

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Growing Our Ag Wellness

Like many raised in this great state, I grew up on a farm in southeast Kansas. Also like many, the family farm needed to evolve over time, shifting from full time crops and cattle to ‘part time’ hay and cattle. Love for the land and this work has stayed with me, now my husband and I have a small hand in the business with plans to keep it going like generations before.

With these personal experiences and the work of K-State Research and Extension, a passion for our farmers’ wellness has intensified since learning of the alarming reports about suicide rates through a study from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A breakdown of deaths by suicide within occupations shows that those in the farming, fishing, and forestry industry have the highest rate by more than 30 percent.

Suicides in Kansas rose 45 percent over the past 17 years, far outpacing the nation as a whole, with Kansas having one of the largest increases. The rate increase for our Missouri neighbors was 36.4 percent.

Whether times are as challenging as now or not, we must value and address our farmers’ wellness. Farmers and agricultural professionals have careers full of uncertainty. Changing weather patterns, fluctuating schedules, pest outbreaks and low commodity prices can easily lead to overwhelming stress. Not just for farmers, but for their entire families.

Stress can take a toll on the body’s physical and mental wellbeing with potentially disastrous results. Farmers and their families can manage stress by developing the right mindset and gaining the right tools. North Dakota State University Extension Service created and partners with K-State Research and Extension to provide a *Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness in Times of Tight Margins* resource. This gives numerous tools for farmer’s wellness specifically. I would love to share these with you! You may find most of the resources at www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu.

If you are in agriculture and this hits a little close to home, you are not alone. Those in agriculture are passionate and invaluable, producing and supplying the essentials for human life. I do not want to see any of my family or your family increase these startling statistics. It is challenging to take the time to seek out resources. They are out there if you need them. Here are just a few:

Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services

800-321-3276 or kams@ksu.edu

Kansas AgrAbility

Addressing conditions such as physical injuries, arthritis, chronic back pain, and behavioral health issues, contact 1-800-KAN DO IT (1-800-526-3648).

How to Handle Stress on the Farm is a free, self-paced online course

http://www.canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for Kansas at 785-841-2345, or 800-273-8255

Local resources at www.KansasSuicidePrevention.org or dial 211

Ag Behavioral Health

Dr. Mike Rosmann, Farmer, Psychologist, and leading expert in agricultural behavioral health

www.agbehavioralhealth.com or mike@agbehavioralhealth.com

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