Moving Forward: Who, Where, How?

Research from Anna Scheyett, PhD
Presented by Maria Bowie, DrPH
UGA School of Social Work and College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Start by remembering: This is COMPLICATED
Update on Research Activities through *Rural Georgia Growing Stronger*

- **Who:** Listening to Farm Wives
- **Where:** Precision Agriculture Stress Support (PASS) mapping
- **How:** Messaging Strategies for Farmers
Listening to Farm Wives
Why Farm Wives?
Sunbelt Ag Expo Survey 2021

• Who will a farmer trust and talk with when experiencing extreme stress?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Farmer</th>
<th></th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife/Husband</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>.014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Farmers</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor/Faith Leader</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banker/Financial Advisor</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<td>Local Shop/Restaurant Worker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extension Agent</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>ns</td>
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</table>
Since “spouse” most frequently identified as the person a farmer would trust and talk with about stress

29 women recruited from 6 counties in S GA with support from regional FB and Extension agents

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (STD)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>50.1 (14.4)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College 2 or less</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade degree/certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for children at home</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working outside the home</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years married to farmer</td>
<td>26.7 (14.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years lived on a farm</td>
<td>36.3 (19.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Farm Wives Focus Group Themes

• Asked about stress in their farmer, their children, themselves
• Asked what would help?

• What we heard:
  • Farmers: high stress, reluctance to admit
  • Stress in other family members (children)
  • Stress in self
  • Time is a precious commodity
  • Coping mechanisms exist—faith, family, friends
  • More connections among farm women would be a support
  • Any education/supports for farmers must be brief and/or woven into existing events
Next Steps

• Return to spouses in April/May 2023 to discuss focus group results and gather ideas to build a “farm family stress management toolkit”
• Considering Extension-sponsored social events for women
• Feedback supports our continuation of Farm Stress Production Meetings (DEFINE THIS...)
• Informed development of farm stress management flyer (more in a bit)
Precision Agriculture Stress Support Mapping
Precision Agriculture Stress Support (PASS) Mapping

Project Lead: Wes Porter, Crop & Soil Sciences
Co-leaders: Anna Scheyett, ALEC, Extension, SSW
Barry Croom, ALEC
Leo Bastos, IPA, Crop & Soil Science
Simer Virk, Crop & Soil Sciences, Extension Precision Ag

Graduate Research Assistants: Hugo Nunes Martins Nogueira
Brianna Yoo

Funded by UGA Institute for Integrated Precision Agriculture
The UGA Precision Ag Stress Support (PASS) Initiative

• The primary benefit is the ability to identify high-stress areas, save lives, and improve overall well-being in agricultural communities within Georgia.

• The main goal is to:
  – Develop and test a predictive GIS model to identify high-stress farming conditions at the county level
    • The model will label Georgia counties with a ranking scale for response intervention
  – Test and improve the on-the-ground response protocol for identified high-stress communities
  – Develop an automated workflow to import public data into the mapping process rather than manual entry, to ensure continuous, real-time data updates and map generation.
What data will be mapped?

- Derived from rural Georgia experts, the process prioritized these variables as very important to stress levels of rural communities:

  - Weather
  - Commodity prices
  - Farm operating costs
  - Crop/livestock disease
  - Lack of available labor
  - Lack of access to healthcare
  - Lack of health insurance
  - Opioid and other substance misuse
  - Work-related accidents
  - Sudden changes to the local economy
  - Debts and loans
  - Poverty & high unemployment

Legend:
- UGA Weather Center
- Multiple Sources
- BLS
- CDC’s SVI
- GA DPH OASIS
- Google alerts
- Federal Reserve
- CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index
Beta test

• So far, bivariate analysis to demonstrate proof of concept
• Ultimately, will overlay more static health and social data with more real time variables (e.g. weather)
BUT...identifying high stress counties doesn’t matter unless you do something

• Idea for possible resources in flagged counties
  • Materials (posters, flyers, social media content, newsletter content)
  • Advanced stress-management-related training for Extension faculty, staff, and community stakeholders
  • Information on local behavioral health resources
  • Protocol for who to contact locally to inform of high risk
  • Consultation with qualified counselors, perhaps anonymously
Messaging Strategies for Farmers
Message content regarding innovative stress management behavior change (Identity-value model)

Message context/channel: Normalizes topic and stress management behavior change (Spiral of silence)

Message description of innovative stress management behavior change characteristics (Diffusion of Innovation)

Adoption of innovative stress management behaviors
What does this mean for messages?

• Decrease stigma
  • Use recognized leaders
  • Use “we all” normalizing language

• Messages must match values in identity of Farmer
  • Surveyed at Sunbelt Ag Expo: *family, farming is for generations, and faith*

• Changes in behavior must have certain characteristics
  • Have a clear advantage
  • Be simple
  • Be try-able
  • Result in an observable change
Message Testing

• Crafted messages and selected images based on principles of model
• Tested at Southern Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference
• Asked growers to select message (or combination) and image that most resonated with idea of stress management
Proposed Slogan
“Take care of your family, your farm, and yourself”

Message
- We all know that stress is a part of farming, but high stress can make it really hard to stay focused on what matters. Don’t let stress wear you down—stay SAFER with these simple steps

Images
- Multi-generational images of farmer and land
Stay SAFER

Sleep: Get a good’s night sleep each night

Aware: Be aware when you are getting stressed, a take a break and stretch, even for just 5 minutes

Focus: Focus on things to be grateful for—family, friends, faith

Eat well: Eat healthy food, drink lots of water

Reach out: Talk with someone, a friend, a pastor, a counselor
Next Steps Summary

- Farm Family Stress Management Toolkit
- Finalize PASS and test
- Finalize farmer flyer and test
SIGN UP!

Thriving on the Farm: A blog with tips and supports for managing stress on the farm

Sign up at http://eepurl.com/ibhqJT
THANK YOU!  QUESTIONS FOR ALL PRESENTERS

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