OSF SilverCloud can help farmers weather a storm of uncertainty

Diesel prices are at record levels nationwide, and farmers have been hit especially hard.

According to a July estimate by the Democratic staff of Congress's Joint Economic Committee, diesel for planting major crops in Illinois, for example, cost $163 million more in 2026 than it did last year — an increase of nearly 80%. Now harvest time is here, and prices are even higher than they were in the spring.

Some farm families report fertilizer costs have also added thousands of dollars to the yearly cost of treating their fields.

It's a perfect storm of sorts for stress, anxiety and depression in farming communities. Matt Goedeke's family farms 1800 acres of corn and soybeans on family farms in Knox and Fulton County. He also has an off-farm job selling Ag products. He worries most about his employees struggling to make ends meet.

Goedeke, who is in his 30s, says has known farmers who let that kind anxiety and depression drive them to suicide.

"They're also the same guys, I talked to them quite often and I never really thought they had a problem or anything like that, so it goes back to that, they just hold it in and then don't really know what to do and in their minds, there's really no other option," he shared.

OSF HealthCare wants farmers know about OSF SilverCloud, which offers a digital way to manage those stresses with support from the comfort of farmers' home, shop or tractor.

Especially for farmers who are part of a generation of family farmers the pressure not to fail can be tremendous. Isolation also keeps farmers at a higher risk for depression, stress and anxiety.

OSF SilverCloud is a website and smart phone app that offers evidence-based tools for adults who are not in crisis, but who could benefit from helpful assessments, exercises, and strategies available in short modules that are easy and available 24/7.

Goedeke has found himself tapping SilverCloud while waiting in his truck for chemicals to arrive or while at home watching TV. He likes that he can work at his own pace and use it whenever he has a few spare minutes. Quizzes and exercises provide personalized feedback and helpful strategies such as journaling, mindfulness and breathing exercises.

"Based off of how your personality is, this is some ways you can kind of deal with things and cope with things and go about tackling task at hand but it's super easy to navigate. You just scroll up, get to the bottom of that page, hit the button and it's on to the next one."

The tool advises not rushing through modules to avoid added stress. It is a softer entry into receiving help which is important for farmers who research shows are more reluctant than most about seeking professional help for mental health struggles.

Goedeke says as a younger farmer, he's probably more willing to admit he doesn't have all the answers, even when it comes to managing stress. He recommends OSF SilverCloud for anyone, even

if they aren't experiencing obvious symptoms because he says it helps uncover issues, re-frame perspectives, and improves how you relate to the world and those around you.

Goedeke says he also gained new insights when he reflected on recent challenges.

"I felt like I could just relate more real-life scenarios of alright, if I had thought of it this way, maybe I could have handled this situation better."

SilverCloud is monitored by regional behavioral health navigators who can be accessed through a "Get Help" button to offer coaching, personalized support or to connect users with more immediate, community-based resources when warranted. Those behind-the-scenes navigators set OSF SilverCloud apart from other digital behavioral health tools.

Research by OSF HealthCare shows the tool can be as effective as face-to-face counseling.

You do not have to be an OSF HealthCare patient to enroll in SilverCloud

To get started, create an account at: OSF.SilverCloudHealth.com/signup. Then, access the tool via web site or download the app.