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# Wyoming Department of Agriculture ag stress page offers resources

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) launched a web resource focused on supporting Wyoming producers with agriculture-related stress and mental health help.

Visit <https://bit.ly/wyo-ag-stress> to see the Wyoming Ag Stress page and all the resources available.

Agricultural producers on any given day, no matter the size of land or number of animals they manage, face issues like market uncertainty, time commitments, weather, livestock health, neighbor relations, and more.

These challenges may be the least of their worries on a bad day. Producers are routinely faced with many difficult situations that can cause anxiety and worry.

Take a moment to look at the list above, or look at your own life, and think about how many stressors are on your plate. Combine these

stressors with geographical isolation and lack of readily accessible resources for help and you start to get a sense of what many face in agriculture.

Now add COVID-19.

The WDA highlights resources from other organizations, educational institutions, and government entities in one easy-to-access location so those seeking information can quickly find the content and resources they need.

This page serves as a clearinghouse for resources available to those directly and indirectly involved in the agriculture industry. There is information for spouses and family members as well.

## Get help

Everyone is wired differently. Some want to talk about concerns. Others are stoic and prefer to work

things out on their own. There is not a one-size-fits-all strategy when finding help. The “Get Help” button on the web page leads to a variety of options for seeking assistance. There are farm crisis toll-free numbers, podcasts to listen to other producers talk about resiliency, bulletins on a variety of ag stress topics, and even links to finding a counselor or mental health professional in your area or online.

## Family support

Maybe you notice your dad or your mom facing a lot of challenges lately. Maybe your spouse is having trouble sleeping and you see the toll on their physical health. Agricultural stress impacts everyone in the family and everyone on a farm or ranch. The “Family Support” button will lead you to resources designed specifically for ag families. From resources for families coping with mental health



disorders, a parent's guide to teen depression, veterans' crisis line and more, the link will provide a lot of information for families and loved ones.

## Help someone

Perhaps you work in an organization that serves the agricultural community. Or you share a fence with a neighbor who runs a few cows. In Wyoming, we are easily connected to agriculture and our rural way of life. Maybe you've noticed your neighbor or your customer is going through some hard times. If you know someone is struggling, they may just need someone to listen. Encourage them to talk; you don't necessarily need to offer insights or solutions, just be an ear.

You can also offer specific help. When we tell someone, "Let me know if there's anything I can do for

you" we may be burdening them with more decision-making or they may be embarrassed to admit the help that they do need. Instead, tell them you are running into town and ask if there is anything you can pick up for them. Offer to grab some groceries and save them a trip. Ask if you can take their kids for a few hours so they can get a project done.

The "Help Someone" button on the website provides links to resources for responding to distressed people, articles on recognizing the signs of a mental health crisis, additional training on rural resiliency, and more.

## Other resources

Ag stress can be caused by many aspects of the industry, including financial concerns, regulatory issues, conflicts with federal agencies, opioid and substance abuse, and more. Addressing these issues directly may help manage stress and move toward recovery. The "Other Resources" button on the

web page provides information about the WDA's Mediation Program, Farmers' Legal Action Group, financial counseling services, substance abuse ombudsman, and more.

This industry can be difficult, and these can be challenging times for agriculture producers. Fortunately, in times of need, the agriculture community routinely pulls together to help each other get through difficult times.

Please use this information to help yourself, or someone you care for, so we can continue the great agricultural tradition of lending a helping hand to neighbors and communities in times of need.

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