

# Agriculture Wellness Ontario

Mental Health Support, Education and Community





# What is Agriculture Wellness Ontario?

Agriculture Wellness Ontario (AgWO) is a suite of free programs that brings mental health education, counselling services and enhanced community support to rural and agricultural communities across the province. AgWO is managed by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division, in partnership with other stakeholders in the agricultural community.

Our dedicated team works across the province, delivering programming and training to promote wellbeing among farmers, farm families, and agricultural workers. Whether through workshops, events, or one-on-one support, we are committed to meeting people where they are—both geographically and on their mental health journeys. Our mission is to provide meaningful, accessible support that helps the agricultural community thrive.

This project is funded in part by the Governments of Canada and Ontario under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), a five-year, federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

# Disclaimer

This presentation touches upon topics of discussion which some individuals may find difficult.

If you need a break, feel free to step out of the room (or leave/step away from the virtual meeting).

The Farmer Wellness Initiative is available 24/7/365 for free support at 1-866-267-6255.

Group agreement:

- Any personal information and/or experiences shared remain confidential
- Demonstrate respect to each participant and facilitator
- Be open-minded and recognize we all have a different background
- Take care of yourself before, during and after the presentation



# In the Know

## Education



# What is In the Know?

This free 3-hour workshop was developed by the University of Guelph(2019) and is delivered virtually or in person. Designed for farmers, their families and those who are involved in and/or support the agriculture sector, it covers topics including:

- Stress
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance Use
- Suicide
- How to start a conversation around mental well-being

Sessions are facilitated by mental health professionals from the Canadian Mental Health Association.

## WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM IN THE KNOW?

Agricultural Societies & Fairs	Financial Institutions
Rural Volunteer Groups	Agricultural Salespeople
Municipal Government	Agricultural Service & Technicians
Commodity Focused Groups	
Veterinarians & Vet Techs	Farmers' Market Groups



# Book an In the Know Training

Staff Teams | Board Directors | Community Groups



Offered free to agricultural businesses and organizations, virtually or in person.

- 3-hour training
- Group size: 5 - 30 people
- Training handouts & resources provided
- Includes interactive discussions and activities
- Facilitated by ag-informed CMHA professionals

**Over 100+ trainings to date!**

‘The In the Know training that was offered to staff at 4-H Ontario has given our co-workers the knowledge, skills and confidence to navigate the mental health challenges of our key stakeholders in rural and farming communities. We believe everyone has a role to play in ensuring the strength and resilience of our communities, and we feel grateful that this training was available.’

Christine Oldfeild, Executive Ditector, 4-H Ontario



# Growth Workshops

Education



# What are Growth Workshops?

Growth Workshops are a series of short, focused sessions created to bring accessible mental health education to the agricultural community. These workshops are thoughtfully designed to fit into busy schedules, each lasting an hour or less, offering practical tools and support to help individuals navigate life's challenges. Rooted in understanding the unique pressures of farming life, Growth Workshops provide a welcoming space for learning and self-care, fostering a sense of connection and well-being within the agricultural community.

Our current offering include:

- An Introduction to Mental Health in Agriculture - 30 minutes
- Navigating Stress in Agriculture - 60 minutes





**GUARDIAN**  
Network

# Guardian Network

Community



# What is the Guardian Network?

Based upon the award-winning “Sentinel” program created by The Quebec Association for Suicide Prevention (AQPS) and the Union of Agriculture Producers (UPA), The Guardian Network is a network of mental health advocates that supports Ontario’s farming community. Guardians are equipped with strategies and tools to identify the signs of mental distress, react to farmers at-risk, and connect individuals with appropriate mental health and crisis resources.

**1.**

Guardians Register

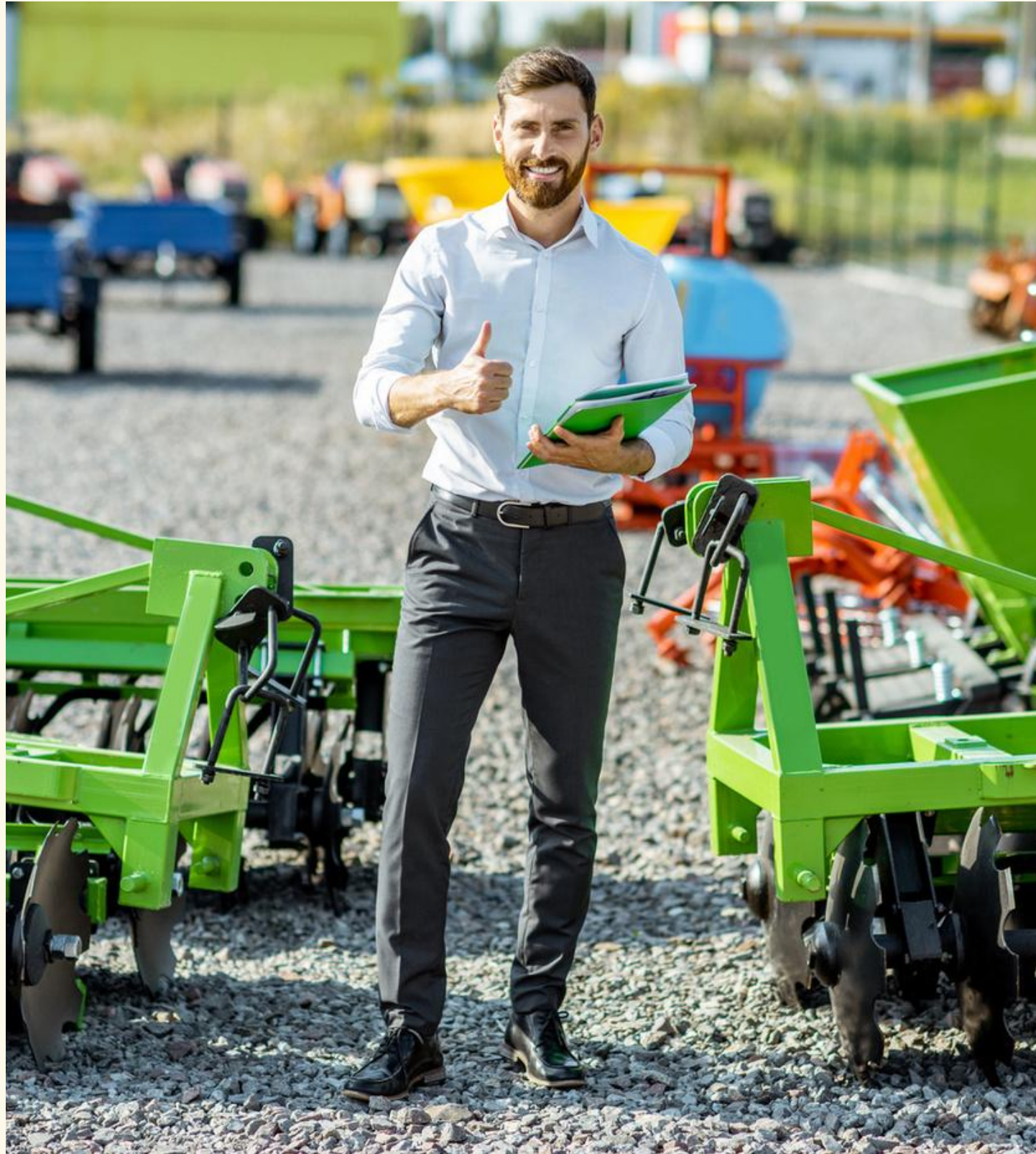
**2.**

Participate in Training

**3.**

Engage in Program

# Who are Guardians?



Guardians are caring people who live, work, or volunteer in the agriculture community and want to be there for their neighbours, family, co-workers, clients and friends.

- 18 years old +
- Have regular interaction with the farming community
- Want to better their understanding of mental health and suicide prevention
- Want to support and connect members of the farming community to mental health support

Disclaimer: A Guardian does NOT act as a therapist or counsellor. A Guardian does NOT provide follow up mental health care to community members.



# Book a Training

**Join the over 300 trained Guardians today!**



Offered free to agricultural businesses and organizations, for groups of 10-20 people, both virtually and -in person.

Great offering for:

- Boards of Directors
- Staff
- Membership
- Community Members

“Municipalities, being closest to the people, directly feel the agricultural sector's challenges like stress, social isolation, and burnout. I often wondered how local government could support mental health wellness until our collaboration with the Guardian Network. Hosting training sessions has significantly addressed our agricultural sector's sustainability and health and built community connections among farmers and those in contact with them. Working with the Agriculture Wellness team was seamless, the training impactful, and we are fortunate to be part of the Guardian Network.”

- Catalina Blumenberg,  
Municipal Clerk, Prince Edward County

# Upcoming Trainings

Agriculture Wellness Ontario hosts virtual monthly *In the Know*, *Growth Workshops* and *Guardian Network* trainings. These trainings are open to anyone in the province to attend.



## In the Know

December 4 - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Register Here:

<https://bit.ly/INTHEKNOWREG>



## Growth Workshops

November 27 - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Register here:

<https://bit.ly/INTHEKNOWREG>



## Guardian Network

December 3 - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Register Here:

<https://bit.ly/guardianreg>



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# Farmer Wellness Initiative

Support





# What is the Farmer Wellness Initiative?

The Farmer Wellness Initiative provides Ontario Farms with mental health support by offering free unlimited counselling for farmers, farm workers and their families. Intake is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year in English, French and Spanish. Once assessed, eligible participants may schedule free counselling sessions with a mental health professional who has received specific training on how to best serve the unique needs of Ontario farms.

## Eligible Participants:

- Farmers (owners or operators of farms)
- Farm Families (relatives of farmers – living on or off farm)
- Farm Employees/Workers (anyone who works on a farm)
- Spouses and dependents of all farm employees

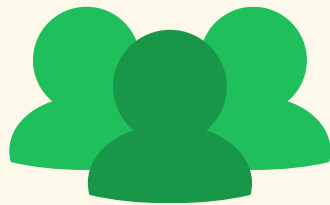
Note: Youth between the ages of 12 to 15 may use the service with parental consent.

# How does it work?



## STEP ONE

When you call the line, you'll go through a brief intake process. You'll be asked your name, where you live and why you're calling. (Note: if you're in crisis, you'll be directed to immediate support.)



## STEP TWO

Within a week, you'll be connected to a counsellor that you can see on an ongoing basis by phone, video, or in person (based on availability). The mental health professionals who provide counselling are ag-informed to best serve the community.



## STEP THREE

Engage in counselling for as long as you need. Sessions are free and unlimited. Finding the right counsellor is important. If you'd like to be matched with someone new, you can call the line back and be matched with someone who may be a better fit – no questions asked.



**INTERNATIONAL  
AGRICULTURAL WORKER  
WELLNESS PROGRAM**

# **International Agricultural Worker Wellness Program**

*Support*

# International Agricultural Worker Wellness Program

The International Agricultural Worker Wellness Program aims to address the unique mental health and wellness challenges faced by temporary international agricultural workers in Ontario. By providing culturally responsive a program, we will equip workers with the tools to manage stress, social isolation, and other wellness concerns. Over two years, the program will be piloted in Windsor-Essex and Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk, impacting both workers and employers in creating healthier agricultural environments.

- Multilingual resource development
- Mental health promotion through outreach
- Workshops for IAWs & farm owners/employers
- Community referrals & system navigation



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**

**Windsor-Essex County**

*Community well-being is our sole focus*



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**

**Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk**



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**Questions or Comments?**

**[www.agriculturewellnessontario.ca](http://www.agriculturewellnessontario.ca)**

