

Depression: Know When to Seek Help

A commentary by Jessica Beauchamp, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Farmer Wellness Program Tele-Counselor

Depression is a “whole body disorder” meaning it impacts our physical and mental wellbeing. A few physical symptoms can include stomach problems such as IBS and ulcers, fatigue and insomnia, increases in aches and pains, and decreased libido. Some mental and emotional symptoms can include agitation, restlessness, sadness, increased feelings of guilt or shame, trouble concentrating or focusing on tasks, and loss of interest in activities, hobbies, or work.

Depression is so widespread that the medical field is finding patients with a variety of physical symptoms are more likely to have depression. If you have been to the medical doctor in the past couple of years, you may have noticed that you are not only getting your temperature, pulse, weight, and blood pressure checked, but also getting screened for depression and anxiety.

If you suspect you have depression, there are free online questionnaires that you can complete confidentially in the comfort of your home, barn, office, or even the tractor. These questionnaires can help gauge the severity of your symptoms and aide you in your decision on whether to look at treatment options. Here are three options you can try:

1. [Hamilton Depression Rating Scale \(HAMD\)](#)
2. [Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale \(MADRS\)](#)
3. [Patient Health Questionnaire-9 \(PHQ-9\)](#)

Regardless of your result, it is important to speak with a doctor about your concerns. There is no reason to have to continue feeling poor physically or mentally, and the best part is that there is treatment available!

Wisconsin farmers and their families can access no-cost, confidential mental health support through the Wisconsin Farm Center’s Farmer Wellness Program. If you need immediate support, contact the 24/7 Wisconsin Farmer Wellness Helpline at (888) 901-2558. If you are looking for ongoing care, the Wisconsin Farm Center can provide counseling vouchers to cover the cost of an in-person visit with a provider near you or even schedule a tele-counseling visit with me. Give them a call today at (800) 942-2474 to see what options are available!