

# Media Release

For Immediate Release  
December 5, 2005

## **National call for help from Farm Stress/Family Support providers!**

*Individual, confidential, support services reflecting the farming culture is needed.*

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) and the Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC) sponsored a forum for Farm stress counsellors from across Canada.

“A national survey commissioned by CASA identified critical areas that farmer assistance providers must address to meet farmers needs. Farmers require services tailored to meet their specific needs and characteristics.” said Marcel Hacault, Executive director of CASA. “The professionals in attendance recognized that in order to offer meaningful assistance, the departments of agriculture and health must work together, each focusing on their area of expertise.”

“Agriculture is a health disparity group that is under-serviced and suffers from unequal access to services.” said Sharon Clark, Vice-chair of CASA “Farmers must be able to access professionals and trained peers that have a strong understanding of the aspects of farming and rural life.”

The group of Farm family support professionals from across Canada shared their successes, challenges and promising practices. They committed to collaboration with the common goal of meeting the needs of the farm families collectively.

-30-

*Canadian Agricultural Safety Association is a non-profit organization funded through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Renewal chapter. Our mission is to have Canadian agriculture free of workplace injuries and illnesses.*

For further information:

Marcel Hacault  
CASA, Executive Director  
(204) 261-4948

Sharon Clark  
CASA Vice- chair  
(306) 347-5573

and the following provincial contacts:

## Backgrounder

NAME	TITLE	CONTACT INFO
<b>Sandeep Mangat Ph.D</b> (British Columbia)	<b>Senior H&amp;S Coordinator FARSHA</b>	<b>Phone (604)881-6078 Fax (604)881-6079 <a href="mailto:sandeep@farsha.bc.ca">sandeep@farsha.bc.ca</a></b>
<b>Ken Imhoff</b> (Saskatchewan)	<b>Manager, Farm Stress Unit Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food</b>	<b>Tel. 306 787-5196 Fax. 306 798-3042 <a href="mailto:kimhoff@agr.govsk.ca">kimhoff@agr.govsk.ca</a></b>
<b>Bernadette Jones</b> (Saskatchewan)	<b>Farm Stress Unit</b>	<b><a href="mailto:art.jones@sasktel.net">art.jones@sasktel.net</a></b>
<b>Janet Smith</b> (Manitoba)	<b>Program Manager Manitoba Farm &amp; Rural Stress Line</b>	<b>Phone: (204) 571-4182 Fax: (204) 571-4184 <a href="mailto:manager@ruralstress.ca">manager@ruralstress.ca</a></b>
<b>Denis St. Pierre</b> (Ontario)	<b>Chair The Farm Line Support Service</b>	<b>Phone (613) 692-0386 <a href="mailto:dstp@magma.ca">dstp@magma.ca</a></b>
<b>Susan Klein-Swormink</b> (Ontario)	<b>Coordinator The Farm Line Support Service</b>	<b>Phone (613)448-3436 <a href="mailto:coordinator@thefarmline.ca">coordinator@thefarmline.ca</a></b>
<b>Pierre Plourde</b> (Quebec)	<b>Coordonnateur Tel-Aide Québec</b>	<b>Phone (418)683-5079 <a href="mailto:coordonnateur.telaide@clie.net">coordonnateur.telaide@clie.net</a></b>
<b>Armand Savoie</b> (New Brunswick)	<b>CMHA New Brunswick</b>	<b>Phone (506)455-5231 <a href="mailto:armand.savoie@gnb.ca">armand.savoie@gnb.ca</a></b>
<b>Mary Thomson</b> (Nova Scotia)	<b>Farm Family Support Centre</b>	<b>Phone (902)896-0091 <a href="mailto:mjthomson@ns.aliantzinc.ca">mjthomson@ns.aliantzinc.ca</a></b>
<b>Janice Henry , MSW, RSW</b> (Prince Edward Island)	<b>Farm Assistance Program</b>	<b>Phone (902)894-8006 <a href="mailto:janhenry@pei.sympatico.ca">janhenry@pei.sympatico.ca</a></b>
<b>Maria Labrecque- Duchesneau</b>	<b>Au Coeur des Familles Agricoles</b>	<b>Tél. (450)460-4632 Fax. (450)460-8854 <a href="mailto:marialabrecque@sympatico.ca">marialabrecque@sympatico.ca</a></b>
<b>Sharon Clark</b>	<b>Consultant, Sask Workplace, Health, Safety &amp; Education Services</b>	<b>Phone (306)347-5573 Fax (306)347-5908 <a href="mailto:sharone@saho.org">sharone@saho.org</a></b>

Key Recommendations:

## Backgrounder

1. Funding for the establishment and maintenance of provincial based toll-free Farm and Rural Stress Line services enhances mental health services and serves as the entry point for many who seek support. Subsequently stable funding for toll-free farm and rural stress line services ought to be a priority.
2. Farm and ranch families are a health disparity group that is under serviced and suffers from unequal access to services. Farmers and producer groups in recognizing this should be involved in advocating for better access within the health care system. This is especially important as good health / mental health is essential to success in a farming or ranching enterprise.
3. The health care system should assess gaps and barriers in mental health service delivery and support programs that meet the unique needs of farm and ranch families.
4. One on one trained peer support for farmers is a priority. Trust must be earned and the services should match the culture and the region. Face to face support service is ideal.
5. To address the needs of the agricultural sector, mental health workers with a rural/agricultural background should be recruited and trained for services delivery to rural Canada. The training should include an understanding of the farm and rural situation, and the complexities of the debt resolution process. It is essential that they be knowledgeable of mental health issues and the interplay of stressors unique to agriculture.
6. There should be an annual conference for farm/rural mental health providers and other professionals to exchange ideas and resources.
7. Awareness of existing services should be made to the other professionals dealing with farmers. A comprehensive promotional program is recommended to ensure that lawyers, accountants and health professionals are aware of existing services and so that if needed, farmers can be encouraged to access them.
8. The development of an Employee/er Assistance Program, similar to that offered to other industries, should be considered a national priority and be accessible to Canada's agricultural producers and their families. This EAP would allow one-one assistance with pre-approved resources to provide support. This service should be available at no cost to the farmer and be a mandatory part of the mediation services currently offered.