

FARMERS' MENTAL WELL-BEING STRESSORS & COPING MECHANISMS



FARMER MENTAL WELL-BEING STUDY

Study Goal: Develop an inventory of the issues impacting agriculture and farming in Georgia by understanding the demographics, stressors, current health issues, coping mechanisms, mental health, and healthcare access of farmers.

Farmer: Includes farm workers, farm managers, and farm owners.

Mental Well-Being: A term that describes mental health in a holistic way.

Statewide Survey

1651 responses from 157 Counties

- 30% Farm Workers
- 19% Farm Managers
- 38% Farm Owners
- 12% Farm Spouses
- 3% Other

Today's Presentation

- Stressors: Farming is a stressful occupation. What stressors impact farmers?
- Coping Mechanisms: How do farmers deal with stress?

Authors: Stephanie Basey, Ph.D.; Anne Montgomery, Ph.D.; Chris Scoggins, MPH; Lily Baucom



Read the Full Report

Scan With Your Phone's Camera



www.georgiaruralhealth.org/farmworkersurvey/



STRESS

Stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed by a situation or event.

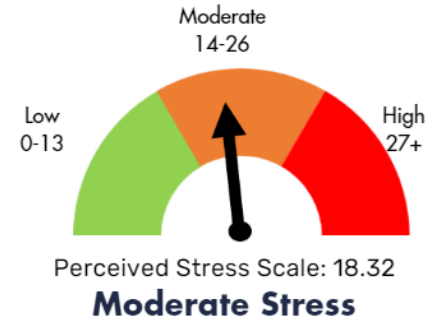
Excessive stress can negatively impact a person's mental and physical health.

Top Stressors – Overall Sample

Balancing home and work life	61%
Weather & its effect on the farm	61%
COVID19's effect on income	59%
Saving and retirement	59%
Unexpected financial burden	59%
Succession planning	56%

The **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)** assesses a person's *perceived* level of stress.






It measures how the person experiences stress in their daily life.



AGE, GENDER, RACE

Top Stressors

Female Farmers

-  71% - Balancing home & work life
-  66% - COVID19's effect on income
-  64% - Saving and retirement
-  62% - Unexpected financial burdens
-  60% - Succession planning








- At least once per month
- 48% - Lonely
- 55% - Sad or depressed
- 31% - Hopeless
- 49% - Unhappy with their farm role

34% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Young Farmers

Less than 36 years old






-  72% - Balancing home & work life
-  71% - Saving and retirement
-  69% - COVID19's effect on income
-  65% - Succession planning
-  65% - Unexpected financial burden



- At least once per month
- 50% - Lonely
- 52% - Sad or depressed
- 39% - Hopeless
- 49% - Unhappy with their farm role

30% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Black Farmers






-  82% - Lack of opportunities for people like me
-  76% - Balancing home & work life
-  73% - Problems parenting
-  70% - Operation certificates
-  70% - Microaggressions



- At least once per month
- 47% - Lonely
- 53% - Sad or depressed
- 36% - Hopeless
- 60% - Unhappy with their farm role

29% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Latino Farmers

-  68% - Balancing home & work life
-  67% - COVID19's effect on income
-  67% - Operation certificates
-  64% - Alcohol Use
-  64% - Managing debt



- At least once per month
- 40% - Lonely
- 47% - Sad or depressed
- 38% - Hopeless
- 45% - Unhappy with their farm role

28% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Thoughts & Feelings

FARM EXPERIENCE

Top Stressors

Thoughts & Feelings

First-Gen Farmers

First in their family to farm



67% - COVID19's effect on income



65% - Saving and retirement



64% - Succession planning



63% - Unexpected financial burdens



62% - Weather and its effects

Perceived Stress Score



At least once per month

- 51% - Lonely
- 54% - Sad or depressed
- 49% - Hopeless
- 51% - Unhappy with their farm role

46% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Generational Farmers



60% - Weather and its effects



60% - Succession planning



59% - Balancing home & work life



52% - Saving and retirement



49% - COVID19's effect on income

Perceived Stress Score



At least once per month

- 47% - Lonely
- 46% - Sad or depressed
- 29% - Hopeless
- 44% - Unhappy with their farm role

12% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Beginner Farmers

Less than 10 years experience



68% - Balancing home & work life



65% - Unexpected financial burdens



65% - COVID19's effect on income



64% - Weather and its effects



64% - Saving and retirement

Perceived Stress Score



At least once per month

- 50% - Lonely
- 53% - Sad or depressed
- 44% - Hopeless
- 53% - Unhappy with their farm role

36% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Experienced Farmers



56% - Weather and its effects



50% - Saving and retirement



48% - COVID19's effect on income



47% - Balancing home & work life



47% - Changes to ag law/policies

Perceived Stress Score



At least once per month






- 49% - Lonely
- 47% - Sad or depressed
- 36% - Hopeless
- 41% - Unhappy with their farm role

24% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

FARM ROLE

Top Stressors

Farm Workers






-  71% - Balancing home & work life
-  69% - Weather and its effects
-  68% - Operation certificates
-  65% - COVID19's effect on income
-  64% - Microaggressions



- At least once per month
- 56% - Lonely
 - 56% - Sad or depressed
 - 42% - Hopeless
 - 55% - Unhappy with their farm role

26% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Farm Managers






-  73% - Saving and retirement
-  72% - Balancing home & work life
-  72% - Unexpected financial burdens
-  72% - Succession planning
-  71% - COVID19's effect on income



- At least once per month
- 39% - Lonely
 - 41% - Sad or depressed
 - 33% - Hopeless
 - 41% - Unhappy with their farm role

50% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Farm Owners






-  53% - Weather and its effects
-  50% - Balancing home & work life
-  49% - COVID19's effect on income
-  48% - Unexpected financial burdens
-  44% - Health issues



- At least once per month
- 42% - Lonely
 - 45% - Sad or depressed
 - 35% - Hopeless
 - 39% - Unhappy with their farm role

26% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Farm Spouses

-  68% - Changes to ag law/policies
-  64% - Difficulty hiring & managing
-  63% - Saving for retirement
-  61% - Sexual issues
-  61% - Problems parenting



- At least once per month
- 39% - Lonely
 - 41% - Sad or depressed
 - 33% - Hopeless
 - 41% - Unhappy with their role

19% think about dying by suicide at least once per month

Thoughts & Feelings



COPING MECHANISMS

Coping is the strategies and behaviors used to manage stress.

Coping strategies can be healthy or unhealthy, and individuals may use a variety of coping strategies depending on their situation.

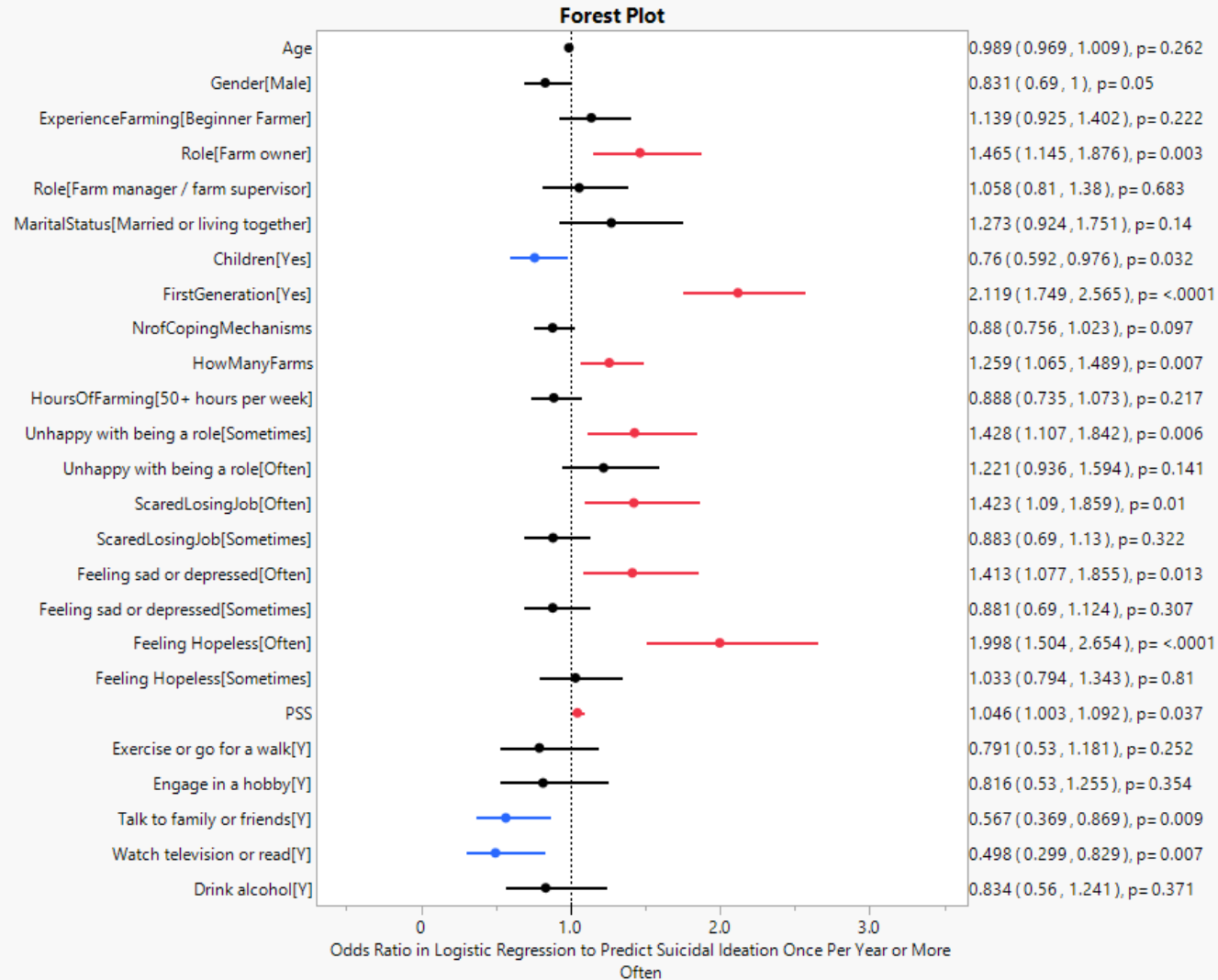
Coping skills are learned and developed over time. They are not one-size-fits-all; what works for one person might not work for another.

COPING MECHANISM – Total Sample	
Exercise/walk	39%
Talk to family or friends	31%
Engage in a hobby	28%
Drink alcohol	27%
Watch TV or read	27%
Sleep	22%
Pray or other religious	18%
Spend time alone	17%
Spend time with pets	15%
Draw or paint	12%

Differences in Coping Depending on Demographics and Experience

- **Female** farmers report:
 - Having fewer coping mechanisms than male farmers,
 - Being more likely to go for a walk or journal,
 - Being less likely to engage in a hobby, spend time alone, or use alcohol.
- **Latino** farmers use exercise and alcohol as coping mechanisms at higher rates than non-Latino farmers.
- **Black** farmers:
 - engage in hobbies, use exercise, and talk with friends or family at higher rates
 - less likely to use alcohol than non-Black farmers
 - use fewer different coping mechanisms
- Farm **workers** are more likely to drink alcohol to cope than farm managers and farm owners.
- Farm **owners** are more likely to pray or participate in other religious activities than the other farmer types.
- On average, **generational** farmers use more diverse coping mechanisms than first-generational farmers do.
- **Beginner** farmers are:
 - More likely to exercise/walk than experienced farmers
 - Much less likely to pray (or practice other religious acts)

Risk Factors For and Protective Factors Against Suicidal Thoughts



Farming is a stressful occupation.

29% of farmers report thinking of dying by suicide at least once per month.

42% of farmers have thought of dying by suicide at least once in the past 12 months.

Understanding the specific stressors that impact farmers will allow for more targeted and effective interventions to improve mental health outcomes.





Email us at
info@gafoundation.org
info@georgiaruralhealth.org

Find our reports here:



www.georgiaruralhealth.org/farmworkersurvey/