



Sarah Kyle with her family

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Student wins prestigious award to help improve mental health among farmers and their families

A Northumbria University PhD student has won an esteemed studentship award to support her research into the mental well-being of people from farming communities.

Sarah Kyle, a PhD student in the Department of Psychology, has been awarded a Routledge/Round Table Commonwealth Studentship award, worth £5,500, for the academic year 2023-24.

Two of these awards are made each year - one to a UK-based student, and one to a student based elsewhere in the Commonwealth – and competition for these studentships is always hard-fought.

Sarah is researching how well-being can be improved by building resilience to farm-specific stressors. As part of her research, Sarah is developing a scale to measure farming-related stress. She will use the Routledge/Round Table Commonwealth Studentship award to extend the validation of this scale to include the Canadian farming community.

Sarah has a background of more than 20 years in the agricultural sector, being both a farmer's wife and mother of a young farmer. Her knowledge of the agricultural industry comes from a real-life perspective, since she understands first-hand the issues being faced by farmers and their families.

“The study is being carried out to further our understanding of the different causes of stress experienced by members of the UK farming community,” said Sarah. “We are planning to design a new measure of farming related stress and we need to make sure we have captured all the causes of stress before we do this. The study is being carried out as part of a PhD thesis project. Being a farmer's wife and mother myself, I have a personal interest in the outcomes from this study.”

The information gathered as part of Sarah's PhD study will help to understand farmers' wants and needs better and, importantly, enable cross-country comparisons. Evaluation of the similarities and differences across farming populations will facilitate sharing of best practice and the devising of successful interventions to build resilience in farming communities.

The data will provide the evidence base for intervention programmes that will have real world tangible impact on people's lives. Sarah intends that her findings will be adapted for dissemination to a farming audience and at relevant agricultural events.

Any members of the farming community who wish to take part in the studies should visit www.sarahkyle.info where details of both current and future surveys are posted.

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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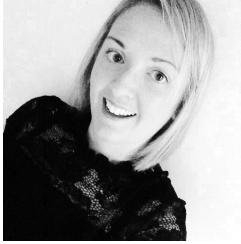


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