

Episode Title: Thanksgiving Special

Summary: “I’m thankful for farmers because of the hard work, dedication, persistence and pride that they take in their work to help feed people in the United States and around the world.”

This week we are celebrating farmers and their important work. We asked listeners and folks who work with the center to send in messages of thanks to the farmers who provide us with Thanksgiving staples and healthy and safe food all year round. We also recognize the enormous stressors that have strained the mental health of farmers and agricultural workers, especially in the last couple of years, and we have provided links to mental health resources for farmers and rural communities.

Expert: Renee Anthony

Episode Quote:

“I’m thankful for farmers because of the hard work, dedication, persistence and pride that they take in their work to help feed people in the United States and around the world.”

Transcript

00:04 K. Crawford

Hi everyone and welcome to the FarmSafe podcast. This week, as we reach our 8th episode, we are changing things up a little bit. We are staring at the calendar, looking forward to releasing this episode right before Thanksgiving, and we realized it is a great time to reflect and think about how grateful we are to the farmers who provide us with not only this holiday bounty but with healthy and safe food all year round. We also recognize the enormous stressors that have strained mental health of farmers and agricultural workers, especially in the last couple of years, and we thought this was a perfect opportunity to send out a message of thanks to them.

I am joined today by Renee Anthony, faculty at the University of Iowa’s College of Public Health and director of the CDC/NIOSH-funded Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, which has developed this podcast.

Thanks for being here, Renee.

00:52 R. Anthony

Hello Kate, it’s great to be back with you on the FarmSafe podcast.

00:56 K. Crawford

So, Renee, as we approach Thanksgiving, what are some of the things you’re thinking about?

01:01 R. Anthony

Well, it’s wrapping up 2021, and this year we look forward to safe dinners with family once again, sharing thanks with one another. This is one of our great American Food Holidays, and it is important that we as a society take some time to thank our farmers for the work they do. We know that farmers have to be experts in many things to be successful—sure, they have to be agrarians and animal handlers; but they also have to be accountants, transportation specialists, mechanics, meteorologists, human resource experts, safety and environmental experts, the list goes on. In the past few years, when things go wrong—such as dropping prices, drought setting in, repair parts become scarce, they can’t find help to run the farm, or family issues need attention— we worry about how these stresses can result in shifts of mental health. So, I think this week, let’s take the stress off the table and celebrate the contributions of farmers to everyone’s life.

02:00 K. Crawford

I think you bring up some great points. I think it's hard sometimes for many of us to comprehend the amount of work that goes into growing the food that we find at the grocery store. And not just food, right? But all of these other resources we need to make the world go round. I also think it's important you brought up all those different aspects of farming and how stressful it can be to juggle all of those different roles.

So, this week we are taking some time to celebrate farmers and their important work. We asked listeners and folks who work with the center to send in messages of thanks and I'm going to share those in just a moment. But Renee, let's start with you, why are you thankful for farmers?

02:39 R. Anthony

Great question. I have a huge garden that I grow lots of food in every year and it's way too much for my family. But when I harvest food, I realize that the amount of time that I put into things, the grocery store prices— how do they possibly reflect the amount of time that goes into the great food we eat. So, I want to thank you to the farm workers who take enormous gambles with weather, workers and varmints every year to produce the bounty that is available to us year-round.

03:20 Speaker 1

Hi, this is Sam from Iowa. I'm thankful for farmers because they work long hours and hard days to put food on my family's table.

03:28 Speaker 2

Thank you, farmers, for getting us food. I'm excited for Thanksgiving.

03:34 Speaker 3

Hi, my name is Becca and I'm from Iowa. Every year, but especially this year, I'm thankful for the agricultural community surrounding my home. My family and I always appreciate the opportunity to purchase locally produced pork or poultry throughout the year from our neighbors, and especially to have it on our table at Thanksgiving dinner, thank you farmers.

03:53 Speaker 4

Hey, this is a shout out from Nebraska to all the farmers out there who produce things that will be on my family's Thanksgiving Day table. I especially look forward to Southern cornbread, sweet potato casserole, and pumpkin pie. Of course, none of those things would be complete without dairy farmers who provide the butter that makes anything better. Thanks for all that you do. We appreciate you.

04:24 Speaker 5

I don't know if you're familiar with the, the Bradley County pink tomato and Arkansas traveler tomato. But that tomato was actually developed on my family by my great grandfather. And what was so he was a farmer, but I never knew he went through the research process at the university to do that until after he died, a man let me know. You never talked about it, he never bragged on his self; he was humble. He was very ethical in everything he'd done.

And so, this morning, as I woke up and I saw the sunrise I thought, I'm really grateful for farmers I'm grateful for ranchers I'm grateful for loggers, because they never set an alarm to get up, they just because there's work to be done. They never open up policy manual to follow the rules, they set their own rules. And they never send an email to get a job done. It's just done. And it's work from daylight to dark, many, many days. It's work through the ice and snow. But they're simple, they're humble, they have integrity. They provide us with food, clothing, resources, fuel, many other things that you can probably never identify. And that is why I'm so grateful for that population.

05:34 Speaker 6

Hi, my name is Jim Patterson, and I grew up on a farm in Cherokee Iowa, that my grandparents, my parents and now my younger brother and his family work. And I'm thankful for farmers because of the hard work, dedication, persistence and pride that they take in their work to help feed people in the United States and around the world.

05:56 Speaker 7

I think, as a farm wife, being thankful for a safe harvest so far, we still have a ways to go. We've got a couple of new young people that are involved in our farm, and one of them this is his first year, not just for us but for himself. And so, I'm thankful that there are new people that are interested in continuing that and then learning to do it in sustainable and regenerative ways and feeling good about their role in doing that.

06:24 Speaker 8

A big thank you to our farmers. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. I'm wishing, all of you a safe and happy holiday season. Every day, the results of all the hard work you do show up on my table, and I'm especially grateful for the wonderful Thanksgiving meal you provide. Please know we thank you for choosing farming as your life's work. With love from Iowa.

06:46 Speaker 9

It has been a challenging year for everybody. For the farmers, for the producers, the food manufactures, it's been challenging for the last couple years, and I do think that we owe them all a big thank you because they have kept food on our shelves. Maybe one time we went to the store and there wasn't a peanut butter or there was, you know, or a whole aisle was empty, but it's been challenging for everybody. And I think that average American maybe doesn't always understand or, can appreciate some of the challenges that that our producers have gone through that our food manufacturers have gone through that everybody has gone through to keep the population fed. And I do think that's something that we should be thankful for. We have so many resources today that we concentrate on what we don't have, and what isn't happening rather than what we have.

07:52 Speaker 10

Thanksgiving's always been a really special holiday to me. I think now, especially this year, we're all thankful for so many things that we have. We're more aware of the things that we have. So, this year, I'm definitely thinking about the people that are working so hard to get us all this delicious food for our Thanksgiving table. Thanks everyone and Happy Thanksgiving.

08:23 Speaker 11

Thank you, farmers, for getting us food and stuff that we can eat from the farm. I know this year you're gonna be working hard because it's close to Thanksgiving.

08:43 Speaker 13

Hello, this is Jenna Gibbs. I am the Director of Operations for the Ag Health and Safety Alliance. This Thanksgiving, I'm just really thankful for farmers because of all the little-known industrial products that they helped create and two really come to mind for me. I'm a mother of two young children and I know every time they're coloring with their art supplies and their crowns, they're soy in those products. And I'm a big fan of candles especially around the holidays so I'm thankful for farmers. I know that candles or may not have soybean oil, and that helps the candle burn a little cleaner inside of my home. So, thanks to farmers for, for those two products and of course all the other thousands of products that row crops go into. And I hope that you have a happy holiday season.

09:32 Speaker 14

Okay, Gracie, why are you thankful for farmers? I'm thankful for farmers because [I eat eggs for breakfast] every morning. You eat eggs for breakfast every morning? What other farmer products, are you thankful for this Thanksgiving? Corn! And what's one last product that you like a lot? Do you like pizza with cheese? Pizza with cheese! So, are you thankful for cheese? Yeah. Can you say happy thanksgiving? Happy Thanksgiving!

10:18 K. Crawford

I have another guest with me today, Jenn Patterson. Jenn is the center coordinator for the Great Plains Center, and she also handles communications and social media. Jenn posted about this episode on the center's Facebook page, and she brought some of those responses so we can share them with you. Jenn thanks for being here.

10:36 J. Patterson

Sure, it's great. And thanks to all our Facebook followers who answered our call out on social media, we received some really great responses and, as promised Kate and I are going to read them now.

10:46 K. Crawford

So, this one was sent in by a teacher living in a farming community, and she said, "Our property borders farmland and cotton and soybeans are being harvested now. The farmers work long hours and deserve our thanks. Many fields are now barren and are being prepared for new crops and the circle of life continues. Our county has century old family farms and may of my former students will be able to live their dream of being a farmer. They work side by side with fathers and grandfathers."

11:13 J. Patterson

Another individual said, "I'm thankful for farmers because one acre of soybeans can produce 82,358 crayons, and I have loved crayons, all my life."

11:22 K. Crawford

"I'm thankful for the fact that we can access locally grown produce from farmers here in the state very easily. I've tried a few different farms we have feel the family and the Iowa City farmers market and the taste and quality far better in my opinion than comparable imported produce. You can tell local farmers take pride in their work by the food. We can usually easily connect with farms in person through the summer markets."

J. Patterson

I'm thankful for farmers because they promote a hard work ethic!

K. Crawford

"I'm thankful for farmers because they are wonderful community members that jump in and help whenever it is needed!"

J. Patterson

And personally speaking, Kate, I'm thankful for farmers for putting food on our tables and so many choices in our grocery stores with grain fed, grass fed, organic, all natural, all the goodies. So, thank you, farmers. What are you thankful for farmers about Kate?

12:09 K. Crawford

I'm definitely also thankful for all the food that's provided to us. I've had a little luck growing tomatoes and lettuce but everything else I eat someone else has, has produced for me and I'm grateful for that. I'd also like to say that I'm thankful for the farmers and workers that have been sharing stories with us for this podcast. I know, sometimes it's difficult to tell those stories, especially if they deal with injuries or even fatalities. But it really does help shed a light on some of those hazards and what's the rest of us learn about how we can try and prevent some of those things from happening to other people. So, I'm especially thankful for those people who are who are helping us out with that and joining in on that conversation.

12:56 R. Anthony

Join in the conversation and share your thanks to a farmer. Post a comment of thanks on comment boards wherever you access this podcast. Forward the link to your farming friends and include your personal note of thanks. Small kindnesses really do matter.

13:13 K. Crawford

If you are concerned about your mental health or the mental health of your farming friends, we have shared links on our website to send you to a wide range of resources, including the comprehensive website hosted by ruralhealth info.

If you want more podcasts that focus on mental health on the farm, visit the Transformation podcast.

You can also visit the farmstress.org website for regional resources and state specific services addressing farm stress and mental health for the north central region of the US. As always, these links will be included in the episode resources section of our website.

13:47 R. Anthony

Join us on the farm safe podcast to learn more about keeping you and your family safe on the farm.

K. Crawford

We want to hear from you. Share your stories about health and safety issues on the farm, about injuries that made you change the way you work, or about the ways you keep yourself and others safe on your farm. Also let us know if there are any topics that you want to hear about on the air. You can visit our website at gpcah.org or email us.

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Happy Thanksgiving!

Episode Resources

- FarmStress.org
- [TransFARMation Podcast](#)
- [Rural Health Information Hub](#)

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