

Farm Stress Awareness & Response Guide

For Extension Agents, Grain Elevator Operators, and Ag Professionals

Quick read adapted from Rural Resilience, QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer method), and USDA's Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) resources



KEY POINTS

If someone seems off:

- Notice signs of stress.
- Ask how they're doing directly, without judgment.
- Just listen—you don't need to fix it.

Connect them with:

- 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, available by call/text/chat)
- 1-800-FARM-AID (Farm Aid Hotline, available by call)
- [#SoyHelp \(Soybean grower resources\)](#)
- [USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network \(FRSAN\)](#)

RECOGNIZING FARM STRESS

Soybean farmers are under intense **pressure**: input costs, weather, markets, equipment breakdowns, and family expectations. Stress can build silently and show up in everyday interactions—you may be the first person to notice something's off.

COMMON SIGNS OF FARM STRESS

(you don't have to diagnose, just notice change)

Behavioral / Emotional Signs

- Irritable, angry, or withdrawn when they're normally social.
- Expressing hopelessness (“It’s not worth it anymore,” or “I can’t keep up”).
- Difficulty concentrating, missing appointments, or seeming distracted.
- Comments about being a burden or not caring if something happens.

Physical / Work-Related Signs

- Farm operation falling behind (unkept equipment, livestock neglected, late planting/harvest).
- Increased accidents or risky behavior.
- Noticeable fatigue, weight change, or illness.

Financial / Family Strain Signs

- Frequent talk about debt, loss, or selling off assets.
- Family tension or isolation from community events.



Helper Guide (QPR)

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RESPONDING WITH CONFIDENCE

Start the Conversation (Question)

- Be direct but kind.
 - *“You seem to be under a lot of stress lately. How are you holding up?”*
- Avoid judgment. Don't rush to fix; just listen. Silence is okay.

Listen and Connect (Persuade)

- Offer support.
 - *“You don't have to carry this alone.”*
- Normalize seeking help:
 - *“Lots of farmers are feeling the same way, it's a difficult time. There's support out there specifically for you.”*
- Offer immediate options:
 - *“You can call or text 988 anytime and its completely confidential”*
 - *“There's a Farm Aid hotline just for farmers 1-800-FARM-AID.”*
 - *“ASA's #SoyHelp site has farmer-specific resources and you dont have to talk to anyone.”*
 - *“The checkoff has a Soy Farmer Support Hub with farmer stress materials.”*

Guide Them to Help (Refer)

- If they're in crisis, call 911 or 988 and stay with them if possible.

- If they're not in immediate danger, help them connect to:

- USDA Farm Stress Resources: [usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-congressional-relations/office-external-and-intergovernmental-affairs/center-faith/farm-stress-and-mental-health-resources](https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-congressional-relations/office-external-and-intergovernmental-affairs/center-faith/farm-stress-and-mental-health-resources)
- #SoyHelp resources from ASA/USB: soygrowers.com/soyhelp-national-resources-info/
- Farm Bureau Farm State of Mind campaign: fb.org/initiative/farm-state-of-mind
- Farmer Toolkit hub: farmertoolkit.org/farm-stress-resources/
- Soy Farmer Support Hub: unitedsoybean.org/soy-farmer-support-hub/

Take Care of Yourself

- Supporting someone in crisis can be heavy on the helper.
- Talk with your supervisor, peers, or local Extension wellness coordinator.
- Do not take on more than what you feel you can handle.

