



PERSONAL APPROACH OF DEALING WITH MAJOR CHANGE THROUGH FARMWELL

Here Eleanor Parton, Communication and Events Officer for FCN lists the resources available on FarmWell to support those in the agricultural community in building personal resilience.

Farming is changing in England from January 2021. Changes include the phasing out of direct payments, the design of future schemes, changing rules and regulations etc. Having business resilience will be critical in learning how to adapt your farm business and progress through the changes that we are facing in agriculture.

Resilience is a word that we see quite often, particularly in farming as we face so much change. Having both business and personal resilience will allow the farmer and farm business to approach the new schemes and regulations in a way that will be less daunting, giving them the capacity to progress and learn through these changes.

Having business resilience is a great starting point when approaching change, however progression through change will be difficult unless personal resilience is also maintained. This includes maintenance of both your mental and physical health.



Eleanor Parton

Mental health and physical health

The mind is so important when it comes to farming. If the mind is not well maintained there are often bigger consequences out of the person/farmer's control and even those around them. Personal resilience in the farming community is a widely recognised process of coping with stress and bouncing back from difficult situations. But really it is the process of 'bouncing forward' - you are bouncing forward from those difficult situations or troubles. It is important to recognise and relay to farmers that it is normal to experience difficult times and stress and that there is help and support readily available for them to overcome these challenges.

It is also important to embrace change and even points of failure - everyone will have things go wrong at certain points in their life or come to a crossroads; these times in your life will often shake up how you have been living and then allow you to bounce forward stronger. You will then be able to adapt your environment, learning from experiences and putting changes in place, so that you won't come across those difficult times again as you will know how to deal with them. The ability to cope well with pressure, adversity and uncertainty relies on the farmer redeveloping their behaviours, thoughts and actions.

This proactive thinking links in with the idea of 'disrupt or be disrupted'. There will be a shift and change, and people will push change whether we like it or not. This could be said for the change in support payments, change in BPS, change in policy and so on. We need to disrupt ourselves before we are disrupted by others; we need to be prepared for the change that is coming.

FarmWell acts as that proactive support to the farming community in shifting with the changes, providing guidance on how to develop this resilience prior to it being needed.

Physical Health

There are clear connections between your mind and your body, two things which very much work in sync. Exercise is essential in developing your mental and physical resilience and wellbeing. This doesn't require the need for lifting heavy weights or paying for a gym membership. It requires you to move your body!

The main issue around staying fit and farming can often occur when making enough time in your busy day to exercise. However, it is important to take a break out of your day to focus on your mental state, whether that is through physical exercise or through mindfulness exercises. Information and guidance on mindfulness is available here: farmwell.org.uk/mindfulness/

FarmWell has plenty of accessible resources developed allowing you to stay fit alongside a busy farming life. Visit: farmwell.org.uk/fit-for-farming/

Mental Health

Having positive mental health allows you to feel, think and act in way that allows you to live a happy and progressive life. Mental ill-health can be experienced by anyone.

Mental stress affects us all differently and is also influenced by social and environmental factors as well as by the level of support we receive from those around us. There are many ways you can improve your mental health and wellbeing which will allow you to feel more positive and gain a sense of achievement.

FarmWell has plenty of tips around improving your mental wellbeing and things you may be struggling with personally. FarmWell also signposts to support and further guidance around the following aspects:

- Anxiety and Depression: farmwell.org.uk/anxiety-and-depression/
- Isolation and Loneliness: farmwell.org.uk/isolation-and-loneliness/
- Identifying, managing and minimising stress: farmwell.org.uk/identifying-managing-and-minimising-stress/
- Substance misuse: farmwell.org.uk/substance-misuse/
- Talking therapies: farmwell.org.uk/talking-therapies-2/
- Mindfulness: farmwell.org.uk/mindfulness/
- Staying connected: farmwell.org.uk/staying-connected-business/
- Bereavement: farmwell.org.uk/bereavement/
- Physical health: farmwell.org.uk/physical-health/

With the changes we are facing in the farming community, having personal resilience and a positive personal approach to dealing with changes and challenges will allow you to progress through the barriers you may face. It won't always be smooth sailing and approaching change will often be a daunting thing from a farmer's point of view, which many will struggle to face. The personal and business resilience aspects to FarmWell attempt to help you overcome these barriers - approaching change in a clear, strategic way through the development of resilience.