



## **Tennessee Farmers Suicide Prevention**

**Task Force Meeting  
Monday, January 28, 2019  
TSPN Central Office  
446 Metroplex Drive, Suite A-224  
Nashville, TN 37211  
10:00 AM Central**

### **Minutes**

#### **Task Members Present**

Scott Ridgway, MS, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, Co-chair  
Stan Butt, Tennessee Dairy Producers Association  
Phyllis Ferguson, Tennessee Pork Producer's  
Jennifer Goodrich, Tennessee State University  
Mary Beth Henley, University of Tennessee Extension  
Dr. Lauren Kennedy, Tennessee State University  
Ryan King, Tennessee Farmer's Co-op  
Scott Lewis, Farm Credit  
Dr. Chaney Mosley, Middle TN State University  
Dr. Emily Paskewitz, University of Tennessee  
Dan Strasser, Tennessee Farm Bureau  
Lee Fields Wambles, Centerstone  
Dr. Heather Wallace, University of Tennessee Extension

#### **TSPN Staff**

Joanne Perley, MPH, TSPN Staff, Director of Statewide Initiatives and Development

#### **Task Members Absent**

Dale Barnett, Tennessee Poultry Association  
Charles Hord, Tennessee Cattlemen's Association  
Richard Jameson, Tennessee Soybean Association  
Carol Coley McDonald, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Co-chair  
Lou Nave, Farm Animal Care Coalition of Tennessee  
Finis Stribling III, Tennessee State University

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Perley welcomed all to the meeting at 10:16am and thanked all for their attendance.
- Perley asked those present to introduce themselves with their name, agency they represent, and role within their agency.

- **All present were provided with the previous meeting minutes. Ferguson motioned for approval, Butt seconded. The December meeting minutes were approved with no changes.**
- Co-chair Ridgway provided a TSPN Update:
  - The next Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for February 13th, Goodwill Career Center, 937 Herman St, Nashville, TN 37208. Ridgway informed the group that Commissioners Williams has been invited to the February AC meeting. TSPN will also extend an invitation to the Governor-elect also.
  - Last Friday on the front page of the Tennessean there was an article about the Natchez Trace Parkway Bridge (NTPB), A (NTPB) Barrier Committee has been formed to focus on a barrier on the bridge due to the 32 deaths by suicides. Ridgway is Co-Chair of this committee.
  - Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity's National Conference, January 11th & 12th (All Chapter Presidents and Advisors) in which Ridgway presented and promoted suicide prevention to all chapters nationwide.
  - The Next meeting of the Higher Education Suicide Prevention Task Force meets February 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Tennessee Violent Death Advisory Committee held its first meeting Friday, January 4th to discuss the TNVDRS Overview in our state and how the process will work.
  - TSPN is closing out the first six-month reports for the state due January 10th. Training over 18,191 in all curricula including general awareness presentations, QPR, ASIST, suicide2Hope, and many more.
  - Ridgway met with Joseph Williams- Governor-elect transition team member on Wednesday, 1/2/19 about TSPN and the rise of Youth suicide and need for funding for suicide prevention.
  - Status of Suicide Report is in your packets with press release.
  - TSPN is updating all of our brochures/Flyers and will approved by the AC in February.

### **Cookeville FFA Farmers and Suicide Presentation**

- Danielle Johnson and three students from the Cookeville High School FFA presented on Farmer Suicide in Tennessee and beyond. The title of their presentation was "Just a Number: Suicide Rate Among Farmers, is it becoming an epidemic or are the numbers inflated?"

### **Discussion with Lived Experience Producers**

- The producer who was invited was unable to attend. The invitation will be extended to the next meeting.

### **Committee Meetings**

- All committees met to discuss progress and goals for their committee moving forward.

### **Committee Reports**

- Research:
  - The committee asked the task force 'what is a farmer,' to get a definition. Want to work to ensure that all committees are on the same page:

- Those involved with production agriculture.
  - Farm worker with a cultural mix.
  - Farm families.
  - Those who farm to make a living, production agriculture. Primary income from at least one member of the family.
- Also, characteristics of farmers and farm culture:
  - Two groups to target, big famers, claim on schedule F, and those that come in as small and startup farmers who have different stressors.
  - Person first, information second; community first and personal connection.
  - Farm bureau tax service and UT Farm Manage Specialists work with farmers and would be a good liaison.
  - Private, focused, and family focused.
- This committee will look into farmer and suicide research as well as related fields.
- The focus and definition agreed upon is to focus on famers who farm to make a living, production agriculture; primary income from at least one member of the family. The system approach with a focus on the farm family defined as the owner, the family members, and their employees.
- Focus groups as well as surveying professionals, using the TSPN email list, to complete a questionnaire could be used to further detail stressors of farm families.
- Prevention:
  - Reviewing Governor Lee Rural Health Initiative, it was noted that those counties have high suicide rates.
  - Media highlighting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Crisis Text Line, and TSPN already include the Co-op magazine and Farm Bureau News.
  - Upcoming conferences that will have TSPN resources and information represented will be the Pick TN conference, Young Ranchers, and others are in the works.
  - Materials for this demographic were discussed including pop up display for trade shows (we do have table skirts for each region), magnets but something smaller and need for discretion, business cards similar to the key rings as well as putting information in electric bills
  - Agriculture day on the hill and a resolution were discussed as well having co-chair Ridgway testify to the Agriculture Committee.
  - A Tennessee Agriculture Day was also discussed, perhaps coinciding with Agriculture Day on the Hill or another widely held meeting/event, to disseminate the message of suicide prevention for farmers through social media and all other avenues.
  - Perley will work on a story for review with Stan's contact similar to the Co-op story released today.

- Intervention/Postvention:
  - Opportunities to share task force and resources include February 22<sup>nd</sup> Young Farmers, March 8<sup>th</sup>, February 7<sup>th</sup> at Sheriff's Association, and many others.
  - The QPR Train the Trainer course, March 20, 2019 for \$525 to cover materials, was highlighted.
  - The committee is investing how to best meet with rural church leaders.
  - The committee is also pursuing what trainings would be best to utilize for different groups including ASIST, CALM, etc. Co-chair Ridgway noted that the number of suicide prevention trainings that are best practice/evidence based are limited.
  - UT Manage and Farm Bureau tax services were again highlighted a key stakeholders in prevention, with Wallace volunteering to be connected to with these efforts.
  - Wallace highlighted the need to create a logic model/strategic plan for the task force to guide the efforts of the task force as well as best capture impact.
  - Rural Stress Conference attended by both Strasser and McDonald was reported on by Strasser to Perley through an email to be shared hereto. The presentations and videos from the recent Rural Stress conference I attended are available here <https://ruralstress.uga.edu/presentations/> as well as North Dakota State University lessons are online for training and trainers [www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmranchstress](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmranchstress)

### **Goals for Next Meeting**

- Send all conferences/events to Joanne that TSPN could be present at.
- Will be inviting Commissioner of Agriculture to this next meeting.
- Meeting adjourned at 2:01pm by Co-chair Ridgway.
- Perley will send a Doodle poll to all task force members concerning the proposed next meeting, March 29<sup>th</sup>, to judge attendance and availability of task force members. The April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting is confirmed.