



Resources for Managing Stress and Burnout - Vermont

Stress is part of life, and farming is considered to be one of the most high-risk and stressful occupations. In fact, studies by The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) confirm that agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries in the United States and that farmers represent an occupational group with one of the highest levels of job-related stress. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, Sep 30, 2022), farmers and ranchers are nearly two times more likely to die by suicide in the U.S. compared to other occupations.



Everyone develops their own tactics to manage all of the routine pressures in order to cope, but burnout can develop over time when someone faces chronic stressors. Extraordinary stressors may come your way that cannot be effectively managed with the same strategies, resulting in feeling overwhelmed.

When feeling swamped, burned-out, or overloaded, keeping your frustrations bottled up and isolating yourself is **not** an effective strategy. In fact, that approach can deepen the anxiety and enhance feelings of despair, resulting in continued distress, depression or feeling compelled to rages or abusive behaviors toward yourself or others.

Reaching out for support or assistance is NOT a sign of weakness; rather, it shows one's strength and responsibility. *Who can you talk to?* Family members and close associates may have noticed some changes and would be caring confidants. If the preference is for talking with someone outside the family, perhaps you can talk with a trusted friend, reach out to your primary care physician, a pastor or other individual in your own religious group. Alternatively, there are now confidential 24/7 resources available for farmers to assist with managing farm stress or offer needed contacts and supports. The worst thing is not talking to anyone. Here are national resources:

National Crisis Lines, Hotlines and Resources

988

988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Starting July 16, 2022, this became available to everyone across the United States. Counseling services via phone in English and Spanish. Translation services are available in an additional 150 languages. Text and chat are currently available in English only.

1.800.950.NAMI (6264)

The NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) HelpLine can be reached Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. ET. Call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264); text "HelpLine" to 62640; email at helpline@nami.org; chat: nami.org/help

Text to 741741

The Crisis Text Line is a texting service for emotional crisis support. It is free, available 24/7, and confidential. Start your message with HOME or START or HELLO to get connected to a volunteer Crisis Counselor.

1.800.FARM-AID (1.800.327.6243)

Farm Aid has resources and hotline for farmer support. (This is NOT a crisis line.) To talk to the Hotline Team directly, call **1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)**. The Hotline is answered Mon. through Fri. from 9am – 10pm ET. Hotline assistance available in English and Spanish.

Vermont State Resources:

Vermont is one of the states in the Northeastern region with stress management and crisis resources specifically for farmers, their family members and farm workers: **Farm First**.



Farm First is a free, Vermont-based program providing farmers and their families with support, resources and information to reduce stress. They can help someone connect to resources, including technical, legal or financial assistance, as well as to a counselor or trained peer. <https://www.farmfirst.org/>

Farm First is a public, not-for-profit program jointly sponsored by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and the Vermont Agency of Human Services' Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing. Their staff includes licensed counselors and an agricultural resource navigator, all with an interest or experience in agriculture. They can provide assistance remotely through videoconferencing and in person -- oftentimes right at the farm.

The **Farm First Farmer Peer Network** is a group of farmers trained in listening skills, problem-solving and resiliency-building to help other farmers get through the rough spots. They can also help someone access the many resources available through Farm First, including a counselor. There are farm peers all over Vermont, in many different farming disciplines. <https://www.farmfirst.org/resources/peer-support>

To reach Farm First:

Call: (802) 318-5538 during daytime work hours (8:00 AM-4:30 PM M-F)

Call: 877-493-6216 outside of daytime work hours

Email: Eva Griffin at EvaG@farmfirst.org

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