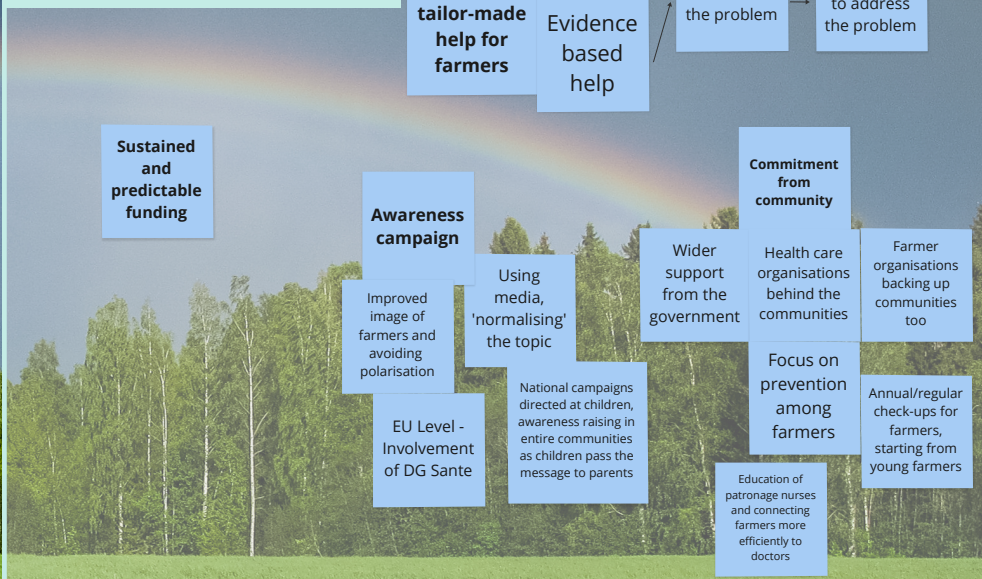


Addressing farmers' mental health support at community level



The information and views set out in this document are those expressed by the members of the EU CAP Network's Thematic Group on Nurturing Skills for a Thriving and Sustainable Agricultural Sector and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

Must-haves / Key ingredients



Notes from the discussion on this topic

Addressing mental health support for farmers at the community level requires the basic understanding that communities should be inclusive, not exclusive. The discussion on this topic gathered information about various initiatives across Europe, clustered on the Miro board according to their similarities.

Community events for farmers, especially those in isolated areas, as well as campaigns and fundraising within communities, were identified as relevant examples from Ireland and France.

Other examples include trained volunteers providing support at the community level and training initiatives for different individuals in farming communities, such as advisors, veterinarians, and banks. This helps create an 'early intervention' network to detect farmers under pressure and signpost them to the right form of help. Examples of these initiatives are found in France, Finland, Ireland, Germany, and Austria.

Additional examples focused on women in farming communities, beyond women farmers. Women's organisations in different countries play a crucial role by organising activities for farmers' mental well-being and providing mentoring programmes and other supporting initiatives.

Group discussions highlighted geographical differences. In northern Europe, farmers are considered entrepreneurs and are often supported through local food supply chains. In southern Europe, a community-based approach is prominent, where institutions like churches play a significant role in supporting farming communities.

Following the discussion on examples, the focus shifted towards identifying key ingredients for effective mental health support at community level. These include tailor-made support for farmers, providing evidence-based assistance to assess the extent of mental health issues and developing a plan to address them.

Proper training for advisors was also identified as a key ingredient. Additionally, attention was given to awareness-raising campaigns, which can help normalise mental health discussions, enhance the image of farmers, and prevent polarisation. TG members acknowledged community commitment as crucial and emphasised the importance of broader government and healthcare organisational support. This commitment should encompass prevention efforts, possibly integrated with regular health check-ups for farmers, starting from a young age. Lastly, the conversation highlighted the necessity for sustained and predictable funding for mental health initiatives within farming communities.