



Tennessee Farmers Suicide Prevention Task Force Meeting
Monday, April 29, 2019
TSPN Central Office
446 Metroplex Drive, Suite A-224
Nashville, TN 37211
10:00 AM Central

Minutes

Task Members Present

Carol Coley McDonald, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Co-chair
Scott Ridgway, MS, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, Co-chair
Dale Barnett, Tennessee Poultry Association
Stan Butt, Tennessee Dairy Producers Association
Phyllis Ferguson, Tennessee Pork Producer's
Jennifer Goodrich, Tennessee State University
Mary Beth Henley, University of Tennessee Extension
Charles Hord, Tennessee Cattlemen's Association
Dr. Lauren Kennedy, Tennessee State University
Ryan King, Tennessee Farmer's Co-op
Scott Lewis, Farm Credit
Lou Nave, Field Representative for Congressman Rose
Dr. Emily Paskewitz, University of Tennessee
Dan Strasser, Tennessee Farm Bureau
Finis Stribling III, Tennessee State University
Lee Fields Wambles, Centerstone

TSPN Staff

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

Task Members Absent

Richard Jameson, Tennessee Soybean Association
Dr. Chaney Mosley, Middle TN State University
Dr. Heather Wallace, University of Tennessee Extension

Welcome and Introductions

- Ridgway welcomed all to the meeting at 10:18am and thanked all for their attendance. Noted that the Commissioner will be joining us shortly.
- Ridgway 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. Hord motioned for approval, Barnett seconded. The January meeting minutes were approved with no changes.**
- Co-chair Ridgway provided a TSPN Update:
 - TSPN is closing out the 3rd quarter of the fiscal Year, which includes submitting training, outreach and material numbers; we are requesting everyone please turn in all trainings and outreach efforts to Regional Directors.
 - The Suicide Prevention Higher Education Legislation has been passed and is going to the Governor for signing.
 - Please get your 2019 "Love Never Dies" Memorial Quilt orders now. We have 10 squared left. Every year, we create a new quilt to memorialize the lives of those who died by suicide. Any questions, e-mail to Karyl, Arlyn's mom, at karylofcolumbia@cs.com with QUILT SQUARE in the subject line.
 - The International Suicide Memorial Wall dedication upcoming in May. <https://internationalwallopenhouse2019.eventbrite.com>
 - TSPN will be receiving \$625,000 recurring dollars from the Governor's budget. These funds would be focused on building the regional network. We are hiring the following Regional Directors in the areas below. All the positions will start August 5. Announcements will be sent out May 1st.
 - Northeast Region-Johnson City, TN
 - East TN Region-Knoxville, TN
 - Southeast Region-Chattanooga, TN
 - South Central Region TN-Columbia, TN
 - Southwest Region-Jackson TN
 - Memphis/Shelby Co.
 - Tennessee's new Garrett Lee Smith grant has been submitted and we should hear something by the end of May. This funding will fund two current TSPN staff.
 - TSPN staff attended the Mayor's Veteran's Policy Academy in the DC -3/27-29/19 with the Clarksville Team. Ridgway presented on TSPN's Gun Safety project.
 - The following Statewide meeting will be held this month.
 - Statewide Veterans Suicide Prevention Task Force 4/4
 - Intra-state Department meeting 4/10
 - Tennessee Violent Death Advisory Committee 4/12
 - Statewide Farmer's Suicide Prevention Task Force 4/29
 - Please promote the License Plate in your area, region, please make any effort to continue to press this on social media and sharing to get these numbers up. We have 3 months to get our plates, 504 reserved as of this date..

Department of Agriculture Commissioner Hatcher

- Ridgway welcomed Commissioner Hatcher who was present at the meeting.
- Commissioner Hatcher noted how important what this group is doing and that it is one of his priorities. Two of his mentors, in the Arno community, died by suicide. Everyone is impacted by this tragedy. He is thankful we have this funding and this group in Tennessee and will keep pushing to keep it prominent in our state. Financial pressures

and hopelessness are common issues for farmers thinking of suicide, noting farm income down 50% in Tennessee and the dairy farming community as particularly suffering, .

- Ridgway highlighted that the National Violence Death Reporting System allows many states to report on the number of farmer deaths, but as Tennessee has only recently received this system we will be more able to get a picture of this population in Tennessee in the coming years.
- Those present introduced themselves to the Commissioner and told why they are passionate about being involved in this task force.

Committee Meetings

- All committees met to discuss progress and goals for their committee moving forward.
- Ridgway announced that the goal is to have products/plans prior to the September Advisory Council Meeting.

Committee Reports

- Research:
 - At the last meeting this committee started looking at existing resource on family farm culture and rural literature on suicide prevention.
 - Paskewitz looked specifically at the economic downturn on UK dairy farms and found that those that face an economic downturn deal with such in one of a few ways: diversify, ignore the family and focus on the business, or focus solely on the family isolating and losing their support system.
 - Kennedy reviewed various studies that focused on differences in risk factors and the implications on different demographics. For example, farm owners are typically older and more likely to have relationship stress whereas laborers are often younger and more at risk for substance abuse. Also, those who are exiting agriculture are twice as likely to be black.
 - This committee will move forward to make recommendations to the task force and Advisory Council on how to improve the data we have, make recommendations for policy, trainings, data, and specific outreach components.
 - In the recommendations, the committee plans to use quotes from farmers, utilizing not only data as justifications but stories and personal experience to best resonate the needs to the Tennessee farmer.
- Prevention:
 - The committee is going to work on a one-half page condensed flyer, with four or five points and images. The church bulletin insert is being used as the model for this flyer. King will work with stakeholders to create a Farmers Suicide Prevention logo: Points suggested for the flyer were as follows:
 - Each year in Tennessee an estimated 1,000 men, women, and children die from suicide.
 - Due to the physical and financial stresses incurred in Agriculture, Farmers and Ranchers are especially at risk.
 - The Tennessee Farmers Suicide Prevention Task Force aims to bring awareness to this issue.
 - The Lifeline and Crisis Text line numbers.

- Resolution, since September is Suicide Prevention month, the committee proposed to have a Farmers week during this month. Ryan working with Chairman Halford for the House resolution will amend the resolution to possibly reflect this; will depend on how the house moves forward. During the week long awareness week, the focus would be on social media and consistent messaging to all media across Tennessee.
- The committee created a comprehensive list of engagements connected to the Task Forces efforts:
 - Young Farmers Conference
 - TN Cattleman's Association
 - Farm Bureau Women's Meeting
 - Pick TN Products Meeting
 - Materials distributed to Farm Bureau offices
 - Middle TN Grain Conference
 - Dairy Quarterly Board Meetings
 - TN Sheriff's Association Meetings
 - Co-op Magazine
 - Farm Bureau Magazine
 - Poultry Association Newsletter
- Intervention/Postvention:
 - At the past meeting, the committee decided some groups to target, including the previously mentioned TN Sheriffs Association with a focus on famers/agriculture and tying in the opioid epidemic.
 - The committee requested to have train the entire task force at the August meeting.
 - The main product for the committee will be a wallet card, similar to the one shared at the meeting by Henley, to assist those to intervene with someone who may be thinking of suicide, such as signs and symptoms.
 - The committee will be connecting with research committee for data.
 - Gatekeepers need to have this training including UT Farm manage specialists.
 - In terms of postvention, the committee will confirm that the intervention messaging includes information on reaching out to resources and follow up opportunities.

Goals for Next Meeting

- Will be inviting lived experience producers to next meeting.
- The next meeting will focus on the flyer, wallet card, and Farmer Suicide Prevention week/Resolution.
- Meeting adjourned at 1:06pm by Co-chair Ridgway.

- Next meeting is June 27, changed today, and committees will meet via conference call between now and this date.