

Little Arkansas River WRAPS

Spring 2025



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Stressed from Farming? You are not Alone.



Spring is quickly approaching, creating a feeling of new beginnings, growth, beauty, and renewal...*for most*. However, we know that our farmers and ranchers are faced with unique stressors with the change in season and WE CARE!

Farmers - take note of signs of stress in your farming community and within yourselves. Common signs of stress are: **increased heart rate, tension in the neck and shoulders, headaches, fatigue and lack of motivation, irritability, easily frustrated and on edge, as well as seeking to withdraw from others**. When you begin to note such feelings, pause and ask yourself, *"What is the leading cause of my stress? Is the trigger something I can control?"* Take a moment to step back and evaluate your environment and the presenting situation. If the trigger is something you can control, *do you need to do something about it right now, or can it simply wait?* If the situation is out of your control, *is it gaining you anything by stressing over the presenting situation?*

Once you have evaluated the scenario, the following are coping techniques that can help ground and center you: **deep breathing, prayer, connection with others, exercise, being outdoors surrounded by nature**. Take the time to breathe in the fresh air while soaking in the sunshine and digging your fingers into the soil you are currently tending to.

To better maintain stress and anxiety, the following ag-specific resources are available to you if needed:

- **Kansas Ag Stress website ([kansasagstress.org](https://www.kansasagstress.org)):** Resources focused on stress management, financial and legal challenges, and many other needs, which are available to help care for and assist Kansas farmers and ranchers in their well-being.
- **Ag Aware Providers in Kansas (<https://www.kansasagstress.org/ag-aware-providers-in-kansas>):** A list of mental health professionals in Kansas who are familiar with the unique challenges faced by farmers and ranchers.
- **Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services (<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/kams/>):** A state program that helps farmers and ranchers explore mediation options and connects them with financial advisors, legal advice, and mental health facilities.
- **Togetherall (<https://togetherall.com/en-us/join/farmfoundation/>):** A free, anonymous, online community for farmers and their families to receive and give support.
- **K-State Research and Extension (<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/program-areas/health-and-wellness/stress-management/>):** Offers resources and education on stress management, mental health, and resiliency.
- **Kansas Farm Bureau (<https://www.kfb.org/Article/Mental-Health-Resources>):** Provides resources and support for mental health in rural communities, including the "Rural Minds Matter" initiative.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, do not hesitate to call the National Suicide Prevention Line at 988.

Harvesting Knowledge: Little Ark's Productive Producers



In this issue, we are high lighting the work of **John McCurry** and his family. John is a fifth-generation producer in Reno County, married to his wife Melody and they have a lot of help from their 3 children. John's mother is involved in the McCurry Angus business. Clearly a family endeavor!

The McCurry's work primarily with livestock, 400 pure-bred Angus and 250 commercial. John uses unconventional, innovative best management livestock practices. He follows row-crop farmers with what he called "green planting", where he plants cover crops for grazing. Everything John plants is designed to feed the cattle, whether it be for grazing or baling.

John has been a part of the Little Arkansas River WRAPS Sediment BMP program this past year, planting over 700 acres of cover crops. John also hosted one of the WRAPS group's field days last summer (right photo). John was asked if he had any advice to share with his fellow livestock and agriculture producers. He said, "Keep communicating and sharing what you have tried on your farm, rather it did or did not work." The purpose of that field day was to do just that. McCurry shared what he has been working on in his livestock business and shared his cover crop practices and successes with the group. Another BMP John utilizes is alternative watering systems, including solar tire tanks. This is his livestock's only source of water and John plans to add a few more of these systems in 2025.



When asked what his aspirations were for the future, McCurry said that he wishes "to expand to accommodate more cattle and to acquire more sub-par farm ground to do so". **Thank you to the McCurry Family for being stewards for conservation and water quality in our watershed.**

2024 WRAPS Program Accomplishment Update

The Little Arkansas River Watershed made a positive impact on water quality throughout the watershed in 2024 by facilitating educational events and offering the following programs.

- **Atrazine Program:** 113 Atrazine BMPs were implemented on 20,096 acres in priority areas. Atrazine BMPs included: early application (32%), post emergent application (18%), reduced soil-applied rate (17%), split application (12%), and the utilization of no atrazine (21%). Thank you to the City of Wichita for their continued financial support in providing \$68,161 in funding for these practices in 2024.
- **Sediment Program:** In 2024, individual consultations were made with producers and sign-ups were/are ongoing. There were 19 sediment BMPs implemented on 2,700 acres at year-end utilizing over \$47K in WRAPS funds. An additional \$20K has been allocated to sediment BMP implementation taking place on 528 acres by the end of June.
- **Nutrient Management Program:** Twelve 12 producers signed up to make soil health and precision agriculture a priority on 2,731 acres in 2024. This program has committed its full EPA 319 WRAPS funds in the amount of \$40,000 to nutrient management at this time. The Little Ark is ready for another 3-years of funding!
- **Livestock Program:** Livestock BMPs can utilize WRAPS funds in Turkey, Sand, and Kisiwa Creek sub-watersheds. In 2024, several producers signed up for alternative watering systems. Due to drought, the well drillers were very busy, therefore, these BMPs have not been implemented, however the program's \$40,000 has been allocated to get these systems in place by June. 🙌
- **Off-site BMP Program:** This is a City of Wichita funded 5-year program, with 4 years of incentive payments and the 5th year in maintenance. BMPs include crop rotations and no-till. The City of Wichita provided \$4,552 for incentive payments on 454 acres in 2024, 313 acres were in their 4th year and 141 acres were in their second year of incentive payments.



If you are interested in any of these programs, please use the contact information listed below and let one of us know!



Growing Growers...



IS A DECENTRALIZED PROGRAM THAT OFFERS APPRENTICES PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH HANDS-ON WORK AT THEIR HOST FARM, YEAR-LONG ACCESS TO A COMPREHENSIVE ONLINE COURSE, AND PARTICIPATION IN A SERIES OF IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS AND FARM TOURS DURING THE GROWING SEASON.

THIS PROGRAM IS STATE-WIDE! IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN APPRENTICE ON A FARM OR **BEING A HOST-FARM**, PLEASE REACH OUT TO US AT GROWERS@KSU.EDU OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.GROWINGGROWERS.ORG.

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For more information, visit our website at www.kcare.k-state.edu. We are on social media, too!
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