

Central Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Report



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Taking Care of You In Today's Agriculture

Evan Henthorne —Agriculture Agent, Adams County

As I am sure we all have noticed, markets across the board aren't at the booming prices they were a few years back. Low markets = less money in our pockets, and low amounts of money make it stressful to run our daily operation. Not knowing how to handle stress can lead to the potential of a mental health disorder. What is a Mental Health disorder? A Mental Health disorder, also known as mental illness is a diagnosable illness that affects a person's ability to work or carry out other daily activities and engage in satisfying personal relationships (Mental Health First Aid). The causes of a mental health illness can be different depending on the impacts of the individual. The most common mental illnesses include anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar.

There's this stigma or attitude when it comes to the topic of mental health that we aren't supposed to talk about it. We're supposed to ignore it. I can tell you that's simply not the case anymore. Some when battling a mental illness have the feeling they are "trapped" and that there isn't a way out. If you're feeling trapped or feeling like you may be battling with a mental illness, make sure to reach out and speak up. Whether that be to a spouse, neighbor, friend, or even the county Extension staff. Agriculture Educators are not licensed professionals, but we are here to listen non-judgmentally and help guide you to available resources. A fact provided from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, "National survey of Americans found that 18.5% percent of adults (18 or older) experienced a mental illness in any one year. This is equivalent to 43.8 million people." Limited number of people know that recovery from a mental illness is possible with setting goals of hope, empowerment, and positive self control.

If you're interested, Taking Care of You (TCY) is a research-based program that offers practical strategies and experiences to help people deal with the stress in their lives. Managing life's challenges in healthy ways allows participants to take better care of themselves and their overall health. Contact your Extension office to find out about program availability.

In case of an emergency please make sure to check out these contact numbers.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1/800-799-4889
National Drug & Alcohol 1/800-662-4357

Source Citation: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.



Tell Your Story

Ben Jenkins—Agriculture Agent, Green Lake County

In just about every trade publication that lands on my desk there are farmers and ag professionals writing about what the loss of independent farmers means to future food prices and the future of the rural communities that once depended on the money generated from having many farms of smaller size in the surrounding countryside. That's great! It's all good stuff and it's all true! But I'm afraid that it's just preaching to the choir.

Right now the consumer doesn't care. They don't care because they don't know that they should care. Most don't know that the farming community is in serious danger of losing land and legacy. They don't know why you got into farming or why you can't just quit your "job" and get another. They don't know why you do what you do.

What they do know is what special interest groups have told mainstream media about you, FYI, much of it is not good. You are running your big oil dependent equipment day and night polluting the air with dust and diesel fumes, you're depleting the globe's oil reserves with your dependence on fertilizer, your causing soil erosion at alarming rates, you're destroying the land with toxic chemicals, you're polluting pristine bodies of water by dumping fertilizer anywhere and everywhere, your putting cow manure into unsuspecting peoples water supply, your hiring illegal help, your abusing animals for profit, your farting cattle are melting the polar ice caps, and your abusing animals for profit. Believe it or not someone actually wrote that milking cows was sexual assault.

What they don't know is how many generations have been able to make a living on your land prior to you. They don't know why your ancestors fled their former homeland to set up an agrarian life in the new world. They don't know how your grandparents managed to hold onto the land you farm through the Great Depression. They don't know how you held on in the eighties. They don't know that some of you have received suicide prevention notices with your milk check this last year. They don't know why they should care. They don't know what losing you and thousands like you across the country is going to do to the future of their food supply and their communities. They can't understand why losing you will eventually hurt them.

They can't understand because you aren't telling them! You need to help them draw the lines, connect the dots. Who is in a better position to do that than you the farmer? You can't just say it's because farmers grow your food. That doesn't mean anything to them because food is plentiful and cheap. To them the supply of cheap food will never end. If we lose American production we can just do what industry is doing and get our food from China right? You have to help them understand why that is a very bad idea. You have to help them see that you being forced to take a second job off farm to keep on farming puts more bodies into the labor market which can help keep wages low. You have to help them understand that if we give up our food growing to foreign entities we won't have the security of a domestically owned food supply in times of war. After all the Russians defeated Napoleon by depriving his troops of food.

You can't be afraid to tell people what you spend every year to run your farm. Saying that it costs more to farm than what you receive only sounds like whining until you give them the actual numbers. This spoke volumes to those that attended an NRCS field day last summer where the host farmer admitted that he just sold a semi load of corn for less than what the USDA said it cost to grow it. The non-farming crowd came away with a greater appreciation, from a numbers perspective, for exactly how hard it is to make a living farming. They also began asking deeper questions that can only be answered by you the people who are attempting to farm for a living.

Today it is easier than ever to get word out to the non-farming community. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Youtube are the things that come to mind. Facebook is probably the easiest way to get word out. Using Facebook you can post an online article that you've seen to your account and then share it with your contacts. You can then write a comment on the post. In your comment you can elaborate on a point that the author touched on but didn't fully develop. Or you might want to comment by adding a point that the author failed to mention that you feel could give your audience a better understanding of the point trying to be made. When I was a kid we used to get the magazine Farm and Ranch Living. Farmers and Ranchers would keep journals of the day to day and share those with the readership. That is an excellent example of how to share with your non-farming social media contacts what your day to day is like.

It's important that they know that your great great came here to escape a miserable existence in Europe, or maybe you can trace your heritage back to native farmers who were here before the white settlers. Tell them about your relatives who worked and died on the land. Write about your favorite show cow, or your best herding dog. Put into words the joy of walking the fields. Describe the changing of the seasons and how the work you do changes right along with it. Share the frustration of losing a calf or ten. Talk about the droughts, blizzards, torrents, floods, heart attacks, lost limbs, and the times you pulled an all-nighter because the crop had to get in. Reminisce about when the barn burned down with that year's hay crop still inside. Tell them about the 4-H awards, the birth of twin heifers, and about how proud it makes you to have made it this far. When you tell your story learn how to see what you do through their eyes. That way you will be more effective in getting them to really, truly and honestly understand what you go through and have been through.

The younger non-farming crowd craves experiences. Experience encompasses not just the physical doing but also involves an emotional and spiritual element. I know this is difficult for farmers to do but you have to learn to tell your story in a way that your audience will feel as if they are living out your experience with you. Why do farmers get so annoyed with activists? Because they are emotional and their tactics often involve media blurbs with emotional appeal rather than hard and fast facts. Farmers, you can learn something here. By you telling your stories you are not just appealing to people's intellect but you are also appealing to their emotions. Emotions can often be more effective in convincing the non-farming population to care about the loss of independent farmers and their legacy. Let's help them get over their apathy.

Financial Management on the Farm

Ken Williams—Agriculture Agent, Waushara County

The end of tax season, April 15, will soon be here. In a normal year farmers will breathe a sigh of relief that the taxes are finally done. This year I am suggesting that it would be an excellent time to assess where you and your farm is at from a financial viewpoint. The issue of trade tariffs has hit the farm economy pretty hard and the current market for most farm products is not what it used to be. Over the years agricultural exports have been one area of the United States economy that has been able to provide a positive value to the balance of trade. This appears to be in jeopardy with potential negative effects on farm prices.

With the market for agricultural products facing this uncertainty it might be wise this year to put extra effort into planning for the 2019 growing season. This past year we endured a severe period of drought during the early part of summer which had serious negative effects on crop yields in Central Wisconsin. Realistic projections for production cost and potential income should be developed. Farmers should also take a look at developing cash-flow budgets to allow them to see any time periods where there could be additional cash needed to cover expenses.

Communication is especially important during times of economic stress. Tax management personnel can provide

guidance and suggestions for managing income and expenses in ways to provide the most economic benefit for the producer. The farm banker needs to be consulted and kept informed of any developments that would affect the repayment of the farm operating loan. Any businesses that provide supplies or inputs for the farm also need to be kept informed should there be any cash flow issues resulting in non-payment of notes when due.

Enterprise budgets for grain crop production are increasingly important as the market price for grain crops and the cost for inputs to grow these crops continue to increase. I developed a set of spreadsheets that provide a simple and concise way to compare the potential production costs and returns for various crops. These spreadsheets enable anyone to easily see the production cost and the potential return for corn, soybeans, winter wheat, seeding alfalfa and established alfalfa. Each spreadsheet is concise enough to print on a standard 8½ x 11 page of paper. This spreadsheet is posted and available for download from the UW-Extension, Waushara County website, <http://waushara.uwex.edu/agriculture>. Click on "Crop Budget Analyzer Feb 3, 2017". For additional information or questions contact Ken Williams at Ag.Agent@co.waushara.wi.us or 920-787-0416.

****New** BQA Certification Requirement**

Lyssa Seefeldt—Agriculture Agent, Marquette County

Some large packers and processors have announced that effective January 1, 2019, they will only purchase from farms that are BQA or FARM Certified. Most dairy farms are FARM certified through their milk processor. Ask your dairy plant representative for help to get a copy of your completed FARM evaluation, or a letter from them indicating your farm's completion of FARM 3.0 or beyond.

The January 1, 2019 BQA Requirement impacts those selling finished cattle that are predominately beef breeds and will be in effect for all markets and all private treaty transactions. At this time, it is believed that beginning in January 2020, additional processors will begin to require BQA or FARM Certification from their suppliers.

Beef producers created the voluntary Beef Quality Assurance Program in 1987 to assist each other in raising, feeding and harvesting high quality beef. By participating in BQA and adopting BQA production practices, you are helping to answer the call from the packers' consumers, for safe beef raised in a humane manner. You can obtain free, online BQA certification at BQA.org, <http://>

www.bqa.org. Here you will create an account (based upon your email address) and select the course that best fits your particular operation. Each interactive course takes about 2 hours to complete, and requires an 80% score to pass the final test. You will receive your BQA certification via email, which you will provide at the point of sale.

UW-Extension is hosting in-person BQA certification trainings throughout the state. Visit the WI Beef Information Center online calendar at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/wbic/> for enrollment information of upcoming trainings. Two locations will be offered in the central Wisconsin area in the near future.

Montello

Marquette County will be hosting a BQA training on April 5 at the County Service Center in Montello from 12:30 pm

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(registration) to about 4:30 pm. The Marquette County Service Center is located at 480 Underwood Avenue, Montello. This certification is provided in cooperation with UW-Extension and the WI Beef Council, and costs \$15 per farm. The fee will be collected at the door; please make checks payable to WI BQA Program. So we may plan for materials, please RSVP by March 29 with the number attending from your farm so we know how many manuals to have on-hand for training. Call 608-297-3141 to register. The WI BQA Program will verify your certification with BQA.org and return your certification number back to the farm by either email or regular mail.

Baraboo

Sauk County will be hosting a BQA training on May 3 at the West Square Administration Building located at 505 Broadway, Baraboo. This certification is provided in cooperation with UW-Extension and the WI Beef Council, and costs \$15 per farm. The fee will be collected at the door; please make checks payable to WI BQA Program. So we may plan for materials, please RSVP by April 26 with the number attending from your farm so we know how many manuals to have on-hand for training. Call 608-355-3250 to register. The WI BQA Program will verify your certification with BQA.org and return your certification number back to the farm by either email or regular mail.

You Are Not Alone

Alana Voss—Agriculture Agent, Juneau and Sauk Counties

Farming communities in Wisconsin have been getting tested with their faith, traditions, and practices of running and keeping their farms going this past year. Between the financial strains, governmental changes, and extreme weather patterns all playing a part in these difficult times for the agriculture industry. More and more we are hearing about the farm stress in the news and mental health of our farmers in Wisconsin. Farm struggles or even struggles emotionally are never an easy topic to discuss or admit to others or even ourselves. However, you are not alone in feeling this way, one in five adults have a mental disorder in a given year. The onset of mental disorder can happen quickly and can be due to a traumatic experience. Many of these mental disorders can happen as a combination as well.

Again, I know this is a difficult conversation and hard to accept during these tough times. However, if you can look for signs among your neighbors, family members, and even yourself, you may be able to help these individuals or yourself find the resources needed to help work through these tough times. Depression is one of the top mental disorders and can pair with anxiety very easily. A few symptoms to look for are individuals to be withdrawn, unusually sad mood, lack of interest & enjoyment in normal daily activities, loss of appetite, aches & pains, difficulty sleeping, feeling worthless, and thinking about death.

Ultimately, that last thought is not one we want to accept that may affect us or ones that we care about in our life. Suicide is a serious concern and if you feel there are any concerns with individuals that you know, take the time to talk with them. Some signs you can look for are: threatening harm or death to themselves, talking or writing about death, acting recklessly, no sense of purpose or reason for living, giving items away, and expressing hopeless-

ness. The biggest thing is to ask a person how they are and if they need a chance to talk. Remind them that they have others there for them.

If you or anyone you know may potentially be showing or stating any of these signs when you chat with them. Help them reach out to a few of these resources to help find the right options. You can reach out to your local UW-Madison Division of Extension agriculture agent/educator. Another great resource is the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Farm Center can offer help with legal and farm planning, call them at 1-800-942-2474. Additionally, if you feel a person is thinking about suicide you can call the Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-8255 (Vets dial extension 1). If texting seems to be a better fit there is the Hopeline, which you can text hopeline to 741741. Furthermore, you can call your counties crisis line which are listed below for another local resource. Lastly, if you feel someone is going to commit self-harm and cannot be left alone, please stay with them and call for help,

CWAS Counties Crisis Lines:

Adams County: 1-888-552-6642

Green Lake County: 1-920-294-4000

Juneau County: 1-608-847-2400 or
after hours 1-608-847-5649

Marquette County: 1-888-552-6642

Portage County: 1-866-317-9362

Waushara County: 1-920-787-6618 or
after hours 1-920-787-3321

Wood County: Wisconsin Rapids - 1-715-421-2345 or
Marshfield - 1-715-384-5555

Forage to Concentrate Ratio

Matt Lippert—Agriculture Agent, Wood County

Reducing purchased feed cost is a critical factor when dairy margins are low. Purchasing less feed is beneficial if we can maintain production. Lactation rations can have as little forage as in the 30's for percent forage on up to 70 and 80 percent forage. The number is not as definable as percent NDF or other lab measures, largely because of the characteristics of some common feeds.

Corn silage is the primary ingredient in many dairy rations today and is considered an excellent forage. Typically about 7 bushels in each ton of silage is corn grain. Doing the math about half of the silage is grain. Yet most ration analysis counts the entire product as forage, not half forage and half grain. What if we harvested the corn high- leaving more of the lower stalk in the field, we still call the product corn silage even if the starch levels exceed 40%. On the other hand snaplage has become a more common product as have other types of high moisture corn that include the cob and some of the stalk. These products have more fiber in them than traditional grain and may not be that different from silage that is harvested with high stubble, but we usually account for these products as entirely grain. As you see percent forage can be a very imprecise number and means more if you couple it with other measures of fiber level in the ration such as percent NDF and some measure of NDF digestibility.

Very high percent forage diets

High forage diets have several characteristics, one is a high percent of corn silage, another would be outstanding digestibility of the forage, this may include BMR corn, low-lignin alfalfa, high quality grasses harvested at an immature stage and also alfalfa harvested with a short cutting interval (28 days or less) that will shorten stand life and decrease yield. Another characteristic, especially if high fiber digestibility is not obtained, will be decreased milk production potential from the diet. In some systems where grain is more expensive such as for organic producers, this production loss may be justified, another possibility will be grazing systems with very low overhead. Even for many grazing systems supplements can be justified if the high percent forage is causing production loss. Another challenge with very high forage diets is that one ingredient is expected to do too much of the work. For example a high quality pasture grass is the only forage and it is too wet and too high in soluble protein, possibly higher in sugars than needed. Alt-

though the grass has outstanding characteristics it would benefit from being balanced out by other ingredients. In many forage feeding systems the forage side is limited to one or two ingredients making the ration more difficult to balance.

Are high forage diets healthier?

The answer is yes- and no. There are some excellent byproduct feeds available that can replace forage without causing starch overload, acidosis and too many highly digestible ingredients in the diet. These include- soy hulls, beet pulp, corn gluten feed, distiller's grain, wheat middlings, cottonseed and others. In the case of cottonseed it can even match or improve on the chew factor, the effective fiber in the ration, the ability to maintain a stable rumen mat of fibrous ingredients. These ingredients often price in the diet to be no more expensive than adding corn. They do require the ability to handle more ingredients in the diet, either on the farm or mixed at the feed mill.

Increase your play book-

Dairy farmers are, and should be interested in improving the quality of their forage. Sometimes weather gets in the way of meeting some forage quality targets that seem to be getting more aggressive every year. I advise against locking yourself into expecting to meet all of your NDF digestibility requirements through your forage, on the other hand we should not throw in the towel and accept poor forage as the normal situation. Another tool that can help is managing inventory so the best forages go to early lactation animals and average or below forage makes it to the replacement herd and dry cows.

Forage to concentrate ratio is a great management concept to guide your operation but be sure to think about what the numbers actually mean- usually best understood with some other fiber and energy measures of the ration included.

Visit the
Central Wisconsin
Agricultural Specialization Team
on the web
<http://fyi.uwex.edu/cwas/>

African Swine Fever: Why Should We Care?

Lyssa Seefeldt—Agriculture Agent, Marquette County

In this day and age of global economies, we get inundated with all kinds of information of what is going on in the US and the world. Not a day goes by that don't hear about a natural disaster or disease outbreak in another country. We hope the next disaster or disease won't be here at home.

One disease that is currently on the watch list for many is African swine fever (ASF), a deadly, highly contagious, viral disease that affects pigs. The challenge with ASF is that it can spread very rapidly from pig to pig either via direct contact or indirect routes, primarily via ticks or fomites. Fomites are inanimate objects that may carry a disease such as boots, vehicles, or feed. Research has shown that viral shedding and transmission can occur for at least 70 days post-inoculation in an experimental setting. This is **NOT** a zoonotic disease, so humans are not affected by this virus. Currently there is no cure for ASF, nor are there any vaccinations to prevent infections. The only currently viable solution is eradication of infected animals.

As the name implies, this virus's home territory is in African countries. Wild pigs, warthogs, and other animals in the Suidae (pig) family can be reservoirs of the ASF virus, although they may not show signs of illness. Like many diseases, there are different strains of ASF which can lead to 100% mortality to only exhibiting signs of minor illness.

Some research in domestic pigs shows that ASF virus can linger in tissues of pigs for three to six months. The virus can lurk in uncooked pork products, which can facilitate the spread of the disease to previously uninfected areas. This is one reason why the US is so tough on not allowing "unapproved" or "unregulated" food items through airport security or other points of entry into the US.

Keep abreast of global happenings

As the Chinese swine herd continues to be decimated by ASF, US markets are being affected. China is the number one importer of soybeans in the world. As swine herd numbers in China decrease, so does the demand for raw commodity products like soybeans. In November 2018, China imported zero soybeans from the US as demand was down due to lower pig numbers and tariff pressure was providing incentive for the Chinese to buy Brazilian soybeans.

Another issue is the US imports a lot of vitamin pre-

mixes and other feed ingredients from China... a concerning potential biosecurity issue with ASF running rampant across the country. As we learned with Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv), even really good biosecurity can have fine cracks in it, that in the end, let a biosecurity issue like PEDv through. The Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus was thought to have come to the US from China via feed ingredients, so we don't want to repeat mistakes of the past.

Since ASF is considered a foreign animal disease, it is a reportable disease to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), so if there is any suspicion of ASF present in a herd or animals at a abattoir presenting signs that look like ASF, steps would be immediately taken to eradicate any potential threat. If testing came back as ASF, movement of ALL swine would come to a halt- and that has big implications for abattoirs and farmers alike- to the tune of about \$8 billion dollars in the first year.

Marquette County Dairy Breakfast

Marquette County Fairgrounds
757 Main Street, Westfield, WI

Sunday, June 9
7 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Menu: Pancakes, scrambled egg bar, sausage, fried potatoes, apple sauce, cheese, milk, coffee, juice and ice cream

Cost:



Under 6 - Free

6-12 - \$5

12 and older - \$7



Activities:

Kids games and educational activities

Farm animals

Live Music

**Questions or for more information contact
Brooks Buchholz at 608.369.0366**

TravelMarquetteCounty.com



- May 25 Adams County Dairy Breakfast**, Adams-Friendship High School, 1109 E North St., Adams WI 53910
7 AM-11 AM. \$5/per person, \$3 children Kindergarten-5th grade
“Farm Tour to New Chester Dairy”
- May 31 Mayor’s Dairyfest Breakfast**, Central WI State Fairgrounds, Expo Bldg., 513 E. 17th Street, Marshfield 54449
5:30 AM-9:30 AM. \$7/per person, children 6 and under free
- June 9 Marquette County Dairy Breakfast**,
Marquette County Fairgrounds, 757 Main St., Westfield
7:00 AM-12:00 PM. \$7 per person; \$5 children 6-12; 5 & under-free
- June 15 40th Annual Portage County Dairy Brunch and Open Farm**
Front Page Holsteins, Edelburg Family Farm, 1499 County Road A, Amherst Junction, WI 54407
8:00 AM-12:00 PM, \$7 adults; \$2 children 6-10; 5 & under-free
- June 30 Juneau County Dairy Breakfast**
Elroy Fair: 80/82 south of Elroy, at the City Park, Entertainment Tent
7:00 AM-11:00 AM, \$5 adults; \$3 children; website: <https://www.elroyfair.com/>





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