



FARMER RESOURCE NETWORK
RESOURCE GUIDE

FARM STRESS

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Farming can be a stressful occupation for many reasons. Farmers in the U.S. today face immense challenges including climate change, the high price of land and inputs, discrimination from lenders and access to capital.

For many farmers, farming is more than just a job — it is a lifestyle and a calling, sometimes passed down through generations. Farming is different from other occupations in the sense that it is difficult for a farmer to take breaks or to leave farm life altogether. A farmer may feel like they would be letting down their family by quitting, or that their identity would be in question if they were to no longer be farming. Farm stress is an important risk factor that farmers need to be aware of. If the farmer isn't healthy, the rest of the farm won't be healthy either.

FARM STRESS PREVENTION

Just like taking care of our physical health, we can help prevent farm stress by taking care of our mental health as well. Making a plan to manage farm stress is just as important as other risk management strategies in farm business planning. Here are some resources to help you create a risk management plan for farm stress. All of these are quick reads, and they are written by folks in the farming industry who really understand the unique stressors that farmers face.

North Dakota Ag Extension has developed some resources for farmers making a farm stress management plan. This includes [12 Tools for Your Wellness Toolbox in Times of Farm Stress](#), a [Farm/Ranch Stress Management Plan](#) and [Farming, Ranching and Work-Life Stress](#).

Michigan State University has also put together some very useful brochures on how to plan for and prevent farm stress. They write about [How to Cultivate a Productive Mindset](#) and [Managing Stress for Farmers and Farm Families](#).

[Ifarmwell](#) is a unique program out of Australia that is created by farmers for farmers. There are five short lessons that you can work through to help build an understanding of how to manage stress. They also have short tip sheets on lots of topics, like [Improving the Quality of Relationship with Your Partner](#) and [What to Do if You're Feeling Down or Low](#).

However, sometimes preventative measures aren't enough. Just like with physical health, when feelings of stress or depression become overwhelming or they interfere with the ability to function on the farm, it's time to reach out for help.

SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Only you can know what it looks like to be impacted by farm stress, because only you know what is out of the ordinary. The biggest sign that it's time to reach out to get help is when stress interferes with your ability to do your job and manage personal relationships well. Here are just a few things to look out for:

- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Lack of motivation and energy

- Increased use of alcohol or other substances
- Hostility and impatience in personal relationships

Here are some resources with a more in-depth list of the signs that it's time to reach out for support: [Recognizing the Signs of Farm Family Stress](#), [Stress Symptoms](#) and [6 Symptoms of Stress](#).

WHAT TO DO

If you notice these signs of increased farm stress, and they are interfering with your farming and personal life, there are people who can help. Here are some ideas for places you can reach out to:

- Talk to your physician about what you are experiencing.
- These days, many insurance providers cover some or all of the cost of seeing a counselor. Many counselors can meet with you either via phone or video. The [Psychology Today website](#) is a good place to start when looking for a counselor. You can meet via telehealth with any counselor in your state.
- Talk with someone you trust, like a family member or friend. If you are a member of a religious community, talk with your pastor or spiritual leader.
- Reach out to the [Farm Aid Hotline](#). Our team of Hotline Operators is here to listen and offer support and resources. You can also search our [Farmer Resource Network](#) for farm stress resources in your state or region.
- Several states now have voucher programs for farmers and farm families that offer free counseling services to farmers. We can help you find a resource that makes sense for you.
- Sometimes, farm stress can become overwhelming. If you are feeling that you are in crisis or are considering suicide, it's time to get help immediately. You can call **9-8-8** any time to get support. This line is open 24/7. Counselors will listen and help you get the resources you need to get through this time. You can also text 741741 to reach the [Crisis Text Line](#).

The most important part of the farm is the farmer. We are here to help you find the right resources to manage farm stress so that you, your family and your farm can thrive.

CONNECT WITH FARM AID

Not finding what you need? Request one-on-one assistance from our Farmer Services Team by filling out our [Online Request for Assistance form](#) or by calling **1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)**. Farm Aid staff are happy to listen and help you in all the ways we can.

FARMER RESOURCE GUIDES

Check out our [Farmer Resource Guides](#) for straightforward information created by our Farmer Services Team to help with topics that come up frequently on our 1-800-FARM-AID hotline.