

News Column for Use Week of 03/25/2019
Tyler Husa, Extension Agent: Crop Production
River Valley Extension District
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Farm Stress Summit – “shedding some light on a dark subject”

River Valley Extension Agent Sonia Cooper and Director John Forshee had an excellent contribution to the March 2019 Edition of the Extension Newsletter with “Farm Financial Crisis Affects on Mental Health.” They informed us on how stress affects the body: physically, emotionally, as well as socially. We are going to dive into why we, in the River Valley District, sought the opportunity to attend the Farm Stress Summit at Michigan State University in Lansing, Michigan this January.

With many of us coming from farming backgrounds ourselves, we see the need to be proactive in our approach to keep our rural communities and farms thriving during these more difficult times. If we take a look back to the 1980’s Farm Crisis, we can see how extremely difficult times in agriculture affect not only farmers themselves, but the communities, neighbors, families, children, and professionals who work with our producers on a daily basis. Farmers hold onto the land, because it not only involves their income, but is a way of living that was established from an early age. “The land means everything to farmers...losing the family farm is the ultimate loss...” (Rosmann, 2008, p. 39). This is witnessed and explained in the “Agrarian Imperative: ‘...this genetically programmed instinct impels farmers to hang onto their land at all costs. The agrarian imperative instills farmers to work incredibly hard, to endure unusual pain and hardship, and to take uncommon risks’” (Rosmann, 2008, p. 72).

With that being said, we recognize we cannot reach all of the producers, in the state of Kansas, who are enduring extreme amounts of stress. However, we understand we can reach a vast majority of our producers by educating and informing the families, agriculture professionals, and businesses that work with our producers. With the curriculum ascertained and adapted from Michigan State University to fit Kansas, our team, in the River Valley District, is preparing to help as many folks, involved in agriculture, as possible.

For more information, contact Tyler Husa, Crop Production Agent in the Concordia Extension Office by calling (785) 243-8185 or emailing thusa@ksu.edu.

References:

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