

How do Farmers Perceive Information about Economic Hardship and Stress?



We aimed to better understand the experiences of financial and emotional distress among farm households in NC, SC, and VA; Identify what resources farmers experiencing distress found helpful and differentiate these experiences based upon race so that culturally relevant resources could be developed in the future

What We Found:



Measures of long & short-term financial and emotional stressors showed a range of responses and differences by race of the farmer informant.

- For **Black** farmer informants, responses revealed a consciousness of the history of discrimination against family members in particular and Black farmers in general
- **White** farmers tended to have higher scores than Black farmers on questions measuring stress and economic hardship and discussed feeling excluded from support resources because they were small-scale family farmers



Delivery of information directly from fellow farmers, family, and Church were reported as preferred sources - especially about stress management

- Responses to questions about preferences for resources and information on farming practices, farm finances, household finances and stress management showed a mixture of positive and negative feedback about government and community organizations, and lower perceived access to financial and mental health services
- The data from the farmer informants show some race-based differentiation in how certain sources of information are used and accessed

What We Recommend:

Teams-Based and Networking

Existing organizations:

Attempt to operate as teams and form networks that rely on existing strengths to reinforce overall service provision.

Expansion of Financial and Mental Health Services:

Results from this study point toward a need to expand financial and mental health services for small-scale family farmers and their households.



Facilitation and Translation:

Resource providers play an important role as facilitators and translators of information for farmers.

Recognizing Positionality:

Farmers have different historical and contemporary experiences.

Farmer-to-Farmer, Faith-Based, and Community Organizations:

Results demonstrated a role for fellow farmers in providing information and resources for the problems confronting farm households.

Comprehensive Toolbox:

The farm is a complex organization integrating farming practices, farm finances, household finances, family relationships (male and female members of the farm household and division of labor), and legal rules and regulations.

How?

Screening survey + mixed closed-ended and open-ended semi-structured interview



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Who?

30 interviews across 3 states: 15 White farmer informants and 15 Black farmer informants

The majority of farmer informants for this study operate farms that can be classified as Small-Scale Family Farms:



Farm Size
Mean = 204 acres
Median = 41 acres



Gross Farm Sales
Mean = \$57,733
Median = \$21,000



Median Percentage of Income from Off-Farm Sources
41 to 60 %



More than 2/3 of Farmer Informants had at least one family member working on the farm



2/3 of Farmer Informants had less than \$100,000 in farm debt



LAND LOSS PREVENTION PROJECT

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