



Thematic Group on Supporting the Mental Health of Farmers and Farming Communities

2nd TG meeting – 28 May 2024

#RuralMentalHealth



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Key messages from the informal TG meetings

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1st informal TG meeting: Mental health and women in farming

Branwen Miles, COPA COGECA





Mental health and women in farming

Identifying stresses and mental health issues

- Challenging Work-Life Balance: Examples highlight the lack of social support for entrepreneurial mothers.
- Gendered Values: Feminine values like open communication contrast with masculine values of stoicism.
- Specific Challenges: Women facing unique stressors, such as farm transitions and feeling undervalued.

Key conclusion: While root causes may overlap, women in farming face distinct challenges requiring tailored mental health support.





Mental health and women in farming

Implementing effective initiatives

- Women-Only Discussion Groups: to provide a safe space for discussing mental health issues.
- Phone Counselling: to provide also indirect support for women assisting male farmers.
- Nationwide projects: to offer tailored support and training for both men and women.

Key conclusion: Accessible mental health support requires a multi-faceted approach, including training, discussion groups, and legislative support.





Mental health and women in farming

Leveraging women's perspectives for positive impact

- Cultivating acceptance of vulnerability and sharing successful practices across EU countries.
- Recognising the role of online mental health support, especially in communities where stigma hinders in-person care.
- Initiatives like mental health first aid training can contribute to community resilience.

Key conclusion: Women in farming can leverage their unique perspectives and networks to foster positive mental health outcomes in their communities. Collaboration and innovation are essential for addressing the diverse needs of women in agriculture.





2nd informal TG meeting: Tailored sustainable mental health support for farmers

Alun Jones, CIHEAM





Tailored sustainable mental health support for farmers

Existing support systems

- › One-to-one counselling available at various levels.
- › Group workshops for farmers.
- › Hotline services for immediate assistance.
- › Addresses issues like suicidal behaviour and domestic violence.

Main takeaway: Existing support systems play a crucial role in addressing mental health challenges among farmers, highlighting the need for tailored interventions to meet their specific needs effectively.





Tailored sustainable mental health support for farmers

Evidence-based approaches

- › Use of research studies to inform interventions
- › Government-funded initiatives targeting mental health
- › Consideration of farmers' broader context for effective support

Main takeaway: Adopting evidence-based approaches is essential for developing sustainable mental health support programs for farmers, ensuring their effectiveness and relevance to farmers' unique circumstances.





Tailored sustainable mental health support for farmers

Long-term funding & integration

- › Securing sustained funding for mental health initiatives
- › Integration of mental health support with agricultural advisory services
- › Training programs for frontline workers to recognise signs of distress

Main takeaway: Securing long-term funding and integrating mental health support into agricultural policies are critical for ensuring sustained accessibility and effectiveness of mental health services for farmers. Strong cooperation among stakeholders is key to addressing mental health challenges comprehensively within farming communities.





3rd meeting of the Subgroup on CAP Strategic Plans: the role of Advisors in mental health support

James Claffey, Irish CAP Network





The role of Advisors in mental health support:

- › The Subgroup on CAP Strategic Plans (SoCSP) is a permanent body within the EU CAP Network's Assembly, working alongside two other subgroups.
- › Members of the Subgroup include representatives from managing authorities, farm advisory services, research institutes, EU-wide NGOs, and regional/local authorities engaged in agriculture and rural development at the EU level.
- › SoCSP serves as a platform for improving CAP Strategic Plans' implementation quality, fostering knowledge exchange, and identifying common challenges and opportunities, thus informing the EU CAP Network's work program.
- › During the 3rd meeting, members had a presentation about the work of the TG and replied to the question: '**How can advisory services better support farmers in recognising and addressing mental health issues?**'





The role of Advisors in mental health support:

- **Training and education:** Advisors must undergo comprehensive training to recognise the signs of mental health issues and understand their impact on farmers.
- **Awareness and destigmatisation:** Advisory services should play a pivotal role in fostering open dialogue and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health in agriculture.
- **Providing resources and referrals:** Advisors can act as gateways to mental health resources and services, providing farmers with access to professional support and guidance.
- **Increasing personal interaction:** Advisory services should prioritise building strong relationships with farmers through personal meetings and consultations.
- **Collaboration:** Collaboration with other stakeholders, such as mental health experts, farmer organisations, and local authorities, is essential for developing comprehensive support networks for farmers.

