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# Stressors and Coping Strategies in Rural Farmers: A Qualitative Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Farmers in rural areas face unique lifestyle stressors which may cause physical and behavioral health issues. Because of external stressors, and often an internal drive to succeed, farmers in rural areas have high rates of prescription drug use, excessive alcohol use, depression, and suicide. These methods of coping may increase prevalence of distress and mental illness in farmers leading to poor health outcomes. Social norms within rural farming populations are influenced by culture, family, friends, and community beliefs which make it difficult to conduct research about substance use and mental health. The purpose of this study is to identify stressors in rural farmers and positive and negative coping strategies for stress in the farming population. **Methods:** In-depth interviews (35 minutes-1 hour) were conducted with full-time rural farmers ( $n = 15$ ) in ten counties throughout Georgia. Using qualitative analysis, inductive coding was used to identify themes and patterns among transcribed interview recordings.

**Results:** Stressors reported by farmers included: financial, work-life balance, physical health and disconnect from non-farming populations. Farmers described feeling misperceived by those outside of their community and feeling a distinct lack of control due to external factors. All the farmers identified alcohol use as a primary coping strategy to deal with stressors.

**Conclusions:** This study identifies distinct stressors associated with a farming lifestyle and socio-cultural factors that are barriers to care for mental health and substance use in rural farmers. This study can provide information to health practitioners that may lead to a better understanding of the factors influencing farmer's health outcomes.

## KEYWORDS

Rural farmers; alcohol and substance use; mental health; stressors; coping strategies

## Introduction

Farmers in rural areas in the United States face unique stressors which have been amplified in recent decades due to changes in farming practices and economic instability<sup>1</sup>. Farming is physically demanding and many farmers face direct exposure to physical hazards such as working with heavy machinery and dangerous chemicals in unpredictable environments<sup>2</sup>. In addition to immediate risk to physical health, farmers have stress associated with financial uncertainty, isolation from family and community, long workdays, and extreme weather events, which can cause physical and behavioral health issues<sup>3,4</sup>. Farmers report high rates of generalized anxiety and depressive disorders due to work-related stressors<sup>5</sup>. Because of external stressors and often an internal drive to succeed, farmers in rural areas have high rates of tobacco, alcohol, and substance use<sup>6-8</sup>. Several studies have reported higher rates of alcohol consumption and binge drinking in the farming community when compared to non-

farmers in other high-stress occupations<sup>9-14</sup>. Alcohol use and binge drinking in the farming population are associated with adverse occupational outcomes including physical injuries, loss of productivity, and higher medical-related costs<sup>14</sup>. These negative coping strategies may contribute to increased distress, depression, poor health outcomes, and suicide in rural farmers<sup>10,15</sup>.

Barriers to care for mental health and substance use may be contributing factors to mental health and substance use disorders in farmers<sup>16</sup>. Many farms are located in rural areas, where access to mental health or substance use facilities and specialized care is limited or nonexistent<sup>17</sup>. Due to unique cultural and social norms, many farmers do not believe in mental health issues and stigmatize those who seek mental health and substance use care<sup>18</sup>. Public stigma gives rise to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination<sup>19</sup>, as well as self-stigma influencing farmers' normative beliefs and negative attitudes about seeking mental healthcare<sup>20</sup>. High stress in the farming

population, barriers to care, and stigma associated with substance use treatment perpetuate negative coping strategies and delays or prevents treatment for alcohol-related disorders<sup>21–24</sup>.

Currently, there is a deficit of research being conducted in the United States examining stressors, coping strategies, and mental health and alcohol use in rural farmers<sup>25</sup>. Compared to other nations, research examining the patterns of and risk factors contributing to mental health disorders and alcohol use in rural American farmers is outdated. An additional flaw of the existing research is a lack of exploration of risk factors for mental health disorders and alcohol use beyond sociodemographic factors<sup>25</sup>. Normative beliefs, individual and community perceptions, and occupational-related stressors have not been explored with in-depth interviews in previous research. Examining coping strategies that may be perpetuating negative health outcomes is important to ensure the health and safety of farmers. This study identifies distinct stressors associated with a farming lifestyle, coping strategies used by farmers to deal with stressors, and socio-cultural factors that are barriers to care for mental health and substance use in rural farmers.

## Methods

*Setting:* This study used data collected from full-time family farmers whose farms are organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or family corporation. Family farms exclude farms organized as nonfamily corporations or cooperatives, as well as farms with hired managers<sup>26</sup>. Research participants primarily resided in rural Georgia counties with the exception of two farmers interviewed in Bulloch County. Even though Bulloch County is classified as a metro area, there are over 470 farms in the county with 197,200 acres of farmland<sup>27</sup>. The majority of the state is rural with 120 of Georgia's 159 counties classified as non-metropolitan<sup>27</sup>. Agribusiness, which refers to any business related to farming and farming-related commercial activities, is Georgia's leading industry and the state has 42,439 farms. Since 2012, the acreage of farmed land in the state has increased from 9.6 million to 9.95 million acres<sup>28</sup>. The ten counties selected for this study were geographically dispersed throughout the state and participants were recruited

from these areas so different types of farming could be represented.

*Participant Recruitment:* Full-time farmers were recruited to participate in 35-minute- 1-hour in-depth interviews. Full-time was defined as having 75% of income coming from farming. Recruitment strategies included: advertising interviews with Cooperative Extension agents across the state, sharing information with farmers at community meetings, and asking farmers to share study opportunities with fellow farmers. Word-of-mouth recruitment from fellow farmers was the most successful recruitment strategy with 87% of participants resulting from snowball sampling. By using a variety of recruitment methods and interviewing farmers from counties across the state, diverse viewpoints and experiences were represented.

*Data Collection:* Data were collected from a total of 15 rural full-time farmers. Researchers traveled to 12 farms to conduct 13 of the in-depth interviews in – person and two of the interviews were conducted via zoom. An interview script was followed to collect data and procedures were consistent across interviews to decrease bias. The interviews were audio-recorded and facilitated by the same two researchers. A series of questions on stressors, mental health, substance use, and barriers to healthcare were developed using farming consultants and extension agents. Respondents were asked a total of 17 questions including: “What are major stressors associated with farming?”, “What ways have you seen farmers coping with those stressors?” and “Have you seen any negative health effects in farmers/farmworkers because of their coping strategies?”. Structured follow-up questions were used to explore dominant themes based off of previous literature<sup>29</sup>. All study participants provided informed consent and received \$100 for participation.

*Data Analysis and Interpretation:* Audio tapes from the interviews were transcribed and cross-checked by researchers to ensure accurate transcribing of the interviews. Thematic coding was used to analyze data<sup>30</sup>. A large amount of text was reduced to specific thematic categories for each interview and researchers developed a coding dictionary based on preliminary review of the data. The coding dictionary included keywords and quotes that represented responses and themes

identified in the transcripts. Searches were conducted for each code to ensure information related to identified themes were identified. This information was cross-checked by the research team. Researchers reviewed the text by generating a table that listed main themes, subthemes, and all quotes related to each subtheme. The text was broken up by question to reveal thematic categories and highlight relevant interview responses.

## Results

A total of 15 rural farmers were interviewed in counties throughout the state (see Table 1). The majority of farmers interviewed were male, with one female farmer interviewed. The majority of farmers had been managing their own operations for 5–10 years and had grown up in a farming community. Participants represented a wide range of generations of farmers. The majority of farmers interviewed ran a mixed operation with a combination of row cropping and livestock.

### Major stressors

Five major themes emerged for stressors related to farming: financial, environmental factors, work-life balance, physical health, and disconnect/isolation from non-farmers (see Table 2). Participants identified stressors within their lives and those they believed their farming peers experienced. Frequencies represent the number of individuals who identified the stressors rather than the number of times the stressor was mentioned.

Farmers were also asked to report health outcomes associated with farm stressors. Physical health issues reported included: chemical burns, blisters and lacerations, chronic pain from repetitive motion, overweight/obesity, mouth ulcers, chest pain, acid reflux, and injuries from farming equipment. PTSD was described by farmers who had traumatic injuries on the farm or knew others who had a serious farming-related accident. Anxiety symptoms were described by all but two interview participants with symptoms including excessive worrying, loss of sleep, and physical manifestations like mouth ulcers and weight loss.

**Table 1.** Demographics of interview participants.

	Number of Farmers
<b>Type of Farmer</b>	
Cattle	10
Row	9
Poultry	6
Mixed Operation	10
<b>Years Farming</b>	
Less than 5 years	1
5–10 years	8
11–20 years	3
21–25 years	1
More than 25 years	1
<b>Generational History</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Generation	2
2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	3
3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation	4
4 <sup>th</sup> Generation	2
5 <sup>th</sup> Generation	3
6 <sup>th</sup> Generation	1
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	14
Female	1

### Coping strategies

Participants identified positive and negative coping strategies within their lives and those they believed their farming peers experienced (See Table 3). Major themes identified for positive coping strategies included: family time, non-farming hobbies, faith, and small breaks away from farming operations. There was more variation in negative coping strategies and only two major themes emerged: alcohol and substance use. There was often a disconnect between stressors farmers were experiencing and strategies they were using to cope with those stressors. One farmer recognized this dissonance in his farming peers, “Farmers are very independent . . . proud. So I feel sure they do a good job [hiding coping strategies]. There are probably some out there that wouldn’t even think about the things they are doing as something to cope.” Several farmers identified coping mechanisms that did not match with major themes, including retail therapy, gambling, crying and stress eating. The majority of farmers initially identified negative coping strategies when probed about stress management. Alcohol was the most frequently reported negative coping strategy. While fewer farmers led with positive coping strategies, those that did mentioned faith most frequently.

**Table 2.** Stressors in Farming Population.

Stressors	Frequency N (%)	Sub-Themes	Quotes
Finances	14 (93%)	Market prices, equipment cost, animal care, loans and high debt, taxes, insurance	<p>"most of the time our budgets don't even work out on paper".</p> <p>"borrowing a lot more money to make about the same ... and really one bad decision could mess you way up".</p> <p>"The concern here is that am I going to be able to keep it all together to pass on like it was passed on to me and my brother?"</p>
Environmental	9 (60%)	Weather, wildlife and pests, financial costs associated with weather-related events	<p>"That year that all that happened [drought], it stressed me out pretty bad to the point where I had to go to the doctor to take some medication because I was losing my mind."</p>
Work-Life Balance	7 (47%)	Long hours working on the farm, constant vigilance and monitoring of farm operations, little to no leisure/free time, lack of opportunities for vacation, and lack of time with family	<p>"little kids at home you don't get to see them"and that this was "especially a strain on a marriage".</p> <p>"I've laid in bed many a night, worrying about, are we going to make it through this batch?"</p> <p>"I still have anxiety, I wake up three or four times per night, every night. I wake up thinking about the same thing I think about during the day."</p>
Physical Health	5 (33%)	Development of repetitive stress injuries, injuries during maintenance of farm structures or equipment, unprotected exposure to chemicals and fertilizers, lack of medical care to deal with physical injuries, physicians insensitive to farmer's work	<p>"The physical aspect is bad. He goes to the chiropractor, his hips are messed up his joints just from carrying the buckets of chickens. And good luck getting a good insurance because you're self-employed."</p> <p>"Essentially we just keep paying for them to tell us, you have to take time off, you have to take time off work."</p> <p>"I don't think that people realize how dangerous it is. My Christmas Eve, two years ago, my hair got ripped out bald and I was working with a drill going through and letting down the last line of houses and the drill, It spins six hundred spins a minute and it got the tip of my hair and it completely scalped me and it broke my occipital bone."</p>
Isolation/ Disconnect From non- Farmers	4 (27%)	Negative personal interactions with non-farmers in the community, disconnection from policymakers who's decision's influence their day-to-day operations, remote nature of work, lack of prospective workers due to low population in rural areas	<p>"if you do not start out the day feeling like people hate you, go and drive the tractor down the road."</p> <p>"But there is no one else to hire, which is why I can't fire you, right? I mean, the other day I caught him drinking on the job. That is a huge no no. And I don't care if he drinks, but don't do it around equipment. I mean, that's a huge no-no. But I can't fire him because I don't have anybody replacing him. So you kind of have to deal with whatever you got hired at the time being."</p>

## Negative

*Alcohol use* Every farmer mentioned some level of alcohol use, and many reported regular consumption of alcohol as a common strategy for managing stressors associated with a farming lifestyle both personally and among their peers. Farmers commonly reported high levels of alcohol consumption among their peers and mentioned alcohol more

frequently than any other substance when discussing substance use as a coping strategy. When farmers disclosed personal alcohol use it was described as a bonding opportunity with others in the farming community and a way to unwind. One farmer when describing her husband's coping strategy said, "I go to therapy, which helps. He has liquid therapy. So that's kind of how we handle it." This sentiment

**Table 3.** Coping Strategies in Farming Population.

Coping Strategies		
Negative		Frequency N (Proportion Reporting)
Alcohol Use		15 (100%)
Substance Use	Marijuana	6 (40%)
	Rx	7 (47%)
	Medication	
	Tobacco	2 (13%)
Positive		
Family Time		7 (47%)
Non-farming Hobbies		7 (47%)
Faith		5 (33%)
Small Breaks		6 (40%)

of alcohol in lieu of traditional therapy was echoed by other farmers throughout the interview process. One farmer said, “So [I] just sit on the porch. Drink a six pack. I mean, a lot of my friends aren’t necessarily close by where you can go drive 10 minutes down the road. Right? I mean, we sat on the phone for hours and drank beer.” Farmers also described others in the community providing alcohol in times of stress. One farmer said, “But we do have a few friends that even if they can’t understand, they don’t even try to. They’re just like, Hey, I’m here. If you need me, let me stop by and buy you a case of beer.” The transactional nature of this relationship and the function of alcohol in the lives of farmers as a coping mechanism may contribute to feelings of isolation.

Farmers reported alcohol consumption during work hours and reported alcohol use among their farm workers. One farmer linked drinking during work hours with stress relief, saying “Let’s be honest here, I mean, he’ll even have your bad mornings and 10 a.m. He’s like [I’m having] a beer. This is just a bad morning. And I mean, that’s just how he kind of copes with it.” While some farmers reported drinking after hours with friends as a way to decompress, others reported alcohol consumption while working as a way to connect with others on the job. One farm owner replied:

And I used to do it, not to try and get away from anything that was just kind of a habit [after a] long day? shoot, that’s just what we did. And now, you know, I rarely ever, drink at all. I just saw that you can get sucked into that so easy . . . It was always a thing here. You know, we pick peanuts (and) it’s slow. It’s harvest time. There’s seven or eight of us out there working and everybody gets them a little cooler and drinks a few.

Several farmers provided anecdotes about other farmers losing operations due to alcohol consumption. One farmer stated, “I know a guy, he was drinking a lot. And he lost pretty much everything. We did see him at three o’clock he’d start drinking, then it backed up to 12 o’clock and then ten o’clock in the morning, and then it was continuous.”

*Substance use* In addition to alcohol use, many farmers reported the use of other drugs as a coping mechanism for stressors associated with a farming lifestyle. A key distinction from farmer’s discussion of alcohol was that no farmers admitted to personally using drugs other than tobacco, but felt confident that substance use was occurring in their communities. When describing the habits of other farmers, one farmer said:

I feel sure it’s happening. And I’ll be honest, right off the top of my head, I can’t say, Yeah, I know just one guy. He’s probably taking pills or I know this one guy’s probably smoking marijuana or something. I can’t say that for sure off the top of my head, but I feel certain it happens and I feel sure they know it and make sure they try to hide it.

Frequently tobacco use or paraphernalia was observed during research, but few farmers identified tobacco as a substance that they used to cope with stressors associated with a farming lifestyle. Beyond tobacco, farmers reported the use of marijuana in a similar context as alcohol consumption, with one farmer saying “Most everybody partakes and you know they self-medicate. Yeah. Self-medicate with alcohol and probably some smoke.” Marijuana was commonly reported as a method of coping with stress, but farmers insisted that they only knew of others that used marijuana and abstained from personal use. For example: “Yes, a lot of people, they smoke pot, we’ve just never I mean, we just never wanted to. A lot of them, they’re like, Hey, you don’t get drug tested, why not? But a lot of other farmers that is typically what they do to calm themselves down.”

Farmers also reported personal and general use of prescription medications. Farmers were not explicit about whether or not the use of prescription medication by others was off-label use or misuse, and those that reported personal use all said that they were prescribed their medication by

a physician. One farmer said “I do take antidepressants that I did not take prior to being in the farming business.” Other farmers reported being prescribed medications for physical symptoms of anxiety, like chest pain or blisters in their mouths.

### Positive

*Family time* Family time was reported more frequently than all but one other positive coping strategy. When asked about the impact of family time on feelings of stress, one farmer explained: “I’ve got a very healthy support system. So it’s almost like as soon as I get off work, there’s a lot of stress [but] because I’ve got family surrounding me that I love [and] care about, they love [and] care about me, so that relieves a lot of stress right there.” Another farmer expressed the importance of family time not only as a stress management tool, but also as a way to reaffirm the importance of their family:

Family time is sacred and, you know, taking time to go and do stuff together, it kind of tells your family you’re more important to me than your work, you know? And I think that’s super critical because it helps you maintain that healthy relationship with your spouse and children.

*Non-farming hobbies* The importance of non-farming hobbies was another positive coping mechanism that emerged when interviewing farmers. While many farmers reported farming was something they also enjoyed as a hobby, others reported they felt it was important to take time away from their operations to recharge. One farmer from South Georgia said, “And I think a lot of farmers, you know, they say their hobby is farming, but I think it’s healthy to have a non-farming hobby.”

The majority of farmers who discussed non-farming hobbies specifically mentioned hunting as an activity they used to take their mind off day-to-day operations on the farm, even if only briefly. One farmer said that hunting allowed them to “just [get] out and [get] away and just be away from everything.” In addition to hunting for recreation, some farmers reported physical exercise as a key coping mechanism that helped them manage the stress they experienced. One farmer

explained: “I use physical fitness. I enjoy to work out and I enjoy to run. And that’s what I start every day by doing ... to kind of keep me grounded and keep those stressors at bay.”

*Faith* Faith emerged as a major coping strategy for many of the farmers interviewed. Even when it was not mentioned specifically in the context of coping with stressors associated with a farming lifestyle, farmers often mentioned their belief in God as a requisite for their success in the agriculture industry. Farmers reported not only regularly attending church, but frequently reading the bible, with one farmer saying, “that’s how a lot of my friends have dealt with [stress].”

Many farmers reported a belief that both bountiful harvests and surviving lean years could be attributed to their faith, and reported that this was common in their communities and industry. One South Georgia farmer quipped: “irrigate what you can and pray for the rest, pray for all of it, really.” Given that farmers frequently described feeling as though many of the issues and stressors experienced were beyond their control (e.g. weather, market price, cost of inputs, availability of workforce), their belief that faith in a higher power was essential for success in the agriculture industry is consistent.

*Small breaks* Several farmers mentioned the importance of taking time out of their day to clear their minds and separate themselves from operations, if only for a moment, as a strategy for coping with farm-related stress. Many farmers described feeling as though they were constantly thinking of their work and expressed they could not take extended time away from the farm itself because of the constant pressure to accomplish work-related goals. Because of this, many farmers chose to take small breaks throughout their workday to give themselves mental clarity and prevent feeling “burnt-out”. One farmer explained, “I usually just go out there to the cow pasture and just turn the phone off. Having that quiet [time because] my phone rings all day.”

### Discussion

Many of the stressors identified by farmers are known predictors of problematic drinking and substance use<sup>31</sup>. In addition, cultural norms in rural areas might amplify negative coping strategies and make it difficult for farmers to address

stress and intensify mental health and substance use issues<sup>32</sup>. Consistent with previous research, our participants were more likely to use negative coping strategies such as drinking alcohol and abusing substances to deal with stress rather than seeking out therapy or mental health treatment<sup>33</sup>. The prevalence of negative coping strategies in the farming population may be attributable to a combination of individual characteristics like the adherence of farmers to traditionally masculine ideals, mixed with community-level factors like the stigmatization of help-seeking in rural communities. Farming, like other high-risk occupations, has a predominately male workforce that takes pride in their independence and ability to cope without asking for outside help<sup>34–36</sup>. In addition, individuals who seek help for mental health issues in rural communities encounter high levels of public stigma<sup>21</sup> and this fact, combined with a male-dominated workforce concerned with upholding traditional values of masculinity, may perpetuate negative coping strategies within farming populations<sup>37</sup>.

There is an undercurrent of masculine pride and independence to cracking open a 24-pack of beer rather than driving 24 miles to the nearest mental health care provider, and this belief system may contribute to high levels of alcohol consumption in farmers without their awareness. A recent study in Ohio found farmers reported elevated rates of problematic drinking and highlighted a need to address normative perceptions about alcohol consumption<sup>38</sup>. Farmers interviewed in our study demonstrated a “normative misperception”, where drinkers underestimate their own consumption relative to others. Situational factors in the farming community such as family history of drinking, social isolation, and community norms regarding alcohol use may account for this normative misperception<sup>24</sup>. Farmer’s use of maladaptive coping strategies to contend with the instability, physical pain, and isolation associated with a farming lifestyle may only compound these issues and further isolate farmers from their peers and family members.

Though spread out geographically, rural farming communities are tight knit, lacking anonymity and privacy<sup>39,40</sup>. If a farmer receives treatment or prescribed medication for a substance use or

mental health issue, they can be sure to receive negative comments from a neighbor if they choose to share with anyone. Concerns about privacy and negative cultural norms toward mental health providers in rural areas are well-documented<sup>41–44</sup>. People in rural areas often lack options for care beyond their childhood doctors or someone they will see at church<sup>45</sup>.

Farmers are also self-reliant, which has been identified as a barrier to care for help-seeking behaviors and may perpetuate negative coping strategies<sup>46</sup>. There is a great deal of respect among farmers for their elders of previous generations. Having set the culture of independence, distrust of outsiders and masculine pride, older generations of farmers place more stigma on mental health care<sup>47</sup>. Younger farmers may be more open to discussing their mental health; however, they still look to the practices of their elders as sources of tradition and guidance. Rural communities in general tend to have a higher proportion of older individuals and the contributions of this population to wider normative beliefs should not be underestimated<sup>48</sup>.

Those who seek to positively impact mental health among farmers must understand and navigate their complicated cultural milieu. One example is a behavioral health program in the Midwest called “Sowing the Seeds of Hope” highlighted the importance of creating services that were delivered by providers who had knowledge of agriculture to ensure that services are culturally accessible to regions they serve<sup>49</sup>. An additional study by Hagen et al. calls for providers, resources, and messaging to be tailored to farmers’ needs through an individualized approach, normalizing mental health care and increasing awareness of existing services<sup>50</sup>. Training physicians in rural areas to understand agriculture and the realities for farming life could lead to higher quality of care in farmers and increased credibility in the farming community. This understanding would be particularly important for mental health care services.

Another approach to combating alcohol and substance abuse among farmers may tap into positive coping strategies identified in this study. Farmers should be cued to take small breaks, spend more time with family, and adopt non-farming hobbies as ways of managing stress.

Since many of the cultural norms such as self-reliance, masculinity, and pride promote negative coping strategies, using a salutogenic approach to push farmers towards positive coping strategies may be applicable in this population<sup>51</sup>. A recently published qualitative study of Canadian farmers that applied a salutogenic approach found farmers relied heavily on time spent with family and leisure unassociated with farm activities to cope with traditional expectations of farmers as “relentless workers”<sup>51</sup>. This self-perception in farmers was heavily influenced by behavior modeled by previous generations, and while younger farmers acknowledged both internal and external pressures to adhere to this traditional role of farmers in society, they also discussed the importance of taking time away from farming operations to maintain a healthy lifestyle, a sentiment that was mirrored in our respondents. Developing messaging that reinforces family time, and time away from the farm in general, as essential components of a healthy farming lifestyle should be explored as a solution to stress in farmers. Promotion of positive coping strategies, like spending time with family, and overall well-being in farming populations have also been effectively achieved by focusing on health care and messaging at the individual level. Providing farmers with health assessments, encouraging provider referrals, and stress management incorporated into workshops may help farmers increase family and leisure time<sup>52</sup>.

This study had several limitations. While qualitative interviews allowed researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of factors that influence help-seeking behaviors of farmers, it limited the number of participants involved in the study due to the time required to collect data. Convenience sampling was used to source interview participants with a range of perspectives informed by agricultural specialties and regional differences in experience. Another limitation of this study was that information about the age of farmers was not collected by researchers. The interviews took place in one Southeastern state, expanding the scope of interviews beyond a single state could have offered additional insights into barriers to care faced by farmers. Despite these limitations, these results provide information about barriers to care present in an understudied population.

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