



# AGRICULTURAL STRESS AWARENESS

## Let's talk about it

Unpredictable weather, heavy workloads and financial worries can sometimes take their toll on farm families and lead to mental and emotional distress, substance abuse, anxiety, depression and even suicide. Caring for their own health and wellness is often overlooked, but is just as critical as caring for their farm business. Farmers, agricultural agencies and health professionals offer guidance and resources to help cope with farm stress.

Without healthy coping strategies and a support network, it's all too easy to cross the hump into distress. Understanding the symptoms of stress is an important step to dealing with it in a constructive way.

### Symptoms of stress include:

- Anger and irritability
- Feeling worthless
- Lack of Focus
- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol

We may never be able to remove all stress from our lives, but we can build resilience. If you're feeling stress, anxiety, or overwhelm, remember that you're not alone. Reach out for support and know that asking for help is a resilient quality in any farmer.

Long-term stress, such as this, can carry physical and mental health risks, so it is crucial to find a healthy way to manage stress. Not all stress reduction strategies work for everyone — but here are some to help manage stress in your life.

**Deep Breathing:** When we are stressed, our minds and body become overloaded. A minute of deep breathing will help calm the brain and the rest of the body. This technique is excellent because it can be done anywhere and at any time. There are many deep breathing techniques, so you may have to try a few to find one that works best for you. A great one to start with is taking deep breaths while counting backward from 10.

**Acceptance:** Some things cause us stress but are out of our control, such as commodity prices, government regulations, ect. By accepting that they are out of our control, we can take productive steps towards shift time and energy towards a solution instead of getting frustrated by the problem.

**Connect with others:** The act of socializing itself can reduce stress and remind us of our values to those around us. Sharing feelings, frustrations, and stressful problems aids in strengthening our social support system and destigmatizing mental health issues. Friends, family members, spiritual leaders, and counselors may see problems differently and offer insight, solutions, or additional support.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US



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## Resources

### Mental Health Resources

#### Kansas Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC)

The 26 licensed CMHCs have a combined staff of over 4,500 providing mental health services in every county of the state in over 120 locations. Together they form an integral part of the total mental health system in Kansas.

 <https://acmhck.org/about-us/cmhc-directory/>


#### Kansas Farm Bureau / Mental Health Resources

Kansas Farm Bureau offers educational resources to help in times of stress, including mental/behavioral health videos and webinars.

 <https://www.kfb.org/Article/Mental-Health-Resources>


#### Kansas AgrAbility Project

The vision of AgrAbility is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with limitations.

 <https://agrability.k-state.edu/>

#### National Alliance on Mental Illness | Kansas (NAMI Kansas)

NAMI is a strong grassroots organization that conducts tuition free courses for families of individuals with mental illness and organizes support groups for those individuals. Their Web site contains information on disorders, symptoms, treatment, medications and advocacy.

 <https://namikansas.org/>

#### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline


1-800-273-TALK (8255) (ENG), 1-888-628-9454 (ESP) "The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States. We're committed to improving crisis services and advancing suicide prevention by empowering

#### Farm Aid's Farmer Hotline

1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243) "If you need to talk to someone directly, we are here to listen. Whether you have been farming for a few years or decades we welcome your call, our team will listen and point you in the right direction. Our Farm Aid staff answer the hotline Monday through Friday from 9am to 10pm ET / 6am to 7pm PT."

### Other Resources

#### Farm Aid's Farmer Resource Network

 <https://farmaid.my.site.com/FRN/s/>

#### K-State Research and Extension

 <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/>

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