

# The Impacts of climate change on farmers' mental health in Finland – measures to manage psychosocial risks

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# The Content

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- What is the situation of Finnish agriculture regarding climate change now and in the future?
- How much stress farmers experience due to climate change?
- What are the measures to manage psychosocial stress caused by climate change?

# What is the situation in Finland regarding climate change?

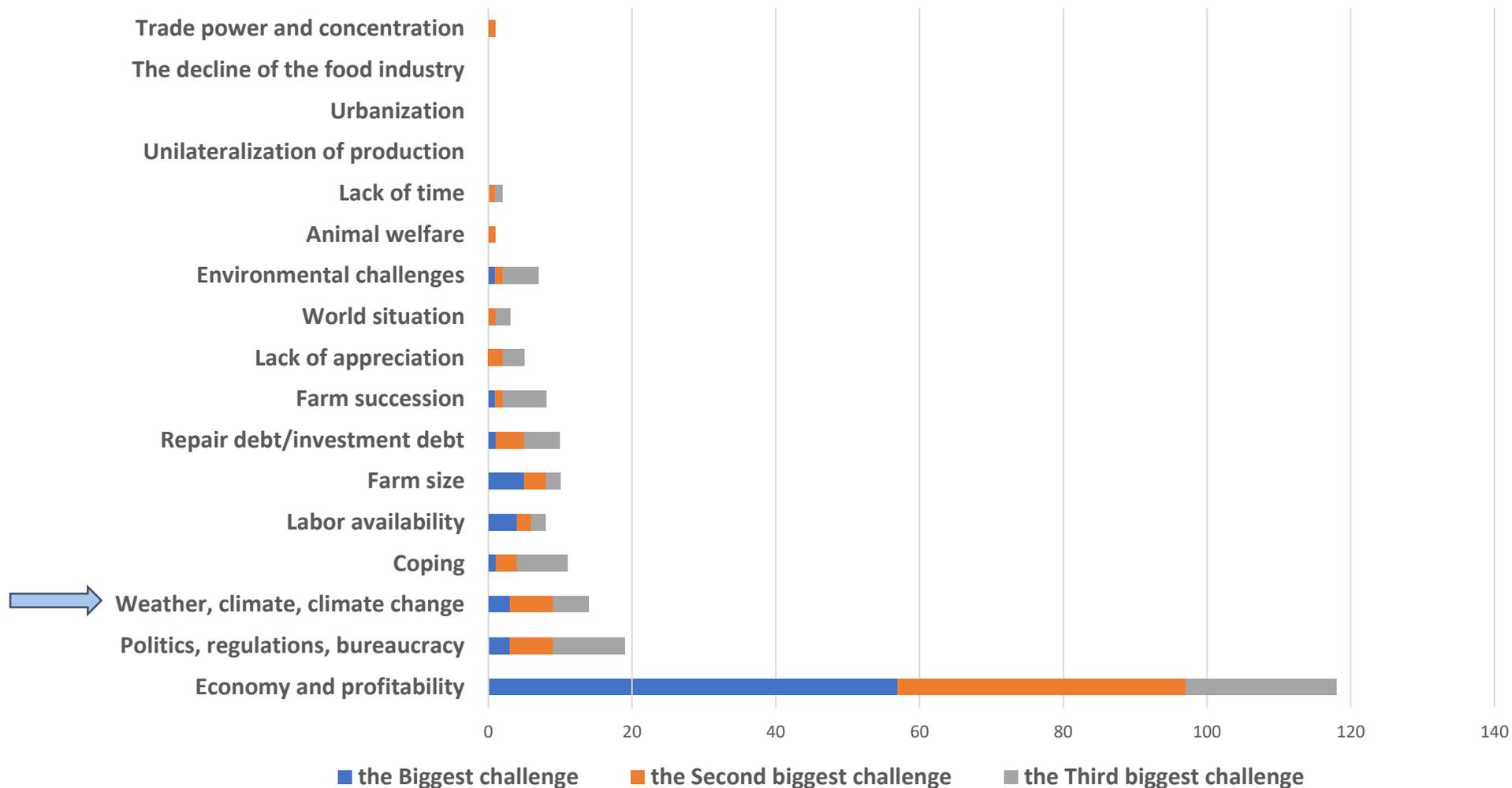
## Some opportunities

- Longer growing seasons
- The possibilities for new plant species and varieties
- Higher yield
- The possibilities to expand cultivation to more northern areas
- Finland has lots of water – proximity of bodies of water

## Some threats

- Extreme weather conditions and storms become more common
- Longer periods of drought, more rain at harvest time
- Warmer conditions and reduction on snow and frost increase the number of pests and plant diseases. New pest species will appear → the use of chemicals is increasing
- diseases spread by animals and insects and risk of skin cancer may increase
- Erosion of fields
- Difficult to predict growing conditions → mental distress

”What do you think are the three biggest challenges for farming in currently and in the near future in the 2020s on your own farm?” Number on mentions



# Support the Farmer -project



## What?

- Finnish Government targeted an allowance to a project to support farmers' wellbeing as a part of 'crisis package for farming' in 2017
- The Farmers' Social Insurance Institution Mela is responsible for carrying out the project
- Based on the need and good results, the project is still going on

## Why?

- The project was initiated in response to increased mental stress perceived by farmers due to structural changes in agriculture, sharp decline of profitability in farming and extreme weather conditions
- The aim of the project is to help farmers, who are working under severe economical and mental pressures, to get the situation under control and to reduce the risk of the loss of their work ability

# Main tools of the project

## Individual help and guidance

- Mela's project workers help farmers to form a clear picture of their situation and to define the steps that need to be taken to solve the problems
- Offers conversational help
- Farm visits and negotiations
- Easy to contact: farmer her-/himself or with help of the co-operation partner
- Free of charge
- Confidential

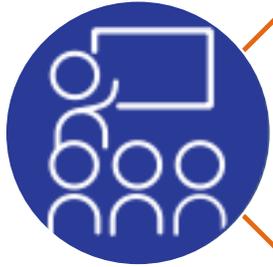
## A voucher for expert services

- If project worker's help is not sufficient
- Expert services to support mental health (psychological help, psychotherapy, pair therapy, work supervision)
- Worth 500 €, max 2/farmer

## Early intervention

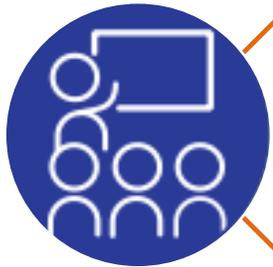
- **Support the Farmer network**
- Mela organizes regional meetings and seminars for the co-operation partners
- **Educations and trainings for farmers**
- Mela organizes different kind trainings / offers digital tools related to psychosocial stress for farmers

# Trainings and courses to manage psychosocial stress



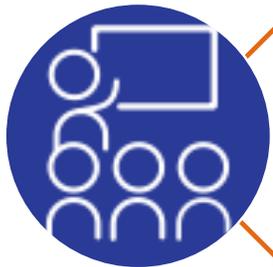
## **Mental Health First Aid course**

- Focuses on providing tools for strengthening mental well-being and coping and offers tools for managing crises



## **Vahva mieli, "Resilient mind" training**

- Focuses on providing tools for strengthening mental well-being and resilience
- Distance learning

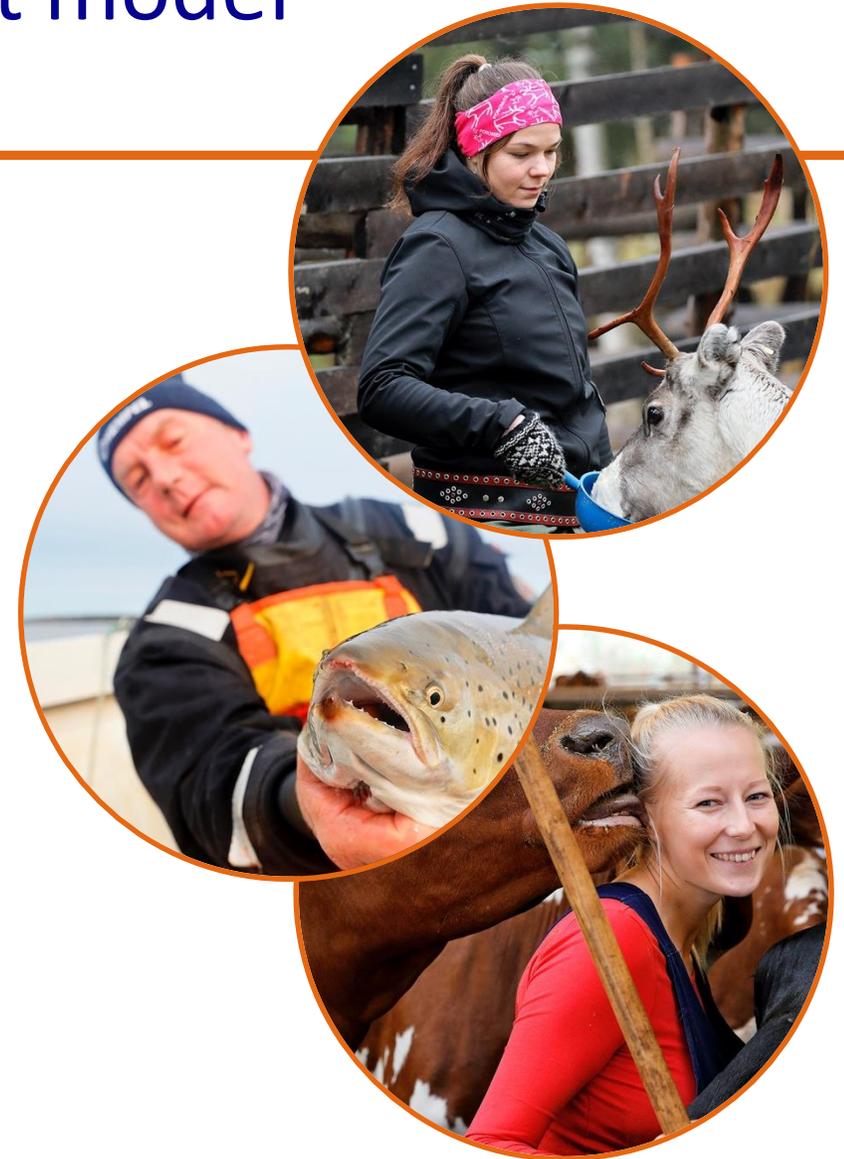


## **Peer groups, Welfare days**

- Changing themes

# Support the Farmer Project - permanent model from the beginning of 2025

- The Government has proposed that Support the Farmer -model is to make statutory/permanent - Parliament is going to discuss the proposal in a few weeks
  - The Results and impacts of the project have been significant
  - The unstable situation in the world has highlighted the importance on food security
- The activities will be financed from the budget of The Ministry of Social and Health Affairs
- In addition to farmers, the law also applies to reindeer herders and fishermen
  - There are about 1000 reindeer herders and 500 fishermen in Finland



# Thank you for your attention!



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