

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## IN THE POULTRY AND EGG SECTORS

THE STRESSORS FACING FARMERS ARE PLENTIFUL – UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER, ANIMAL DISEASE, FINANCIAL PRESSURE, HEAVY WORKLOADS, BURDEN OF PAPERWORK/BUREAUCRACY, MEDIA CRITICISM, SOCIAL ISOLATION, ETC.

Recent research confirms the impact this is having on farmers. In national surveys of Canadian farmers conducted by the university of Guelph<sup>1,2,3</sup>, researchers found that mental health outcomes for the farming population are consistently poorer than the general public.

TO READ MORE ABOUT THIS RESEARCH, VISIT [WWW.AJRESEARCH.COM](http://WWW.AJRESEARCH.COM)

The message here? Whatever you are feeling, you are not alone.

RESULTS FROM THE 2021 SURVEY OF FARMER MENTAL HEALTH IN CANADA

### CANADIAN FARMERS



FARMERS HAD SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER SCORES ON ALL 3 SUBSCALES OF THE MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY COMPARED TO POPULATION NORMS.

HIGH EXHAUSTION & CYNICISM ARE 2 OF THE 3 COMPONENTS OF **BURNOUT.**



**76%** OF FARMERS WERE CLASSIFIED AS EXPERIENCING MODERATE OR HIGH **PERCEIVED STRESS**

**1 IN 4** CANADIAN FARMERS FELT THEIR LIFE WAS NOT WORTH LIVING, WISHED THEY WERE DEAD, OR THOUGHT OF TAKING THEIR OWN LIFE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS.

ROCHELLE THOMPSON, BRIANA HAGEN, ANDRIA JONES-BITTON, 2022

Farm equipment needs constant maintenance and fuel to run well. So does your body and brain – the most important tools on your farm. Reach out to friends and family for support and have a look at some of the resources listed here. There is a wide variety of support tools available including articles, podcasts, 24-7 confidential counseling support by text or phone, and a wellness dashboard to check in with yourself.

<https://www.fcc-fac.ca/en/community/wellness.html>

[https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/mental\\_health](https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/mental_health)

<https://www.domore.ag/crisis-contacts>

<https://animalhealth.ca/mentalhealth/>





<https://cyff.ca/programs/self-care/>

### References

- Jones-Bitton A, Best C, MacTavish J, Fleming S, Hoy S (2020) Stress, anxiety, depression, and resilience in Canadian farmers. Soc. Psychiatry Psychiatr. Epidemiol., 55:229–236; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-019-01738-2>
- Jones-Bitton A, Hagen B, Fleming SJ, Hoy S (2019) Farmer burnout in Canada. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 16, 5074; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16245074>
- Thompson R, Hagen BNM, Lumley MN, Winder, CB, Gohar B, Jones-Bitton A (2022) Mental health and substance use of farmers in Canada during COVID-19. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 19, 13566; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192013566>

# WELLNESS DASHBOARD

Balance is extremely important when dealing with stress. When you look at your internal dashboard, do you see all green lights? Are there any red lights tipping you toward overload and stress? Let's all take care of ourselves so we can continue to do what we enjoy most.

	<b>GREEN</b> Healthy   Optimal	<b>YELLOW</b> Reacting   Stress	<b>ORANGE</b> Injured   Burnout	<b>RED</b> Illness   Depression   Mental Illness
 <p><b>Physical</b></p>	<p>Good sleep Good appetite, want to eat healthy Want to take care of physical health Rarely or never sick</p>	<p>Mild insomnia Tired Attracted to junk food often Unmotivated to exercise Trouble relaxing without a drink</p>	<p>Moderate insomnia Exhausted Binge eating Drinking too much alcohol or using drugs to relax Various aches and pains</p>	<p>Constantly sleeping or periods of no sleep at all Constant aching in body Immunocompromised: always sick Trouble getting off the couch or getting out of bed Only moments of relief come from excessive drinking or drugs, or over-the-counter medication</p>
 <p><b>Mental</b></p>	<p>Mentally clear Focused Good concentration Creative problem-solving Sees solutions</p>	<p>Easily distracted Excessive worry Procrastination Avoidance Sees obstacles</p>	<p>Chronically preoccupied Inability to concentrate Impaired decision-making Memory loss Constant focus on problems Always negative</p>	<p>Impaired judgment Paralyzed decision-making * Suicidal thoughts or actions * If you're having suicidal thoughts, seek help immediately and call 911 or see additional resources at the end of the magazine.</p>
 <p><b>Emotional</b></p>	<p>Motivated Excited Good social network</p>	<p>Irritability Loss of sense of humour Discouraged Impulsive Seeing people is a chore</p>	<p>Anger Anxiety Low mood Overwhelmed Avoiding social situations</p>	<p>Apathy Hopelessness or helplessness Out of control: explosive-impulsive, holding it all in Feeling like a burden Isolating yourself from friends, family and your community</p>
 <p><b>Strategies</b></p>	<p>Self care: physical, mental and emotional Serotonin boost Take a work break or vacation</p>	<p>Reaching out to friends and family Doing something to relax Seeing your family doctor</p>	<p>Peer support, assistance programs, mental health first aid</p>	<p>Professional or clinical support: doctor, psychologist</p>

## More information

### Don't be afraid to call for help

Mental health help lines are available in every province and territory:

BC: 1-800-784-2433  
AB: 1-877-303-2642  
SK: 1-800-667-4442  
MB: 1-866-367-3276  
ON: 1-866-531-2600  
QC: 1-866-277-3553  
NB: 1-800-667-5005  
NS: 1-888-429-8167  
PEI: 1-800-218-2885  
NL: 1-888-737-4668  
YT: 1-844-533-3030  
NT: 1-800-661-0844  
NU: 1-800-265-3333

#### Do More Ag

Get mental well-being information and support for Canadian producers.

[domore.ag](http://domore.ag)

#### Canadian Mental Health Association

With 330 community locations, CMHA is a nationwide organization that promotes mental health and supports people recovering from mental illness.

[cmha.ca](http://cmha.ca)

#### Online Therapy Unit

This free service was the first online therapy clinic in Canada (2010). It includes therapy services with a primary focus on depression and anxiety.

[onlinetherapyuser.ca](http://onlinetherapyuser.ca)

#### Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program

This program, created especially for farmers, offers six free, short-term counselling sessions for farmers and their families in Manitoba.

[manitobafarmerwellness.ca](http://manitobafarmerwellness.ca)

#### Farmer Wellness Initiative

Developed and launched by the Canadian Mental Health Association – Ontario Division and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, this telehealth service provides 24-7 counselling support (up to four sessions per issue per year) in various languages to Ontario farmers and their families.

[farmerwellnessinitiative.ca](http://farmerwellnessinitiative.ca)

#### Rural and Remote

Telepsychology Services  
Laura Friesen is offering a rural and remote psychological counselling service in Alberta for the farm and rural communities.

[agknow.ca](http://agknow.ca)

#### AgSafe BC

AgSafe BC has partnered with mental wellness practitioners to provide completely free and confidential third-party counselling services for all members of the BC agriculture community.

[agsafebc.ca](http://agsafebc.ca)

#### Mental Health Commission of Canada

[mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://mentalhealthcommission.ca)

#### Dealing with social isolation and loneliness

Social isolation is a serious issue on Canadian farms. This publication offers helpful tips in how to stay connected.

[casa-acsa.ca/en/canadianagricultural-safety-week/safety-is-our-standard](http://casa-acsa.ca/en/canadianagricultural-safety-week/safety-is-our-standard)

#### In the Know

In the Know is a mental health literacy program designed specifically for farmers, their families and those who are involved and/or support the agriculture sector. A free, four-hour training program helps participants start conversations around mental self-maintenance: Ontario.

[ontario.cmha.ca/intheknow](http://ontario.cmha.ca/intheknow)

#### Mental wellness dashboard

Learn to recognize common signs of addiction, anxiety, depression and suicide with this resource from AgSafe BC.

[agsafebc.ca/mental-wellness](http://agsafebc.ca/mental-wellness)

#### FarmersTalk.ca

The PEI Farmer Assistance Program offers resources and support for farmers and their families experiencing mental health distress.

[farmertalk.ca](http://farmertalk.ca)

#### 211

211 is Canada's primary source of information for government and community-based, non-clinical health and social services. The free and confidential service can be accessed 24 hours a day, in more than 150 languages, by phone, chat, text and web.

#### We Talk. We Grow.

We Talk. We Grow. is an initiative of Farm Safety Nova Scotia raising awareness and taking action to protect and nurture the mental health and well-being of Nova Scotia's farming community, and enhance and maintain a culture where mental health is valued, prioritized and protected.

[wetalkwegrow.ca](http://wetalkwegrow.ca)

#### 988

Similar to 911, anyone in Canada can call or text 988 to be quickly connected with suicide prevention services.