

KEEP YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME



As an industry, and as a wider society, we can often be accused of championing the safety of our physical health while ignoring the precautions we should be taking for our mental health.

In the UK, one farmer commits suicide every week. This is a stark and damning figure and if you considered adding it to the figures for 'fatal injuries on farms' you would see that number more than double.

The cases of farmers suffering from mental health issues do not have to end tragically, there are places to go to and people to speak to.

When 'Adam' was suffering from stress, his employer urged him to contact RSABI. Adam is in his forties and lives with his wife and young daughter and has been employed in agriculture his entire working life.

Adam got into a situation where he had more money going out than coming in, which was causing significant pressure on both himself and his family. He had resorted to using pay day loans, exacerbating the problem. He emailed RSABI and a case officer went to visit.

The case officer listened to the issues and both her and Adam looked at the family's

finances and discussed the options that may be available for him to pursue.

The case officer checked benefit entitlement and suggested he contact the local Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to help reschedule the debt, which Adam did.

To alleviate the immediate pressure RSABI issued Tesco vouchers to allow the family to manage their essential needs without resorting to a high cost pay day loan. CAB looked at options for dealing with the debt which Adam is now pursuing.

"RSABI pointed me in the right direction," said Adam. "The help and support I have received from RSABI has made such a big difference to me and my family. Knowing there is someone there to talk to has helped my stress levels too."

What would Adam say to others struggling to make ends meet? "Talk to RSABI, don't ignore it. RSABI can help."

Mags Granger, RSABI Welfare Manager, said: "We listen, that's very first thing we do. If someone comes to us directly, we take the opportunity to chat, we can offer services if they need counselling or they just want one of our case officers to go around and visit. We talk

about any pressures and look at any practical help we can give towards to alleviating some of these worries.

"For better mental health you need to talk. Depression seems to like to stay quiet, and most people who are feeling low tend to be more introverted and tend to stay in. Without being given that opportunity to talk, then the situation can get worse in your mind because there's nobody to talk it over and let those feelings out. It's really important to talk, that's one of the main things.

"Apparently, there is quite a large correlation between people that are suffering from a low mood and accidents occurring.

"You also might not be as aware of the safety aspects as your mind is being taken up by other stuff. You're not noticing things that normally you would be aware of. And, generally, sometimes just not getting the job done at all itself can lead to farm injuries."

For more information about the services available to you through RSABI either call 0300 111 4166 to speak to someone in confidence or visit www.rsabi.org.uk

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