

News Release
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PANDEMIC IMPACTS ...

COVID-19 Taking Heavy Toll on Farmers' Mental Health

Poll clearly demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic is having broad-ranging impacts.

PUBLISHED ON January 10, 2021



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WASHINGTON — A strong majority of farmers/farmworkers say the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their mental health, and more than half say they are personally experiencing more mental health challenges than they were a year ago, according to a new [American Farm Bureau poll](#).

The survey of rural adults and farmers/farmworkers explores how the pandemic has affected their mental health personally and in their communities, as well as how attitudes and experiences around mental health have changed in rural and farm communities since AFBF conducted its [first rural mental health survey](#) in 2019.

“My takeaway from this survey is that the need for support is real and we must not allow lack of access or a ‘too tough to need help’ mentality to stand in the way,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “We are stepping up our efforts through our Farm State of Mind campaign, encouraging conversations about stress and mental health and providing free training and resources for farm and ranch families and rural communities. The pandemic added a mountain of stress to an

already difficult year for farmers and they need to know that sometimes it's OK not to be OK, that people care, and that there's help and hope.”

The results of the new poll clearly demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic is having broad-ranging impacts among rural adults and farmers/farmworkers. Key findings include:

- Two in three farmers/farmworkers (66%) say the pandemic has impacted their mental health.
- Rural adults were split on COVID-19's impact. Half of rural adults (53%) say the pandemic has impacted their mental health at least some, while 44% say it has not impacted their mental health much or at all.
- Younger rural adults were more likely than older rural adults to say the pandemic has impacted their mental health a lot.
- Farmers and farmworkers were 10% more likely than rural adults as a whole to have experienced feeling nervous, anxious or on edge during the pandemic (65% vs. 55%).
- The percentage of farmers/farmworkers who say social isolation impacts farmers' mental health increased 22% since April 2019, a significant finding given the long hours many farmers work alone.
- Half of rural adults (52%) aged 18-34 say they have thought more about their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than other age groups.
- Three in five rural adults (61%) say the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted mental health in rural communities. Farmers/farmworkers were more likely than rural adults to say COVID-19 has impacted mental health in rural communities a lot (37% vs. 22%).

The survey of 2,000 rural adults was conducted by Morning Consult in December. It also identified the main obstacles to seeking help or treatment for a mental health condition, the most trusted sources for information about mental health, impressions of the importance of mental health in rural communities and the importance of reducing stigma surrounding mental health. A presentation with additional detail on the full survey results is available [here](#).

AFBF will host a session at its 2021 Virtual Convention titled Farm State of Mind – Responding to the Challenges of Rural Mental Health on Tues., Jan. 12 at 11 a.m. Eastern time. The session will feature diverse perspectives on the issue of rural mental health and highlight Farm Bureau's efforts to respond to this key moment in agriculture. Visit <https://annualconvention.fb.org/> to register for the convention and view this session.

If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or has concerns about their mental health, visit the Farm State of Mind website at farmstateofmind.org where you can find crisis hotlines, treatment locators, tips for helping someone in emotional pain, ways to start a conversation and resources for managing stress, anxiety or depression.

–American Farm Bureau Federation

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