Our mission is to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources. We are working to confront mental health challenges in rural communities and the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

A Message from Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton

Rural Minds has had a busy start to 2023. During the last few weeks, I’ve had the honor and privilege to represent Rural Minds at two events to help raise awareness about the mental health crisis in rural America, as well as share actionable mental health information and resources.

The first event took place at a joint meeting of the local Cuba, NY, Grange and youth Grange leaders from across New York State. For the presentation, I partnered with Teresa McMahon, who is a trained and certified therapist with NY FarmNet. Founded by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University in 1986, NY FarmNet provides free and confidential financial and mental health services to farm families and agribusiness employees in New York State.

Both Teresa and I were encouraged by how open and honest today’s generation of youth is when it comes to talking about difficult topics like depression, bipolar disorder, substance use disorder and suicide. They are truly the hope for tackling the growing mental health epidemic in rural America.

In addition, I’m grateful to the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) for the opportunity to participate at the 2023 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show that was recently held in New Orleans, LA. Rural Minds Vice President of Communications Julie Lux and Rural Minds Social Media Coordinator Adriel McMahan joined me at the convention, where more than 6,000 beef cattle producers were in attendance. In this newsletter, we share some highlights of how Rural Minds raised awareness about the mental health crisis in rural America at the Convention.
I look forward to collaborating with our partners and representing Rural Minds at several events and speaking opportunities in the weeks ahead, as we continue our quest to end the suffering, silence, and stigma around mental illness in rural America.

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**Rural Minds Cultivates a Powerful Presence at the 2023 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show**

As thousands of cattle producers from across the U.S. gathered in New Orleans at the 2023 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Rural Minds was there to help raise awareness about rural mental health challenges, and provided actionable information and resources for confronting the mental health crisis in rural America.

Here are highlights of the presentations and info Rural Minds provided at the convention, which ran from January 31 through February 3:

"Are You Brave Enough to Attend This Session?" That was the title of Jeff Winton’s presentation at the Cattlemen’s College. Now in its thirtieth year, NCBA’s annual Cattlemen’s College continues to be one of the cattle industry’s premier educational events. In his presentation, Jeff talked about his own family’s story and the importance of sharing lived experience with mental illness, and provided mental health information and resources to help ranchers and their families.

Rural Minds Vice President of Communications Julie Lux partnered with Lilac Lane Media Owner and Ag Director WDAY Radio Bridgette Readel to develop a presentation – “Mental Health and Wellness in Rural America” – for NCBA Cattle Chats. New for 2023, NCBA Cattle Chats were 20-minute “Ted Talk”-style sessions delivered in the main aisle of the trade show. The presentation covered the warning signs that indicate someone may be struggling with a mental

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Donate Today!
Mental health information and resources presented by Rural Minds and NCBA were available at "The Back Porch." A new addition to the Convention, this room at the Convention Center designated as "The Back Porch" provided Convention attendees who visited with printed materials, and gave attendees an opportunity to share notes of encouragement on message boards and sign up for rural mental health updates from Rural Minds.

Special thanks to Rural Minds Social Media Coordinator Adriel McMahan, who helped set up "The Back Porch," and who collected and created content for social media coverage of Rural Minds at the Convention.

Eating Disorders – Early Detection & Treatment Are Key to Recovery

Eating Disorders Awareness Week (EDAW) 2023
Monday, February 27 – Sunday, March 5

EDAW is an annual campaign designed to provide hope, support, and visibility to individuals and their families who are impacted by eating disorders. During this EDAW, Rural Minds strives to help increase awareness about eating disorders, as rural Americans face higher risks from this potentially deadly mental illness.

Eating disorders are a serious type of mental illness that, when left untreated, can be deadly. People with eating disorders have persistent and unhealthy thoughts and behaviors about food, which causes them to eat dangerously too little or too much.

Read more

Help Us Help Others – Qualified Charitable Donations

As our attention turns to taxes with April 18 approaching, something to consider any time of the year is a financial gift to support the work that we are doing through Rural Minds to confront the mental health challenges in rural America and the stigma that surrounds mental illness.
Among the many options is a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD) directly from your IRA. Anyone over the age of 70½ can make a gift through their IRA; and if you’re 72, you can make a gift out of your required minimum distribution. Most Americans don’t itemize their deductions. But you can save on income taxes with this approach, while providing much-appreciated support to help us help others.

To learn more about this simple and tax-friendly way to give, please visit our DONATE webpage.

IN THE NEWS:

Rural Minds and Mental Health in Rural America

Click on the links below to see some of the ways Rural Minds has been reaching out through the media to help increase awareness about mental health challenges in rural America and the stigma surrounding mental illness.

NCBA’s Cattlemen to Cattlemen Interview – “Mental Health in Rural America”
In this interview with Cattlemen to Cattlemen host Russell Nemetz, Jeff Winton discusses some of the barriers that are unique to rural residents when it comes to seeking mental health services and how Rural Minds is helping to improve mental health resources in rural areas.

Brownfield Interview – “Changing the Conversation Around Mental Health in Rural America”
During a recent interview with Brownfield Ag News at the 2023 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Jeff Winton talked about how Rural Minds is confronting the stigma surrounding mental health in rural America.

Western Livestock Journal – “Cattlemen’s College Draws Big Crowd in New Orleans”
This article highlighted Jeff Winton’s Cattlemen’s College session in which he addressed the mental health crisis in rural America and provided solutions for producers to prioritize mental health.

Daily Yonder – “A Year to Prepare – Organizers Work to Ensure 988 Helps Rural Residents Too”
In this article, Jeff Winton provides insight about 988 – the new three-digit mental health crisis hotline – and its impact on access to crisis intervention for people who live in rural communities.

The Ag Queen Podcast – “Rural Minds”
Rural Minds Executive Director Chuck Strand was featured on The Ag Queen
Podcast to talk about how Rural Minds is working to connect people in rural America with mental health resources.