

## **Mental Wellness Resources Ready for Ohio Farmers**

Ohio's farmers do a great job of caring for their families, employees, livestock, and crops, but don't always do the same for their own well-being, including their mental health. While no one is immune from the stresses of modern living it's often magnified for farmers as they face numerous challenges and unknowns that their non-ag counterparts don't realize or understand.

Everything from weather, input prices, labor issues, trade disruptions, family issues, isolation, and more, can affect farmers immensely. This can lead to something more than simply feeling blue but can become serious mental health conditions that need treatment.

According to survey conducted last year, the Ohio Agricultural Mental Health Alliance (OAMHA), only 39% of respondents indicated their mental well-being is "very good or excellent," indicating there's a need for proper recognition and appropriate resources to address the situation.

Today's mental health experts urge farmers and others to look past old stigmas about needing mental health assistance and reach out to friends and family when they truly feel overwhelmed or helpless. However, those closest to the ones in need should also be proactive by following these key steps: Listen, Ask Questions, Don't Jump to Conclusions, Encourage Self-Care, Avoid (your own) Compassion Fatigue.

### **Resources to Consider for Yourself, Friend or Neighbor**

Ohio's farm community is one large family, which is why we all need to look out for one another in addition to our own well-being. Here are some resources to consider from multiple professional outlets.

#### **Got Your Back**

Agriculture is the number one industry in Ohio. We know our farmers give so much of themselves to keep the industry strong. We also know so many factors in farming are out of a farmer's control and can be stressful. Wondering if the weather will cooperate, long hours working alone – it can all affect the well-being of the farm family. With its wealth of resources, this organization has your back. Link: <https://agri.ohio.gov/gotyourback/>

#### **Farm State of Mind**

Farming is a stressful occupation that is associated with increased levels of anxiety and depression. Experiences such as natural disasters, extreme weather events, financial uncertainty, fluctuating markets, labor shortages, trade disruptions and other factors all contribute to extreme stress for farmers and ranchers who often live in a very isolated setting. To build a sustainable future for agriculture for our nation and our world, we must promote the wellbeing of our nation's farmers and ranchers. Find a full list of resources at the Farm State of Mind website. Link: [www.FarmStateofMind.org](http://www.FarmStateofMind.org)

### **Togetherall**

Togetherall is an anonymous, online, clinically moderated peer-to-peer mental health support community. Togetherall members are there to listen, support and give each other's mental well-being a boost, 24/7. The network is safeguarded by licensed clinicians who oversee the community around the clock. Farmers and their families have access to an agriculture sub-group to share or read others' experiences in a safe, judgement-free zone. Thanks to support from the Farm Family Wellness Alliance, access to the platform is available to members of a farm family aged 16 and older, free of charge.

Link: <https://account.v2.togetherall.com/register/company-lookup/Farm%20Family%20Wellness%20Alliance>

### **Farm Stress Certification Program**

Surveys show that one in four Ohio farmers who did not receive the mental wellness services they needed felt their service provider wouldn't understand their background or culture. That is why Ohio State's College of Food Agricultural and Environmental Sciences created the Farm Stress Certification Program to provide certified counselors who understand the farm community and the unique stressors that come with being a part of the agriculture industry are located throughout the state. Get the care you need to help you through these challenging times. Link: [https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/d/90894/files/2023/08/Farm-Stress-Certified-Providers\\_08.24.23-1.pdf](https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/d/90894/files/2023/08/Farm-Stress-Certified-Providers_08.24.23-1.pdf)

### **Ohio Mental Health Resource Guides**

With 44% of Ohio farmers saying there was a time in the past 12 months when they felt they needed mental or emotional health care or counseling, help is available. The Center for Public Health Practice in partnership with the College of Public Health students and Equitas Health Institute has developed Mental Health Resource Guides for all of Ohio's counties. View the Ohio Mental Health Resource Guides by County.

Link: <https://u.osu.edu/cphp/ohio-mental-health-resource-guides/>

### **988**

If you need to talk (or text) for yourself, or on behalf of another, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is standing by. It's a free, confidential resource to use when life's challenges become overwhelming. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, trained counselors are ready to respond.

Link: <https://988lifeline.org/>