

Depression in Farming – LET'S TALK ABOUT IT



IN FARM COUNTRY, WE EXPECT A LOT FROM OUR BOOTSTRAPS.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP. FIND SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TODAY.

Handling stresses. Fixing problems. Farmers, ranchers and others working in agriculture learn early how to take care of their own challenges.

But farming and ranching is stressful, and those life stresses can overwhelm us. That doesn't mean we are weak — it means we are human. Life can get tough at times.

Being frustrated, down or exhausted doesn't mean you are failing. Such feelings are stress signals, like the check engine light on a vehicle. They mean slow down and focus on wellness. **Your health is your most important asset in farming and ranching.**



SADNESS VS. DEPRESSION

Feeling down, sad or discouraged? Such feelings are normal, especially in times of loss or stress. Depression, however, is different. Depression is a medical condition, like arthritis, and does not just improve on its own.

Common Signs of Depression:

- Depressed, sad mood
- Irritability (more common in men)
- Constant worry or restless thoughts
- Inability to concentrate or make decisions
- Loss of interest in activities
- Wanting to be alone or avoid others
- Sleep issues (cannot sleep well or getting too much sleep)
- Feeling tired or a lack of energy
- Physical stresses (upset stomach, trouble eating, headaches, muscle aches)
- Feelings of being worthless or hopeless
- Repeated thoughts of death or suicide
- Others asking if you are okay, if something is wrong

If you notice any of these symptoms, you could be experiencing depression. Please seek medical care. Get a health assessment right away.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

- **Depression is not a sign of weakness.** We may not like asking for help or wonder what others might think. Depression requires help. Asking others for help indicates wisdom and strength.
- **You are not alone.** Millions have experienced mild to severe depression and have gotten help.
- **Untreated depression damages health and limits quality of life.** It risks a person's life. North Dakota showed a 57% increase in suicide rates over a 20-year period — the highest in the nation. Depression is very treatable.
- **Depression is a complex medical condition.** It requires treatment and support. It is not better to hide it, ignore it or struggle with it alone. Seek help from people you trust, including your health care professional.
- To get immediate support, call or text the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**. Available 24 hours a day. Call or text **9-8-8** or chat <https://988lifeline.org>.

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ARE YOU WEARING OUT YOUR BOOTSTRAPS?

HELP IS AVAILABLE. WE ARE HERE TO HELP. FIND SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TODAY.



I AM WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE. WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Simply ask if they are OK.** When a person is depressed, they may not realize it. Be prepared to share, in a nonjudgmental and nonshaming way, **what** you have noticed and **why** you are concerned.
- Let the person know you care sincerely about them.
- **Use these three steps: (1) Listen; (2) Respond; (3) Refer.** Listen to the person's feelings and fears; do not minimize their problems or offer advice. Respond with any concerns or questions, and communicate your care. Refer to a health care provider or mental health resource, and go together if possible.
- **Ask if they have considered harming themselves or attempting suicide.** Bringing up the topic reduces the risk (does not increase it), lessens stigma about such feelings and invites the person to open up.

TUNE-UPS AND TOOLS FOR DEPRESSION

To manage stress or depression, a variety of tools can help:

- Schedule a visit right away with your primary health care provider. Get a full exam and share how you are feeling.
- Check out mental health tips and screening tools at Mental Health America: www.mhanational.org.
- **Practice wellness habits** such as exercising, maintaining a healthy diet, practicing good sleep habits, laughing, connecting with loved ones, practicing stress reduction efforts and seeking help.

WHERE TO GET HELP

- **NDSU Extension** – Farm/Ranch Stress Resources are available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmstress or at your local Extension county office.
- **Together Therapy and Wellness** – Together Therapy and Wellness offers in-person and telehealth farm-to-farm counseling services, and the counselors have farming backgrounds. Cost coverage is available as needed. Call **701-404-0997** or visit this link: <https://www.togethertw.org/farm-to-farm-1>
- **North Dakota Behavioral Health Services Directory** – Counseling and substance misuse services are available statewide: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/behavioral-health/find-services>
- **FirstLink Help Line** (24-hour helpline, services, referral) – Call: **2-1-1** or visit this link: <https://myfirstlink.org>
- **North Dakota Department of Agriculture – Mediation Service and Credit Counseling** — This program offers help to financially distressed farmers and ranchers through assistance with credit, financial matters and resolving disputes. Call 701-328-4158 or visit this link: <https://www.ndda.nd.gov/divisions/business-marketing-information/north-dakota-mediation-service>
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** (available 24 hours a day) – Call or text **9-8-8**, or chat <https://988lifeline.org>, available 24/7.
- In an emergency, call 9-1-1.

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