

Supporting farmers to become resilient

Farming is a unique industry and faces a unique set of challenges. Coronavirus (COVID-19), extreme weather events and the forthcoming changes to agricultural support as a result of the UK leaving the EU have made the past two years particularly difficult. These issues can cause high levels of stress or anxiety for farmers and individuals within the agricultural sector and may result in many farmers and land managers in England needing to adapt their business models and carefully consider options for the future. In this article, FAS provides information on the support available to help build business and personal resilience for members of the farming community.

**Farming
Advice Service**

RABI

The [Royal Agricultural Benevolence Institution](#) (RABI) is a charity providing local support to the farming community across England and Wales. In addition to the practical care and financial support RABI has long been known for, it also provides mental wellbeing support. This support includes a free, anonymous [online mental wellbeing platform accessible through the RABI website](#), as well as free in-person mental health counselling and farming-focussed accredited/certified mental health training which launched in January 2022. Support is available via RABI's freephone 24/7 helpline (0800 188 4444) or by emailing help@rabi.org.uk.

In 2021, RABI conducted the [Big Farming Survey](#), which shone a spotlight on the importance of personal resilience and wellbeing. They found that 36% of the farming community are probably or possibly depressed, 58% of women in agriculture experience some form of anxiety, 52% of the farming community have physical health issues causing them pain and discomfort, with 21% struggling to undertake their usual tasks due to poor health.

These are not just statistics; these are real people. RABI is committed to supporting farming people and providing services that help to build resilience.

RABI
helping farming people

The Farming Community Network

The [Farming Community Network](#) (FCN) is a voluntary organisation and charity that supports farmers and families within the farming community through difficult times. It provides pastoral and practical support for those seeking help for personal or business reasons, including financial difficulties, animal disease, mental health and family disputes. The organisation has more than 400 volunteers across England and Wales, many of whom have an agricultural background or close links to farming, so they understand first-hand the issues that farmers face on a daily basis.

The charity runs a helpline that you can call to discuss issues about your farm, business, family or health. Volunteers listen, empathise and can connect you with other forms of support available. This is freely available from 7am to 11pm every day. The helpline number is 03000 111 999.

The FCN also runs the [FarmWell](#) platform. This is a separate website that offers extremely practical information on business and personal resilience. It collates the wealth of information available on the internet in one place, making it easier for farmers who are not 'tech savvy' to find what they need.

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National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) and Rural+

Being part of the farming community as a young person can be especially difficult. Stressors include lack of transport as well as social isolation from friends and neighbours. To combat this, the [National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs](#) (NFYFC) has launched [Rural+](#), which offers guidance on recognising and understanding stress and anxiety, often the first step towards improvements.

NFYFC has created [an updated training module called Rural+ Curve](#), which is delivered by other farmers and gives guidance on how to manage your mental health. Online support can be particularly useful if you live in an isolated area or COVID-19 restrictions mean you can't travel, but face to face contact is important. [Read more information on Rural+ Curve and watch videos from those delivering the training.](#)

There are more than 580 Young Farmers' Clubs across the country for young farmers and people who enjoy rural life. [Read more on how to become a member.](#)



You Are Not Alone

[You Are Not Alone](#) (YANA) is a service specifically for those involved in farming or rural businesses who are affected by stress or depression. Telephone (0300 323 0400) and email (helpline@yanahelp.org) helplines are offered. The website can help you make a plan of action for yourself or get advice on how to help someone you know who is struggling with depression or anxiety.

YANA offers specific help for those involved with farming or other rural businesses in Norfolk, Suffolk and Worcestershire. This includes funding up to six counselling sessions. Please call the YANA helpline for more information.



The Prince's Countryside Fund national directory of farm and rural support groups

In 2020, YANA handed over the management of the directory of national and regional rural support organisations to the Prince's Countryside Fund. This directory of national and regional rural support organisations will help to signpost the sources of help and advice for those who need assistance with the challenges of rural work and life.

[Read or download the directory.](#)



Future Farming Resilience Fund

The [Future Farming Resilience Fund](#) (FFRF) will help improve the resilience of your business. It is being funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and is designed to provide tailored business support to farmers and land managers during the early years of the agricultural transition period.

The scheme will focus on assisting farmers and land managers to make the right decisions for themselves, their families and their business through effective discussion and planning. The discussions between farmers/land managers and the advice provider are confidential. Defra has recently extended the current phase of the support. The end date varies between organisations providing advice and [can be checked on GOV.UK](#). Free support is available to any farmer or land manager currently in receipt of Direct Payments. The final phase of the project is being finalised but is expected to launch later in 2022 and run until March 2025.

As places are limited and provided on a first-come first-served basis, [FAS would encourage you to engage with organisations delivering advice in your sector/area](#). To keep up to date with the details of the scheme, please subscribe to [Defra's Future Farming blog](#) and sign up to [Defra's e-alerts](#).