



Report on the Findings of the Pennsylvania Animal Agriculture Mental Wellness Survey

August 2022

This report is part of an initiative of the Pennsylvania Beef Working Group, Center for Beef Excellence, Center for Poultry & Livestock Excellence, Penn State Extension, and Center for Dairy Excellence. It is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the USDA Farmer Rancher Stress Network Assistance Program.



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Report: Pennsylvania Animal Agriculture Mental Wellness Survey

Team Members

Melissa Anderson, Center of Dairy Excellence
Cheryl Fairbairn, Penn State Extension
Ginger Fenton, PhD, Penn State Extension
Jennifer Reed Harry, Center for Poultry and Livestock
Nichole Hockenberry, PA Beef Council
Michelle Kirk, Center for Beef Excellence
Gina Pighetti, PhD, retired animal science faculty from University of Tennessee
Suzanne Pish, MA, LPC Licensed Practicing Counselor
Jayne Sebright, Center for Dairy Excellence

Objectives: Generate a baseline snapshot on state of mental wellness within the Pennsylvania farm community and needs of the community relative to mental health.

Methods

Sample populations. Two populations in the state of Pennsylvania were of interest in this project: livestock farmers and industry professionals that work with farmers.

Survey development. Two surveys were developed, one for livestock operators and one for agriculture industry professionals, by the members of the mental health committee (all but Gina Pighetti).

Survey notification, delivery, and completion. Printed surveys were mailed once to dairy, beef, sheep, swine, and goat producers (n=7,862) and industry professionals (n=329). Mixed methods were utilized for survey administration as the printed survey could be completed and returned by U.S. mail or completed online. A variety of strategies were used to inform and remind Pennsylvania farmers and industry professionals about the survey: including distribution through organization electronic databases (PennAg Industries Association, PABeef Producers, Center for Poultry and Livestock Excellence, Center for Dairy Excellence, Center for Beef Excellence), social media posts by participating groups, and in person workshops and meetings. Surveys were available and accepted between December 11, 2021 and January 31, 2022.

Data analysis. In order to ensure that respondents answered the majority of questions and reduce non-response error, we assessed completion of five separate questions. If more than one of the five questions was skipped, the respondent was removed from the dataset. For farmers, 12 respondents were removed for a final total of 570. No respondents were removed for industry professionals, maintaining 102 respondents. Frequencies were determined using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0 (Armonk, NY). To better understand what factors contributed to the feelings of stress symptoms, we determined the probability or relative risk using Proc SurveyFreq in SAS 9.4 (Raleigh, NC). The chi-square statistic was used to determine if observed frequencies differed from expected frequencies. A P-value less than or equal to 0.05 was considered significant. This P-value reflects the confidence in the association. In this case, we would be wrong about this association only five out of 100 times. Microsoft Excel was used in preparing charts and tables.



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Survey Findings

The response rates were 7.5% (n=592) for farmers and 31.0% (n=102) for industry professionals based on the number of printed surveys that were distributed. The limited response rate for farmers could partly reflect that a number of farmers most likely belong to mailing lists of several animal agriculture organizations which is not accounted for in calculating the response rate. To support this assumption, 43% of respondents indicated they had more than one species on farm.

Demographics of Respondents

The farmers that responded to the survey most frequently responded on their own behalf with 94% indicating “self” as the respondent. In some cases, responses were provided on behalf of another including “spouse”, “partner”, “parent”, or “other”. Ag industry professionals were not asked this question.

When indicating gender of the respondent, 70% of farmers were male with 27% indicating female. The gender distribution of ag industry professionals was more evenly split with 50% male and 48% female while 2% of the respondents to both surveys preferred not to answer.

Table 1 Gender of respondents to farmer and ag industry professional surveys.

Gender	Farmer (n=558*) Number (%)	Industry (n=102) Number (%)
Male	393 (70)	51 (50)
Female	150 (27)	49 (48)
Other	3 (0.5)	0 (0)
Prefer not to answer	12 (2)	2 (2)

*“Prefer not to answer” was presented as a choice, but an additional 12 respondents did not answer this question in the farmer survey.

The highest age category was the most frequent choice of respondents to both surveys (Tables 2 and 3). For farmers, 61 years and up, was indicated by 37% while 39% of the ag industry respondents were 56 and older. Responses to both surveys were low from the youngest age group with only 6% of farmers between 18 – 30 years old and 3% of ag industry professional that were 25 or younger.

Table 2 Age categories representing farmers that responded to the survey.

Age* Category	Number (n=566)	Percent
18 – 30	33	6
31 – 40	88	15
41 – 50	94	17
51 -60	140	25
61 and up	211	37

*age in years

Table 3 Age categories representing ag industry professional survey responses.

Age* Category	Number (n=101)	Percent
25 and under	3	3
26 to 35	19	19
36 to 45	20	20
46 to 55	20	20
56 and above	39	39

*age in years

Years in the agriculture industry and years farming also demonstrate a large portion of respondents in the highest category with more than one-half of ag industry professionals reporting as such and 40% of farmers reflecting this choice.



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Table 4 Farmers indicate the number of years that farming has been their occupation.

Years farming as occupation	Number (n=566)	Percent
1 to 5	15	3
6 to 10	35	6
11 to 20	98	17
21 to 30	102	18
31 to 40	88	16
41 or more	228	40

Table 5 The ag industry professionals that responded indicated the number of years in the industry.

Years in ag industry	Number (n=102)	Percent
less than 1 to 5	13	13
6 to 10	17	16
11 to 20	18	18
21 or more	54	53

The structure of the agricultural businesses associated with the farmer respondents reflected sole proprietorships with 62% of the responses, followed by partnership (16%), and LLC or corporation at 15%. Of those farm businesses that had partners, 110 reported 2 partners, while 28 had 3 partners, and 27 had 4 or more partners. Additionally, the involvement of family members that were non-partners in the business was indicated by 44%. Response was slightly higher when respondents were asked for the number of non-partner family members involved (Table 6). Ag industry professionals were provided with slightly different choices when asked about business structure with which they most commonly worked. Husband and wife team was reported by 36%, sole proprietorship by 28%, family partnership with 3 or less by 28%, family partnership of more than 3 by 5% and another structure by 3%.

Table 6 The type of business structure, number of partners in the business, and involvement of non-partners family members is described.

Business structure reported by farmers (n=560)	Number	Percent
Sole proprietorship	350	62
Partnership	88	16
LLC or corporation	85	15
Other	16	3
Prefer not to answer	21	4
Number of business partners*		
2 partners	110	20
3 partners	28	5
4 or more partners	27	5
Non-partner family members involved	251	45
Number of non-partner family members involved		
2 or fewer family members	159	28
3 to 5 family members	117	21
6 or more family members	30	5

*The number of respondents to this question is greater than those who indicated partnership.



The target audience of the survey was Pennsylvania livestock producers which included dairy, beef, swine, poultry and other species. The breakdown of species raised by the respondents is in Table 7. Farmers were asked to indicate which species they raised, so more than one answer was possible from each farmer. A closer look indicated that 40% of those responding only raised dairy, 32% only raised beef, and another 16% had beef and dairy only. The ag industry professionals that responded indicated that they most frequently encountered dairy operations as noted by 72%.

Table 7 Farmer respondents indicated all species that were raised on their operations.

Livestock on operation (n=570)	Number	Percent
Dairy	319	56
Only dairy	227	40
Beef	275	48
Only beef	184	32
Only dairy and beef	91	16
Swine	93	16
Poultry	112	20
Small ruminants	86	15
Other livestock	68	12

*Totals are greater than 100% as more than one species per farm was indicated.

The most frequently reported number of head of livestock on the operation was 51 to 200 (49%) with an additional 23% indicating 50 or fewer head, while 14% had 201 to 500 head, 5% had 501 to 1000 head, 2% had 1001 to 2000 head, and 7% had 2001 or more head on the farm.

The respondents from both survey groups were asked in which region of Pennsylvania they were located (Table 8). The top response for farmers was the Northeast region at 30% while more ag industry professionals were located in the Central region with 34%. The second most frequent location for farmers was the Central region Pennsylvania followed by the Southeast. The lowest number of responses for both groups was from the Northwest and Southwest regions.

Table 8 Most participants to both surveys were located in Central and Eastern Pennsylvania.

Region of Pennsylvania	Farmer number (%)	Industry number (%)
Northeast	165 (30)	26 (26)
Southeast	120 (22)	24 (24)
Central	149 (27)	34 (34)
Northwest	61 (11)	7 (7)
Southwest	53 (10)	8 (8)

*Farmers (n=548) and Ag professionals (n=99)

The ag industry professionals that responded to the survey were a diverse group with 20% who indicated a profession other than the choices presented, 19% were financial/accounting, 17% in the veterinary field, 9% each of feed and nutrition, marketing cooperative, and Extension, another 5% each in crop inputs and sales, 3% each in genetics and engineering, and 1% in nutrient management, equipment provider, and hauling or transport.

Responses, Behaviors, and Attitudes toward Stress

The overall response from farmers and ag industry professionals was that mental health was moderately or very important with 89% and 90%, respectively, responding as such (Table 9). Of the ag industry professionals, 72% felt that mental health is a serious issue in the farming community (Table 10).



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Table 9 Importance of mental health to farmers and ag industry professionals.

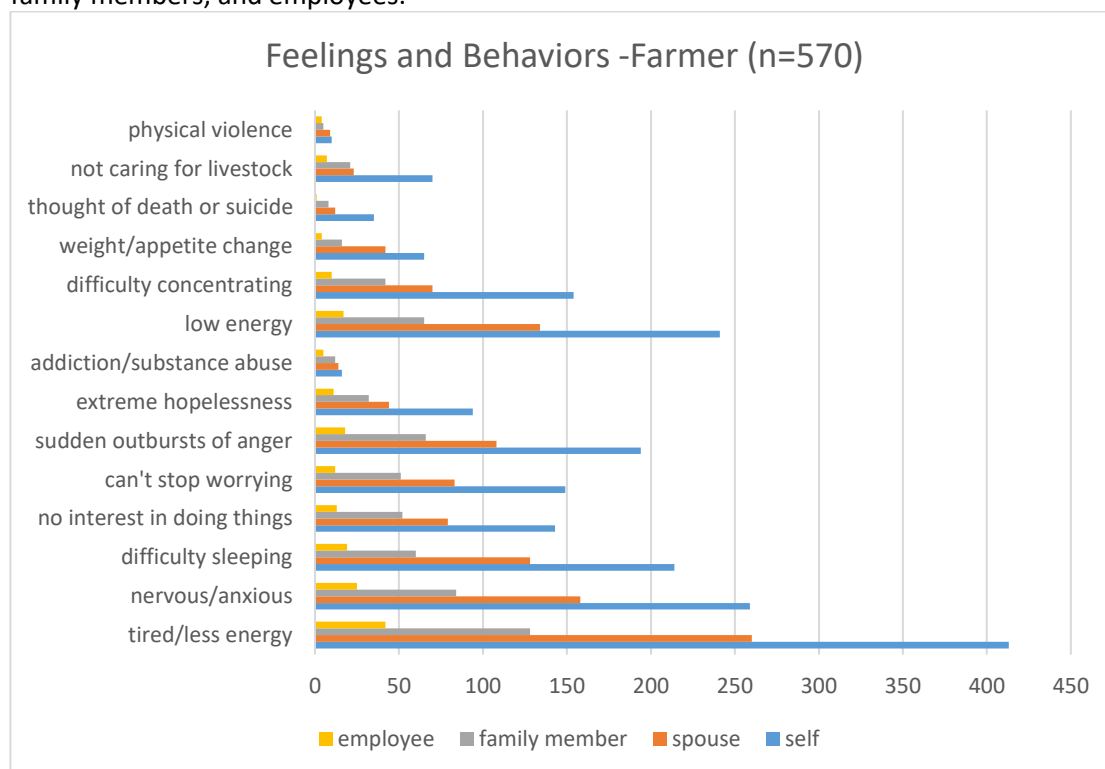
Importance of Mental Health	Farmer number (%)	Industry number (%)
Very important	367 (69)	68 (67)
Moderately important	108 (20)	24 (23)
Somewhat important	49 (9)	8 (8)
Not important	4 (1)	0 (0)
Don't know	3 (1)	2 (2)

*Farmers (n=531) and ag industry professionals (n=102)

Table 10 Ag industry professionals indicated how serious of an issue that mental health is in the ag community.

Seriousness of mental health	Industry percent (n=102)
Very serious	30
Moderately serious	40
Somewhat serious	25
Not serious	3
Don't know	2

Farmers who completed the survey were asked to indicate if they, their spouse, a family member, and farm employees had experienced any of a list of feelings and behaviors in the past year. For all groups, feeling tired/having less energy was reported with the greatest frequency. Feeling anxious was second for all groups (Figure 1). Low energy was another common response for all groups.

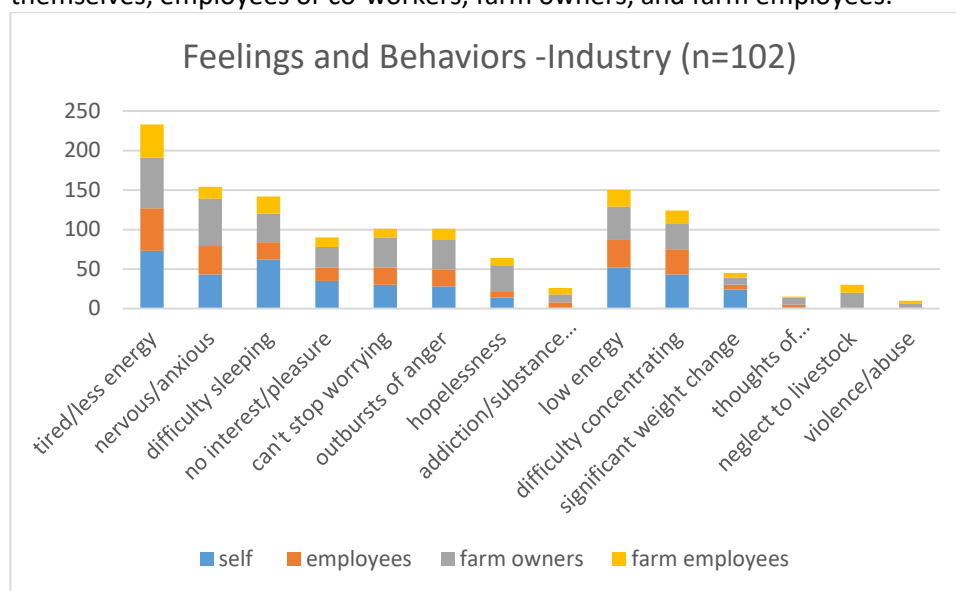
Figure 1: Feelings and behaviors related to stress as reported by farmers for themselves, spouse, family members, and employees.

*Respondents were able to mark all choices that applied.

A similar question was asked of agriculture professionals: had they felt or observed any employees or coworkers, farm owners, or farm employees displaying one of fourteen stress feelings or behaviors (Figure 2). The most frequent stress symptom for all groups was being tired or observing others more tired. The second most frequent response from ag industry professionals was difficulty sleeping, whereas, they observed nervousness/anxiousness more frequently in others.

Only 18.8% and 16.7% of farmers and industry professionals respectively, reported no symptoms of stress. What is particularly notable, is that 41.6% of farmers and 53% of industry professionals reported four or more symptoms of stress, suggesting 4 to 5 individuals out of 10 involved in the industry are experiencing significant levels of stress.

Figure 2 Feelings and behaviors related to stress as reported by the industry professionals for themselves, employees or co-workers, farm owners, and farm employees.



*Respondents were able to mark all choices that applied.

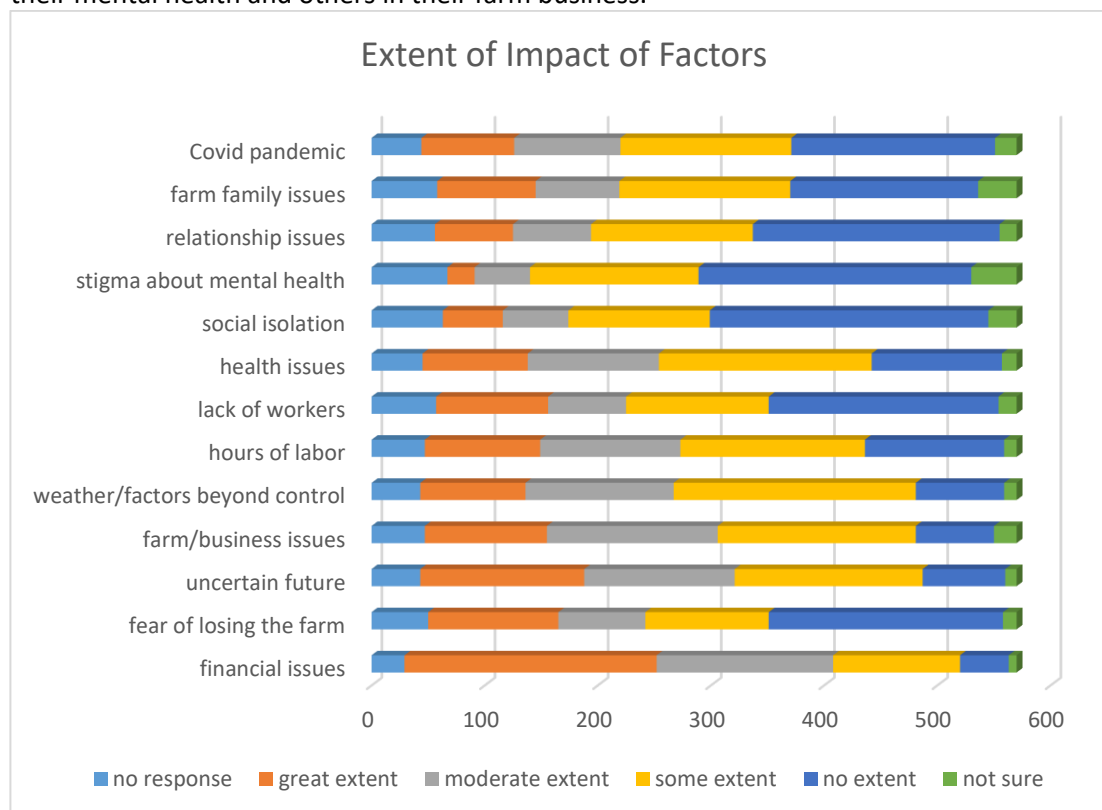
The agricultural community routinely faces many stressors. Farmers were asked to choose their top 3 stressors from a list while ag industry professionals were asked to choose the top stressors that they felt had the greatest impact on the mental health of farm families (Table 11). Financial stress was the top choice of farmers and ag industry professionals. The other top stressors for farmers were the weather and other forces out of their control along with long hours and stressful working conditions. Ag professionals ranked labor shortages and other employee issues and farm family dynamics and relationships as top issues.

The extent to which farmers felt various factors impacted their mental health and those of their farm business was reported. The results are depicted in Figure 3. Financial issues were most frequently reported as making an impact to a great extent. Conversely, stigma about mental health issues and social isolation were each reported by 42% of the respondents as impacting mental health to no extent.

Table 11: Farmers and ag industry professionals ranked top 3 stressors of farmers.

Top stressors	Farmers	Industry (rank)*
financial stress	331	89 (1)
weather	219	27 (6)
long hours and conditions	218	35 (4)
non-farm stressors	174	24 (7)
physical health	166	13 (9)
farm transition	131	29 (5)
farm family dynamics	119	37 (3)
Labor shortage	100	44 (2)
fear of losing farm	82	19 (8)
spouse/partner relationships	55	3 (10)

* Number in parentheses denotes rank by frequency of choice.

Figure 3 Farmers were asked to choose the extent to which they agreed that factors below impacted their mental health and others in their farm business.

*Non-response varied by each item.

Spouse, family members, and friends were with whom farmers most frequently had conversations about the issues that impacted their mental health. Ag business professionals were the most frequently indicated professionals of any type while mental health professionals including private counselors, community mental health and telehealth were infrequently indicated.

Table 12 Farmers indicated with whom they talked about issues that were related to the mental health.

Farmers talked with	Number (n=570)	Percent
spouse	409	72
family members	324	57
friends	309	54
agribusiness employees	165	29
church/pastor	100	18
veterinarian	77	14
primary doctor	71	12
private counselor	39	7
community mental health	7	1
telehealth	4	1
Not applicable	43	8

*Respondents marked all answers that applied.

Both farmers and ag industry professionals were asked about their level of confidence in spotting the warning signs of a mental health condition in someone in the ag community (Table 13). Farmers more frequently expressed a higher level of confidence in spotting warning signs as compared to the response from ag industry professionals. In a follow-up question, both groups reported their level of confidence in responding to someone that is experiencing an issue related to mental health including suicidal thoughts or ideation (Table 14). As with the previous question, farmers also indicated with a higher frequency greater confidence in their ability to respond to those experiencing an issue.

Table 13 Respondents indicated their level of confidence in spotting the warning signs of a mental health condition in those in the ag community.

Level of confidence	Farmers percent (n=568)	Industry percent (n=102)
Very	86 (15)	6 (6)
Moderately	198 (35)	26 (26)
Somewhat	203 (36)	49 (49)
Not at all	43 (7)	16 (16)
Don't know	39 (7)	3 (3)

Table 14 Survey respondents expressed their confidence in responding to someone that is experiencing a mental health condition.

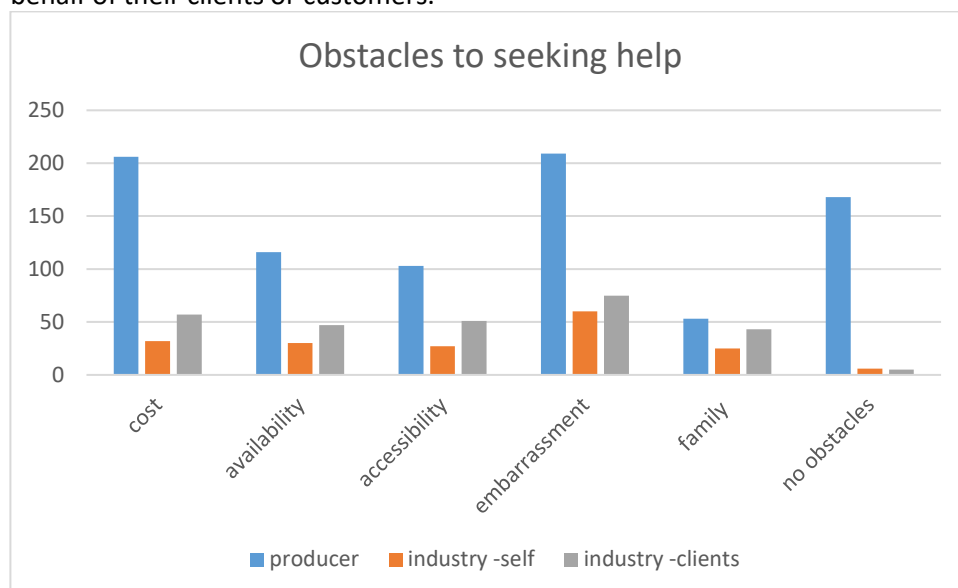
Level of confidence	Farmer percent (n=565)	Industry percent (n=102)
Very	59 (10)	8 (8)
Moderately	151 (27)	19 (19)
Somewhat	199 (35)	37 (37)
Not at all	87 (15)	36 (36)
Don't know	69 (12)	2 (2)

The obstacles to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition were indicated by farmers and by ag industry professionals on behalf of themselves or their coworkers and for the farm clients or customers (Figure 4). The same obstacle was indicated with the greatest frequency for all groups which was embarrassment. Cost was next for farmers and as indicated by ag professionals on behalf of farmers.



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Figure 4: The obstacles to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition were indicated by farmers and by ag industry professionals for themselves and on behalf of their clients or customers.



*Farmers (n=570) and industry (n=102)

Factors contributing to stress symptoms

We were interested in identifying factors associated with a person experiencing stress symptoms. To accomplish this, we analyzed when a farmer reported experiencing a symptom of stress and the probability or relative risk they also said yes to certain issues, obstacles, or demographic groups. The *three primary issues* identified by producers as contributing to symptoms of stress were fear of losing the farm, farm financial stress and uncertainty, and farm family dynamics and relationships (Table 15). Fear of losing the farm posed the greatest relative risk, contributing to 12 of the 14 symptoms of stress: anxiousness, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating, little interest, constant worry, feelings or outbursts of anger/frustration, hopelessness, low energy, change in weight or appetite, not caring for farm as usual, and episodes of violence. Farm financial stress and uncertainty was associated with 8 of 12 symptoms, while family dynamics was more limited. Please note extreme caution should be used when interpreting the findings related to addiction and substance abuse, frequent thought of death or suicide, and episodes of violence or abuse as these symptoms were reported in less than 10% of the sample population.

Table 15. Fear of losing farm, financial stress and uncertainty, and farm family dynamics and relationships are greatest factors contributing to symptoms of stress.

Stress Symptom	Fear		Financial stress		Family dynamics	
Addiction [#]	5.95	***	2.18		2.30	
Episodes of violence [#]	3.97	*	1.70		1.64	
Change weight / appetite	3.04	***	1.90	*	1.47	
Hopelessness	2.28	***	1.63	*	1.24	
Constant worry	2.06	***	1.84	***	1.47	*
Not caring	1.95	*	0.95		1.56	
Difficulty concentrating	1.82	**	1.39	*	1.30	
Low energy	1.53	**	1.15		1.28	*
Little interest	1.51	*	1.49	*	1.24	
Difficulty sleeping	1.51	**	1.49	**	1.21	
Anxious	1.43	**	1.41	**	1.21	
Outbursts	1.41	*	1.37	*	1.45	**
Suicide [#]	1.23		1.23		1.76	
Tired	1.14		1.17	**	1.16	*

Data expressed as relative risk or probability of each issue when experiencing a stress symptom. [#]Caution, less than 10% respondents reported symptom. Chi-square, *P<0.05; **P<0.01; ***P<0.001

As a next step, we were interested in understanding what obstacles were indicated when a farmer also reported experiencing stress (**Table 16**). Encountering ANY obstacle was associated with an increased average risk of 127% across all stress symptoms. Cost, embarrassment, availability, and family were most commonly marked by individuals also reporting individual stress symptoms. Accessibility appeared to be less of an issue.



Table 16. Multiple obstacles exist when farmers are experiencing symptoms of stress.

Stress symptom	Any		Accessibility		Availability		Cost		Embarrassment		Family	
Anxious	6.27	*	0.30		0.91		2.27		0.79		2.25	
Change weight / appetite	2.60	**	1.13		1.52		1.94	**	1.89	**	2.21	**
Constant worry	2.30	***	1.06		1.48	**	1.56	**	1.80	***	1.68	**
Difficulty concentrating	2.27	***	1.22		1.46	**	1.28	*	1.75	***	1.39	
Difficulty sleeping	2.04	**	1.39		2.14	***	1.62	**	1.88	**	2.31	**
Episodes violence [#]	1.88	**	1.28		1.48	**	1.68	**	1.44	**	1.21	
Hopelessness	1.80	*	1.26		1.85	**	2.04	***	1.68	*	1.85	*
Little interest	1.79	**	1.62	**	1.47	*	1.54	**	1.35	*	1.70	**
Low energy	1.76	***	1.35	*	1.56	***	1.52	***	1.44	**	1.34	*
Not caring	1.67		0.76		1.58		1.33		1.83		2.02	
Outbursts	1.65	**	1.05		1.66	***	1.42	**	1.17		1.12	
Suicide [#]	1.62	***	1.40	**	1.39	**	1.40	**	1.46	***	1.24	
Tired	1.25	**	1.08		1.06		1.11	*	1.18	**	1.20	*
Addiction [#]	No est		1.94		2.64		4.12	*	4.03	*	4.18	*

Data expressed as relative risk or probability of each obstacle when experiencing a stress symptom. Chi-square, *P<0.05; **P<0.01; ***P<0.001



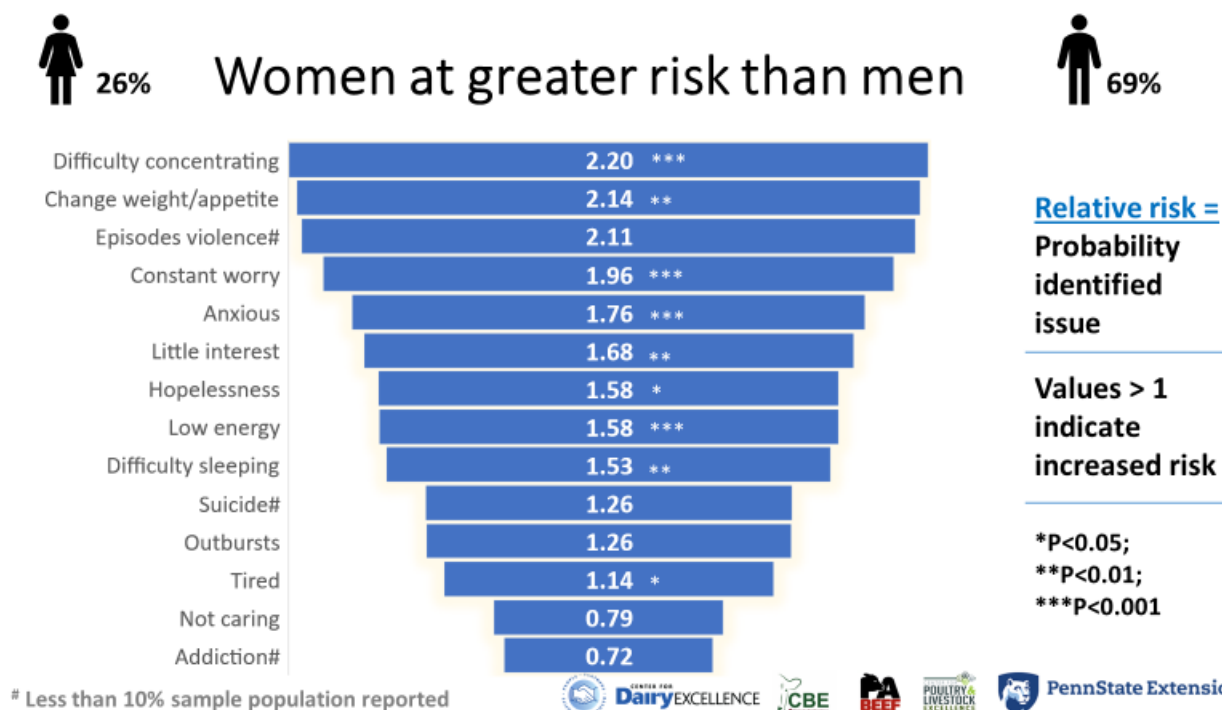
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Another question we wanted to investigate - were specific groups more at risk than others? We discovered that women, younger generations, and farms with 500 or more head of livestock were at greater risk. In contrast, region of the state and species of livestock on farm were not associated with a greater risk of stress symptoms. Women were more at risk to experience specific stress symptoms when compared to men (Figure 5): difficulty concentrating (2.2), significant weight change/change in appetite (2.14), not being able to stop or control worrying (1.96), feeling nervous/anxious/on edge (1.76), little to no interest or pleasure in doing things (1.68), feelings of extreme hopelessness (1.58), low energy (1.58), difficulty sleeping (1.53), and feeling tired/less energy (1.14).

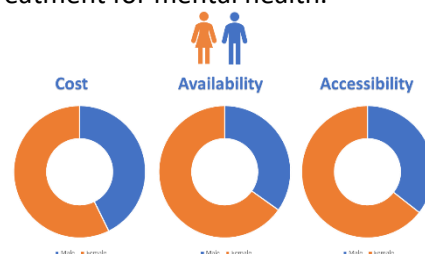
Figure 5 Women at greater risk for experiencing certain stress symptoms when compared to men.



Values in funnel chart represent relative risk. * represent the P-value as outlined in figure.

The greater expression of stress symptoms by women over men may be related to the presence of obstacles (Figure 6). Women compared to men in the survey indicated cost (43.6 vs 32.5%, P=0.02), availability (29.5 vs 15.8%, P=0.0003), and access (26.8 vs 14.8%) were challenges when seeking help or treatment for mental health. Whereas, issues of embarrassment (39.6 vs 35.1%, P=0.33) and family (10.1 vs 8.65%, P=0.61) were similar for women and men.

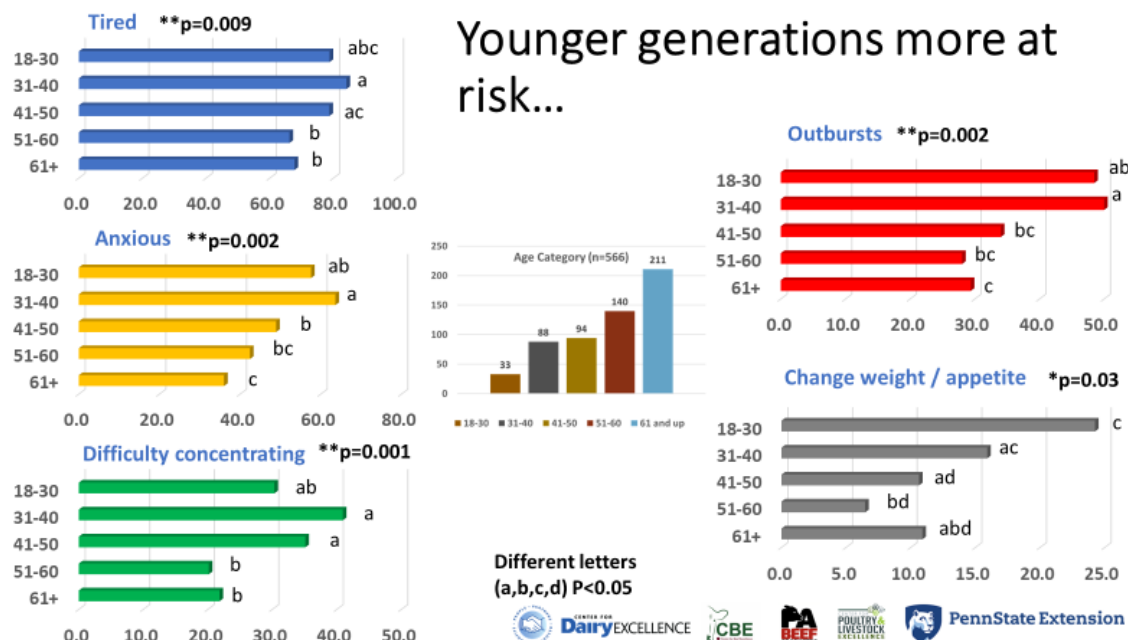
Figure 6 Women face greater obstacles than men when seeking help or treatment for mental health.



Differences in farmers age significantly influenced whether a farmer experienced feeling tired or having less energy, feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge, having feelings or sudden outbursts of anger and/or frustration, difficulty concentrating, or having significant changes in weight or appetite (Figure 7). In general, fewer farmers aged 51 or older experienced these symptoms relative to younger individuals. This could be the

result of several factors such as presence and age of children, experience/wisdom/knowledge, temperament, support systems, and financial challenges that occur among those age groups. Alternatively, or in combination, this may reflect culling events, where farmers experiencing more challenges leave the industry earlier. Age also was associated with variations in obstacles faced and could also contribute to the variations in stress symptoms experienced, as the younger farmers also experienced greater challenges relative to access and family (Table 17).

Figure 7 Younger generations reported certain stress symptoms more frequently than older generations.



Data reported as frequencies (%) for each age group. Frequencies different than expected, Chi-square *P<0.05; **P<0.01. Within each stress symptom, different letters indicate significant differences at P<0.05.

Table 17 Age was associated with obstacles faced by farmers.

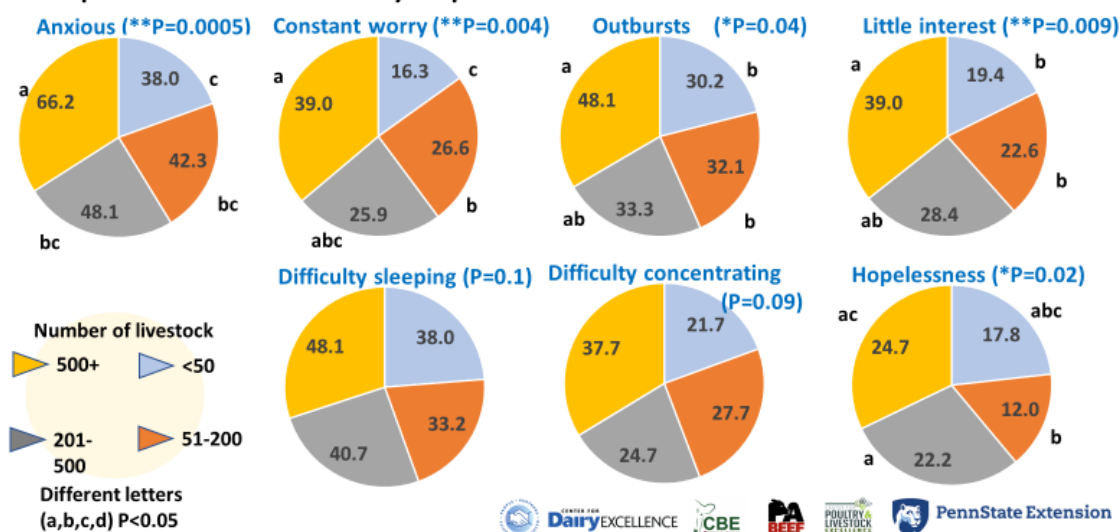
Age (yrs)	Cost	Availability	Accessibility	Embarrassment	Family	Any
18-30	30.3	15.15	33.3 ^a	51.5	15.1 ^{ab}	72.7 ^{ab}
31-40	39.8	20.45	22.7 ^a	42	17 ^a	81.8 ^a
41-50	37.2	18.1	19.1 ^{ab}	40.4	10.6 ^{ab}	72.3 ^{ab}
51-60	38.1	20.1	18.7 ^{ab}	35.25	6.5 ^b	72.7 ^a
61+	34.6	21.8	13.3 ^b	31.75	6.6 ^b	62.6 ^b
P=	0.8	0.89	0.04	0.13	0.03	0.01

Data reported as frequencies (%) for each age group. Frequencies different than expected, Chi-square *P<0.05; **P<0.01. Within an obstacle, different letters represent differences (P<0.05) between age groups

The size of the operation – in terms of number of livestock – also had a significant influence on experiencing stress symptoms (Figure 8). In general, farmers with operations greater than 500 head experienced more of the following stress symptoms when compared to farmers with the smaller operations: feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge, feelings or sudden outbursts of anger and/or frustration, not being able to stop or control worrying, little to no interest or pleasure in doing things, and feelings of extreme hopelessness. Farmers with intermediate size generally fell in-between the smallest and largest farms, with the exception of when the farmer experienced hopelessness ($P=0.02$) or difficulty sleeping ($P=0.10$). Relative to these two symptoms, farmers with farm sizes between 51-200 head of livestock reported lower levels of hopelessness or difficulty sleeping relative to farmers with more than 500 head of livestock.

Figure 8 Farmers with largest farms reported certain stress symptoms more frequently than farmers with smaller herd sizes.

More farmers with greater numbers of livestock experience stress symptoms



Data reported as frequencies (%) for each farm size group. Frequencies different than expected, Chi-square $*P<0.05$; $**P<0.01$. Within each stress symptom, different letters indicate significant differences at $P<0.05$.

Limitations

The farmer response rate was limited as only 7.5% of producers eligible to receive printed copies of the survey. As indicated earlier in the methods, this may reflect an underestimation of the response rate, as the number of eligible farmers most likely was overestimated because they were present in two or more organization distribution lists. The basis for limited response also could be tied to the primary means of communication which was electronic (list-serves, social media) and in person meetings. Farmers that do not use electronic media as frequently (such as older generations, Amish or Mennonite) may not have received follow up notifications. Additionally, those receiving electronic communications and/or attend meetings are more likely to be active within the community and more predisposed to respond. As such,



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the findings of this study are representative of the respondents to the survey. Caution should be exercised in expanding the conclusions of this survey to a larger agricultural population. One additional note, as mentioned earlier in the results, the number of farmers experiencing addiction or substance abuse, episodes of physical violence or abuse, and frequent thought of death or suicide was reported in less than 10% of the sample population. Any findings associated with greater risk of these symptoms should be interpreted with extreme caution.

Conclusions

- Mental health is recognized as an important issue by both farmers and agriculture professionals
- Stress symptoms span the entire animal agriculture community
- Farmers are over-confident or ag industry professionals are under-confident in recognizing and responding to those experiencing mental health issues
- Fear, Financial stress, and Family dynamics are 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
- Findings of this research will allow more targeted development of resources and programs that provide the most benefit for the Pennsylvania animal agriculture community

Team member responsibilities

Survey development, distribution and data entry were completed by MA, CF, GF, JRH, NH, MK, and JS. SP also participated in survey development and review. Statistical analysis, report generation, and presentation at Ag Progress Days completed by GF and GP.

Acknowledgements:

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PENNSYLVANIA ANIMAL AGRICULTURE MENTAL WELLNESS SURVEY

December 2021 to January 2022

Livestock Operator

There's no doubt that the mental challenges that a farmer can face in any given day or any given season can weigh heavily on your well-being. Please consider completing this short survey to help us begin a conversation around mental health and what it means for Pennsylvania livestock producers. Our goal is to normalize the discussion so more individuals will feel empowered to ask for help before it is too late.

Please complete the survey and return it by **January 31, 2022** to Center for Dairy Excellence, 1973 Kemery Road, Akron, OH 44398-3317. No postage is necessary if you return the survey in the business reply envelope enclosed. If you would like to complete this survey electronically, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XR96HR9>

This survey is about mental health in the agribusiness industry. Filling out this confidential and anonymous survey with candid answers will help this organization to provide the best resources and information that is needed revolving around mental health and stress within Pennsylvania agriculture.

How important is mental health to you, your family, and employees?

☐ Very important ☐ Moderately important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not Important ☐ Don't know

Have you or someone within your farm experienced any of the following over the last year? (Check all that apply)

	Self	Spouse	Family Member	Employee
Feeling tired/less energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling nervous/anxious/ on edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Little to no interest or pleasure in doing things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not being able to stop or control worrying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feelings or Sudden Outbursts of Anger and/or Frustration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feelings of Extreme Hopelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addiction and Substance Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty Concentrating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significant weight change/ change in appetite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequent thought of death or suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not caring for livestock, crops or farm as usual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Episodes of physical violence or abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate to what extent you agree that each of these impacts the mental health of you and those within your farm business? (Check box that applies)

	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Some Extent	No Extent	Not Sure
Financial Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of losing the farm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uncertain future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm/business issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weather or other factors beyond control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hours of labor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stigma about mental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spouse or Partner Relationship issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm Family Dynamics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Covid Pandemic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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PENNSYLVANIA ANIMAL AGRICULTURE MENTAL WELLNESS SURVEY

Livestock Operator

December 2021 to January 2022

Pick the top three issues from the list below that you believe are having the greatest impact on the mental health of your farm family and farm employees you are working with in your business

- ☐ Farm Financial Stress and Uncertainty
- ☐ Long Hours and Stressful Working Conditions
- ☐ Weather and Other Forces Out of Their Control
- ☐ Labor Shortages and Other Employee Issues
- ☐ Fear of Losing farm
- ☐ Physical Health and Medical Issues
- ☐ Farm Transition Issues
- ☐ Farm Family Dynamics & Relationships
- ☐ Spouse or Partner Relationships
- ☐ Non-farm Related Stressors (Political, Social, Etc.)

Who have you talked with in the past year about any of the above issues? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Doctor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family members | <input type="checkbox"/> Agribusiness employees
(milk testers, milk truck drivers,
feed salesman, equipment
salesman, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church/pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Mental Health | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Counselor | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telehealth | |

How confident are you, that you would be able to spot the warning signs of a mental health condition in an immediate family member/ employee/ fellow agriculture producer/another member of the ag community?

- ☐ Very confident ☐ Moderately Confident ☐ Somewhat Confident
☐ Not at all confident ☐ Don't know

How confident are you able to respond to someone having a mental health issue, including suicidal thoughts/ideation?

- ☐ Very confident ☐ Moderately Confident ☐ Somewhat Confident
☐ Not at all confident ☐ Don't know

What are the obstacles for you or someone within your farm business to seek help or treatment for a mental health condition?

(Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of help/treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility of help/treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> No obstacles |

Demographics:

Are you completing this survey on behalf of yourself or someone else?

- ☐ Self ☐ Spouse ☐ Partner, ☐ Parent, ☐ Other: _____

Gender: Identify as: ☐ M ☐ F ☐ Other ☐ Prefer Not to Answer

Age: ☐ 18-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61+

Type of Business: ☐ Sole Proprietorship ☐ Partnership
☐ LLC or Corporation ☐ Other ☐ Prefer Not to Answer

If a partnership, how many partners: ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 or more

Are non-partner family members involved in the farm? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how many family members? ☐ 2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6 or more

How long has farming been your occupation? ☐ Less than 1 – 5 years
☐ 6-10 years ☐ 11-20 years ☐ 21-30 years ☐ 31-40 years ☐ 41 or more years

Type of Livestock on Your Farm: (Mark All That Apply): ☐ Dairy ☐ Beef
☐ Poultry ☐ Swine ☐ Small Ruminants ☐ Other

Total Number of Head representing All Species on Your Farm:

- ☐ Less than 50 ☐ 51 – 200 ☐ 201 – 500 ☐ 501 – 1,000
☐ 1,001 – 2000 ☐ more than 2000

Region of State: ☐ Southwest ☐ Northwest ☐ Central
☐ Southeast ☐ Northeast

Are there any other issues you would like us to know in regards to mental health and well being in the farming community:

Resources

Farm Aid Hotline: 1-800-FARM-AID • 1-800-327-6243

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line: 741741

Plain Communities Helpline (Green Pastures): 717-989-8661

[Preventsuicidepa.org](https://preventsuicidepa.org)

2-1-1

Emergency call: 9-1-1

Farm Safety Check: umash.umn.edu

www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screening-tools

This survey is being conducted through an initiative of the Center for Beef Excellence, Center for Poultry and Livestock Excellence, Pennsylvania Beef Producers Working Group, and Center for Dairy Excellence and is funded by the, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the USDA Farmer Rancher Network Assistance Program.

For More Information, contact:

Center for Dairy Excellence

Phone: 717-346-0849

Email: info@centerfordairyexcellence.org

PENNSYLVANIA ANIMAL AGRICULTURE MENTAL WELLNESS SURVEY

December 2021 to January 2022

Ag Professional

As a professional interacting with Pennsylvania's livestock operations, you have firsthand experience with the mental challenges that a farmer can face in any given day or any given season. Please consider completing this short survey to help us begin a conversation around mental health and what it means for Pennsylvania livestock producers. Our goal is to normalize the discussion so more individuals will feel empowered to ask for help before it is too late.

Please complete the survey and return it by **January 31, 2022** to Center for Dairy Excellence, 1973 Kemery Road, Akron, OH 44398-3317.

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This confidential and anonymous survey is about mental health in the agribusiness industry. Filling out this survey with candid answers will help this organization to provide the best resources and information that is needed revolving around mental health and stress within the agribusiness industry.

Demographics:

Which agribusiness description below most closely relates to your profession?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feed or Nutrition | <input type="checkbox"/> Crop Inputs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genetics or Breeding | <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing Cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food or Livestock Hauling and Transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sales | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Extension | <input type="checkbox"/> Food processing |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Please describe your role with company (Check all that apply):

- ☐ Owner
- ☐ Top level management (Report to Owner)
- ☐ Mid level management (Report to Top Management, Supervise Employees)
- ☐ Front line employee working with farms

Years in the industry: ☐ 1 – 5 ☐ 6 – 10 ☐ 11 – 20 ☐ 21 or more

Who do you work most with:

- ☐ Farm Owners ☐ Farm Managers ☐ Farm Employees

Gender: Identify as: ☐ M ☐ F ☐ Other ☐ Prefer Not to Answer

Age: ☐ Under 25 ☐ 26 – 35 ☐ 36 – 45 ☐ 46 – 55 ☐ 55 or above

Region of State: ☐ Southwest ☐ Northwest ☐ Central

☐ Southeast ☐ Northeast

Average number of farms you work with throughout year:

- ☐ 10 or less ☐ 11 – 25 ☐ 26 – 50 ☐ 51 or more

Type of farms you encounter most frequently (check all that apply):

- ☐ Dairy ☐ Beef ☐ Poultry ☐ Swine ☐ Small Ruminants
- ☐ Grain/cash crop ☐ Other

Most common type of farm operation you work with:

- ☐ Sole Proprietorship ☐ Husband and Wife Team
- ☐ Family Partnership or Corporation with 3 or less partners ☐ Family Partnership or Corporation with more than 3 partners ☐ Other

How important is mental health to you, your family, and employees?

- ☐ Very important ☐ Moderately important ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not important ☐ Don't know

How serious of an issue do you believe mental health is within the farm community? ☐ Very serious ☐ Moderately serious

- ☐ Somewhat serious ☐ Not serious ☐ Don't know

Have you experienced or observed these behaviors in any of the following people over the past year? (Check all that apply)

	Self	Employees or Co-workers	Farm Owners	Farm Employees
Feeling tired/less energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling nervous/anxious/ on edge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Little to no interest or pleasure in doing things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not being able to stop or control worrying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feelings or Sudden Outbursts of Anger and/or Frustration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feelings of Extreme Hopelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addiction and Substance Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty Concentrating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significant weight change/ change in appetite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequent thought of death or suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neglect to Farmstead, Animals or Crops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violence or Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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PENNSYLVANIA ANIMAL AGRICULTURE MENTAL WELLNESS SURVEY

Ag Professional

December 2021 to January 2022

How often do you have conversations with farmers about stress related to any of the following topics impacting mental health?

	Multiple Times a Day	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Financial Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of losing the farm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uncertain future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm/business issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weather or other factors beyond control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hours of labor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stigma about mental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spouse or Partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationship issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm Family Dynamics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Covid Pandemic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From the list below, please identify the top three issues that you believe have the greatest impact on the mental health of the farm families and farm employees you are working with.

- ☐ Farm Financial Stress and Uncertainty
- ☐ Long Hours and Stressful Working Conditions
- ☐ Weather and Other Forces Out of Their Control
- ☐ Labor Shortages and Other Employee Issues
- ☐ Fear of Losing farm
- ☐ Physical Health and Medical Issues
- ☐ Farm Transition Issues
- ☐ Farm Family Dynamics & Relationships
- ☐ Spouse or Partner Relationships
- ☐ Non-farm Related Stressors (Political, Social, Etc.)

How confident are you in being able to recognize the warning signs of a mental health condition in an co-worker or farmer you are working with?

- ☐ Very confident ☐ Moderately confident ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not at all confident ☐ Don't know

How confident are you to be able to respond to someone having a mental health issue, including suicidal thoughts/ideation?

- ☐ Very confident ☐ Moderately confident ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not at all confident ☐ Don't know

Which of the criteria listed do you consider as obstacles for you or someone within your agriculture business to seek help or treatment for a mental health condition? ?

	Check all that apply for you or your co-workers	Check all that apply for your farm clients or customers
Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of help/treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility of help/treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Embarrassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you, any of your co-workers, or farm clients sought care for a mental health condition?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee or co-worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm clients or customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything that you would like to share with us regarding the well-being of those in the agricultural industry?

OPTIONAL:

Would you like to be on a mailing or email list to receive resources:

Name/Address _____

Email _____

Resources

Farm Aid Hotline: 1-800-FARM-AID • 1-800-327-6243

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line: 741741

Plain Communities Helpline (Green Pastures): 717-989-8661

[Preventsuicidepa.org](https://preventsuicidepa.org)

2-1-1

Emergency call: 9-1-1

Farm Safety Check: umash.umn.edu

www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screening-tools

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