

Who We Are/What We Do

The Progressive Agriculture Foundation (PAF) builds partnerships to secure both funding and resources for the **Progressive Agriculture Safety Day®** program.

- Recognized as the ***largest rural safety and health education program for children in North America.***
- The program has ***reached millions since 1995.***
- Peer-reviewed curriculum and resources are ***geared toward children ages 4-13.***
- Safety Days are hosted ***annually by volunteers trained as PAF Safety Day coordinators*** (these individuals work with thousands of community volunteers locally).

Our Mission: Provide education, training and resources to make farm, ranch and rural life safer and healthier for all children and their communities.



Getting a Pulse on Mental Health Concerns Impacting Rural Youth

September 27, 2019 – The Progressive Agriculture Foundation hosted a one-day roundtable in St. Paul, Minnesota focused on a closer look at the mental health of our rural and farming youth.

Roundtable Moderator:

Dr. Susan Jones, Professor Emerita in the School of Nursing and Allied Health at Western Kentucky University

Roundtable Panelists:

- **Monica Kramer McConkey**, Rural Mental Health Specialist at Eyes on the Horizon and Rural Mental Health Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- **Thom Petersen**, Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture
- **Dr. Josie Rudolphi**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at the University of Illinois
- **Emily Krekelberg**, Farm Safety & Health Extension Educator at University of Minnesota Extension



Key Findings from Roundtable and Beyond

Common stressors among youth:

- School (*homework/tests/grades*)
- Relationships
- Sports
- Parent expectations
- Peer pressure/bullying/social media
- Environment at home (*divorce, illness of parent/guardian*)
- Making decisions/choices (*figuring out who they are*)



Isolation during the COVID pandemic

- 60-Minutes segment --- U.S. Kids grappling with mental health crisis made worse by the pandemic (aired 9/4/2022)



Key Findings from Roundtable and Beyond

Additional stressors unique to farm youth:

- Bad weather (or natural disasters)
- Financial (*commodity prices*)
- Long work hours, more responsibilities, pressure to complete tasks on time (*lack of sleep*)
- Negative interactions with those that have a disconnect/lack of appreciation of the ag industry
- Pressure to carry on farming tradition
- Inability to have extra-curricular activities due to farm responsibilities



Roundtable Action Items

Major spotlight on farmer mental health with more resources being created and available; however, no one was really focusing on farm and rural youth.

Progressive Agriculture Safety Day® programs have had a strong emphasis on farm safety, but not rural health issues.

How could we address this emerging issue in a similar manner as our other safety topics by providing demonstrations and activities that are hands-on, engaging, age-appropriate, and fun?



Mental Well-Being & Stress Management Curriculum



MENTAL WELL-BEING & STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Mental Well-being & Stress Management Activities

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Count, Clap, Stomp, Snap

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The Pursuit of Happiness

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Insert a Mental Health Break

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The focus is on educating and helping rural and farming youth:

Understand stress and their emotions

Make the connection between mental health and physical health (break the stigma)

Identify coping strategies

Gather and share additional resources (take-home bags)





A Few Small Acts Can Make a BIG Impact

Meaningful Moments

- 9 vital minutes each day

Peach & Pit

- Share both the highs and lows of your day
- Listen/build trust

Role Model

- Practice self-care
- Adopt a coping strategy
- Be kind
- Take a social media/technology break
- Ask for help
- Share your story



"It Takes a Village"

Many thanks to these partners and supporters



Free Resources

2023 NFSHW Webinar Recording

Matthew Crutchman – Enhancing
Youth Resilience

<https://www.progressiveag.org/nfshw>

2020 NFSHW Story Hour Recording

Reading of children's book, *When I Feel
Sad*, followed by an interview with
author, Cornelia Maude Spelman

**North Central Farm and Ranch Stress
Assistance Center**

<https://farmstress.org/>



Get Involved

Learn more about the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program by visiting www.progressiveag.org (visit the Get Involved section)

Safety Days can be offered in three unique delivery modes:

1. Community-based (*original*)
2. School-based (*most popular*)
3. Classroom-based (*newest*)
4. Safety Zone (*coming soon*)

Mental Well-Being & Stress Management is just one of 30+ safety and health chapters available.



Questions

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www.progressiveag.org

