

Study: Health care costs strain farmers, ranchers

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) -- A new report says farmers and ranchers often can't afford the health insurance offered to small-business owners.

The report from The Access Project says family farmers and ranchers are insured at a rate higher than the general population, but that 10 percent of them were uninsured, or had an uninsured family member, sometime during the previous year.

The report was based on data gathered through a 2007 survey of farm and ranch operators in seven Great Plains states including Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota.

The survey found that more than one-third of the uninsured farmers and ranchers spent more than 10 percent of their income on health care. They were also four times more likely to have incomes under \$20,000 than those with insurance.

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