



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **FARM STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO PA ANIMAL AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY**

*A Webinar Recording, Survey Findings, Hotlines and Other Resources Are Now Available*

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – As part of a Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture effort, funded by a USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) Grant, several free mental wellness and farm stress resources are available to the Pennsylvania agriculture community. The Center for Dairy Excellence, Center for Beef Excellence, Center for Poultry & Livestock, PA Beef Producers Working Group, and Penn State Extension Dairy and Livestock teams have collaborated over the past year to find a baseline snapshot of the state of mental wellness in Pennsylvania agriculture and offer resources and avenues for support.

“We have to continue these conversations to make [mental wellness] an acceptable topic to talk about. We need to prepare our ag business professionals, family members, and rural community members to have these conversations. Hopefully the more we do that, it will continue to be normalized and the stigma and embarrassment will start to fade,” said Ginger Fenton, PhD, Dairy Extension Educator at Penn State Extension. “Employers should also promote access to these services such as telehealth and have conversations with employees to increase awareness of what resources are available.”

To gather the initial baseline snapshot of mental wellness in Pennsylvania agriculture, the group distributed the 2022 Pennsylvania Animal Agriculture Mental Wellness Survey and found several important conclusions from the survey responses:

- Mental health is recognized as an important issue by both farmers and agriculture professionals.
- Stress symptoms span the entire animal agriculture community.
- Fear, financial stress, and family dynamics are the greatest risks associated with stress symptoms.
- For those experiencing stress symptoms, obstacles such as cost, embarrassment, availability, and family are present.
- Women, younger generations, and larger farms face greater challenges.

To expand on the survey results with more targeted resources and programs, the following farm stress and mental health resources are available:

- **2022 Mental Wellness Survey Report and Webinar Recording** – The full 2022 PA Animal Agriculture Mental Wellness report with survey findings is now available. A webinar recording in video format is also available to use at trainings and other meetings with agriculture professionals. In the webinar recording, Ginger Fenton, PhD, and Gina Pighetti discuss the survey results and next steps for the agriculture community. Visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/stress](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/stress) to view the survey results and webinar recording.
- **Rack Cards and Posters** – To help community members cope with farm stress and offer resources to those who might be struggling, free posters and rack cards are available at no cost while supplies last. This material can be displayed in offices or businesses and includes high-level statistics about farm stress in Pennsylvania and a list of hotlines that can offer support. Visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/stress](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/stress) to request copies.
- **AgriStress Helpline:** The PA Department of Agriculture’s AgriStress Helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for those who might be struggling with farm stress. Call 833-897-2474 to talk to a professional who can offer support.
- **Additional Hotlines and Resources to Help** – For additional hotlines, resources, or contacts for professionals who can assist with farm stress trainings, visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/stress](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/stress) to view a full list.

For questions on these resources or how to access them, call 717-346-0849.

These resources are offered as part of a Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture effort, funded by a USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) Grant. The Center for Dairy Excellence, Center for Beef Excellence, Center for Poultry & Livestock, PA Beef Producers Working Group, and Penn State Extension Dairy and Livestock teams are partnering on the initiative.

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The Center for Dairy Excellence is a non-profit organization initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in 2004. Bringing together people from more than 40 different dairy organizations in Pennsylvania, the Center’s mission is to enhance the profitability of the dairy industry by empowering people, creating partnerships, and increasing the availability and use of resources. Learn more at [centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://centerfordairyexcellence.org).