Coping with Farm & Rural Stress in Minnesota

Meg Moynihan
Figure 9: Corn Price and Cost of Production

Costs Based on Cash Rented Land, Southwest Minnesota Farm Business Management Association

Price per Bushel
Cost per Bushel (with labor & management)

Price does not include L & O payments and other government support.
Milk - Per CWT Average Price Received and COP

What’s So Hard about Farming??

• Farmers work where they live
• Coworkers can be mostly family
• Responsibility vs. control
• Multiple roles
• Competition and envy
• Loss of peers/community
• Praise/blame
2017: In the last year, have you observed an increase in...

- Depression: 32% Yes, 58% Unsure, 10% No
- Anxiety: 80% Yes, 20% Unsure, 0% No
- Financial worries: 40% Yes, 22% Unsure, 38% No
- Burnout: 80% Yes, 20% Unsure, 0% No
- Marital difficulties: 22% Yes, 55% Unsure, 23% No
- Farm transfer...: 6% Yes, 6% Unsure, 88% No
- Gambling addiction: 3% Yes, 3% Unsure, 94% No
- Alcohol addiction: 6% Yes, 6% Unsure, 88% No
- Drug addiction: 3% Yes, 3% Unsure, 94% No
Shared Concern, Collaborative Efforts
Coping with Farm & Rural Stress in Minnesota
Dedicated Farmer Counselor

- Ted Matthews (a/k/a/“Ted”)
- No insurance; no paperwork
- 1:1 farmers, farm families
- $113K/yr
- Legislature → MDA → Minnesota State → Contract with Ted
24/7 Confidential Hotline

• Contracted service
  • First Call for Help of Itasca Co.
• $21.5K/yr
• Prof. development training
Minnesota Farm Advocates

• Since 1984

• Peer farmers

• Natural or financial disaster

• “In your corner”

• Help navigate solutions to difficult and complex problems
  • Lending/lender negotiation, mediation, farm programs, crisis counseling, disaster programs, legal and/or social services
  • $220K/year

• 2017: ~8,400 hours
In Minnesota, a farmer in debt has the right to renegotiate, restructure, or resolve farm debt through Mandatory Farmer-Lender Mediation.

- State Statute - 1986
- 2017: 3,246 mediation notices issued by creditors
  - 26% of debtors requested mediation
  - 86% of these reached an agreement
- 5.25 FTE
- Housed within U of M Extension
U of M Extension Financial Counseling

• 1:1

• Financial analysts
  • 11 Retired bankers, farm business management instructors

• Free and confidential

• Review and analyze financial situation, identify options and alternatives

• 2 years, funded by U of M
Mobile Crisis Teams

Intensive face-to-face, short-term mental health services. Initiated during a crisis to help a person return to his/her baseline level of functioning.
• 33 teams in the state of Minnesota
• 24/7 access for children and adults in all counties
• Calls answered immediately
• Most face: face assessments occur in < 2 hours from the time of the call
• Funding: 3rd party billing, county funds, state grants
Crisis Services

• Crisis Assessment
• Crisis Intervention
• Crisis Stabilization

• Benefit Navigators
• Service Navigators
• Rapid Access to Prescriber
• Emergency Medication
Available Everywhere

1-800-273-TALK (8255)
SuicidePreventionLifeline.org

CRISIS TEXT LINE
Text MN to 741741
Free support at your fingertips, 24/7
Help farm advisors recognize and respond when they see farmers in trouble.

- 6 locations
- 3 hour sessions
- Free
- 475 attendees (bankers, agency staff, veterinarians, clergy, educators, mental health providers, agribusiness, etc.)
- Creation/delivery: Ted Matthews, MN Sheriff’s Assn, FSA, MDA
Objectives

- Recognize the signs of mental and emotional distress and crisis.
- Understand how and why to take care of your own emotional and mental health in stressful situations.
- Learn to use active listening skills.
- Improve your confidence about delivering difficult information to farmers.
- Be able to use anger de-escalation strategies when necessary.
- Learn about local and regional resources available to farmers in distress or crisis.
• Legislative initiative (another Ted)
• Radio/podcast outreach project to \( \uparrow \) awareness, \( \downarrow \) stigma
• *Down on the Farm* curriculum (SARE)
• *Down on the Farm* follow-on training (SARE)
  • Suicide prevention workshops
  • Pilot youth program
• Closer collaboration with MDH and MDHS
For more info:

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