



State of Wisconsin
2019 - 2020 LEGISLATURE

January 2020 Special Session

LRB-5419/1

MCP:skw

ASSEMBLY BILL 2

February 7, 2020 - Introduced by COMMITTEE ON ASSEMBLY ORGANIZATION, by request of Governor Tony Evers. Referred to Committee on Agriculture.

1 **AN ACT relating to:** regional farmer support for stress and mental illness and
2 making an appropriation.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill authorizes five positions in the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to serve as regional agents to assist farmers in accessing mental health support, to coordinate local and regional peer support programming, and to provide confidential, one-on-one counseling and assistance to farmers. The bill also authorizes one position in DATCP to serve as a supervisor for these five regional agents. The bill also increases funding to provide trainings to mental health professionals and agribusiness professionals to understand sources of stress, identify the warning signs of stress and suicide, identify effective communication strategies, reduce the stigma associated with mental health concerns, and connect farmers with appropriate mental health resources and other resources.

For further information see the *state* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

3 **SECTION 1. Fiscal changes.**

4 (1) REGIONAL FARMER SUPPORT AGENTS. In the schedule under s. 20.005 (3) for
5 the appropriation to the department of agriculture, trade and consumer protection

1 under s. 20.115 (3) (a), the dollar amount for fiscal year 2020-21 is increased by
2 \$350,500 to increase the authorized FTE positions for the department by 5.0 GPR
3 positions to serve as on-the-ground agents to assist farmers in accessing mental
4 health support, to coordinate local and regional peer support programming, and to
5 provide confidential, one-on-one counseling tailored to concerns facing farmers, and
6 one-on-one assistance to farmers that face a crisis due to a natural disaster or
7 financial problem. The 5.0 positions authorized under this subsection shall cover
8 different regions of the state.

9 (2) REGIONAL FARMER SUPPORT SUPERVISOR. In the schedule under s. 20.005 (3)
10 for the appropriation to the department of agriculture, trade and consumer
11 protection under s. 20.115 (3) (a), the dollar amount for fiscal year 2020-21 is
12 increased by \$90,600 to increase the authorized FTE positions for the department
13 by 1.0 GPR position for supervising and coordinating the positions authorized under
14 sub. (1).

15 (3) REGIONAL FARMER SUPPORT TRAINING PROGRAM. In the schedule under s.
16 20.005 (3) for the appropriation to the department of agriculture, trade and
17 consumer protection under s. 20.115 (3) (a), the dollar amount for fiscal year 2020-21
18 is increased by \$200,000 to provide trainings for mental health professionals and
19 agribusiness professionals. Trainings funded under this subsection shall provide the
20 skills necessary to understand sources of stress and issues facing the agricultural
21 community, identify the warning signs of stress and suicide, identify effective
22 communication strategies, reduce the stigma associated with mental health
23 concerns, and connect farmers with appropriate mental health resources and other
24 resources.

25 (END)