



**IDENTIFY CONCERNS:** Our concern is that the agricultural industry exhibits a higher level of suicide, surpassing the rates of all other occupational groups. Suicide rates within the farming and agriculture workforce are 3.5 times higher than those within the general population. From 2000 to 2020, the prevalence of suicides in rural communities experienced a surge of 46%, compared to a 27.3% increase in metro areas. In response to the unfortunate loss of three farmers within our local area due to suicide, the importance of addressing agriculture-related suicides became evident. Additionally, it became clear that it was imperative to educate community members about the signs and indicators linked to suicidal tendencies.



**SET A GOAL:** Having recognized the alarming suicide rates in the agricultural sector, our digital story focuses on raising awareness about the distinct challenges facing farmers and ranchers, along with the indicators of potential suicide. Utilizing the Families First program, we chose to educate our small farming community on the importance of balance and self-care in their daily lives through our digital story. Our goal is to reach 100,000 individuals through our digital story social media campaign and educate individuals about the resources available to those struggling with mental illness and thoughts of suicide.

#### FORM A PLAN (WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW, COST, RESOURCES, AND EVALUATION)



**WHO:** We (Bailey Wheeler & Claire Salmon) will begin by interviewing individuals directly impacted by farmer suicide. We will also interview leaders within the agriculture and healthcare industries. Interviewees include: MO Governor Parson, MO Director of Agriculture Chris Chinn, Henry & St. Clair County USDA County Executive Director Emily Shelby, Local Farmer Ben Gardner and Local Cattle Producer Adam Ashby. Interviews will begin in September 2023 and conclude by December 2023.

**WHAT:** We will compile these interviews into a compelling digital story that focuses on the unique stressors exhibited within the agriculture community and suicide prevention resources.

**WHEN:** The video will be fully edited and completed by Dec. 31, 2023. The finished digital story will be published in a social media blast immediately following STAR event competition.

**WHERE:** The finished digital story will be published on social media channels including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and the school website.

**HOW:** We will contact everyone who is needed to complete this project via email and set up a date and time to facilitate a video interview. We will travel to the office or farm of each person to conduct the interview.

**COST:** There will be no cost (\$0) related to this project due to the generosity of our parents providing transportation & a former FCCLA member who kindly donated their expertise & equipment for the completion of this digital story.

**RESOURCES:** Nikon Z7 Camera and lenses, lapel microphones, tripod, DJI Mavic Pro drone, Adobe Premiere and After Effects software. Statistics & information was gathered from multiple cites as documented on the Works Cited.

**EVALUATION:** We will present this digital story to various community and FCCLA members and have them critique the project based on the Digital Story for a Change STAR Event Rubric.



**ACT:** To reach 100,000 people we will facilitate a social media blast. This social media blast will take place on our chapter's social media channels, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and the school website. We will utilize the information compiled to create our digital story to write creative copy to fit each educational video posted. We will present the digital story to FCCLA members for evaluation based on the Digital Story for a Change STAR Event rubric and make any needed changes.



**FOLLOW UP:** During this project, we learned the startling statistics that have become a heartbreaking reality for many within our community, state, and nation. As we conducted interviews and sifted through hours of gut-wrenching footage, we realized the overwhelming need to change these statistics. If our digital story provides the information needed to save just one person from suicide, our months of effort will be entirely worthwhile. This endeavor is not just a STAR event for us, it has changed our lives. We will forever be mindful of the warning signs of suicide and are committed to making a positive impact on the lives of those within our families and communities.