

University of Guelph
Andria Jones-Bitton
ajjones@uoguelph.ca
519-824-4120 ext. 54786

Briana Hagen, University of Guelph
Colleen Best
Stephen Fleming, York University
Sandra Hoy, Laurentian University

Burnout in Canadian Farmers

Burnout is a syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and low professional efficacy, and is an understudied health issue amongst farmers worldwide. As burnout could have serious implications for farm productivity, retention, and agricultural industry success, this represents a serious knowledge gap. This study's purpose was to investigate burnout amongst Canadian farmers.

A national, online survey of farmer mental health was conducted between September 2015 and February 2016. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used to collect data on the three burnout subscales: emotional exhaustion (EE), cynicism (CYN), and professional efficacy (PE). Subscale scores were separately summed and compared to population norms. The latent burnout profile approach was used to classify participants into one of five profiles: Engaged (low EE, low CYN, high PE), Ineffective (low PE), Overextended (high EE), Disengaged (high CYN), and Burnout (high EE, high CYN). Multivariable regression was used to investigate risk factors for each of the three subscales.

Exhaustion and cynicism scores were higher than those of an international comparison sample. Roughly two-fifths of participants were classified as “Engaged”, one-quarter as “Ineffective”, one-fifth as “Overextended”, 2% as “Disengaged”, and 12% as “Burnout”. Risk factor analyses will be presented. These results support the call to action for farmer-specific wellbeing interventions.