



News Release

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Mental illness and suicide rates increase as the holiday season approaches

For Immediate Release

(COLUMBUS, Neb.) – The holidays are approaching, which means depression and suicide rates are increasing. Studies have found mental illness and suicide rates are higher for many farmers and ranchers. This profession requires long hours and limited social contact, and is often at the mercy of external factors such as weather and market rates. Add to this the COVID-19 pandemic, which has farmers and ranchers facing unprecedented challenges, and the mental health crisis increases even more.

Another difficult issue currently facing farmers is money. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, family farms filing for bankruptcy jumped 23 percent in March, which is a sharp increase from the previous 12 months.

Farmers and ranchers often feel they have to be independent, self-reliant and mentally, physically and emotionally tough. Many may see depression as a weakness versus an illness with treatment options.

"There are so many people willing to help and listen to you," said Teresa Duffek, MSN, RN, a nurse in Columbus Community Hospital's Occupational Health Services. "Please use the phone numbers provided if you need to talk to someone. "Depression is an illness, not a weakness. Be strong enough to ask for help, because you matter and are someone's hero."

To reach someone on a free, confidential 24/7 line, call 1-833-FARM-SOS (1-833-327-6767). You can also call the Rural Response Hotline at 800-464-0258 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.

For more information regarding Occupational Health Services, visit our website at www.columbushosp.org.

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