



Midwestern Farmers Can Find Tools To Thrive With New Resource Center

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URBANA– Farm life can be stressful. Most pressures, such as weather, illness, injuries, loans, and regulations, are constant and uncontrollable. Now, Midwestern farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers have direct access to a new tool to help manage stress, anxiety, depression, or substance use issues.

The newly launched website, www.FarmStress.org, is aimed at providing the agricultural community with resources and support provided through the North Central Farm and Ranch Assistance Center.

Depression, anxiety, and suicide are more prevalent among agricultural populations than the general public. In the past year, COVID-19 has added to stressors faced by farming communities through disrupted supply chains, difficulties getting needed supplies, keeping workers safe, and getting products to market.

“May is Mental Health Awareness Month, so it’s an opportune time to unveil this website that will serve as a clearinghouse for stress and mental health resources for anyone experiencing stress related to the many challenges of farming,” says [Josie Rudolphi](#), University of Illinois Extension specialist and assistant professor in agricultural and biological engineering and project director.

The North Central Farm and Ranch Assistance Center is a 12-state collaborative based at [University of Illinois](#) that works to expand access to and knowledge of mental health resources. The website shares available resources and research in a convenient, easy to access location.

“This new tool will help those in agricultural communities connect with critical information to help themselves, their family members, or people they work with,” says [Courtney Cuthbertson](#), Extension specialist and assistant professor in human development and family studies and project co-director. “Having this information available online helps make mental health information more accessible.”

The website has resources by state and topic, including crisis numbers, telephone hotlines, and training resources. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Those in crisis, should visit their local emergency department or call 911 immediately.

Rudolphi and Cuthbertson encourage people in the agricultural community to bookmark the site for future reference on the many challenges they, their families, employees, or clients face.

Throughout Mental Health Awareness Month, Rudolphi, Cuthbertson, and other center partners are also raising awareness with a daily social media campaign on [Twitter](#) and

[Facebook](#) that will include posts on mental health topics signs and symptoms of distress, where those in need can find help, how to help someone in need, and strategies for managing stress.

The North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center is supported by the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, under agreement number: 2020-70028-32728. The 12-state north-central region includes Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.