

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Office of the Minister

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October 24, 2023

Cathy Lennon
General Manager
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
cathy.lennon@ofa.on.ca

Dear Cathy:

I am pleased to share that the governments of Canada and Ontario are investing over \$8 million to provide farmers and their families with specialized mental health supports.

In their mission to put food on the table for Ontarians and people around the world, farmers have to deal with substantial stressors and challenges. The [Farmer Wellness Initiative](#), the [Guardian Network](#), and the [In The Know](#) programs were designed to meet their unique mental health needs and help them cope with the demands of life on a farm.

Through this \$8 million commitment, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario Division will continue delivering these programs and supporting the invaluable people within Ontario's agricultural community.

I am also pleased to share that we are launching the Sowing the Seeds of Wellness Initiative to generate awareness about the suite of three mental health programs. This initiative is designed to help organizations provide information on mental health supports in a way that best responds to the pressures their members are facing.

Under this initiative, materials such as banners, brochures, and bookmarks will be available to eligible organizations and commodity groups for use and display at member events. Up to \$10,000 will also be available per organization over the next two years so they can produce commodity or organization-specific materials, provide speakers at events, and / or develop other initiatives that provide information on mental health and available supports to members.

The intake will open November 15, but costs incurred after October 1, 2023, will be eligible to provide flexibility for organizations that are preparing for upcoming meetings.

Since its inception in 2021, countless people in the agricultural community have benefited from the services and support offered through the suite of three programs, and I'm confident that many more will in the future. That is why, building on previous success, we are expanding the program to allow for a wider array of promotional partners.

Our government recognizes the invaluable role that Ontario's farmers and their families have in our province and we're committed to supporting them in any way we can.

We look forward to continue working with you, as partners and stakeholders, to help meet the needs of Ontario's agri-food sector.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Did you know about the Farmers' Wellness Initiative?

- Your mental health is important! If you're a farmer or a member of a farm family and in need of mental health support, please call 1-866-267-6255 and arrange to speak with a professional today.
- For additional resources visit: <https://farmerwellnessinitiative.ca/>.