

**Stress, Anger, Depression, and Suicide  
Prevention in the Dairy Industry  
California Dairy  
Quality Assurance Program,  
Webinar CA**

**September 25, 2012 8:30-10:30 AM (CA Time)**

9:30 AM – 11:30 PM (CO Time)  
StressAngerWebinarCA9.2512.ppt (Rev. 9.1512)

**Stress, Anger, Depression, and Suicide  
Prevention in the Dairy Industry**

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Colorado State University



**Farm/Ranch stress**

- Farming is one of the top 12 high stress occupations.
- According to NIOSH, farm owners were second only to laborers in the rate of death for stress-related diseases.

**What were the top stressors  
for farmers?**

- For < 1,000 New Zealand dairy farmers:
  - Time pressures
  - Machinery failures
  - Weather
  - Government policies

**What were the top stressors  
for farmers?**

- For 1,015 New Zealand farmers:
  - Increased work load at peak times
  - Dealing with workers' compensation
  - Bad weather
  - Complying with health and safety legislation

### What were the top stressors for farmers?

- For 1,343 Iowa farm residents:
  - Death of a spouse
  - Death of a child
  - Disabling injury of a family member
  - Disabling injury to oneself
  - Foreclosure on a mortgage/loan
  - Divorce
  - Machinery breakdown during harvest
  - Loss of crop to weather
  - Loss of crop to pests/disease
  - Severe weather conditions

### What are top stressors for you these days?

### What are top stressors for you these days?

- Drought
- Loss of crop to weather
- Skyrocketing feed costs
- Weak milk prices
- Increasing costs for irrigation water
- State and federal regulations
- Increased couple and family stress
- *What else?*

### HANDOUT: Predicament-Problem Continuum

### How stressful is farming and ranching?

- Some researchers found stress and suicidal thinking levels within rural samples to be significantly *lower* than those of their urban or non-rural counterparts.
- Other researchers found ranching and farming to be among the *most stressful* occupations.

### How stressful is farming and ranching?

- Working day in and day out in such highly stressful environments can contribute to high anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.
- Experiencing high levels of fatigue, sleep deprivation, stress, anxiety, and depression probably contributes to ranchers and farmers being less safe around large animals and machinery and therefore explains why farming and ranching are second only to mining in risk of accidents, disabilities, and fatalities.

## How stressful is farming and ranching?

- Acquiring a disability and being unable to live on and manage their farms or ranches can contribute to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, and to lower quality of life levels.
- While most of these factors are outside our control and are therefore predicaments, one is a problem within our control—*which one?*
- AgrAbility provides information, education, service, and sources for ranchers and farmers with disabilities to purchase assistive technology. Why? To increase their independence, quality of life, and hope.

## How do I contact AgrAbility?

- AgrAbility is currently available in 25 states, e.g.:
  - California AgrAbility (530-752-1613; 800-477-6129 & calagr@ucdavis.edu)
  - National AgrAbility Project (800-825-4264 & jonesp@purdue.edu)
  - Colorado AgrAbility (970-491-5648, robert.fetsch@colostate.edu)

## HANDOUT:

### Farm and Ranch Family Stress and Depression: A Checklist and Guide for Making Referrals

## What are signs of high stress?

- Change in routines
- Increase in illness
- Appearance of farmstead declines.
- Care of livestock declines.
- Number of farm/ranch accidents increases.
- Children show signs of stress.

## What are signs of chronic, prolonged stress?

- Physical
  - Headaches
  - Ulcers
  - Backaches
  - Eating irregularities
  - Sleep disturbances
  - Frequent sicknesses
  - Exhaustion

## What are signs of chronic, prolonged stress?

- Physical
  - Panic attacks and/or heart palpitations
  - Sweating, trembling or shaking
  - Shortness of breath, chest pain or discomfort
  - Difficulty swallowing, nausea or abdominal distress
  - Lightheadedness, derealization or depersonalization

Adapted from Rosmann, M. R. (2002, September 9). *Weathering tough times: Responding to farmers, ranchers and rural businesspersons* [Satellite Video Conference]. Available from [http://www.nanhandle.unl.edu/tough\\_times](http://www.nanhandle.unl.edu/tough_times).

**HANDOUT:**  
**Farm/Ranch Family Stress  
Resource List**

**Ranch/Farm anger**

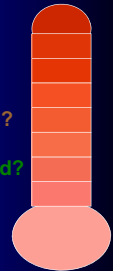
- There is very little research comparing the levels of anger among farm with non-farm populations.
- A study of 323 parents who participated in an anger management parenting program found that farmers' anger levels were the same as those of people who lived in a small town, city or metropolis—except for their state anger (i.e., the intensity of one's anger at a particular moment)—and it was statistically significantly lower.

**What is anger?**

- Anger is a bio-physical-emotional reaction to an unmet expectation.
- When we get angry, if we stop, step back and think about it, somewhere there is an unmet expectation.
- Recall a recent time when you got angry....
- What might your unmet expectation have been?

**How do you feel?**  
**Annoyed?... Enraged?**

Enraged?  
Furious?  
Angry?  
Frustrated?  
Irritated?  
Aggravated?  
Annoyed?



**Farm/Ranch depression**

- Some researchers found that rural samples' anxiety, stress, depression, and suicidal thinking levels were *significantly higher* than those of their urban and/or non-rural counterparts.
- Other researchers found that rural samples' stress and suicidal thinking levels were *lower*.

**Farm/Ranch depression**

- Many farmers/ranchers struggle with depression.
- It is not clear whether they experience lower/higher levels of depression and other mental health issues as does the general population.

### Farm/Ranch depression

- Some researchers found a relationship between exposure to pesticides and high levels of depression among CO farmers/ranchers.
- ND farmers' depression levels were almost twice that of other rural populations in the past.

### Farm/Ranch depression

- IA farm men were more likely to experience depression if within the previous year they had:
  - Lost something of sentimental value
  - Experienced substantial income decline
  - Gone deeply into debt
  - Faced legal problems
  - Or experienced an increase in health problems.

### HANDOUT:

#### Farm and Ranch Family Stress and Depression: A Checklist and Guide for Making Referrals

### What are signs of depression?

- Appearance
- Unhappy feelings
- Negative thinking
- Reduced activity and pleasure in usual activities
- People problems
- Physical problems
- Guilt and low self-esteem

### What are signs of depression?

- Sadness
- Inability to experience genuine pleasure
- Significant weight loss (not due to dieting) or gain (5% of body weight/month)
- Excessive sleep and/or middle or late night insomnia
- Feeling lethargic or agitated
- Loss of energy

Adapted from Rosmann, M. R. (2002, September 9). *Weathering tough times*.

### What are signs of depression?

- Loss of energy
- Feeling worthless/inappropriate guilt
- Inability to concentrate
- Preoccupied with negatives
- Recurrent thoughts of suicide

Adapted from Rosmann, M. R. (2002, September 9). *Weathering tough times*.

## What is the “common cold” of modern psychology?

## The “common cold” of modern psychology is depression.

- A major depression interferes with your positive experience and dramatically affects your life.
- This is more than the normal “blues.”
- Every year 1/10 people experience a major depression.
- Depression is very common.

Source: E. Chavez (personal communication, October 16, 2005).

## The “common cold” of modern psychology is depression.

- Depression is associated with loss, e.g. death of a spouse, child, divorce, loss of the family farm/ranch.
  - With 1 loss in your life, chances of major depression is 50%.
  - With 2 losses, 75%.
  - With 3 losses, 100%.

Source: E. Chavez (personal communication, October 16, 2005).

## The “common cold” of modern psychology is depression.

- Several things protected people from depression.
  - Having an intimate relationship (someone to talk with) helps us navigate the losses.
  - Having fewer than 3 children at home.
  - Having a job outside the home because it can help bring financial stability.
  - Having a true, deep, and abiding religious belief.

Source: E. Chavez (personal communication, October 16, 2005).

## The “common cold” of modern psychology is depression.

- If you or a family member is depressed, you may need to see a doctor.
- Why? Because when we do things that depressed people do, we get depressed.
  - We stop doing fun things.
  - We focus our thinking on negative things in life.
  - We stop exercising.
  - We don't have marital relations as often.

Source: E. Chavez (personal communication, October 16, 2005).

## The “common cold” of modern psychology is depression.

- What is the best, most effective “cure” for depression?
- **Combination of taking good care of yourself, exercise, counseling, and medication.**

**What do you think the leading external causes of death on Colorado ranches/farms have been?**

**What do you think the leading external causes of death on Colorado ranches/farms have been?**

- 1) Suicide
- 2) Animals
- 3) Tractors

**Farming and ranching are among the most dangerous occupations in the U.S.**

- Historically, the leading external causes of death on Colorado farms and ranches have been: 1) suicide, 2) animal incidents, and 3) tractor rollovers (1).

(1) T. Daniels (personal communication, August 22, 2000).

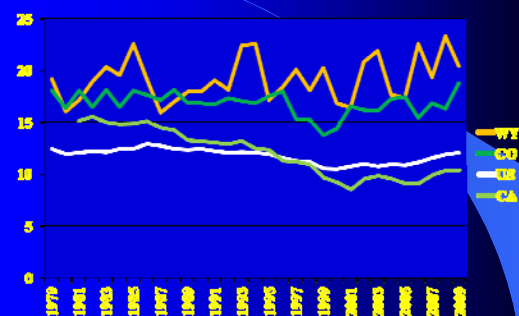
**We've seen progress in physical, but what about in behavioral health?**

- We've seen progress in reduced numbers of physical fatalities and injuries in agriculture, thanks to the efforts of OSHA and Extension Farm Safety programs.
- But we've **not** seen progress in reducing behavioral health issues like suicide, especially among older white men.
- Source: M. Rosmann (personal communication, June 4, 2010).

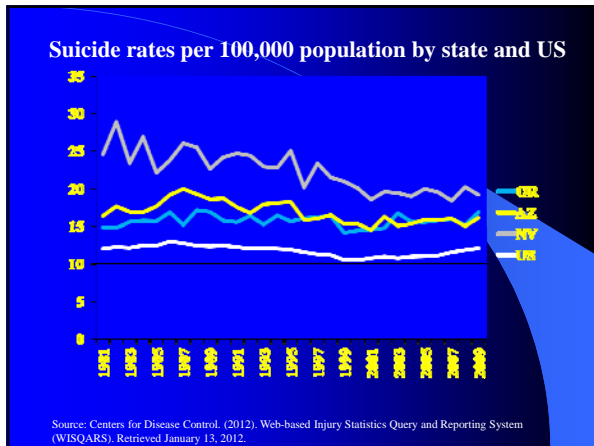
**Suicide rates in Colorado and the U.S.**

- Colorado's suicide rate at 18.7/100,000 in 2009 was 56% higher than the national rate, which makes us 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> in the nation (tied with NM).
- U.S. suicide rate was 12.0/100,000 in 2009.
- Source: Centers for Disease Control. (2011). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Retrieved December 13, 2011.

**Suicide rates per 100,000 population by state and US**

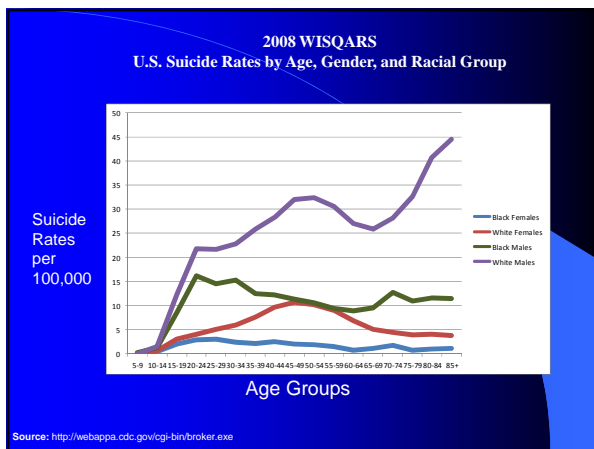
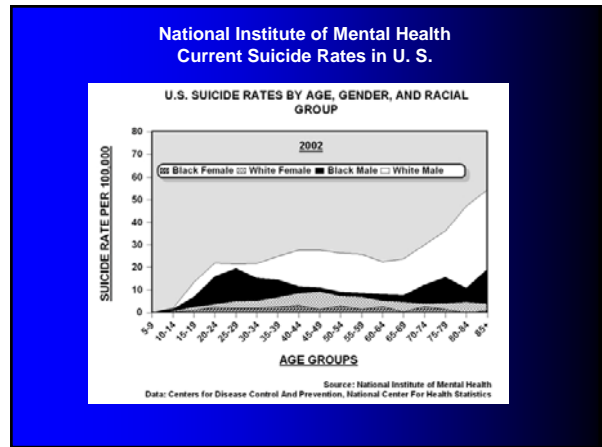
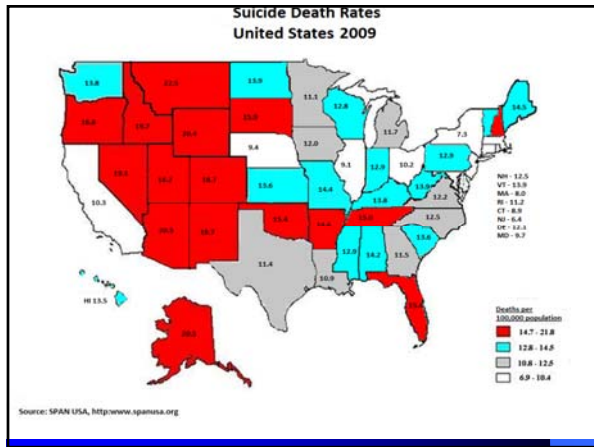


Source: Centers for Disease Control. (2012). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Retrieved January 13, 2012.



### Farm/Ranch suicide rates

- Higher rates of suicide among farmers/ranchers have been reported in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Scotland, and the U.S.



### Western mountain states have the highest suicide death rates.

- The risk of suicide death increases among older men and is especially high for 75 years plus—especially if they lose their spouse and their dairy/farm.
- Most are white and not married.



### 2009 U. S. Suicide Rate by State Top Quintile

STATE	NUMBER of SUICIDES	RATE
Montana		22.5
Alaska		20.5
Arizona		20.5
Wyoming		20.4
Idaho		19.7
Nevada		19.1
Colorado		18.7
New Mexico		18.7
Oregon		16.8
Utah		16.2
South Dakota		15.9

Source: SPAN USA, <http://www.spanusa.org>

### HANDOUT:

Recognize the Signs of Stress, Depression  
(Dairy Herd Management Magazine)

### Why do farmers/ranchers commit suicide at higher rates?

- It's not increased levels of mental health issues.
- It may have to do with:
  - Demands of family farms
  - Culture of farming communities
  - Shortage of health care professionals in rural farming communities
  - High accessibility to firearms
  - Occupational stress
  - Financial difficulties
  - Family problems
  - Retirement is a trying transition for farmers.

### Financial stress and suicide

- Financial stress has historically been reported as a leading factor in completing suicide (Dublin & Bunzel, 1933).
- Financial loss and depressive symptoms are characteristics of individuals experiencing suicidal ideation (Turvey et al., 2002).

### Masculine “Scripts”

1. No sissy-stuff - men are expected to distance themselves from anything feminine.
2. Big wheel - men should be occupationally or financially successful.
3. Sturdy oak - men should be confident and self-reliant.
4. Give 'em hell -men should do what is necessary to “make it.” (David & Brannon, 1976)
5. “When you’re hurting, be a man—keep it inside and tell no one!” (Fetsch, 2009)

### HANDOUT:

Farm and Ranch Family Stress and  
Depression: A Checklist and Guide  
for Making Referrals

### What are signs of suicidal thinking?

- Anxiety or depression
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Helplessness and hopelessness
- Alcohol abuse
- Previous suicidal attempts
- Suicidal plan
- Cries for help

### How can I respond best to prevent suicide?

- With respect
- With sincerity and honesty
- By listening and hearing their pain and worry—not by pitying them
- By caring

Source: Adapted from Bosch K., & Griffin, C. (2002, September 5). *Weathering tough times: Responding to farmers, ranchers and rural businesspersons* [Satellite Video Conference]. Available from [http://www.panhandle.unl.edu/tough\\_times](http://www.panhandle.unl.edu/tough_times).

### How can I respond best?

- IF YOU'RE UNSURE—REFER!

### HANDOUT:

Resources for California Farmers Experiencing Stress  
(County Mental Health Services Spokesperson)

### HANDOUT:

Managing Drought-Related Stress, Anger, and Depression

### RESOURCES:

Preventing Youth and Adult Suicide  
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10213.html>

10 Tips for Successful Family Meetings  
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10249.html>

Dealing with Couples' Anger  
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10238.html>

**RESOURCES:**

Making Decisions and Coping Well with Drought

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10256.html>

Manage Stress During Tough Times

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10255.html>

**RESOURCES:**

Farming and Ranching: Health Hazard or Opportunity

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10201.html>

Ranching and Farming with Family Members

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10217.html>

Transitions and changes: Who copes well?

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10215.html>

**RESOURCES:**

Clinical depression in later life

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10251.html>

Suicide in Later Life

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10252.html>

**RESOURCES:**

- Val Farmer. *Rural Stress Survival Guide*.
- I especially like Part 3 How to Cope in Hard Times and Part 4 Getting Help.
  - Attitude is important during hard times.
    - Try to find meaning in setbacks.
    - Don't dwell on the past.
    - Stop blaming others.
    - Give yourself permission to grieve.

**RESOURCES:**

- Val Farmer. *Rural Stress Survival Guide*.
  - Explaining hardships aids healing
    - Going through the cycle of loss
    - Sharing the pain
  - Working through emotions to get to problem-solving
    - Pay attention to your relationships.
    - Be flexible and adapt.
    - Do what you have to do to put bread on the table.
    - Re-evaluate your priorities.
    - Make a budget that fits your circumstances.
    - Live one day at a time.
    - Take good care of yourself and your family.

**RESOURCES:**

- Val Farmer. *Rural Stress Survival Guide*.
  - Barriers to seeking help
  - Seeking help is smart.
    - Should I seek professional help?
  - How to help a family in crisis
- Google "Rural Stress Survival Guide."

## Colorado Agricultural Mediation Program

Colorado Department of Agriculture  
Mark Gallegos—CAMP  
2331 W. 31<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
Denver, CO 80211  
303-477-0054

Does your State have a Mediation Program?

## Disaster Distress Hotline

- Have you experienced a natural or man-made disaster or tragedy, e.g. drought, fire, tornado, flood, etc.?
- Call **1-800-985-5990**.
- Or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746.

## Suicide Prevention

- Recognize signs of high stress, anger, depression, and suicidal thinking.
- Take action. Find out about which local resources are available.
- Check your yellow pages under “Counselors.”

## Suicide Prevention

- Call **1-800-SUICIDE/784-2433** 24 x 7 for a live trained person to talk with and to find local resources.
- Call **1-800-273-TALK**.



personal nature of agriculture

Recovering from Natural Disasters [B-1103](#)  
Men and Depression [B-1104](#)  
Agriculture and Skin Cancer: What You Should Know [B-1105](#)  
Lenders and Angry Customers [B-1113](#)  
Surviving Tragedy [B-1117](#)  
Men Seeking Help [B-1134](#)

[http://www.uwyo.edu/ces/LIFE/Personal\\_Nature\\_Main.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/ces/LIFE/Personal_Nature_Main.html)



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### Agricultural Producers and Stress Series

The Importance of a Healthy Attitude  
When Do You Need a Counselor?  
Eating and Activity for Health and Pleasure  
Identifying Stress on the Ranch and Farm  
Learning to Relax  
Finding Your Team of Experts

[http://www.uwyo.edu/ces/LIFE/Personal\\_Nature\\_Main.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/ces/LIFE/Personal_Nature_Main.html)

### What do we do next?

- Visit <http://therapistlocator.net>.
- [http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/ppc/prof\\_search.php?iorb=4764](http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/ppc/prof_search.php?iorb=4764)
- [http://www.networktherapy.com/directory/find\\_therapist.asp](http://www.networktherapy.com/directory/find_therapist.asp)
- <http://therapists.americanmentalhealth.com/therapistlocator.page1>

### More Resources...

- <http://mtt.caahs.colostate.edu/resources/Default.aspx>
- Recognizing Stress, Anger, Depression and Suicidal Thinking & Knowing What to Do Next (Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Western Dairy Management Conference, Reno, NV 3/11-13/2009)
- Managing Good & Bad Times: How Can Your Family Be More Resilient? (PowerPoint)
- Managing Good & Bad Times: How Can Your Family Be More Resilient—CSUE Agent/Other Professional Train the Trainer (Power Point)

**Be careful out there.  
Take good care of yourselves!**

**Thank you very much!**

**For More Information, Contact:  
Bob Fetsch  
970-491-5648  
[robert.fetsch@colostate.edu](mailto:robert.fetsch@colostate.edu)**

### How do I make an effective referral?

- 1) Be aware of the agencies and resources available in your community—what services they offer and what their limitations are.
- 2) Listen for signs and symptoms that the person or family needs help which you cannot provide, i.e., financial, legal or personal counseling.

### How do I make an effective referral?

- 3) Assess what agency or community resource would be most appropriate to address the person's/family's problems.
- 4) Discuss the referral with the person/family. "It sounds/looks like you're feeling \_\_\_\_\_. I think \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ could help you deal with your situation."

### How do I make an effective referral?

- 5) Explore the individual's/family's willingness to initiate contact with the resource. "How do you feel about seeking help from this person/agency?"
- 6) Where the person or family is unwilling to take the initiative or where there is some danger if action is not taken, you should take the initiative.

### How do I make an effective referral?

- Call the agency and ask to speak to the intake worker (if there is one).
- Identify yourself and your relationship with the person/family.
- Say what you think the person's/family's needs are. "I think that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ needs immediate protection from harming himself, needs a counseling appointment, and needs financial and legal assistance."

### How do I make an effective referral?

- Provide the agency with background information (name, address and telephone; age and gender; nature of current problem or crisis; any past history you're aware of; further information as called for).

### How do I make an effective referral?

- Ask the agency what follow-up action they will take:
  - When will they act on the referral?
  - Who will be your contact later if necessary?
  - What will be the cost of the service (flat fee/sliding scale)?
  - Do you need to do anything else to complete the referral?

### How do I make an effective referral?

- 7) Make sure the person/family and the referral agency connect and get together.
- 8) Make one or more follow-up contacts with the agency if the situation calls for it.

**Thank you  
very much!**