



**FARM MANAGEMENT CANADA**  
**GESTION AGRICOLE DU CANADA**

**Request for Proposals for  
“Exploring the Connection between Mental Health and Farm Management”**

**Request Date: March 4, 2019**

**Deadline: March 29, 2019**

*Farm Management Canada is funded in part by:*



*This is a Request for Proposals only. Farm Management Canada is not obligated to accept any proposal or to proceed further, and may, at their sole discretion, elect not to accept any proposal for any reason.*

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# Request for Proposals for “Exploring the Connection between Mental Health and Farm Management”

## PART 1 INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit proposals to undertake research on “Exploring the Connection between Mental Health and Farm Management”. The goal of the study is to further explore factors influencing farmers’ mental health, how we can support mental health through business management, support business management through mental health, and the critical path forward. We further seek to explore whether demographic differences exist between regions, production sectors, gender and age, and steps we can take to meet these individual needs. The results of the study will advise us as an organization, and the industry at large, in supporting business development, competitiveness, and the adoption of farm business management practices to achieve sustainable growth for the Canadian agricultural sector.

Prospective proponents are encouraged to submit a proposal that accomplishes the objectives and meets the criteria outlined below **by 4 p.m. EST on March 29, 2019**. The successful proposal will be approved at the discretion of the Farm Management Canada in conjunction with an advisory committee.

Proponents may submit individual or collaborative proposals in response to the RFP.

### Lead Organization

Farm Management Canada was formed in 1992 following an industry recommendation to establish a national body to coordinate, develop and disseminate farm business management resources and tools to help farmers succeed in business.

Farm Management Canada’s national coordinating role is unique in that they connect the agricultural industry across regions, production sectors and language groups from the grassroots producer level through to advisors, academia, associations, private industry and government to continue to advance Canadian agriculture through innovative business thinking and business management practices.

Farm Management Canada is directed by a 9-member Board of Directors with diverse backgrounds and experience in agriculture and skills development.

More information regarding Farm Management Canada can be found at [www.FMC-GAC.com](http://www.FMC-GAC.com).

### Contact Information

All inquiries and questions concerning this policy and guideline should be directed to:

Farm Management Canada  
Denise Rollin, Project Manager  
300-250 City Centre Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7  
P: 613-237-9060x32  
E: [denise.rollin@fmc-gac.com](mailto:denise.rollin@fmc-gac.com)

### Project Background

A University of Guelph study in 2016 found farmers are among the most vulnerable when it comes to mental health, reporting higher levels of stress, depression, emotional exhaustion and burnout than the general population. The same study found 40 per cent of agricultural producers would feel uneasy getting professional help due to the stigma that exists around the issue.

Farming is unique from any other business. Farms cannot simply pick up and start over when times are tough.

Farmers are facing risk and uncertainty like never before, from Mother Nature to changing markets and regulations, much of which is outside of their control. Social media has put agriculture in the spotlight – for better, and for worse. Public trust and social license is putting enormous pressure on farmers. Then there are the slim profit margins. For every cent lost in the exchange rate, that’s \$1 per hog, \$15 per cow and \$5 per acre of cash crops.

Over the next 10 years, 3 out of 4 farms will change hands. And while farmers put pressure on themselves to carry on the legacy of the farm and remain prosperous, there are increasing pressures from industry by way of increasing capacity and gaining new markets.

By 2050, farmers must produce 70% more food to feed 9 billion people around the world. Further, Canada has set an ambitious target for agriculture to become Canada's key economic driver, moving from the world's 5th to 2nd largest exporter, increasing exports \$20 billion by 2025.

This reality puts farming into a category of its own.

Stress is the human response to change – especially changes that cause worry, frustration, confusion, and a sense of losing control.

Stress can burden us to the point where it threatens our physical and mental health.

Physical signs include an increased heart rate, headaches and trouble sleeping. Mental signs include difficulty concentrating and making decisions. Emotional signs include feeling anxious, agitated and depressed. Behavioural signs include restlessness, compulsive behaviors, and cutting corners. Cutting corners can increase risk, such as; farm safety, labour management, animal health and welfare, long-term profitability, growth and resilience. When it comes to farming, the effects of mental health go beyond the individual. The business must keep going, the team must be led, the animals must be fed, crops managed, and cows milked. Not only must we consider the mental health of the farm manager, but the farm team as well, and how the manager and team are equipped to support positive mental health.

We know that mental health impacts farm business decision-making, but to what extent? What other management practices are influenced by mental health, and how does farm business management impact mental health?

Farm business management practices help reduce risk, increase certainty and increase confidence. Through the business planning process, farmers create a vision and learn to set realistic goals. They assess the risks and opportunities they may encounter along the way and put measures in place to mitigate and manage what is in, and outside of their control. Planning solidifies the farm team, creating a support network including family, business partners, and advisors. It is our belief that in this way, farm business management facilitates mental preparedness, reducing stress and the physical, mental, emotional and behavioural consequences thereof. However, we also know farm business management itself can be stressful, and a daunting task. Perhaps there is a short-term pain for a long-term gain. We know farmers are under tremendous pressure to grow their business and pass on healthy farms. How do farmers' ambitions impact or get impacted by mental health?

Farm Management Canada seeks to further explore the connection between mental health and farm business management including factors influencing mental health, and how we can support mental health through business management, support business management through mental health, and the critical path forward. We further seek to explore whether demographic differences exist between regions, production sectors, gender and age, and steps we can take to meet these individual needs.

## **PART 2 THE DELIVERABLES**

### **Project Objective**

The objective of the study is to explore the connection between farm business management and farmer mental health. This research will help us understand:

- Factors influencing mental health;
- How farm business management impacts mental health;
- How mental health impacts farm business management;
- How we can support mental health through farm business management;
- How we can support farm business management through mental health, and
- The critical path forward.

We further seek to explore whether demographic differences exist between regions, production sectors, gender and age, and steps we can take to meet these individual needs.

### **Deliverables**

The proponent will, at minimum:

- Conduct a literature review/environmental scan of existing research related to the topic to inform the scope, format and content of the study
- Supplement existing data with primary data
  - Work with project partners and appropriate stakeholders to design, conduct and report on the study
  - Develop a statistically rigorous methodology for identifying and assessing connections and correlations between farmer mental health and farm business management
- Assess the relationship between mental health and farm business management
- Provide an interpretation of results including whether demographic differences exist between regions, production sectors, gender and age
- Provide a written report and PowerPoint presentation including an interpretation of the results, implications of the findings and the critical path forward to communicate results, support mental health through business management and business management through mental health taking into account different approaches to meet unique demographic needs
- Work with Farm Management Canada to create messaging to communicate study findings and results to various stakeholder groups

For the duration of the project, the successful proponent must provide quarterly progress reports to Farm Management Canada regarding the project including any variations in deliverables and timelines. Periodic presentations to Farm Management Canada will also be required upon request.

### **Qualifications of Applicant**

The ideal applicant for this project will have extensive background in research, analysis and modeling, along with applicable working knowledge and experience in farm business management and mental health. Specifically, the applicant will possess a(n):

- Extensive background in statistical analysis and modelling
- Extensive knowledge and experience in conducting primary and secondary research
- Capability to develop primary and secondary data-gathering according to the proposed project methodology (ex. literature review, interviews, case studies, focus groups, surveys)
- Ability to manage large volumes of data from various sources
- Ability to manage the project within the timelines and within budgetary allocations
- Strong, accessible, collaborative team approach to deliver the required project outcomes
- Capability to estimate, to manage the project and to provide accurate work plan and budget reports in a timely manner

**Note:** While Farm Management Canada is the lead organization, Farm Management Canada may choose at its sole discretion to work with industry partners. The proponent must be willing to work with all project partners.

## **PART 3 OVERALL RESEARCH DESIGN & SCOPE**

### **Research Design**

The project includes research design, data gathering, analysis and interpretations of results, and sharing of results and recommended next steps to address identified needs and opportunities to act. We are looking to discover what the findings mean in terms of our approach as an organization, and for the industry at large. We want to continue to better support business development, competitiveness, and the adoption of farm business management practices to achieve sustainable growth for the Canadian agricultural sector.

The project should utilize a research design that combines the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies including interviews, focus groups, case studies and surveys. To avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources, it will be important to include secondary research methodologies to learn from those already working in this space in Canada and abroad to help inform the scope, format and content of our study. The research should establish a methodology to link business management practices to quantitative measures of mental health over time.

The research design should include multi-methodology and multi-phase techniques, as well as appropriate modeling to assess links, correlations and causal relationships between farm business management and farmer mental health. Findings are to be captured in a way that allows for analysis of farm and farmer demographics including farm size, production sectors, gender and age.

### **Scope**

This research project is national in scope and should encompass all production sectors and farmer demographics.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible Proponents**

Individual Canadian citizens and any registered organization, agency, association, community group, institution, university, college, group, joint venture, or consortium capable of entering into a legal agreement with Farm Management Canada.

### **Eligible Expenses**

Expenditures that are eligible include but are not limited to:

- Consultant/professional costs to conduct the work and develop the complete package;
- Meeting and research costs; and
- Travel and accommodation costs per Treasury Board.

### **Ineligible Expenses**

Expenditures that are not eligible include but are not limited to:

- Costs incurred prior to the approved project start date including costs associated with preparing and submitting the project application; and
- Capital costs such as the construction of buildings, or the acquisition of land and/or equipment.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Each proponent should provide in their proposal

1. A brief description of the proponent as it relates to the deliverables
2. A description of the projects the proponent has previously or is currently delivering with an emphasis on experience relative to the deliverables
3. The roles and responsibilities of the proponent and any collaborative partners who will be involved in providing the deliverables, together with their identities and relevant respective expertise
4. Knowledge, skills and expertise in the following areas:
  - a. Data collection and management
  - b. Statistical modeling
  - c. Project management
  - d. Communications and reporting
5. A description of how the proponent will provide the deliverables, including a budget and work plan
6. A description of the proposed methodology and processes as it relates to the deliverables

### **Proposal Submission**

- Proposals may be delivered by e-mail only.
- Proposals must be received **by 4:00PM EST on March 29, 2019.**
- Changes to the successful proposal(s) may be requested, but must be agreed to by all parties

All proposals should be submitted to:  
 Farm Management Canada  
 Denise Rollin, Project Manager  
[denise.rollin@fmc-gac.com](mailto:denise.rollin@fmc-gac.com)

**Points System Evaluation**

Step 1: Score Card

The following score card or points system can be used to determine the weighting of certain criteria that will be used by the selection committee.

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Robust quantitative methodology for data collection and management	3
Robust qualitative methodology for data collection and management	3
Specificity of methodology and statistical modeling approaches	2
Extensive experience with methodology and statistical modeling	3
Familiarity with the agricultural sector	2
Familiarity with the mental health sector	2
Familiarity with farm business management practices	2
Partnerships or collaborations with government or industry stakeholders	2
Availability for entire duration of project and possible extension to longitudinal, repeat study	2
Availability for in-person meetings and presentations	1

**Key**

- Evaluation criteria = your outline requirements
- Requirement weighting = Essential (3), Desirable (2), Nice to have (1)
- Evaluation score = based upon reviewing and analyzing the RFP response
  - 0 = does not meet requirements
  - 1 = partially meets requirements
  - 2 = meets requirements
  - 3 = exceeds requirements

Step 2: Value for Project

The following calculation will be used to determine the value of the project in terms of the proposed cost per point awarded:

$$\text{Value of project (\$/point)} = \frac{\text{Proposed cost of project (\$)}}{\text{Total score awarded (points)}}$$

Other Factors to Consider (in addition to the deliverables meeting the outlined requirements):

- Keeness and enthusiasm of the proponent to be involved with the organization
- The professionalism exhibited in all aspects by the proponent
- Quality standards that the proponent has achieved
- The ability to meet timelines and deadlines, including timely progress meetings, presentations and reports
- The ability to meet in-person for regular updates, guidance, de-briefs, etc. in a mutually beneficial set-up
- Whether the proponent has the resources to handle the research, modeling, and analysis in-house
- Costs and payment terms offered and whether they are negotiable
- Vendor’s references and current clients

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

Protection of privacy and release of information:

a) Unless otherwise specifically agreed to between the applicant and Farm Management Canada, all proposals and supporting material will be used by Farm Management Canada solely for the purpose of evaluating the proposal and may be disclosed by Farm Management Canada to third party references, partners, or Farm Management Canada advisors as part of the approval process.

b) All proposals and supporting material shall become the property of Farm Management Canada and Farm Management Canada shall not be required to return the proposal or any supporting material.

Certification:

By submitting this proposal to Farm Management Canada, the applicant acknowledges and agrees that:

a) Farm Management Canada may reject any proposal for any reason it considers proper, may impose terms and conditions to its approval, and its decisions are final and binding on the applicants without any right of appeal. Farm Management Canada may return the documentation of any unsuccessful applicants.

b) Farm Management Canada in accepting the proposal undertakes to consider the proposal for approval but assumes no other obligation or risk and the approval or denial of a proposal raises no liability to Farm Management Canada or any cause of action to any third party placing reliance on the same.

c) The applicant agrees to enter a detailed project contract with Farm Management Canada incorporating any terms and conditions imposed by Farm Management Canada as part of its approval to be signed prior to any advance of funds to the applicant by Farm Management Canada.

d) The applicant agrees to provide information necessary to conduct a credit check and to determine the financial track record of the applicant.

The applicant hereby certifies to Farm Management Canada that the proposal and supporting documentation are true and complete in all respects. The signing authority hereby has read and understood the Confidentiality and Certification clauses:

**Project Leader:**

**Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_