

Agricultural Stress and Mental Health

Illinois Extension



College of Agricultural,
Consumer &
Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



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Introduction

Objectives:

- Describe agricultural stressors
- Compare prevalence of mental health conditions between agricultural producers and the general population
- Describe mental health resources and services available in the Midwest

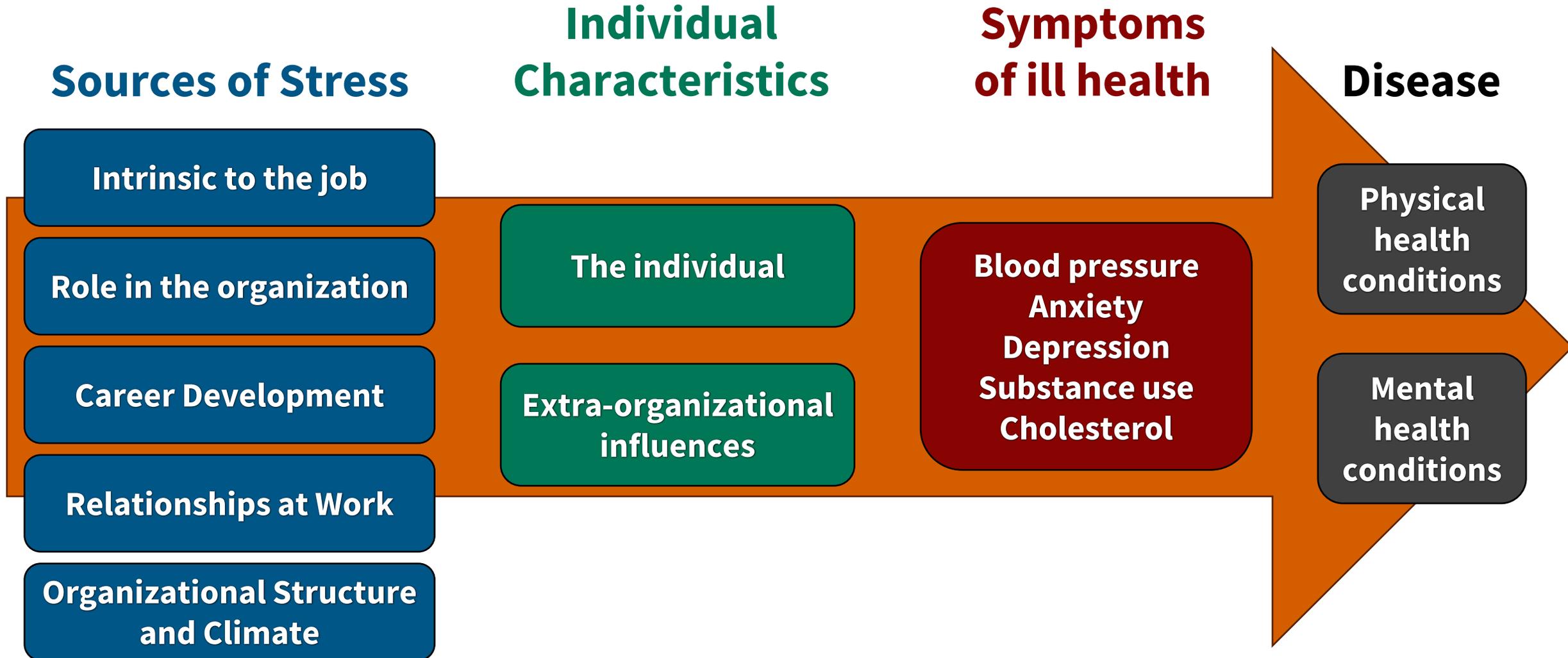


Agricultural Stress



- **Fluctuating commodity prices**
- **Time pressures**
- **Environmental conditions**
- **Economics**
- **Multi-generational farming**

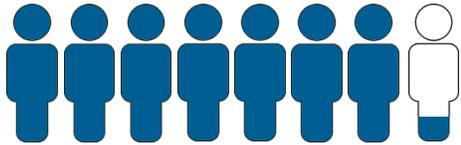
Stress and Mental Health



Mental Health: Depression

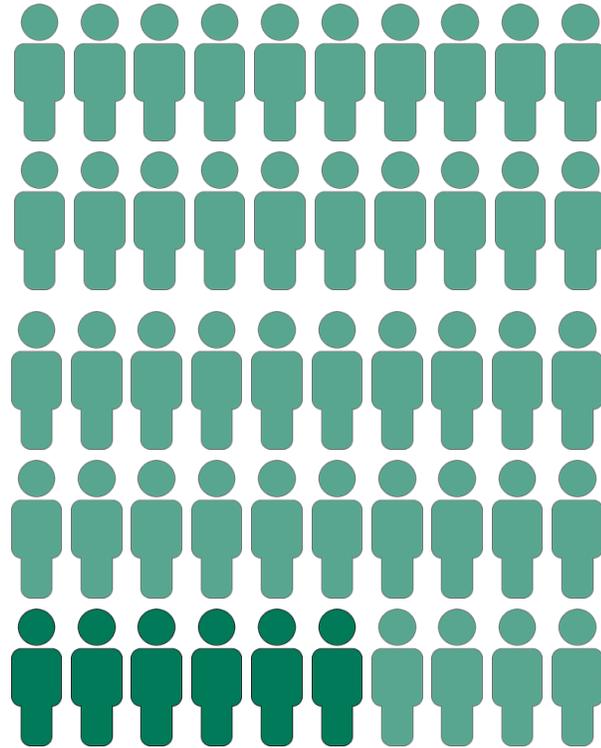
General Population

7.3%

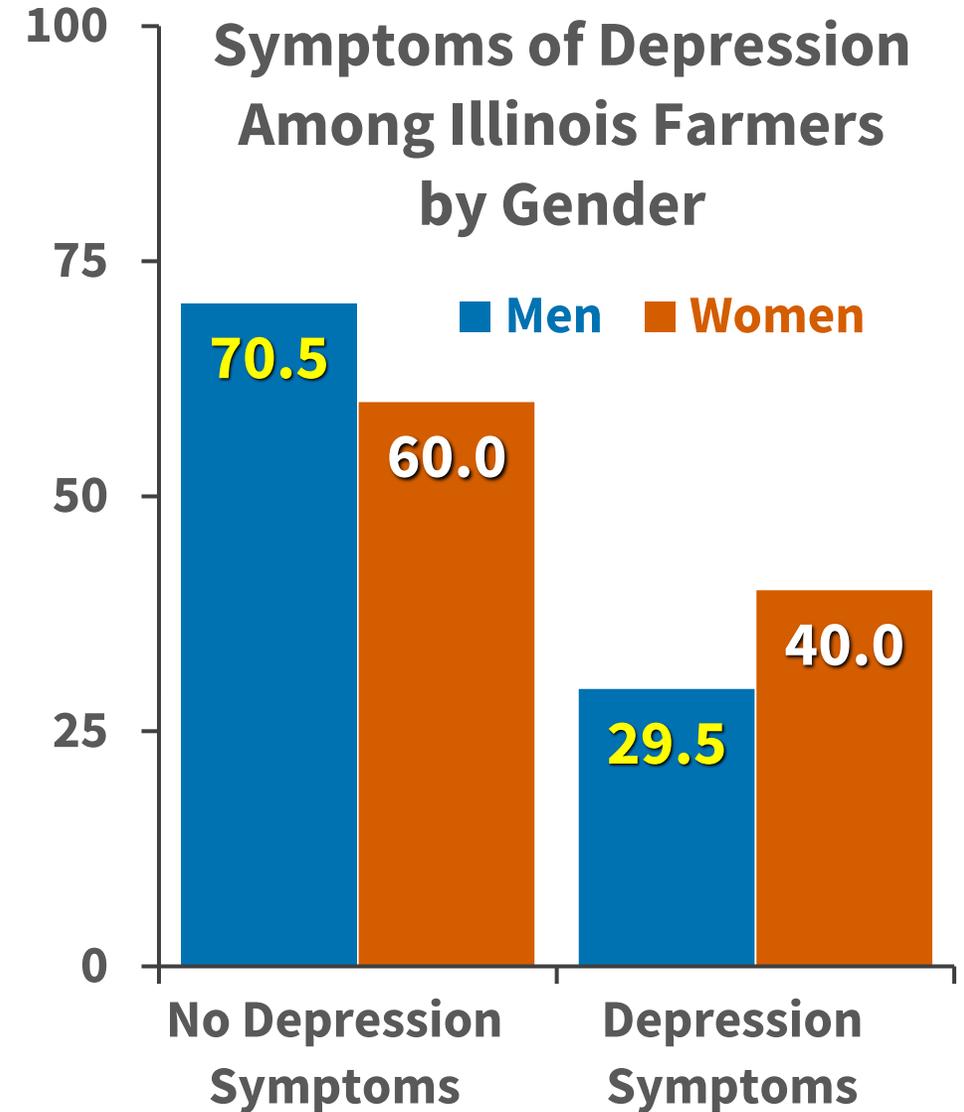


Ag community

6 to 50%



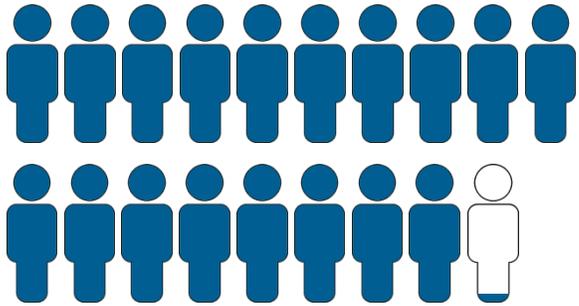
Symptoms of Depression Among Illinois Farmers by Gender



Mental Health: Anxiety

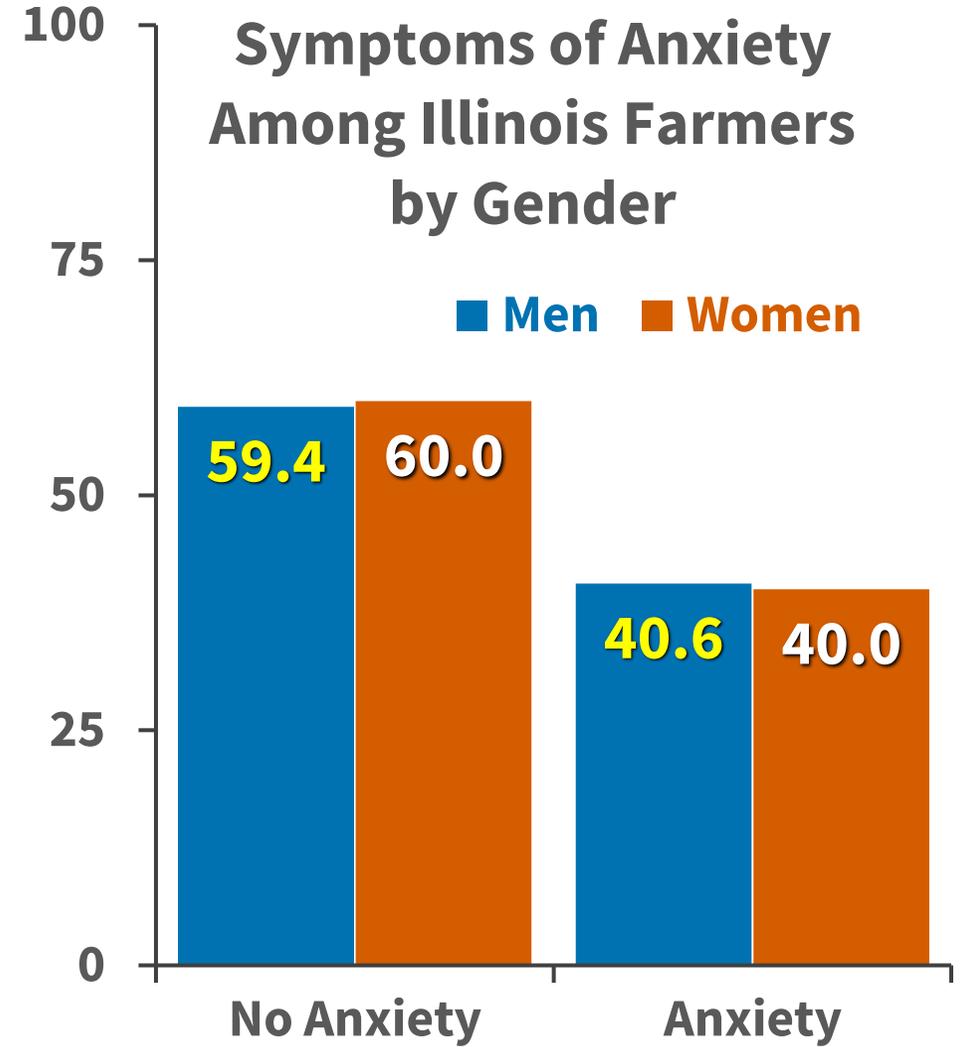
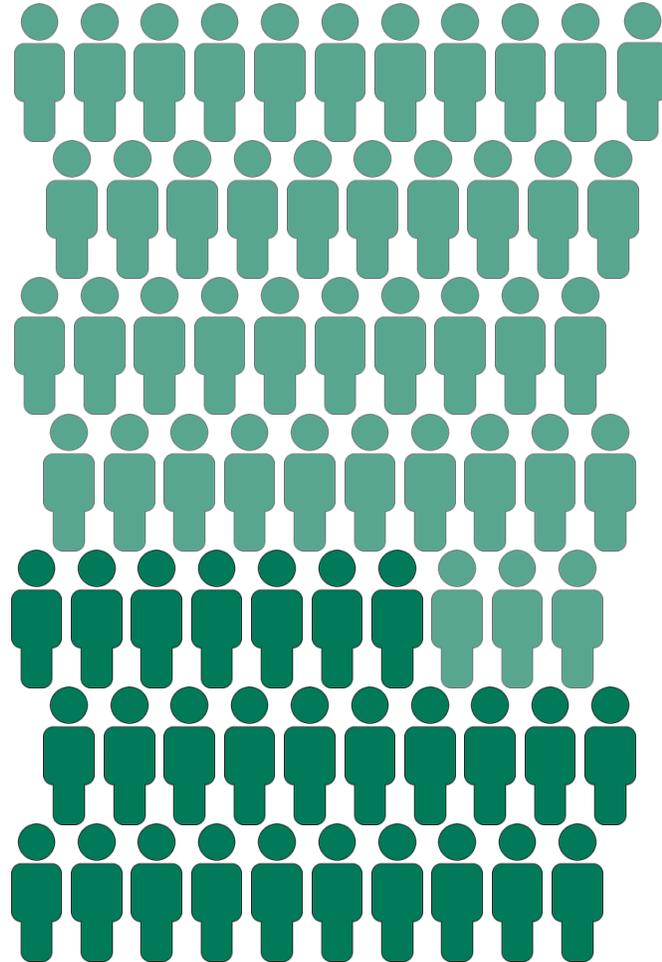
General Population

18.1%



Ag community

27 to 71%



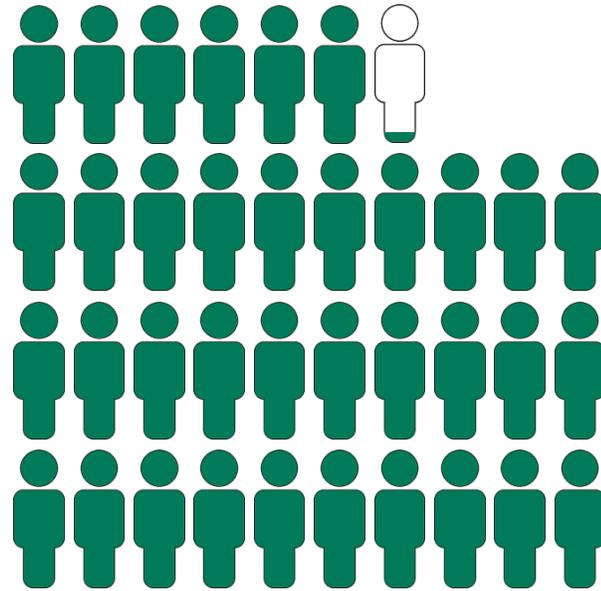
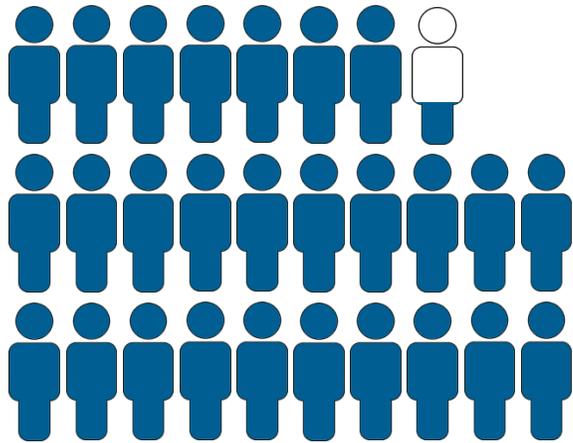
Mental Health: Suicide and Suicide Risk

General Population

Ag community

27.4

36.1



Risk factors for agricultural producers:

- Age 65+
- Physical health problem

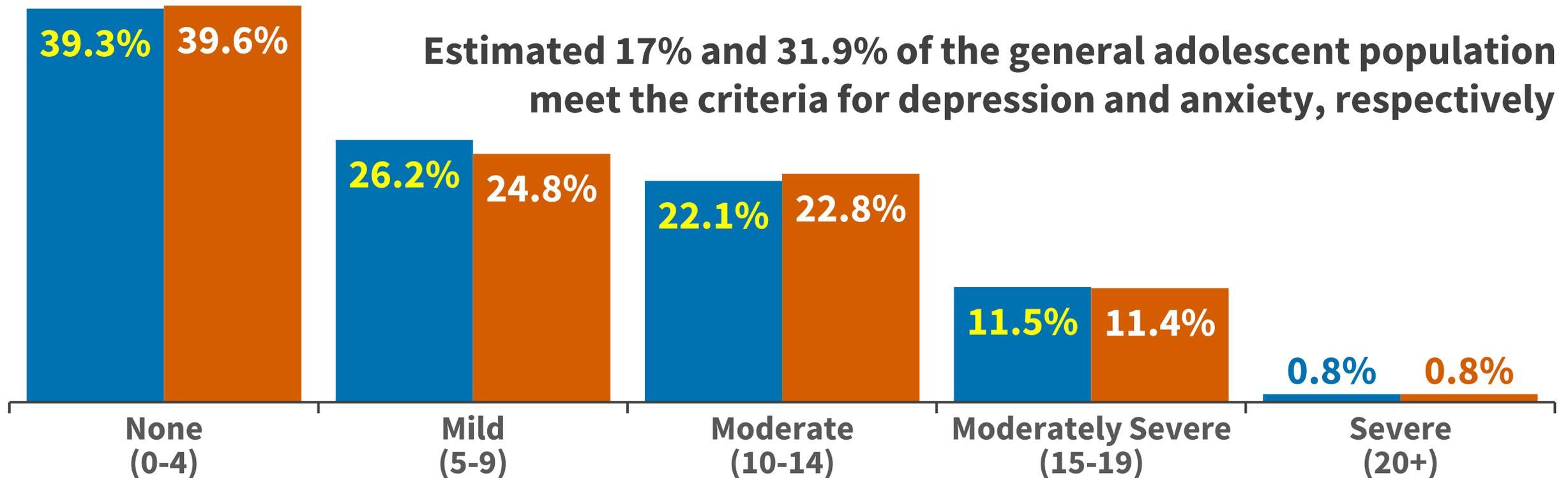
Suicide rate (men) per 100,000

Mental Health: Agricultural Youth

Agricultural Adolescent and Adult Depression

Among a sample of agricultural youth (13-17)

- 60.7% met the criteria for depression
- 45.1% met criteria for generalized anxiety disorder



Mental Health: Farmworkers

Among farmworkers

- 30%+ report symptoms of depression
- 22% report symptoms of nervois
- 50% at risk for alcohol misuse

Farmworker experience

- Low wage
- Substandard housing
- Limited access to food
- Limited transportation
- Barriers to accessing health care
- Social isolation

Mental Health: Farmworkers

A high-angle photograph of four farmworkers in a vast green field. One worker in the foreground is bent over, working with a tool. Another worker in a colorful shirt stands in the middle ground. Two other workers are visible in the background, one bent over and one standing. The field is densely packed with green plants, likely a crop field.

“Unrecognized and unmet behavioral health needs largely resulting from the trauma of migration, navigating a new community and the cultural stigma associated with seeking care for mental health issues have a significant negative impact.”

- National Advisory Council on Migrant Health, 2019



Illinois Extension Farm Stress Initiatives



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Helping Midwestern
Farmers and Ranchers Find
the Resources and Support
to Thrive

[READ MORE](#)

What is the North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center?



Funded by a USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant, North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center is composed of lead agencies representing 12 states. We want to make sure that you, your family, and the people you work with have access to the resources needed, when they are needed. We believe in working together to cultivate rural supports, mental health resources, and community to help

Professional behavioral health services



Training programs

Support groups



**Telephone helplines
1-800-447-1985**



**Clearinghouse website and webinars:
www.farmstress.org**



**North Central
Farm and Ranch
Stress Assistance Center**



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Telephone Helplines & Websites

Hotline

- Concern Hotline
- Agriculture, legal, financial, stress response
- Available 24/7/365



Website

- www.farmstress.org
- 170+ unique ag-specific resources
- State pages and local resources



Training Programs

Training for agricultural supports: 11,068

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) English and Spanish
- Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
Suicide Prevention Training
- Changing Our Mental and Emotional Trajectory (COMET)

Outreach to agricultural producers: 18,220

- Weathering the Storm
- Mending the Stress Fence

Training Programs



“My understanding of this topic was low, so much of the basic information was excellent to create a foundational knowledge.”

Support Groups

- Support groups for farmworkers:
859 individuals engaged in 4 states
- Bienvenido program
 - Educational, strengths-based curriculum on emotional well-being, adjustment, and integration
 - Overall goal: To help participants attain a higher quality of life and develop strengths to reduce emotional risks and behaviors associated with poor mental health



Support Groups

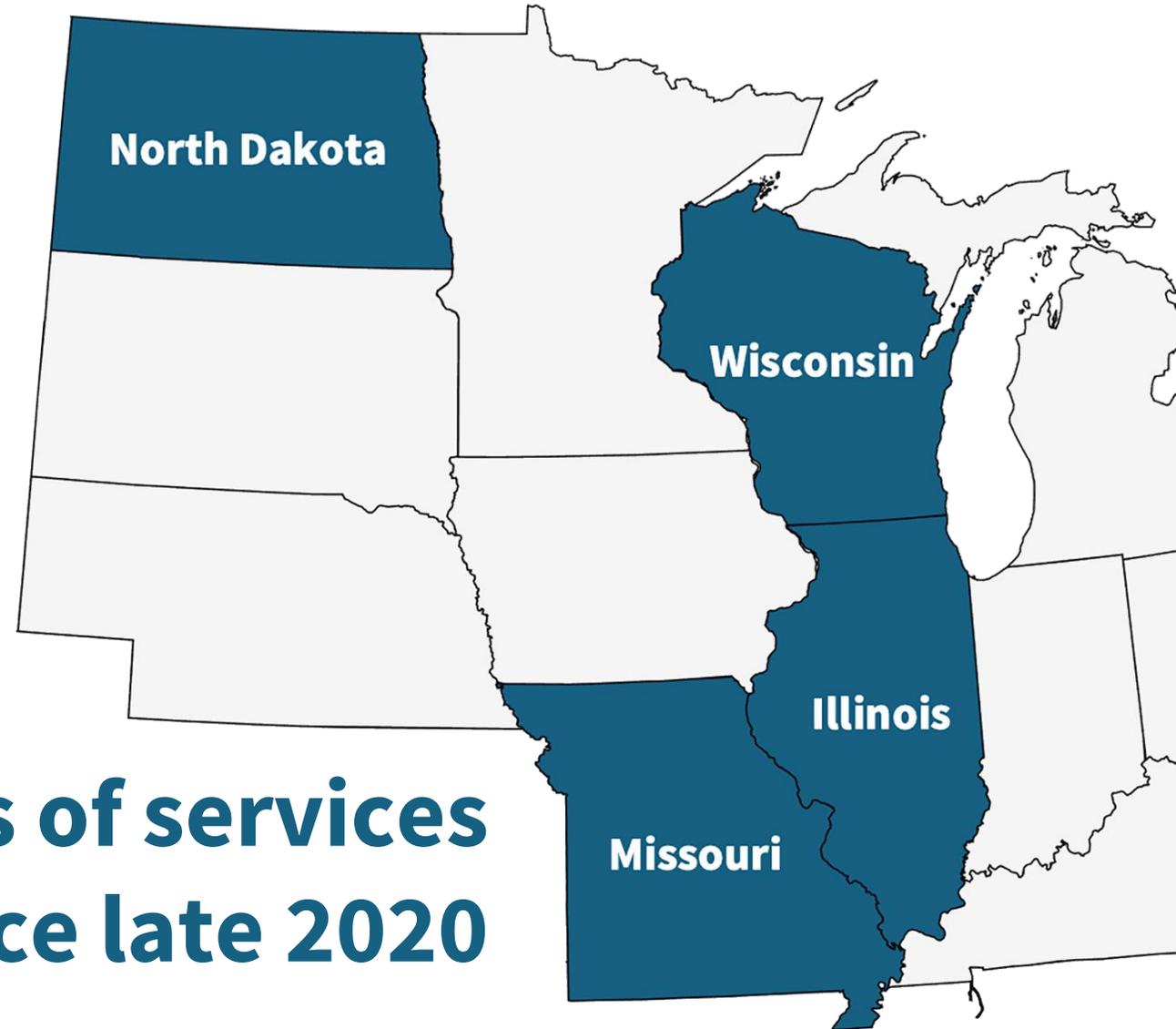
“Thank you, thank you for all these programs that help us know we are not alone and there are places where we can go if we need care.”

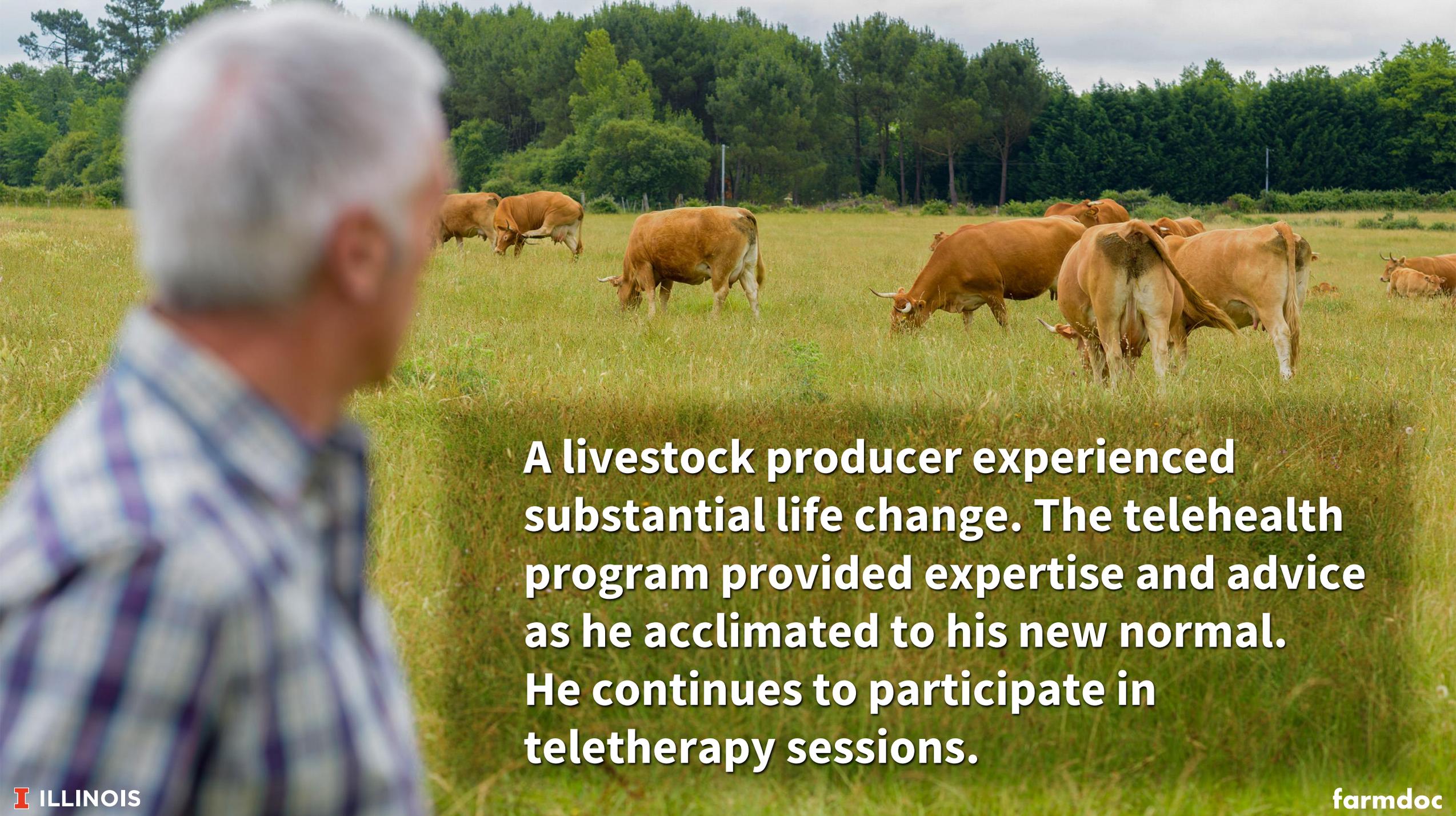


Professional Behavioral Health Services

Low or no-cost professional behavioral health services

Over 1,300 hours of services since late 2020





A livestock producer experienced substantial life change. The telehealth program provided expertise and advice as he acclimated to his new normal. He continues to participate in teletherapy sessions.

Illinois Ag Mental Health Voucher Program

extension.illinois.edu/health/vouchers-ag-producers

Partnership with Illinois Dept of Agriculture



Provides 3 vouchers for professional behavioral health services with partnering provider

Voucher distribution



Farmer requests a set of vouchers



UIUC sends vouchers and provider directory



Vouchers redeemed with a provider



UIUC reimburses providers

Illinois Ag Mental Health Voucher Program



A total of 204 individual voucher request have been made.



35 individuals have made repeat request for vouchers.



306 vouchers have been reimbursed directly to the participating provider.



Of the 204 individuals, 90 of them identify as working directly in agriculture and 110 said they were part of a farming family.

Illinois Ag Mental Health Voucher Program

- 106 providers in 38 counties
- 2 Spanish-speaking providers
- Themes of concerns/issues
 - General depression, anger, anxiety
 - Limited access to resources such as counseling
 - Marital stress and family stress
 - Worries about prices of grain/meat production, income instability
 - Producers not wanting to disappoint their family with their concerns



Acknowledgement



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Under agreement

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#2024-70028-32728

Farm Safety

Visit us at

<https://extension.illinois.edu/keywords/farm-safety>

Events

Register at
go.illinois.edu/SafeAg2024



Addressing Mental Health and Stress in Agriculture
September 17, 2024



Resources for Farmers in Crisis
October 15, 2024



Future of Ag Safety: How AI Will Transform Agriculture
November 19, 2024



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