



ADULT

HEALTH BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER 2019

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

FARM SAFETY AND HEALTH



According to a new national poll sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation, a majority of farmers and farmworkers say financial issues (91 percent), farm or business problems (88 percent), and fear of losing the farm (87 percent) impact their mental health. A strong majority, 91 percent, of rural adults and farmers or farmworkers add that mental health is important to them and/or their family.

It is not an easy time to be in agriculture right now. Higher rates of mental health issues often go unaddressed among farmers or farmworkers and can sometimes lead to dire, but avoidable, consequences.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that male farmers across

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17 states took their own lives at a rate two times higher than the general population. Recent research from the California Polytechnic State University shows that suicide rates in agriculture are higher than any other occupation at 84.5 per 100,000 people. That means farmers are some of the most at-risk people in rural communities, making it extremely important to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues so that people seek help. **Keeping good health, including mental health, is a key factor in one's ability to farm.**

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. If you experience mental health problems, that could affect your thinking, mood, and behavior.

Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including genetic factors and life experience. If you are a farmer, rancher, or farmworker, you already know that your work can expose you to a variety of hazards.

Factors affecting farm wellness

- Financial concerns: equipment purchases, borrowing for farm operations, mortgages, rent, or insurance.
- Personal or family concerns
- Work-related injuries
- Change in farm policies
- Chemical exposure
- Loss of crop or livestock
- Weather

How can I help someone struggling with mental health?

Here are some ways you can help:

- Encourage them to seek professional help. A mental health specialist can help with talk therapy, medicine, or both. A mental health or behavioral health specialist can help those who struggle with depression, anxiety, grief, and addiction.



- Encourage healthy lifestyle choices like eating nutritious foods, getting enough sleep, and getting daily physical activity. These all have positive effects on mental health.
- Listen, and let them know you understand.
- Be patient. It takes time to build up positive mental health.

SOURCES:

- <https://www.fb.org/newsroom/new-national-poll-shows-impacts-of-rural-economy-on-farmer-mental-health>
- <https://www.ocj.com/2019/03/breaking-the-stigma-of-mental-health-in-farming>
- <https://www.agrisafe.org/total-farmer-health>
- <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>

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