



## SUPPORTING MICHIGAN'S AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

Farming can be an incredibly unpredictable, dangerous and stressful occupation. That's why Michigan State University (MSU) Extension is committed to supporting agricultural professionals as they navigate tough times and make decisions that have an impact on their families, livelihoods, operations and farms.

Combining farm business management expertise with mental and behavioral health expertise, MSU Extension's team of more than 20 dedicated professionals provides innovative resources and support. From teletherapy and financial services to free online education and community presentations, MSU Extension provides a variety of knowledge and training tools — not just to farmers, but also to farm workers, local farm organization chapters, veterinarians, Farm Bureau members, county commissioners and other key stakeholders in agriculture and agribusiness.

### IN 2022, MSU EXTENSION ...



Delivered 39 presentations and educational programs to 1,200+ participants.



Hosted 11 agribusiness and farm financial decision-making sessions with 36 farmers.



Received more than 25,000 individual visits to the Managing Farm Stress website, [extension.msu.edu/farmstress](https://extension.msu.edu/farmstress).



Trained 17 farmers in adult Mental Health First Aid.

### GET INVOLVED

To learn more about MSU Extension's programming, visit our Managing Farm Stress website at [extension.msu.edu/farmstress](https://extension.msu.edu/farmstress), or contact MSU Extension farm stress specialist Remington Rice at [riceremi@msu.edu](mailto:riceremi@msu.edu).

### SINCE THE START OF THE LEGACY OF THE LAND PROJECT, MSU EXTENSION ...

- Referred 48 farmers into teletherapy.
- Reached 3,164 people at 59 different outreach events.
- Clocked 550 hours of professional business consulting with farms.
- Enrolled 65 farms in TelFarm ([canr.msu.edu/telfarm](https://canr.msu.edu/telfarm)), MSU Extension's farm business management software. Nineteen of the farms began new business within the past year, with annual sales totaling \$7.17 million.
- Has trained 1,050 people in Rural Resilience ([extension.msu.edu/ruralresilience](https://extension.msu.edu/ruralresilience)), a free, self-paced virtual farm stress education course.



## KEY PROGRAMS AND OFFERINGS

**Community presentations.** MSU Extension offers a variety of in-person and virtual farm stress educational presentations. Ranging from 20 minutes to two hours, these presentations aim to improve knowledge, awareness and skills for agricultural audiences on farm stress issues, stress management strategies and mental health resources.

As continued leaders in managing farm stress efforts, MSU Extension's farm stress programs have been adopted and adapted for use in 23 other states. MSU Extension also offers a train-the-trainer program for other university partners to learn to teach MSU Extension's farm stress programs with more than 120 facilitators trained nationally.

**Teletherapy.** Through an innovative partnership with Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, MSU Extension connects farmers, farm families, agricultural professionals and commercial fishers to online counseling services ([extension.msu.edu/teletherapy](https://extension.msu.edu/teletherapy)). All therapists providing teletherapy through this partnership have an agricultural background or personal connection to agriculture, allowing them to understand the unique stressors of the farming industry.



*Jim LaPeer, a farmer from Cheboygan County, talks about his experience with MSU Extension's teletherapy program.*

**Educational courses.** MSU Extension offers a variety of educational programs, tailored to specific audiences, on farm stress management with a focus on mental health and suicide prevention.

**TelFarm.** MSU Extension's farm business management educators ([canr.msu.edu/farm\\_management](https://canr.msu.edu/farm_management)) assist farmers with their financial records and decision-making with their innovative TelFarm system, a software that helps with accounting, financial analysis, tax planning and more.

**Print marketing materials.** MSU Extension's farm stress team created and distributed more than 26,000 informational postcards (available in English and Spanish) promoting the Legacy of the Land offerings. The cards were distributed to farmers, agriculture contacts and key stakeholders at statewide agricultural events, through MSU Extension county offices and via direct mailing to farmers already on distribution lists for MSU Extension program materials.



*One of the Spanish-language outreach postcards sent to farmers across Michigan.*

**Resources for Spanish speakers.** MSU Extension offers a variety of farm stress resources for Spanish-speaking audiences, from financial worksheets to factsheets. In 2021, MSU Extension's farm stress program, *Weathering the Storm: How to Cultivate a Productive Mindset*, was translated into Spanish. In 2022, MSU Extension began offering a *fotonovela* titled *Secret Feelings/Sentimientos Secretos*. Especially popular in Latin America, *fotonovelas* are small booklets with photographs of characters and captions with melodramatic dialogue. This booklet, developed by the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy, fights stigma on depression and improves health literacy by including realistic, culturally relevant role models performing healthy behaviors and overcoming barriers in relatable settings.

**Mental Health First Aid.** Through the Legacy of the Land grant, MSU Extension offers Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Adults ([extension.msu.edu/mhfa](https://extension.msu.edu/mhfa)) to the Michigan agricultural community free of charge. MHFA teaches participants how to recognize signs of a mental health crisis and help people who may be in distress. In 2023, MSU Extension will train 60 more farmers and agricultural professionals in MHFA.





## OUR IMPACT, THEIR WORDS

Participants have shared what MSU Extension's farm stress management resources and support have done for them, their families and their businesses:

*"It's a tough thing to talk about, but more education on this topic really helps people understand."*

*"Thank you. I didn't believe in the counseling program when you shared it with me, but this program gave me my life back and might have saved it in the process."*



MSU Extension farm stress staff present the Mending the Stress Fence program at Northern Michigan University.

*"It's a difficult but important topic, and I'm glad I went [to a community presentation]. I wish my dad would have [gone] to something like this many years ago."*



MSU Extension farm stress staff visiting a turkey farm manager and veterinarian dealing with the challenges brought on from an avian flu outbreak.

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