

Mental Health and Agriculture

Part One - STRESS and STIGMA

Global events, extreme weather patterns, and rising production costs can make times tough for producers in our communities. It should come as no surprise that those in the agricultural sector have higher rates of stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout compared with many other industries. For example, 35% of farmers may be experiencing depression and 45% of farmers report high levels of stress leading to lower physical and mental health.

- **Myth: It's better to suffer in silence.**

Fact: Isolation is where mental health issues thrive. So **make** time to connect. Our burdens can be unbearably heavy when carried on our own, but if we all share each other's burdens, they all become lighter.

The culture of stigma surrounding mental health within the agricultural sector can create a barrier to talking to someone and/or accessing services. However, showing that mental health is not a topic to be avoided or minimized shows others that you are a safe person to talk with, as well as it helps challenge the stigma associated with mental illness.

National organizations such as the Do More Agriculture Foundation are working to bring producers together to talk about mental health needs and how to enhance the health and wellbeing of agricultural workers in our communities. You can find out more about DO More Agriculture at www.domore.ag, including accessing helpful Wellness Tips.

Local resources are also available. Residents of Barons-Eureka-Warner FCSS's service area can receive free in person, online, or over the phone counselling. First appointments can be booked using our online booking calendar (www.fcss.ca) or by calling 587-370-3728. The Distress Line of Southwestern Alberta is available 24 hours a day, 7 days/week at 1-888-787 -2880.

Stay tuned for future segments in our Mental Health in Agriculture series including Part 2 - *Signs of Stress and How to Kick It*, and Part 3 - *What to (Not) Expect from A Counselling Appointment at FCSS*.

"To our valued producers working hard out there – take care of you as you're the most valuable and irreplaceable piece of equipment on the farm!"

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For references and sources email amanda.fontaine@fcss.ca

Visit www.fcss.ca for more information.

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