



SafeHabitus

Supporting farmers' mental health: SafeHabitus policy brief calls for coordinated EU action

This press release was updated on 21/11/25 at 18:15

Brussels, 21 November 2025 - Farmers are at the heart of Europe's food security, yet many face growing mental health challenges that too often remain unseen and unaddressed. [The EU Policy Brief on Farmer Mental Health](#), launched by SafeHabitus, with the support of MEP Maria Walsh and MEP Eric Sargiacomo at the European Parliament in Brussels, addresses these issues. It highlights the urgent need for a coordinated European response, setting out 10 key recommendations to improve the mental health and wellbeing of farmers and farm workers across the EU.



"Farming is one of the most dangerous jobs in Europe. Fatalities in the sector are 233% higher than in other industries. However, what too many people overlook are the dangers presented by the epidemic of mental health problems amongst our farmers. An Irish study has shown that 20% of farmers surveyed had suicidal thoughts in the two previous weeks, and nearly 40% reported experiencing moderate to extremely severe stress," MEP Walsh set the scene highlighting the worrying data about farmers' mental health, and concluded: "This is not an issue I will allow to be forgotten. The health, and lives, of too many people are on the line. I will continue to fight until we see happier, healthier farmers across the EU."

MEP Sargiacomo warned about the pressures faced by farmers and highlighted the strength community can bring: "Nowadays, we ask too much of our farmers: they have to be the most competitive in the world, on one hand, and respect the highest environmental standards on the other. It's impossible to cope with this contradiction. That's why we need to protect them against unfair competition, against dumping, against markets that are widely unpredictable. That's also



Funded by
the European Union

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

why we need to support collective action between farmers, to share machinery or to manage their supply together. It's a way to improve their earnings but it is also a way to break social isolation."

The policy brief identifies the main occupational stressors affecting farmers: financial uncertainty, climate change impacts, excessive administrative burden, long working hours, and social isolation. The research underscores the gendered dimensions of mental health in agriculture. While stigma around mental health persists across the sector, women farmers often face compounded pressures linked to work-life balance and caring responsibilities.

In response to these multidimensional challenges, the policy brief presents **ten key recommendations** that span multiple policy domains and governance levels:

- Improve **support services for farmers** and ensure their sustainable funding
- Increase the **capacity of agricultural advisory and extension services** in mental health early detection
- Simplify EU agricultural policies and **reduce administrative burden**
- Establish **sustainable income** support for farmers and farm workers
- Support **mitigation of climate change** and environmental impacts on farming mental health
- Support farmers in managing **financial and legal challenges**
- Ensure adequate **occupational health and wellbeing protection** for farmers
- Address excessive working hours and **work-life balance** challenges
- Ensure high-level and cross-sector government support for mental health in farming
- Implement comprehensive research programmes addressing evidence gaps

For each of the 10 key recommendations, the Policy Brief sets out a number of actions and suggests the bodies which could act on them at EU and national level.



From left to right: Alun Jones (CIHEAM Zaragoza), Sergi Queralt (Geopa (Copa-Cogeca)), David Meredith (Teagasc), Maria Walsh (MEP), Marion Picot (CEJA), and Enrico Somaglia (EFFAT)

By implementing the measures proposed, EU institutions and Member States can build a more resilient, supportive, and sustainable agricultural sector, one that safeguards not only food security but also the wellbeing of those who make it possible.

More information:

- [Policy brief on Farmers' mental health and well-being](#)
- [Deliverable 4.1 Current and future drivers of agricultural change: Assessing the implications for working conditions and occupational stress amongst farmers and farm workers](#)

Media contact:

- **Alun Jones**, CIHEAM Zaragoza, [alun.jones\[at\]iamz.ciheam.org](mailto:alun.jones[at]iamz.ciheam.org)

Research contact:

- **Majda Černič Istenič**, ZRC-SAZU, [majda.cernic-istenic\[at\]zrc-sazu.si](mailto:majda.cernic-istenic[at]zrc-sazu.si)

About the SafeHabitus project

SafeHabitus project is a four-year project coordinated by TEAGASC Ireland, funded by the European Union as part of the Horizon Europe Programme, grant agreement number 101084270. This multi-actor project aims to strengthen Farm Health and Safety Knowledge Innovation Systems (FHS KIS) and support the EU transition to social sustainability in farming.

Website

www.safehabitus.eu

Social media

[LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

Newsletter

[Subscribe here](#)

