

From: AGRIC Minister - ^ SEVERED

Sent: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 1:40 PM

To: Niki Thorsteinsson · SEVERED

Cc: Minister of Mental Health and Addiction · SEVERED ; Drumheller-Stettler

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Subject: RE: Letter of Support for AgKnow

Dear Niki Thorsteinsson:

Thank you for the August 22, 2024 letter to the Honourable Nate Horner, MLA for Drumheller-Stettler, and I expressing the County of Stettler's support for the AgKnow Program and highlighting the importance of secure consistent funding to support the mental health and well-being of our agricultural producers.

The mental health of farmers is critically important to Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI). AGI provided grant funding to the Applied Research and Extension Council of Alberta for the development of AgKnow, alongside other organizations offering mental health services. It is encouraging to hear there is industry support for work being done for mental health and our programming priority areas are resonating within the agricultural community.

Since 2022, AGI has invested over \$900,000 in AgKnow through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) or its predecessor CAP to support the development and initial delivery of the program. Although Sustainable CAP funding cannot be used for ongoing operations of an organization or program, it can support project-based deliverables and outcomes.

AgKnow is a good fit with Alberta's Sustainable CAP-funded Resiliency and Public Trust Program. My department has been actively working with the AgKnow team to explore eligible initiatives in the next phase of AgKnow. AGI has also encouraged AgKnow to connect with the ministry of Mental Health and Addiction and other stakeholders in mental health and agriculture communities to source long-term operational funding for the program.

The Alberta government is investing in the diverse health needs of rural Albertans through specific rural health programming. You may be interested in learning more about Alberta Health Services' Community and Rural Health Planning Framework and Rural Health services, which include mental health initiatives for rural Albertans.

Thank you again for writing and sharing the county's endorsement for the continued funding of mental health supports for the agriculture industry.

Sincerely,

Honourable RJ Sigurdson  
Minister, Agriculture and Irrigation  
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