

Resources for livestock owners

November 2019

Managing farm stress and coping with loss

Farming is rewarding. It can be very fulfilling to watch a herd or flock flourish under your care, reap the rewards of harvesting or marketing locally-grown products and overcome the challenges of our unique Yukon environment.

Raising animals or growing crops can also be stressful. Many variables relating to success are beyond your control. Unexpected losses can tip the balance between farming being financially and emotionally sustainable – or not.

Preparing for environmental events and practising good biosecurity can help keep your animals safe and healthy. You'll be empowered to seek help if you know about the resources that:

- support your farming practices;
- keep your animals healthy; and
- help you cope with stress or loss.

What is biosecurity and how can it help prevent losses due to disease?

- Biosecurity is about separating your animals from anyone or anything that could carry disease. Practising good biosecurity enhances the health of your animals, productivity of your farm and safety of local Yukon food. See the fact sheet on biosecurity at: Yukon.ca/biosecurity-farm.
- The Yukon farm biosecurity checklist is a useful tool for assessing on-farm biosecurity and areas that need improvement. View the checklist at: Yukon.ca/yukon-farm-biosecurity-checklist.

Can the government offer support for new or inexperienced farmers?

- The Government of Yukon's "Support for agriculture" website contains links to information about agriculture funding, advice on farming in Yukon, hay testing, feed testing, soil testing and other resources: Yukon.ca/support-agriculture.

I have experienced difficult times on my farm, financially and emotionally: how do I connect with others in the industry who might have experience to share?

- The Yukon Agriculture Association strives to bring together a network of Yukon farmers and homesteaders, growers and producers: yukonag.ca.
- Stay connected with local issues by subscribing to InFARMation, Yukon's agriculture newsletter: Yukon.ca/infarmation.



Contact

Animal Health Unit
Government of Yukon
867-667-5600 or
1-800-661-0408, ext. 5600

P.O. Box 2703 (V-7)
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 2C6

animalhealth@gov.yk.ca

Agriculture Branch
Government of Yukon
867-667-5838 or
1-800-661-0408, ext. 5838

agriculture@gov.yk.ca

- You can also access advice on farming in Yukon, including a farm visit, through the Agriculture Branch by phoning 867-667-5838 or emailing agriculture@gov.yk.ca.

What other resources are available to me and my family if we are experiencing anxiety or feeling overwhelmed?

- The Do More Agriculture Foundation is an organization that strives to help champion the mental wellbeing of all Canadian producers: domore.ag.

I am feeling tired and upset all the time, I can't sleep and I don't know what to do. Is this normal?

- It is important to know that your feelings and experiences are valid, and a professional opinion can help determine if you are suffering from anxiety or depression. Speak to your doctor.
- Depression and anxiety self-assessment tools and quizzes are available online. Examples can be found at: heretohelp.bc.ca/screening/online/ementalhealth.ca/index.php?m=survey&ID=42.
- The Yukon Distress and Support Line is available by phoning 1-800-563-0808.
- Crisis Services Canada is also available 24/7 at 1-833-456-4566 or visit: crisisservicescanada.ca.

I'm having trouble coping with the death of my livestock. Are my feelings normal? How do I grieve their loss?

- The website "GriefLink" has a helpful article "Grief following the loss of an animal: the loss of livestock", which can be found at: grieflink.org.au/grief-associated-with-the-loss-of-livestock.
- Emotional attachment to livestock can be profound. This human-animal bond needs to be respected, especially in times of loss. Hospice Yukon provides this newsletter about grieving the loss of pets: hospiceyukon.net/Pet_Loss_Newsletter_2019.pdf.

Where can I find information on emergency preparedness on the farm?

- The Government of Canada's "Emergency Preparedness for Farm Animals" is a great resource for planning ahead: getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/frm-nmls/index-en.aspx.

I'd like to know more about managing cash flow and making financial plans: are there resources available to me?

- Resources are available to you through the Yukon Agriculture Business Program. Information can be found at: Yukon.ca/agribusiness-program.

I am also interested in assessing the environmental risks on my farm so that I can best prepare for environmental events and hazards.

- The Environmental Farm Plan Program is a great place to start. Information can be found at: Yukon.ca/agricultural-beneficial-management-practices-funding.

