

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **COVID Recovery Iowa Available to Agriculture Community**

AMES, Iowa – Farming can be stressful in the best of times. Financial worries, erratic weather, unpredictable commodity prices, plant pests, livestock diseases and isolation all contribute to farmers' anxiety. Now Iowa's rural communities and families are coping with the economic impact and unpredictability produced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds has described the effect of COVID-19 on Iowa's farm economy as devastating.

During her May 28 daily press briefing, Gov. Reynolds and Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig communicated that Iowa's meatpacking plants are operating at only 80% capacity. In addition, the U.S. pork industry has lost about 25% of its processing capacity due to COVID-19. As a result, some livestock producers are having to euthanize animals.

Iowa State University economists are saying Iowa's pork industry has lost more than \$2 billion; the beef industry, \$700 million; corn, nearly \$800 million; and soybeans, more than \$200 million. "The economic impact is devastating. However, the personal and emotional impact also is taking a heavy toll," said Tammy Jacobs, coordinator for Iowa Concern and other ISU Extension and Outreach hotlines.

Help is now available, Jacobs said. The State of Iowa recently announced the launch of [\*\*COVID Recovery Iowa\*\*](#), a nearly one-million-dollar grant funded program from FEMA. This program, available now, provides resources and stress counseling via virtual sessions, chat or phone call. People of all ages may join groups online to find support and learn new strategies to cope with the effects of the pandemic in a variety of creative ways.

"Anxiety, loneliness, anger and sense of loss are only a few of the very normal emotions Iowans may be feeling right now. This crisis, however, does not affect everyone in the same way. Individuals may feel fine and confident one day and overwhelmed the next. Family members may feel things differently – and at different times as well," Jacobs said. "That is why COVID Recovery Iowa is available to help. It's very important to have a way to learn more about what is happening and talk to someone about the personal impact."

Every Iowan is eligible for free, confidential resource and referral, education and counseling. People can contact the [\*\*Iowa Concern\*\*](#) Hotline at 800-447-1985 or go to <https://covidrecoveryiowa.org/>. Program staff at these sites can also provide referrals to and information about programs that will help Iowans manage stress, family financial and farm

financial concerns throughout the pandemic. These programs include ISU Extension and Outreach farm management resources, resources for parents and much more. Educational seminars and solutions also are available for farmers and businesses managing staff remotely who need support. Contact COVID Recovery Iowa to learn more and receive a response tailored to your specific personal or business need.

#### COVID Recovery Iowa resources at a glance

- Website: [covidrecoveryiowa.org](https://www.covidrecoveryiowa.org)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/covidrecoveryIowa>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/covidrecoveryia>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/covidrecoveryiowa/>
- Phone: Iowa Concern Hotline at 800-447-1985 or Iowa Warm Line at 844-775-9276

