

Coping with **FARM STRESS** *You Are Not Alone*

Farming is a rewarding career and lifestyle, but it can be filled with uncertainty. You are not alone in facing these uncertainties, and it is not uncommon for livestock producers to experience anxiety and depression. To help you cope with farm stress and support family and friends who might be struggling, the following tools and hotlines are available to help.

Symptoms of Stress:

- Anger and irritability
- Feeling worthless
- Racing thoughts and lack of focus
- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol

Farm Stress Coping Strategies:

To help cope with stress, try any two of these ideas each day for 2-3 weeks. Research has found it takes approximately 21 days to cement a new habit.

- **Meditate** – Think of any moment that made you feel comforted and content. Close your eyes and relive that moment.
- **Self-Talk** – Tell yourself you can get through it. You have come through rough times before. You can do it again.
- **Breathe** – Breathe deeply five times. Release the air slowly.
- **Exercise** – A brisk 10-minute walk releases 50-70% of the cortisol in your brain that comes with stress or anger. Take a few minutes away from everyone and everything to walk by yourself.




What not to do:

- Force people to share their stories.
- Make statements like “Everything will be fine.”
- Tell people what they should be feeling, thinking or doing.
- Make promises you can’t keep.



Fast Facts

from the 2022 PA Animal
Agriculture Mental Wellness Survey

- **90% of farmers and ag professionals** view mental health as important
- **Top four symptoms of stress** experienced by farmers:
 1. Tired / less energy - 72.5%
 2. Nervous / anxious - 45%
 3. Low energy - 42%
 4. Difficulty sleeping - 37.5%
- **Top three factors influencing stress:**
 -  Fear
 -  Financial stress
 -  Family dynamics
- Stress symptoms greatly increase with obstacles such as cost, availability, family, and embarrassment
- Learn the symptoms:
 - 50% of farmers feel confident in recognizing symptoms in others
 - 37% of farmers feel confident in responding to symptoms in others

Help is available 24/7 to the agriculture community

Who to Call:

- **AgriStress Helpline:** Call 833-897-2474.
This hotline is available 24/7.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**
Dial 988 or 800-273-8255. Or text GO to 741741 for those in need of emotional support day or night.
- **Rural Response Hotline:** Call 800-464-0258
Monday to Friday (8am - 5pm). Free personal counseling and financial/legal services are available.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):** Call 800-662-4357.

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Sources: Michigan State Extension | Penn State Extension