

## Continuing Education for Nurses: Understanding Rural and Farm Stress and the Neurologic Impact of Stress

UK Extension collaborated with UK College of Nursing and the Kentucky Nurses Association (KNA) to provide continuing education to better equip nurses in addressing the mental health challenges and suicides among Kentucky farm populations. Nurses are at the forefront of healthcare and are one of the most trusted professions in our nation.

In addition to providing individual care, nurses frequently serve as community leaders and are advocates for community members at the local, state, and health systems levels. However, the scope of nursing practice frequently focuses on traditional medical models that do not account for social determinants of health, rurality and the stresses of farm living that adversely impact mental health and the nervous system.

On August 17, 2022, the KNA deployed the course *Understanding Rural and Farm Stress and the Neurologic Impact of Stress* via its on-demand continuing education portal. This course focuses on rural mental health challenges and unique farm stressors specific to the wellbeing of farmers, farmworkers, and their families. The course was approved by the Kentucky Board of Nursing and meets continuing education for licensure for all licensed nurses in Kentucky and Nursing compact states.

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### Training Evaluation

As of December 2022, approximately 8,739 nurses have taken the course for credit toward the licensure renewal. After participating in the course:

- 98% of course evaluation respondents reported that learned about the impact of self-care in farming populations.
- 99% reported that they learned how to distinguish the effects of stress.
- 98% reported that they learned to recognize stressors among farming populations.
- 99% reported that they learned about how to identify rural mental health challenges.
- 99% reported that the course was appropriate for their level of clinical practice.