



For Immediate Release

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FREE WEBINAR TO SHARE FINDINGS FROM ANIMAL AG MENTAL WELLNESS SURVEY ON OCT. 14

Speakers Will Share Key Findings From the Survey and What It Means for PA Animal Agriculture

Harrisburg, Pa. – For Pennsylvania agriculture professionals who missed the release of the 2022 PA Animal Agriculture Mental Wellness Survey results, a free webinar is being held on Friday, October 14 from 9-10 a.m. Ginger Fenton, PhD and Dairy Extension Educator at Penn State Extension and Gina Pighetti, retired professor from the Tennessee State University, will share key findings from the study and what it means for 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 are partnering to host the webinar.

“The stress is real. We know and recognize that farming is stressful. There are a lot of things out of your control, and mental health can be a challenge,” said Gina Pighetti who served on the research team and will be speaking on the webinar. “I think we’re gaining more appreciation of it because of public domain and public figures speaking more frequently about their challenges, but we need to get a snapshot and then figure out how we can start to address some of those issues and concerns.”

The 2022 Pennsylvania Animal Agriculture Mental Wellness Survey was developed to generate a baseline snapshot of the state of mental wellness in Pennsylvania agriculture. One of the key objectives was identifying potential needs relative to mental health for livestock producers. While the survey is only a snapshot of one part of the Pennsylvania agriculture community, 90% of industry professionals and 89% of farmers surveyed felt that mental health was moderately or very important.

Individuals who completed the survey were asked to indicate feelings and behaviors associated with farm stress as well as specific factors, such as financial stress or family dynamics, that might impact farm stress.

“The responses were very telling. Even those individuals who might not be involved in the day-to-day agriculture operations, such as spouses or clergy members, still need to be cognizant of the issues related to the health and well-being of our farmers,” Fenton said. “It just emphasizes that it’s a community effort. Industry professionals felt less confident in recognizing and responding to mental health conditions, and they are our front-line people. It’s all the more reason to make sure they are in the conversation.”

To sign up for the free webinar and receive connection details, visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/mental-wellness-webinar or call 717-346-0849.

The webinar is being 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 to host the virtual event.

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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.