

# Agricultural Producer Stress: A Nevada Statewide Study

The Western Regional Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Project (WRASAP), was funded by a USDA NIFA grant with the goal of developing programs to assist farmer/ranchers in 13 Western states and four territories to manage the debilitating effects of stress.

This report captures the perspectives of the Nevada farmer/rancher producers who responded to our survey on issues of stress and coping. The aim of the survey was to better understand the types of stressors that agriculture producers are currently facing, as well as the types of stress management topics they would be most interested in learning more about. We also conducted qualitative interviews with Nevada farmer/ranchers. Select quotes from the interviews are found in small boxes on each page of this report.



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**EXTENSION**

College of Agriculture,  
Biotechnology & Natural Resources



WRASAP



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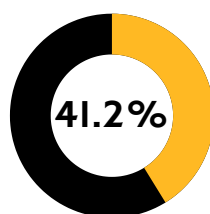


## SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



4 out of 10 participants held a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree.

41.2% had someone in the household working outside of the farm/ranch.



Number of Producer Participants: 69

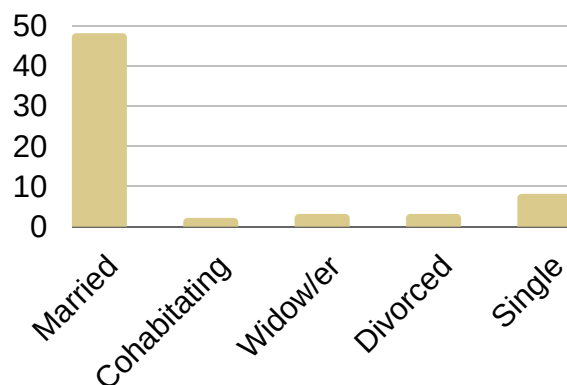
Gender: 67.6% Male, 32.4% female

Average Age: 45 years old

Ethnicity: African American 7.2%, Hispanic 4.3%, Native American 5.8%, White 82.7%

Average Number of Years in Agriculture: 21

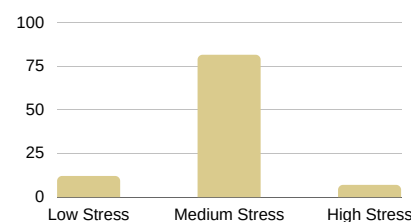
Marital Status: 78.5% married



## Perceived Stress

Background: This survey utilized the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), a widely used instrument for measuring perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are considered by the participant to be stressful. Perception of stress differs from actual stress, in that two farmers could have very similar experiences, but one farmer interprets the experiences as highly stressful, while the other interprets the experiences as low stress. Perception of stress is critical because the body's physical response to stress (and the associated physical problems of chronic stress) is strongly influenced by perception. PSS scores are not diagnostic but are helpful for gaining insight into perceived level of occupational stress. The scale results showed:

- 11.9% of producers reported low stress (scores 1 to 13),
- 81.3% reported moderate stress (scores 14 to 26), and
- 6.8% reported high stress (scores 27 to 40).
- The mean average level of stress was medium (18.97).



## PERCEIVED CAUSES OF STRESS

The chart below shows the percent of producers who indicated that the item was a source of **some, moderate or a great deal of stress**. Very little or no stress is not reported, but can be calculated by subtracting the percent below from 100.



were concerned  
about drought

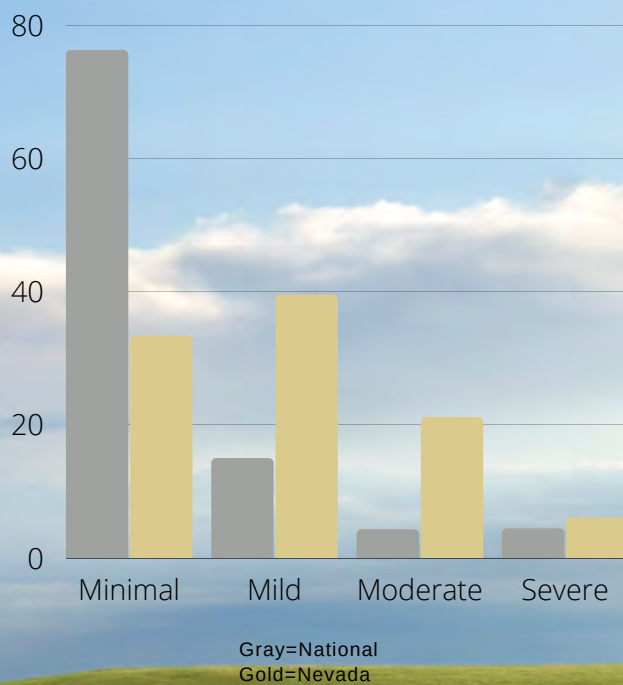
Participant Quote:

*"With everything going on in the world, the prices and stuff have affected me for the last three years. It's been really a hardship with the fluctuation; I mean we have always had fluctuation on cattle prices and hay prices, but nothing as severe as we have had the past three years."*



## DEPRESSION

Utilizing a depression assessment commonly administered in the medical community (PHQ-9), 27.1% of respondents scored as suffering from moderate to severe depression, and 39.5% scored as suffering from mild depression, compared to national averages of 8.7% and 15.0%, respectively. This finding aligns with prior research showing depression to be substantially higher in the agricultural community.\* Note: A limitation in these results is the small number of participants in the study.



*Participant Quote:*

*"People in this industry, tend to be more reserved and less likely to talk about their problems."*

\*Tomitaka, S., Kawasaki, Y., Ide, K. et al. Distributional patterns of item responses and total scores on the PHQ-9 in the general population: data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. BMC Psychiatry 18, 108 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1696-9>

## INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT COPING STRATEGIES

Participants were offered the opportunity to rate on a 1-to-5 scale (5 = very interested) the degree to which they were interested in learning more about 18 coping strategies. In our reporting, HIGH INTEREST denotes 40% or more participants interested or very interested in learning more; MODERATE = 30 to 39% interested or very interested; LOW = 29% or less interested or very interested in learning more about the topic.

### HIGH INTEREST

**Problem Solving (44.7%)**  
**Stress Management (44%)**  
**Nutrition/Cooking (42.6%)**  
**Physical Activity (41.7%)**

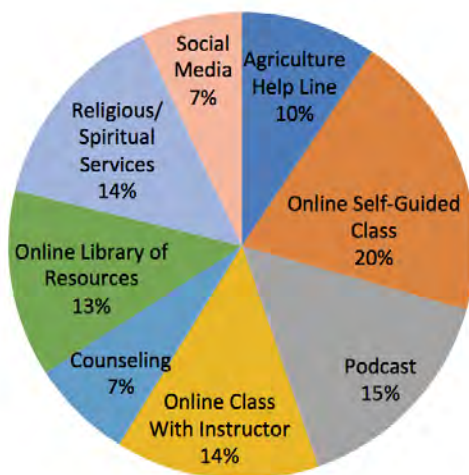
### MODERATE INTEREST

**Succession Planning (39.7%)**  
**Financial (38.2%)**  
**Sleep (37.6%)**  
**Mindfulness (36.8%)**  
**Physical Rehab (34.3%)**  
**Parenting (34.3%)**  
**Retirement Planning (33.9%)**  
**Relationship Support (32.4%)**  
**Mental Health (31.8%)**

### LOW INTEREST

**Career (28.9%)**  
**Alcohol (20.6%)**  
**Support Groups (19.1%)**  
**Grief (19.1%)**  
**Tobacco, Marijuana, Vaping Cessation (7.5%)**

## PREFERRED DELIVERY APPROACHES



Participants were given the opportunity to select the strategies for delivery of information on topics of interest that best suited them. As shown in the pie chart, no particular strategies emerged as dominant, though support for online delivery appeared to be of greater interest than face-to-face delivery.

# SUMMARY and NOTATIONS

## Summary Points

- The participants were long-term farmer/ranchers, primarily married, White males. About 41% of the participants had one household adult working off the farm/ranch.
- Stress levels (perceived) were high, relative to non-farmer/rancher samples. This finding is consistent with prior research.
- Depression levels were higher than a large national sample of non-farmer/ranchers, with 27.1% suffering from moderate to severe depression.
- The top six issues identified as leading to stress were: production costs (84%), legislative issues related to agriculture (78%), workload (77.9%), family (77.9%), livestock (disease and injury) (75.7%), and lack of time (75.3%).

## About the Data

- The data were cleaned in advance of running statistics; false data were removed from the study.
- The analysis of the qualitative interview data and more depth on the survey responses will be disseminated in the upcoming months.

## About the Findings

- Most of the strategies for delivering information showed low interest in accessing information, which is consistent with prior research.
- The best strategies for supporting Nevada farmers and ranchers were social media, online classes/information and webinars.

## Limitations

- The sample was a convenience sample, meaning that those who responded may not represent the whole population of Nevada agriculture producers.
- The sample size was modest; caution should be used in drawing conclusions from the data.

## For More Information

- Contact Brenda Freeman ([brendafreeman@unr.edu](mailto:brendafreeman@unr.edu)) or Lindsay Chichester (775-782-9960).

## Notations

- This publication is made possible through partnerships with Michelle Grocke (Montana State University) and Lorann Stallones (Colorado State University).

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