



Five to thrive Supporting rural communities

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Agrii and FCN are committed to supporting the rural areas in which they work. Over the next five years Agrii has pledged to support FCN in **raising awareness of five key risks affecting farming families:**

- 1 Farming and dementia** – highlighting the associated issues and raising awareness of support and services.
- 2 Mental wellbeing** – raising awareness and signposting support available.
- 3 Lone working** – safe working practice in remote areas or when working alone.
- 4 Fit to farm** – services to support those in farming.
- 5 Sustainability and resilience** - support with strategic farm planning and succession.

For more information about how FCN can support farming families concerned about mental wellbeing, please contact the **FCN helpline** on **03000 111 999**

Agrii

- @AgriiUK
- @AgriiEast
- @AgriiWest
- @AgriiNorth

www.agrii.co.uk

FCN
THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

- @FCNcharity
- /TheFarmingCommunityNetwork

www.fcn.org.uk

MENTAL WELLBEING

Farming is a great profession, but it can also be a very stressful one. When you work in farming, maintaining a sound mind and positive mental wellbeing is not always easy.

By nature of the industry and working environment farmers can be very susceptible to poor mental wellbeing and farming continues to have one of the highest rates of suicide of any occupation. Sadly, in the UK, approximately one farmer a week dies by suicide.

Finding the right help locally can be difficult in remote parts of the UK. Because of the stigma surrounding mental health, many have difficulty coming forward and admitting they need help.

Finding and supporting
POSITIVE STEPS
to mental wellbeing

For more information about positive steps to mental wellbeing:
www.mind.org

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www.agrii.co.uk

The impact of poor mental wellbeing in farming

Farming is an inherently risky and volatile industry to work in, with farmers regularly forced to deal with issues on the farm that are beyond their control, such as animal disease, fluctuating market prices and the weather.

On top of their responsibilities on the farm, farmers also have to deal with issues in their personal life, such as relationship breakdowns, physical health problems and bereavement.

Farming can be a very isolating and lonely occupation, with farm workers often spending long hours out in the field with

little or no form of social interaction. Due to commitments on the farm, farmers rarely have time to seek the help they need.

Simply talking to someone about your problems is often the first step to improving mental wellbeing. Traditionally, farmers take great pride in their work and would not naturally disclose their thoughts and concerns with anyone – even their own friends and family. Speaking to someone they don't know and have no emotional attachment to but who has an understanding of what they are going through can be helpful.

How to recognise the signs of poor mental health?

There are many stress warnings that we may recognise in ourselves, family, or our friends and neighbours. These may be cognitive, emotional, physical or behavioural and often include a number of the following.

COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS:

- + Memory problems
- + Inability to concentrate
- + Poor judgement
- + Seeing only the negative
- + Anxious or racing thoughts
- + Constant worrying

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS:

- + Aches and pains
- + Diarrhoea and nausea
- + Dizziness and chest pain
- + Rapid heartbeat
- + Loss of sex drive
- + Frequent colds

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS:

- + Moodiness
- + Irritability or short temper
- + Agitation or inability to relax
- + Feeling overwhelmed
- + Sense of loneliness or isolation
- + Depression or general unhappiness

BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS:

- + Eating more or less
- + Sleeping too much or too little
- + Isolating yourself from others
- + Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- + Using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to relax
- + Nervous habits – nail biting, pacing etc.

5 Steps to positive mental wellbeing

1 CONNECT

Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing and enjoying these relationships.

4 GIVE TO OTHERS

Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as helping a neighbour, or organising an event can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

2 ENJOY BEING ACTIVE

A farmer's work ensures an active life, but it is important to find enjoyment in some of the activity we take, whether it is a simple field walk, or time spent on activities off the farm.

5 TAKE NOTICE

It's easy to take our work environment for granted. Be more aware of the land around you, the changes, the achievements and your part in managing it.

3 KEEP LEARNING

Farming is an ever changing environment and learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. There are many opportunities to join in training or farm group discussions or a visit to your local agricultural show.

Some people call this awareness "mindfulness", and it can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

What support is available from FCN?

For 22 years, FCN has been providing free, confidential practical and pastoral support to farmers and families within the farming community. Many of the 400+ FCN volunteers are or have been involved directly in farming and therefore have a great understanding of the issues farmers and farming families regularly face.

FCN volunteers can help farmers and their families become more independent, resilient and better able to face the challenges that farming can bring.

Their national helpline which is open every day of the year from 7am-11pm, and all cases that come to FCN are treated confidentially and non-judgementally.

