



FARM STRESS AND OPIOID MISUSE AWARENESS



In spring 2016, the director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture contacted Michigan State University Extension because of an increase in Michigan dairy farmers dying by suicide.

To help respond to the needs of Michigan farmers and their families, MSU Extension developed the Communicating With Farmers Under Stress workshop designed for people who work with agricultural producers and farm families to help them learn more about managing stress and communicating with those in need.

It highlights existing resources and programs including MSU Extension's Stress Less With Mindfulness that introduces participants to the experience and practice of mindfulness to reduce stress.

In 2017, MSU Extension social-emotional programs reached over 2,000 Michigan residents. Since October 2016, more than 900 industry professionals have attended Communicating With Farmers Under Stress workshops.

Impacts:

- 96% of workshop participants learned where to send people for help in the community, and of those, over 60 percent said their awareness of community resources greatly increased.
- 92% of workshop participants can now recognize warning signs of depression, suicide and mental illness.
- 98% of Stress Less With Mindfulness participants know three mindfulness tools to help them manage stress.

In an effort to help support Michigan residents with information on opioid misuse, Michigan State University Extension offers educational programs and facilitates critical partnerships with community groups.

Community film screening and panel discussion events engage with audiences throughout the state to discuss substance use issues. Personal Action Toward Health (PATH) programs equip participants with the skills and tools needed to face the daily challenges of living with one or more chronic conditions.

In 2017, PATH programs reached over 430 people, and community film screening in Wayne, Genesee, Manistee and Crawford counties reached approximately 200 people. Opioid community presentations throughout Michigan reached 500 people.

Impacts:

- 48% of PATH participants developed greater confidence in keeping physical discomfort or pain from interfering with life, and 45% experienced decreased pain symptoms.
- 98% of opioid presentation attendees would do something personally, and 100% would do something in their communities to lessen the impact of the opioid crisis.

To continue the growth of these programs, \$500,000 per year for three years (or a one-time allocation of \$1.5 million) is needed to increase MSU Extension's capacity in both prevention and response.

