

“Farming is a noble calling and many farmers see their occupation as a key part of their identities. When that occupation is threatened- by drought, flooding, disease or a down farm economy- people can feel like their meaning of life is disappearing.”

– Michael Rosmann, PhD



Washington farmers produce over 300 commodities with ag production valued at over 10.6 billion in 2016 (WSDA, 2016).



Despite the large economic impact of ag, over half of Washington farmers work part time off-farm (WSDA, 2016).



Farmers and Ranchers suicide rate is 2-3 times higher than the national average (CDC, 2018).

FREE, confidential, and always available resources for suicide risk

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line

Text HEAL to 741741

Volunteers of America Western Washington

1-800-584-3578

WSU Agricultural Suicide Prevention Program is funded through the State of Washington, Department of Health under the provisions of House Bill 2671.



WSU AGRICULTURAL SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

For more information, go to:

www.extension.wsu.edu/skagit/suicide-prevention/

FREE, confidential, and always available resources for suicide risk

- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HEAL to 741741
- **Farm Aid’s Farmer Resource Network and Hotline:** 1-800-FARM-AID (327-6243)
Staff available Monday through Friday from 6am to 2pm PST.
- **Volunteers of America Western Washington:** 1-800-584-3578

Acknowledgements

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SUPPORTING AGENCIES



Skagit County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence on noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension Office.



**COPING WITH STRESS
IN TOUGH TIMES**

Health & Safety
in Rural Communities



Signs of Agriculture-Related Stress

The last few years have been difficult for farmers and their families. Many are experiencing financial and emotional stress as a result. There are several signs or symptoms when a farm family may be in need of help.

These signs include:

- **Change in routines.** Farmer or farm family stops attending regular activities (i.e. church), drops out of 4-H or other groups, or no longer stops in at the local coffee shop.
- **Care of livestock declines.** Livestock may not be cared for in the usual way; they may lose condition, appear gaunt or show signs of neglect or physical abuse.
- **Increase in illness.** Farmer may experience more colds or flu symptoms or other chronic conditions (aches, pains, persistent cough).
- **Increase in farm or ranch accidents.** Stress can cause fatigue and make it difficult to concentrate. This can result in an increase in farm accidents and injuries.
- **Appearance of farmstead declines.** The farm buildings and grounds no longer appear to be maintained as they once were, or farmer no longer has the time to do maintenance work.
- **Children show signs of stress.** Children may act out, decline in academic performance or be increasingly absent from school.



Warning Signs of Suicide Risk

- Talking or writing about suicide or death
- Feeling hopeless, trapped, or like a burden
- Isolation from others
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Being anxious or agitated
- Acting recklessly
- Increased drug and/or alcohol use
- Stockpiling pills or obtaining a weapon
- Giving away prized possessions
- Saying goodbyes
- Sudden cheerfulness or calm after a period of despondency

What can I do to help?

Friends, family members, neighbors, milk haulers, veterinarians and spiritual leaders can help by first learning the common stressors that farmers face.

Asking for help is difficult.

By understanding the warning signs of suicide risk, you can learn to identify if a person or family needs help and connect them with appropriate resources as soon as possible.

Familiarize yourself with the resources available and have a plan to follow-up if the conversation comes up.

If you are concerned that someone you know may be at risk, have a direct conversation. **Asking about suicide does not cause harm or elevate**