

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **AGRICULTURAL STAKEHOLDERS SEEK SOLUTIONS FOR RURAL STRESS**

### *Stress on the Farm summit to meet May 19*

**MACON, Ga.** – Farm family health and wellness is a priority for many rural Georgia communities. As the backbone of Georgia’s number one industry, agricultural producers face unprecedented pressures, including increasing input costs, a flood of produce imports from Latin America, labor shortages, pandemic protocols for worker safety and more.

A 2019 study by the University of Georgia School of Social Work revealed that rural Georgians’ emotional and behavioral health suffer as a result, and it was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognizing this reality, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) allocated funding for the Georgia Department of Agriculture and UGA Cooperative Extension to help foster enhanced local, regional, and statewide collaborations to cohesively support Georgia’s farm families.

As a key part of this opportunity, these partners are hosting a free, one-day summit to dive into Georgia’s Farm State of Mind. The event, Stress on the Farm: Supporting Wellbeing of Georgia Farm Families, is scheduled for May 19 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center. To register, click [here](#).

Leaders from the American Farm Bureau Federation will share emerging proven practices and recent lessons learned from AFB’s Stronger Together: Farm State of Mind platform. Breakout sessions will focus on identifying and leveraging existing community resources and natural supports.

Community leaders are invited to join the conversation to explore how your organization can engage in this effort and help better serve Georgia farm families. This free event is intended for medical providers, counselors, church leaders, extension agents, policy makers, lenders, local elected officials, county/city municipal staff, pharmacists, school system personnel, agricultural producers, and agribusiness owner/operators.

For more information, please contact Dr. Maria Bowie, conference chair, at 706-542-3824 or [mbowie@uga.edu](mailto:mbowie@uga.edu), or Dr. Mark McCann, co-chair, at 706-542-3824 or [astext@uga.edu](mailto:astext@uga.edu). Other

members of the planning committee and key project partners include the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Venessa Sims, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' Jennifer Dunn, Georgia Farm Bureau's Lily Baucom, Anna Scheyett from the UGA School of Social Work, the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences' Diane Bales, and Andrea Scarrow with UGA Extension, Southwest District.

### **About Georgia Farm Bureau**

Founded in 1937, Georgia Farm Bureau is the state's largest general farm organization and has 158 county offices. Its volunteer members actively participate in local, state and national activities that promote agriculture awareness to their non-farming neighbors. GFB offers its members a wide variety of benefits, including insurance, but enrollment in any of the member benefits is optional and not a requirement for membership. Visit [www.gfb.org](http://www.gfb.org) for more information.

### **About UGA Extension**

UGA Extension translates the science of everyday living for farmers, families and communities to foster a healthy and prosperous Georgia. For more than a century, Extension has provided research and education through a network of committed specialists, agents and volunteers to help Georgians learn, grow and do more. Visit [www.extension.uga.edu](http://www.extension.uga.edu) for more information.