

Study sounds alarm over shock suicide rate among French farmers

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Suicides amongst French farmers are running at a rate of nearly one every two days, the first in-depth study of the issue revealed on Thursday.

Researchers commissioned by the agriculture ministry found a total of 485 [farmers](#) had taken their own lives over the course of 2007, 2008 and 2009, with the death rate particularly high amongst cattle farmers.

The institute which drew up the report found that male farmers were 20 percent more likely to take their own lives than the rest of the population.

The increased risk for cattle farmers between the ages of 55 and 64 was even higher, with a suicide rate 47 percent above the national average.

The researchers linked the high suicide rate to financial stress faced by farmers, who were hit hard in 2008 and 2009 by pressure on wholesale milk and meat prices.

On top of the economic pressures, many farmers have to deal with the isolation that comes with living in rural communities, said Dominique Barrau, the secretary general of the FNSEA farmers' union.

A further study is to be carried out to see if the suicide trend continued into 2010 and 2011.

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