

Foreign Animal Diseases & Farmers' Mental Health

Foreign Animal Diseases

A foreign animal disease (FAD) is an animal disease not currently in the U.S., and an outbreak could severely impact animal health and the U.S. economy. In the swine industry, FADs of greatest concern include African swine fever (ASF), classical swine fever (CSF), and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). FAD preparedness and response activities help to ensure we are ready to both prevent and respond to potential FAD introductions. However, the threat of severe animal illness, high mortality, production losses, and potential financial impact can be taxing on our mental health. While we are taking care of our herds, we must take care of ourselves.



Impact on Farmers

Caring for animals and being faced with a depopulation situation can create stress for producers and workers. Stress happens to all of us and it is normal to feel overwhelmed, especially during tough times. If you feel anxious or depressed, *you are not alone*. Beyond your friends and family, there are many resources to help.

Know the Signs of Stress and Depression

- Persistent worry and fear
- Apprehension and uneasiness
- Avoiding others
- Feeling sad
- Lack of interest or pleasure in activities
- Significant weight change or changes in appetite
- Problems sleeping
- Slow or fidgety body movements
- Low energy/fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Frequent thoughts of death or suicide
- Substance misuse
- Unexplained changes in physical appearance or behavior
- Headaches
- Feelings of isolation
- Anger
- Feeling numb

Know When to Seek Help

If you or someone you know shows signs of stress over the past 2 weeks, seek help from a mental health professional resource on the backside of this sheet.

Contact the National Suicide and Crisis Hotline right away if you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill themselves or someone else, or talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide.



Take Care of Yourself & Your Workers

Caring for your physical health can help lower your stress level.

- Eat healthy foods
- Drink lots of water
- Avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol
- Avoid tobacco or illegal drugs
- Get enough sleep and rest
- Get physical exercise

Use simple techniques for relaxation.

- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
- Engage in your favorite hobbies
- Pace yourself between stressful activities
- Find a work/life balance and do something you enjoy between stressful tasks
- Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends

Check in often to make sure everyone is doing well. The Animal Depopulation Resiliency Check-in Tool can be a helpful resource to guide conversations.

Use your smart phone to scan the QR code to review tool, or enter the URL in your web browser:
aasv.org/resources/depop-resiliency.php



Una versión en español también está disponible en el sitio web.

QPR for Farmers & Farm Families

The Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training teaches laypeople and professionals to recognize and respond to mental health crises. QPR for Farmers and Farm Families is specially tailored to the agricultural community. Your community may be eligible for a free QPR training through the AgriSafe Network and the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH) at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Sign up for free virtual QPR training at agrisafe.org/courses/qpr/



Resources

Stress & Wellness

Disaster Distress Helpline	Call 1-800-985-5990 or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746
Substance Abuse & Mental Health National Helpline	Call 1-800-662-4357 or text 1-800-487-4889

Suicide Prevention

National Suicide and Crisis Hotline	Call or text 988
Veterans Crisis Line	Call 988, Press 1 or text to 838255
The AgriStress Helpline (available in CT, MO, PA, TX, VA, and WY)	Call or text 833-897-2472

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