

## Weekly Article

1-24-2022

### Don't Let Farming Stress You Out!

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of agriculture. January is about wrapped up, even though we are still in the depths of winter spring is almost here March 20<sup>th</sup> is the first day of spring, less than two months away! It is good to stay positive when it comes to the weather, and this is especially true for farmers. A farmers life evolves around the weather, from growing crops, to tending to livestock weather can be a critical factor in on farm stress. Weather is not the only issue producers face daily, there is a host of challenges that need addressed each day on the farm such as volatile markets, rising input cost, diseases, and pest, and so much more. Today I want to touch a little bit on farm stress because let's face it, winter is a stressful time for all of use and it is good to know the truth about farm stress and how one can cope or find help.

I am currently in the process of becoming an Adult Mental Health First Aid Instructor with a focus on agriculture. This course is preparing me to instruct those who work with farmers or even farmers themselves to learn the warning signs of farm stress and how to help those who are facing stressful events or even a crisis event in their lives. Farming is a dangerous and stressful occupation; on the other hand, it is a wonderful life, and I couldn't imagine growing up or living in any other way. Farmers are often thought of as being made of iron, tough and gritty. This statement is not false or completely true. Farmers are very hardworking and do not follow the 9 to 5 work schedule many Americans face and just as I mentioned earlier most work in the elements no matter how hot, cold, rain, sleet, or how hard the wind is blowing. But on the other hand, farmers are human, we feel pain, disappointment, and struggle with the same challenges others struggle with day to day. 1-5 people struggle with mental health challenges each year. A mental health challenge can affect the way a person lives, communicates, and faces everyday challenges. It can also have a direct effect on the persons physical health and well being too. Here are a few factors that make farmers high risk for developing mental health challenges.

- Long work hours
- Isolation from others
- Pride- farmers have a lot of pride in what they do and less likely to ask for help.
- Farmers deal with a lot of things that are completely out of their control.

Not everyone shows stress the same. Some farmers will talk about their challenges with other farmers or family members, but some do not like to discuss or talk about the problems they are having. When left unchecked mental health issues can lead to mental health crisis such as extreme anxiety, eating disorders, depression, self-injury, and potential suicide attempts or thoughts. Some warning signs of a person having a potential mental health crisis include, lack of communication, isolation from others, change in eating habits, change in dress, changes in habits, and lack of laughter and joy. These are all signs that something might be wrong, approaching the person at this point is important. Early intervention can help can lead to positive outcomes and recovery. Too many farmers are left unassisted during times when their actions and changes in behaviors are screaming in need help! Farmers are 3.5% more likely to commit suicide compared to the public. During the 1980's farm crisis over 900 farmers took their lives. Statistics show that in the year of 2017, 75 midwestern farmers committed suicide.

Farming can be very stressful but remember that you are never alone and there is help The National Suicide helpline is 800-273-8255, the crisis text line is 741741. Ohio department of agriculture has also developed the got your back program. Go to <https://agri.ohio.gov/gotyourback> to learn more. And finally, if you want to just talk give me a call at (937) 544-2339 remember that there is a hungry world out there and we need every farmer we can get to make sure it is fed, clothed, fueled, and housed. Thank you for what you do!

Some other details to go over.

- February 24, Ohio Beef Cow/Calf School Located at Scott Farm 9681, US 68 Georgetown, Ohio 45121. Cost is \$10 per person, RSVP with OSU Extension Brown County by February 17<sup>th</sup> by calling (937) 378-6716. Herd Nutrition will be the main topics discussed at the school.
- February 15<sup>th</sup> private pesticide/fertilizer applicator recertification, location of this event will be at the West Union Frisch's (back meeting room) 11157 St Rt 41, West Union, Ohio 45693. Register by calling (937) 544-2339 and mailing payments of \$35 for both Pesticide and fertilizer or \$15 dollars for fertilizer only to the office 215 North Cross St RM104 West Union, OH 45693.
- March 15, 2022, Crop Insurance sign up and agriculture risk coverage ARC, price loss coverage, election enrollment with the USDA FSA office. Contact me for assistance at (937) 544-2339.
- 2022 Tobacco GAP recertification course will be March 31,2022 at Raines Farm and Greenhouse, 10:00am-12:00pm. This event will be open to both Adams and Brown County producers. Call the Adams County OSU Extension office to RSVP at (937) 544-2339.