

Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health

The Rural & Agricultural Natural Disaster Stress & Recovery Study

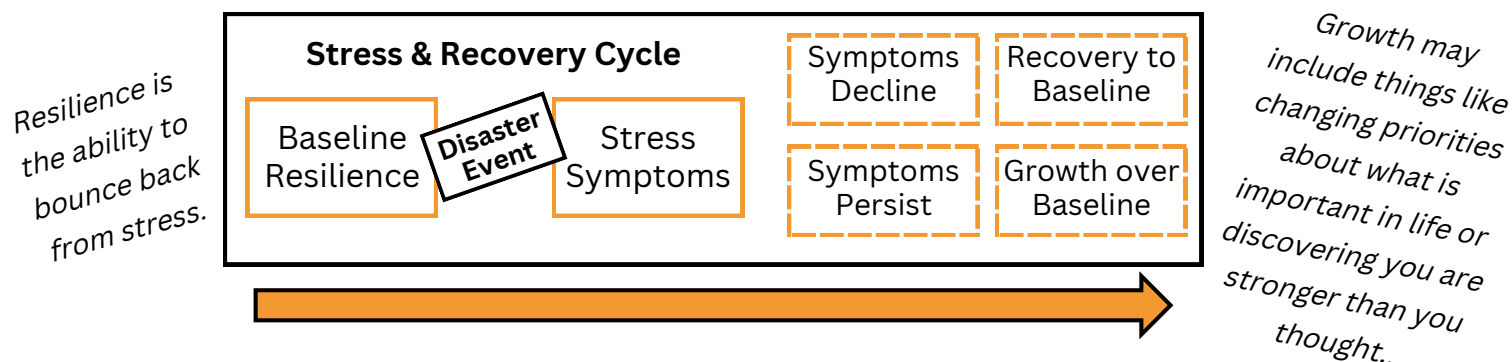
This project conducted by a UNMC College of Public Health student examined the experiences of U.S. agricultural producers following natural disasters, (tornados and flooding), and compared these experiences to their non-agricultural counterparts who lived through the same disaster.

159 participants who lived out of town or in a town with < 10,000 people Affected by Tornado, Flood, Wind, or Hail

52% from Arkansas
39% from Nebraska
21% Agricultural work

Thank you to all the participants who shared a little piece of their lives in this survey and trusted us with their stories!

Disaster stress and recovery might look like this:



Specific post-traumatic stress type symptoms may include...

- **Re-experiencing** the event, such as thinking about it when you didn't mean to, having strong feelings when reminded of it, or having dreams about it.
- **Avoiding** the event, such as trying to remove it from your memory, not talking about it, or staying away from reminders or it.

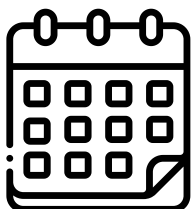


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This study was conducted in cooperation with the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health by MPH student Kristin Gaffney as her Applied Practice Experience (APEX) and Capstone Project.

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How people, groups, and activities from inside and outside the community impacted disaster stress:



Many rural residents still experience disaster-related stress symptoms even years after the event. Some experienced more types of symptoms years later than they did immediately following the event. Individuals and decision makers should consider **long-term stress effects** on relationships and emotional health in the community.



Agricultural residents have similar natural disaster stress and recovery compared to rural, non-agricultural residents. **Women in agriculture** may experience lower levels of recovery or growth. Communities should include agricultural men and women in recovery plans and efforts.



Many readily-available resources often **decreased disaster stress**. The highest rated were:

- Group from neighboring community
- Personal faith activities such as prayer, meditation, or readings
- Helping others in my community



Some resources reduced disaster stress but were used less often. **Expanded use** could have a greater impact on the community:

- Community function (fundraiser, commemoration, school activity, etc.)
- Outside relief group (Red Cross, Farm Rescue, etc.)



Unfortunately, some resources often **increased disaster stress**. Improvements are needed to reduce their negative impacts on stress:

- FEMA, Farm Service Agency, or other government group
- Repairing, replacing, or rebuilding my own property
- Following news or social media about the event
- Finding stress or recovery information on websites



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This study was conducted in cooperation with the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health. The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Office of Regulatory Affairs approved the Rural Disaster Stress and Recovery Study as exempt research under IRB #729-21-EX. While human subjects were involved in the survey study, no identifying protected health information was collected.