, self paced, online class</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss stress, health and wellness topics with someone you know well at informal events</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talk to a peer listener about stress and mental health</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in community planning sessions to identify and address health and wellness issues in your community</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss stress, health and wellness topics with a representative working on behalf of your community or health organization</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in online or telephone counseling/therapy</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in virtual, informal discussion groups</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a support group</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-Percentages based on those who responded

WRASAP Small Grants Program

WRASAP is offering a distribution of funds to partners, collaborators and stakeholders. Requested funds should address causes of and solutions for agricultural stress in the Western region. Unless an expedited, time sensitive review is requested, the Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance (WRASAP) Small Grants are offered four times per year in the fall, winter, spring and summer.

Apply for up to $10,000 (without special approval) to educate yourself/your organization or reduce agriculture-related stress and/or prevent agricultural suicides in your state/territory. Funding opportunities are available in three categories: Translation, Outreach, and Professional Development.

For more information visit farmstress.us
2021 WRASAP Funded Small Grants (through September 2021)

Outreach & Education:
- Hawaii Farmer’s Union United “HFUU Peer Assistance and Outreach Network”
- Colorado AgrAbility “Colorado AgrAbility AGSCI Website”
- Colorado AgrAbility “Colorado AgrAbility Project COMET Training”
- Dr. Virendra and Dr. Chen “2022 Mental Health for Farmers Conferences in Guam and Saipan”

Professional Development:
- Hawaii Farmer’s Union United “Mental Health Technical Capacity Building with the Hawaii Farmers Union”
- Colorado AgrAbility “Regional AgrAbility Workshop Sponsorship”
- LaVerne McGrath “Regional AgrAbility Workshop Sponsorship”

Translation:
- Hawaii Farmer’s Union United “Building Community & Connections with Migrant Farmers (Thai/Laotian)”
- University of Guam “Addressing Stressors in the Pacific Islands’ Agriculture”
This aggregate report was compiled by Dr. Michelle Grocke, Dr. Alison Brennan, Dr. Brenda Freeman, Dr. Lorann Stallones, Kara Erickson, Dr. Kuan-Ju Chen, Dr. Virendra M. Verma, Dr. Lindsay Chichester, Mary Catherine Wiley, Steven Young-Uhk, Madison Besterfield, Boonyarit Gorsakul and Ashley Osborne. Design by Lori Mayr.

For more information on the data in this report, please contact Dr. Michelle Grocke, michelle.grocke@montana.edu. Please also visit farmstress.us.

Accessible versions of this document are available. Please visit farmstress.us or call 406.994.6969 to request a copy or more information.

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