



## **Resolution #9, North Niagara SCIA – Mental Health Literacy and Training Program for Farmers**

WHEREAS out of a survey of 1100 agriculture producers 45 per cent felt their stress level was high, 58 per cent felt they had various levels of anxiety, 35 per cent were struggling with depression, 38 per cent felt they were emotionally exhausted and 43 per cent felt their attitude was negative; and,

WHEREAS over 40 per cent of those responding felt uneasy about getting professional help and over 50 per cent felt there was not adequate mental health support from the industry; and,

WHEREAS Professor Jones-Bitton with her associate Briana Hagen has built a stakeholder's group which includes producers, industry representatives, veterinarians and mental health professionals to develop agriculture-based mental health literacy and training.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association join the fight against mental illness in the agriculture industry by providing funding towards the mental health literacy and training campaign.

*Background Information: Prof. Andria Jones-Bitton is a professor in the Department of Population Medicine at U of Guelph. She analyzed more than 1,100 responses nationwide to an online stress and resilience survey, conducted on agricultural producers from September 2015 to this past January. She is building a team of producers, industry representatives, veterinarians and mental health professionals to create, deliver and evaluate a mental health literacy training program for farmers. This program would train people to recognize and respond to mental distress and reduce stigma around mental health issues in Ontario's agricultural sector. Jones-Bitton and the Ontario Veterinary College AWARD2E group – an acronym for Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Research and Education – started out studying mental health among veterinarians. The scope grew as it became clear producers also had issues. (Taken from <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2016/06/farmers-need-want-mental-health-help-survey/>)*

*Moved by Don Oliver, Seconded by Alan Yungblut (Niagara North).*

**Carried**

**SENT TO OSICA Executive**

---

### **RESPONSE FROM OSCIA Board of Directors**

At the summer directors' meeting in August, the Provincial Board approved a \$500 donation to the continuing work on mental health being conducted by Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton at the University of Guelph. A summary of mental health services available to Ontario farmers was prepared by staff and posted on the OSCIA website. We are very pleased that Dr. Jones-Bitton will be delivering a skills development workshop at the 2019 Annual Conference titled "*Mental Health in Canadian Farmers-Cultivating Wellness for a Stronger Future*".