Working group proposal: European farmers' mental health – Risk factors, measuring, policy recommendations

Convenors

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Topic

The mental health of farmers is becoming an increasingly important topic in scientific and political circles. Research and political initiatives are examining the issue from various angles and at the personal, operational, social, national and EU levels.

One of the key research tasks is to describe the state of mental health in agriculture (e.g., prevalence of burnout, depression, suicidality) in different countries and to identify risk factors. To make mental health measurable and quantifiable is another research focus; it includes questions about the suitability of surveys of farmers as a tool, their limitations and possibilities, and the requirements for their design. Another key research task is the question of how and to what extent the state can influence the factors affecting mental health. How could preventive and supportive policy measures be designed? This depends not only on the potential effectiveness of such measures, but also on how well they are accepted by farmers.

Aims

The working group aims to bring together experts from the fields of science and practice to discuss mental health issues among farmers. The main focus is on documenting and structuring the current state of research and reveal potential research gaps. The group aims to identify risk factors and protective factors, determine the extent of exposure, and pinpoint specific risk groups. Another goal is to gather experiences made, particularly with regard to surveys and policy measures. How have farmers responded to these? What has proven successful or unsuccessful in which contexts? What insights can be gained for the future?

Format

Three sessions including two to three presentations and discussion, workshop language will be English. The contributions for the sessions should reflect the following guiding questions:

(1) For session 1: How is the state of mental health in agriculture for different countries? What are the risk factors for mental disorders?

(2) For session 2: How can mental health be measured, and what challenges does this present?

(3) For session 3: How can politics help to improve mental health?