

# Farmer to Farmer



You are not alone. Across the Southeast dairy farmers are struggling to cope with market losses. Reach out to a farmer below to talk:

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## Please note:

1. The individuals above have experience in, and great love and concern for the dairy industry and its people. They are not trained mental health professional counselors, but have some life experience as listening ears, lay pastors, mentors and trusted confidantes.
2. Their time is voluntary and they are willing to be a 'shoulder to lean on' if you should wish to discuss challenges the dairy industry is facing and how those challenges affect you or your operation. They may or may not suggest a mental health professional for you to speak with further, depending on your situation.
3. This network should be considered as nothing more than it is - a means of providing producers the names of colleagues who are concerned for your future, and who are willing to accept the role of 'listening ear.' Someone wishing to 'vent' and call them does so at their own risk, and accepts all liability as a result of a call.

# Caring for Yourself

Caring for your own health and wellness is just as important as caring for your farm. When you feel stressed or anxious, use one or more of these techniques to help yourself feel better.

## Breathe

Take a deep breath. Let the air out slowly.  
Do this five times.

## Self-encouragement

Tell yourself you can get through this. You have come through rough times before, and you can do it again. You are strong and capable.

## Exercise

Add an enjoyable physical activity to your day. Just taking a short walk in the sunshine can be a big help in improving your mood and your health.

## Talk

Reach out to someone you trust and talk it over. Connecting with someone else can help you to see things in a different way.

*\*\*Information provided by the Mississippi State University Extension Service.*

# Additional Resources

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

- **Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line: 1-866-399-8938**

This number provides 24/7 free and confidential assistance to callers needing emotional support or resource information as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Emotional Support Line is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals and others who have received training in crisis counseling. Call the support line at 1-866-399-8938.



- **SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990**

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

# HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOU



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## HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOUR BODY

From the list below, circle any of the physical symptoms that you frequently have when you are stressed.

- |                            |                                   |                           |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Heart races</b>         | <b>Shortness of breath</b>        | <b>Increased appetite</b> |
| <b>High blood pressure</b> | <b>Dizziness</b>                  | <b>Tapping fingers</b>    |
| <b>Sweaty palms</b>        | <b>Neck feels sore</b>            | <b>Muscle cramps</b>      |
| <b>Face feels hot</b>      | <b>Legs feel shaky</b>            | <b>Backache</b>           |
| <b>Tightness of chest</b>  | <b>Upset stomach</b>              | <b>Grind teeth</b>        |
| <b>Fatigue</b>             | <b>No appetite</b>                | <b>Headache</b>           |
| <b>Nausea</b>              | <b>Feel like you are in a fog</b> |                           |

## HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOUR THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS

From the list below, circle any of the thoughts or feelings you frequently have when you are stressed.

- |                          |                                 |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Easily angered</b>    | <b>Nervous</b>                  | <b>Crying</b>             |
| <b>Feeling depressed</b> | <b>Trouble making decisions</b> | <b>Restlessness</b>       |
| <b>Lower sex drive</b>   | <b>Irritable</b>                | <b>Feeling bored</b>      |
| <b>Exhausted</b>         | <b>Cynical</b>                  | <b>Inability to sleep</b> |
| <b>Can't concentrate</b> | <b>Aggressive</b>               |                           |

## HOW STRESS AFFECTS WHAT YOU DO

From the list below, circle any of the things you may do when you are stressed.

- |                                       |                         |                             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Undereating</b>                    | <b>Increase smoking</b> | <b>Sleeping to escape</b>   |
| <b>Overeating</b>                     | <b>Taking drugs</b>     | <b>Withdraw from people</b> |
| <b>Arguing</b>                        | <b>Drinking</b>         | <b>Breaking things</b>      |
| <b>Stop doing things I like to do</b> |                         |                             |

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To learn more, visit [msue.msu.edu/managingfarmstress](https://msue.msu.edu/managingfarmstress).

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# STRESS



Try any two of these ideas each day for 2 to 3 weeks and you will be able to notice how much less stressed you have become.

*“Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.”*

-William James

## REFLECT

Think of any moment that made you feel comforted and content. Close your eyes and relive that moment.



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## THINK “B-R-A-I-N.”

**B** = **Breathe**. Breathe deeply 5 times. Release the air slowly.

**R** = **Relax**. Tell yourself to relax, whether in your head or out loud. Notice areas of tension in your body, and try to release that tension.

**A** = **Ask** yourself what you need or want to feel. We usually ask why the other person is such a jerk or why we goofed up. Instead, ask yourself what you need to feel: calm, in control, at peace, and other comforting feelings.

**I** = **Imagine** feeling that way.

**N** = **Now**, after doing those four things, ask yourself, “How do I feel now?”

## SELF-TALK

Tell yourself you can get through it. You have come through rough times before. You can do it again. You have gotten through difficult situations.

## EXERCISE



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Physical activity can help to lessen cortisol in the body and protect against negative impacts of stress (Puterman et al., 2012; Hamer, 2012; Heaney et al., 2014). What physical activity might you be able to add in that you would enjoy? Even taking a short walk can improve our mood and heart health (McGuire & Ross, 2011; Hansen et al., 2001).

## REFERENCES

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**To learn more, visit [msue.msu.edu/managingfarmstress](https://msue.msu.edu/managingfarmstress).**

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# helpful resources

## SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English and Español)

SMS: Text TalkWithUs to 66746 SMS (Español): "Hablamos" al 66746  
TTY: 1-800-846-8517

[disasterdistress.samhsa.gov](http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov)  
[disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/espanol](http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/espanol)

## Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL)

Toll-Free: 1-800-715-4225  
Georgia's 24/7 toll-free line staffed by licensed mental health professionals. Language assistance available.

[dbhdd.georgia.gov/access-services](http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/access-services)

### Treatment Locator

Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

[findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/home](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/home)

## National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Toll-Free: 1.800.273.8255

Contact the National Suicide Prevention Life-line right away if you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill him or herself or someone else, or talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide.



Pictured: Greg Mims, Georgia farmer after Hurricane Michael



You are not alone.  
Across the state and  
nation farmers struggle  
to cope with the  
effects of natural  
disaster.

Find help inside.



Pictured: Casey Cox, Georgia farmer after Hurricane Michael

# COPING WITH DISASTER

in the agricultural  
community

"Devastating would be the main word I would use, but I'd also say we are fortunate and blessed. Even though it's hard to look at it that way."

-Stuart Griffin,  
Georgia farmer



Pictured:  
Casey Cox, Georgia farmer after Hurricane Michael

[agr.georgia.gov/disaster-relief](http://agr.georgia.gov/disaster-relief)

## KNOW WHEN TO GET HELP

While it is normal to feel sad, anxious, or worried after a disaster, some may still feel those heightened emotions a year or more after a disaster. If you or someone you know struggles to cope with strong feelings after a few weeks/months, or experiences continued interference with normal functioning, get help by accessing one of the resources found in the pamphlet.

Contact the National Suicide Prevention Life-line right away if you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill him or herself or someone else, or talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide.

## Common Responses to a Disaster

### YOUR BEHAVIOR

- Changes in Activity Level
- Trouble Relaxing or Sleeping
- Increased Use of Alcohol/Drugs
- An Increase in Irritability
- Poor Work Performance
- Difficulty Maintaining Balance in Life
- Loss of Interest in Usually Pleasurable Activities

“My motto has been adapt and overcome through this whole thing.” Sheila Rice, Georgia Farmer after Hurricane Michael

## Know How To Relieve Stress

You can manage and alleviate your stress by taking time to take care of yourself.

### KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Use credible sources to keep informed about new information and developments, but avoid overexposure to news broadcasts of the event.

### BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT RESOURCES

Learn about what resources are available to aid you and others affected by the tragedy. Seek resources if needed. Contact your local EMA.

### CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Talk to friends, family, or colleagues who likely are experiencing the same feelings. Spend time with friends and family.

### KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY

Get adequate rest, eat healthy meals, and drink plenty of water. Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine or alcohol and the use of tobacco or illegal drugs.

### SEEK ROUTINE

Maintain a normal family and daily routine, limiting demanding responsibilities on yourself and your family.

### USE PRACTICAL WAYS TO RELAX

Use relaxation methods such as breathing exercises, meditation, calming self-talk, or soothing music. Get plenty of exercise.

## Common Responses to a Disaster

### YOUR BODY

- Digestive Issues
- Headaches/Pain
- Fatigue/Loss of Energy
- Easily Startled
- Trembling
- Rapid Heart Rate
- Weakness
- Sweating or Chills

### YOUR EMOTIONS

- Shock/Denial
- Fear/Anxiety
- Anger or Irritability
- Sadness
- Feelings of Hopelessness
- Guilt
- Numbness
- Grief
- Mood Changes

### YOUR THOUGHTS

- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Difficulty Making Decisions
- Dreams/Nightmares of Event
- Confusion or self-doubt
- “Flashbacks” of Crisis Event