

## Analysis

### Department of Agriculture

#### Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network

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**Analyst:** John Terpening

**Request:** Approve the submission of a federal grant application by the Department of Agriculture to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in the amount of \$115,000 to fund stress assistance programs for the agricultural community.

**Analysis:** The Department of Agriculture (ODA) is requesting approval to apply for a federal grant in the amount of \$115,000 as part of the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN). This network provides grants to assist with funding for maintaining or expanding stress assistance programs for agricultural-related occupations. ODA would partner with Oregon State University (OSU), as the University began FRSAN work last year through its extension services.

The grant funding will assist in further developing the current statewide network, expand the current FRSAN clearinghouse database, and provide additional outreach and education. If funding is awarded, ODA would pass on the funds to OSU, as the grant requires it goes through a state agency but there is no match requirement.

The grant application deadline is June 15th. ODA does not anticipate needing any additional Federal Funds expenditure limitation if the grant is awarded.

**Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation:** Approve the request.

## Department of Agriculture Klein

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**Request:** Authorization to apply for a United States Department of Agriculture Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant of \$115,000 to provide funding to sustain and expand stress assistance programs for the agricultural community.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is requesting authorization to apply for a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN). The Department would collaborate with Oregon State University (OSU) for this opportunity. Funding will be used to continue FRSAN programs OSU started during the 2020-21 fiscal year, this includes: further developing statewide networks, expanding the existing FRSAN website with resources for the agricultural community, and providing outreach and education opportunities related to ag-stress and suicide prevention. The work associated with this grant would be performed by OSU, with ODA providing technical assistance for the grant application and the grant reporting processes. There is no match required for this grant and the Department anticipates having sufficient Federal Funds expenditure limitation in the 2021-23 biennium, should they be awarded this grant.



**OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE**

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May 18, 2021

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

**Nature of the Request**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) requests permission to apply for a USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network-State Departments of Agriculture (FRSAN-SDA) grant in partnership with Oregon State University (OSU). ODA and OSU frequently collaborate to serve agricultural community needs for education and one-on-one assistance, and we believe that OSU is the appropriate partner in Oregon to conduct this work with support of grant funds.

Grant funds may be used by State Departments of Agriculture to expand or sustain stress assistance programs for individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations. Funds may support behavioral health counseling programs, helplines and websites, farmer to farmer support networks and support groups, crisis counseling, and outreach services and activities. Grant guidelines require that applicants must be State Departments of Agriculture, and encourages State Departments of Agriculture to use the funds to support eligible programs operated by Tribes, cooperative extension services, and nongovernmental organizations. The grant application deadline is June 15, 2021.

OSU is collaborating with other Extension service personnel across the country to understand the needs of farmers and ranchers and provide training and one on one assistance to address those needs. OSU is requesting \$115,000 to continue the FRSAN work started during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. This will involve three primary objectives: 1) further develop the current statewide network, 2) expand the current clearinghouse

database, and 3) provide outreach and education.

- **Networking:** OSU will further integrate with Oregon AgLink and Oregon Dairy Farmer's Association to promote farm stress, mental health, and suicide prevention education. OSU will continue efforts to recruit additional organizations. As COVID restrictions ease, OSU anticipates increased visibility and increased responsiveness to the program. OSU will explore integration with financial advisors.
- **Clearinghouse:** OSU has constructed a FRISAN website with a wealth of resources available for the agricultural community ([beav.es/farm-stress](http://beav.es/farm-stress)), and will continue to expand these.
- **Education:** OSU will offer additional agriculture-focused suicide prevention trainings (QPR trainings) in both Spanish and English. As COVID restrictions allow, on-farm trainings will be conducted. OSU will also explore building ag-stress/suicide prevention competencies into pre-existing trainings (e.g., pesticide applicator trainings, farm field days, winter grower meetings). OSU will explore education for rural health providers with CE credits, to be available via OSU. OSU will explore finding farmers to be QPR trainers, training trainers, and incorporating personal stories of farmers into trainings. This is expected to increase interest in QPR trainings. Finally, OSU will help promote the FarmAid hotline and 9-9-8 rollout to rural and ag communities.

ODA will provide technical assistance related to the grant application and grant reporting, but is not making cash or in-kind contributions that will be reported to USDA.

### **Agency Action/Background**

Oregon State University is working on multiple initiatives to address rural stress and addiction. The Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, of which OSU is a part, is one of these important initiatives. As part of the Network, OSU is collaborating with the University of Nevada, Reno to survey agricultural producers' needs regarding stress management and to create programs and materials to meet their needs. OSU plans to incorporate reported needs from said survey into 2021-2022 plan of work.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has a long history of working with Oregon State University Extension Service to provide education, outreach, and one-on-one assistance to



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agricultural producers. We have provided funding for multiple OSU initiatives related to pesticide safety and fresh produce safety, and we also collaborate with OSU to educate agricultural producers on many other topics, including water quality protection, processed food safety, and invasive species prevention. We have not previously collaborated in the area of mental health but have received enthusiastic feedback from stakeholders regarding the possibility of collaborating.

**Action Requested**

The ODA respectfully requests permission to apply for a USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network-State Departments of Agriculture (FRSAN-SDA) grant in partnership with Oregon State University (OSU) to further develop a network of partners, expand the current ag mental health resource clearinghouse, and provide outreach and education.

**Legislation Affected**

ODA anticipates having sufficient federal funds expenditure limitation.

Sincerely,



Lauren Henderson, Assistant Director  
Oregon Department of Agriculture

