



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Joan Ballweg
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Weekly Radio Address: Focus on Farmers

Madison... Rep. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) talks about how the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention is working to help farmers and others working in Wisconsin's agriculture industry.

Hi, I'm Representative Joan Ballweg.

Farmers have the highest rates of suicide of any occupation. Farmers and their families are entrepreneurs, whose businesses are dependent on variables such as weather, economic conditions and family support. This is why as Chair of the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention, I made sure we focused our most recent hearing on the unique challenges and struggles facing this population.

Our task force continually heard about the need for community-based, sustainable programs. Farms are very personal businesses that often have generations of pressure to keep them going. Taking time off to ask for help or search for resources often means fear of stigma or loss of independence and less productivity.

The state does have programs already in place to assist farmers in crop and herd management, succession planning, counseling and damage assistance.

However, the recent trends in suicide among farmers means we have to do more. I would like to thank those who attended the hearing, and shared their personal stories. Your input will help us as we develop targeted recommendations aimed at supporting Wisconsin farmers in crisis, and saving lives.

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