

DEALING WITH LOSS ON THE FARM

Loss is part of the farming experience. Farmers lose crops due to weather, lose animals due to illness, and sometimes lose the farm all together if family members do not continue farming.

Farmers and farm families pride themselves on being self-sufficient and independent. However, it is not 'weak' to ask for help when dealing with a loss on the farm, whatever that loss may be.

While there's no timeline for grief, some of the following suggestions may be helpful for those who are experiencing grief or supporting someone who is dealing with loss.

Experiencing Loss:

- **Find support:** Explore resources in your area that may be helpful for you and your family. You cannot change what happened, but you can influence what is happening within you.
- **Grief has no timeline:** Be kind to yourself no matter how grief shows up for you or how long it's been since the loss. Whether it's been one day or 10 years, it's completely normal for grief to resurface, sometimes unexpectedly.
- **Accept sympathy and support:** Your family and friends want to help you. Let them. Your support system will be better equipped if you let them know what would be helpful to you.

Supporting others experiencing loss:

- **Anticipate Needs:** Families who experience loss don't always know what they need. Offer practical supports that you would need if you were in a similar situation, such as running errands, bringing meals, helping with chores, or picking the kids up from school.
- **Check in frequently:** Even after many have passed following the initial loss, be sure to check in periodically with the family. Some have forgotten about the loss, but the family has not, and they may still need your support.
- **It's okay not to know what to say:** The family who has experienced the loss does not expect you to have all the answers or to be able to change the situation that they are in. Instead, just be there for them to offer comfort and support.
- **Research local resources:** It may be helpful to bring the family a list of resources that can help them move through their grief and loss. For instance, FCSS Counselling Services and online or in-person grief support groups.

For more information about the Farm Family Outreach Program, contact Kori Kuryvial at kori.kuryvial@fcss.ca or (403) 915-8803. For more information about FCSS Counselling Services, call [\(587\) 370-3728](tel:5873703728).

Visit www.fcss.ca for more information.



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