

Focusing on Farmer Wellness: Young Farmers and Cultivemos

Agriculture is an economic and social bedrock of the United States, yet for decades, farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers have endured growing challenges that increase their levels of stress. After years of grassroots organizing, the 2018 Farm Bill established the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) to develop a network of service providers dedicated to wellness for agricultural workers. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), a branch of USDA, awarded funds to the [National Young Farmers Coalition](#) (Young Farmers), alongside Farm Aid, Farm First, Migrant Clinicians Network, Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust, and University of Maine Cooperative Extension, to carry out farmer wellness programs across the Northeast. Together these six organizations, in partnership with over 90 other organizations and service providers, are known as Cultivemos.

“Cultivemos” is a Spanish word meaning “we cultivate.” Together this network is dedicated to advancing the well-being of agriculture producers, workers, and their families through accessible and effective mental health care and assistance programs. From hosting events, creating resources, fostering connections with service providers, and publishing podcasts, Cultivemos has spearheaded a variety of projects that address the unique mental health needs of the agricultural community. The network services communities in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

A highlight of the work Cultivemos has done is the [Farmer Resource Network](#), which is a free online search tool that can be used to find organizations and resources that are useful for farmers, agricultural service providers, farmworkers, farm communities and farming families across the U.S. Whether someone is looking for support amidst a financial crisis or a natural disaster, seeking a lawyer, or in search of tools to address farm stress and mental well-being, the Farmer Resource Network provides easily accessible and equitable access to much-needed resources.

Many people and communities have been historically marginalized and discriminated against within services for farmers and farm workers. Young Farmers envisions a just future where farming is free of racial violence, accessible to communities, oriented towards environmental well-being, and concerned with health over profit. And as a network, Cultivemos recognizes that discrimination increases both individual and systemic stress and weakens our food and agriculture system. Addressing language barriers by providing access in both Spanish and English, the primary languages of the communities with which Cultivemos works, is one example of how the network aims to make resources more accessible and inclusive of the diversity that exists without our food system. Other examples of the work Cultivemos has carried out over the years include:

- [Cultivating Resilience](#), a six-part podcast all about skills and stressors in farming life, with many personal stories from farmers. Topics covered include succession, community, climate anxiety and farm finances.
- [Stronger Together](#), a training to support all members of the agricultural community to engage in proactive support of mental health concerns in their daily work.
- A Farmer Advisory Board, made up of farmers from around the Northeast region who are paid for their time and ensure that Cultivemos meets the needs of those it serves.
- The formation of Cohorts who have been awarded funding to carry out specific projects, such as the Mental Health and the Queer Farmer Cohorts.

NIFA, through the 2018 Farm Bill, also supported the formation and efforts of other networks similar to Cultivemos across the country. Other regional providers include [Southern Ag Exchange Network](#), [Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program](#), and the [North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center](#).

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