

AGING ON THE FARM

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PARTNERS



- Normandale Center for Healing and Wholeness
- United Church of Christ Zumbrota
- Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity
- Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center
- Supporters: St. Mary's University School of Social Work and U of M School of Public Health Student Interns, United Christ Redeemer Lutheran Church

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HEALTHY AGING ON THE FARM IS ...

A one-year demonstration project to identify barriers to healthy aging on the farm

Issue to be addressed: A Minnesota Rural Health Research Center report (2018) found that workers in the rural areas don't have the same access to services and face shortages in formal long-term care options, pushing the burden of care to unpaid (family) caregivers.

These caregivers, while often older themselves, require social supports and resources to maintain their own health. Yet, isolation, stigma, and time are challenges, leaving aging farmers who may need help most at the greatest risk of not receiving it.

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RATIONALE

- Question: How as a community can we support the health and safety of aging farmers, and farm families?
 - What are the needs? What are the avenues? What are the challenges? What are the opportunities?
- Why Now?
 - According to UMASH agriculture workers are comprised of more "older workers" than any other profession or industry
 - The average age of farmers in Minnesota is 60
 - Statewide population trends reflect that the number of adults in their 60's in Minnesota will double by 2030, and those over 85 will grow by 41%.
 - Older farmers in Goodhue County face an increasing amount of health and aging-related concerns and are more likely to report their health as "fair" or "poor" (20%) than younger respondents (1-10%).
- Goal:
 - To share findings among policymakers, partner organizations and residents in Goodhue County to start to better understand and address the barriers to healthy aging that farmers over 60 are facing today.

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CAREGIVER BURDEN

- Statewide population trends reflect that the number of adults in their 60's in Minnesota will double by 2030 and those over 85 will grow by 61%.
- While Minnesota is aging rapidly, rural areas are aging at an even faster rate, and in general have less access to supportive services and long-term care, than urban areas
- These caregivers, while often older themselves, require social supports and resources to maintain their own health as well as address the unique challenges of caring for a loved one on the farm.
- Data reflect that most seniors desire to age in place and that unpaid, informal caregivers (family) provide the vast majority of all long-term care in Minnesota.
- In 2020, 74% of residents in Minnesota who are 65 or older reported helping or being helped by a non-paid caregiver (U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics compiled by Minnesota Compass).

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PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Expand existing faith-based and multi-sectorial partnership aimed at supporting aging farmers and their caregivers
2. Identify barriers to accessing existing services
3. Identify best practices to communicate opportunities and information with aging farmers, their caregivers, and farm communities
4. Test virtual delivery of supportive services for caregivers
5. Identify unmet needs to improve the quality of life and health outcomes of aging farmers and their informal caregivers.

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PROJECT LEAD


- Founded in 1998 as a 501c3 non-profit
- The Mission: To provide support for healthy aging in spirit, mind, and body
- Relationship-based approach, supporting 500+ seniors annually by building on the capacity and strengths of their informal and family caregivers to:
 - Alleviate isolation
 - Maintain mental, physical and emotional health
 - Extend independence
 - Enhance quality of life
 - Alleviate caregiver burden



United Church of Christ Zumbrota was established in 1862


The Mission: To listen to the still speaking voice of God, to welcome all, to love our neighbor, to serve those in need, to live in faith, to accept grace, and in all things to give God the glory.

The majority of the congregation's members are Goodhue County farmers over the age of 80



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MEGAN M. SCHOSSOW, MS
OUTREACH DIRECTOR AND CENTER COORDINATOR UPPER MIDWEST AGRICULTURAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



- \$10,000 grant funding for the project from the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety & Health Center (UMASH) and the Center for Healthy Aging Innovation, U of Minnesota.
- UMASH is part of a collaboration of five leading research and health care institutions.
- The mission of the Upper Midwest Agricultural Health and Safety Center (UMASH) is to improve the health and safety of agricultural workers, owner-operators, and communities in the Upper Midwest.

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PRE-SURVEY PREPARATION

- Community Advisory Team Development
 - Key Questions & Engagement Strategies
- Identify Community Resources for Seniors
- Literature Review
- Beta Focus Group
- Finalized Survey
 - Written/ Oral implementation
 - Demographics
 - Senior and caregiver
 - Depressive Scale
 - Open-ended Questions

AGING ON THE FARM Participant Assessment Questionnaire

For any questions in completing this survey contact

Jennifer at jmonroe@norman@alecenter.org
OR
JD Haas at pastorjdhaas@gmail.com

Mail completed survey to
Attention: Pastor Haas
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METHODOLOGY

The opportunity exists for rural faith communities to work together to improve support for our aging farmers

AGING ON THE FARM


Seeking Farmers Over 60 for Conversations About Aging on the Farms

Non-profit and faith-based partners in Goodhue County are working together to collect information about healthy aging on the farm.



Complete a short survey today. The survey takes about 15-20 minutes. Individual responses are confidential.


Participants receive a \$30 gas gift card



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SURVEY FINDINGS

N= 37




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NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS PER CITY

Zumbrota 12	Kenyon 5	Red Wing 5	Goodhue 4	Lake City 2
Dennison 2	Cannon Falls 1	Mazeppa 1	Wanamingo 1	Pine Island 1
Hampton 1		2 Skipped		

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FARM INFORMATION



Number of Owners= 27


Number of Acres Owned:

- >100; 3 responses
- 100-200; 9 responses
- 200-300; 9 responses
- 400-500; 5 responses
- 500+; 5 responses

(2 individuals in the 500+ row 600 acres along with own 250)

Types of farms:

- 12 responses crop
- 5 responses beef/crop
- 2 beef
- 2 grain
- 1 Crop/hog
- 1 Crop/livestock
- 1 Cattle, tree processing, cropland
- 1 Crop/sheep
- 1 Corn/beans
- 1 tree
- 1 dairy
- 1 Sheep/wool




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DEMOGRAPHICS

22 male and 12 female

Ages:

- 50-60; 2 Responses
- 60-70; 14 Responses
- 70-80; 10 Responses
- 80-90; 7 Responses
- 90-100; 1 Response



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WHAT IS YOUR RACE?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian/Alaskan	0.00%	0
Asian	2.86%	1
White Hispanic	2.86%	1
White not Hispanic	94.29%	33
2 or more races	0.00%	0
Black/African American	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
TOTAL		35

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HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Approximate Household Income:

- \$100,000+; 6 Responses
- \$70,000-100,000; 8 Responses
- \$40,000-70,000; 17 Responses
- >\$40,000; 2 Responses

Dependents:

- 0; 15 Responses
- 1; 4 Responses
- 2; 6 Responses



Total Living in the House:

- 1; 9 Responses
- 2; 24 Responses

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ARE YOU A VETERAN?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.89%	5
No	86.11%	31
If yes, do you receive any Veterans benefits? Please describe:	11.11%	4
Total Respondents: 36		

- Veteran's Benefits;
 - Disability pension 30%, Medicaid assistance
 - 200 a month for hearing
 - VA Medical
 - \$281 and medical if desired hearing aids

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PRIMARY CAREGIVERS

- Wife; 14 Responses
- Husband; 7 Responses
- No One; 2 Responses
- Self; 9 Responses
- Daughter; 4 Responses
- Non-Relative, Friend; 1 Response

* Roughly 30% of respondents listed themselves or no one as their primary caregivers.

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DESCRIBE YOUR DAILY ROLE

- Feeding animals
- Milk on instances if necessary
- Planting, field work
- Buy and harvest hay
- Cut grass, gardening, mowing
- Cleaning woods, cutting trees, chopping firewood
- Shovel snow, clean roofs
- Machine repair
- Manage wool/fiber business connected to farm
- Give tours
- Maintain household
- Help with grandchildren for a son who is taking over the field work.

Does Anyone Help you?

- 8 Responses= No
- 25 Responses= Listed a variety of family members

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HEALTH STATUS

- In general, how would you rate your current health?
- What illness or medical problems do you have that limit your ability to do what you need to do on the farm?
- In the past 30 days, did poor physical health keep you from doing activities such as self-care, work or recreation?
- In the past 30 days, did stress, sadness or your emotions negatively affect you?

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WHO WOULD YOU CALL FOR HELP IF YOU HAD A PROBLEM, YOU COULD NOT SOLVE BY YOURSELF. (TOP 3 RANKINGS)

Family 33	Neighbor 21	Friends 21	Internet 5
Church 10	Doctor 4	No One 1	Senior or Social Club 2

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WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COULD YOU HAVE USED HELP WITH DURING THE PAST YEAR?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Social activities	4.76% 1
Preparing meals	0.00% 0
Shopping	0.00% 0
Cleaning	28.57% 6
Reading	0.00% 0
Caregiver respite	9.52% 2
Laundry care	19.05% 4
Home repairs (minor plumbing, painting)	42.86% 9
Home maintenance (gutters, filter change)	14.29% 3
Home Chores (raking, trim bushes, gardening)	14.29% 3
Heavy housework (laundry, windows)	19.05% 4
Light housework (vacuum, dishes)	0.00% 0
Errands	4.76% 1
Paying bills/balancing checkbook	0.00% 0
Getting prescriptions	0.00% 0
Snow shoveling	14.29% 3
Other (please specify)	28.57% 6
Total Respondents: 21	

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HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO CONTINUE FARMING?

- "As long as possible" – 14 Responses
- >10 Years – 4 Responses
- "Indefinitely" – 8 Responses
- "Do not know" – 3 Responses
- 10-20 Years – 3 responses

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WHERE DO YOU INTEND TO LIVE AS YOU AGE?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Remain on the farm	97.30% 36
Move into town	5.41% 2
Move to congregate care setting (assisted or senior living, etc.)	2.70% 1
Move in with existing family (elsewhere)	0.00% 0
Other	0.00% 0
Please explain your response:	40.54% 15
Total Respondents: 37	

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RESPONSES EXPLAINED:

- "Beautiful, don't plan to live beyond any place else."
- "That is where life is until unable to."
- "Like to stay as long as I can."
- "Don't want to leave."
- "Staying as long as possible."
- "Love the country – been there for 60 years."
- "Been on this farm for 30 years so I want to stay"
- "Remaining on the farm for now and then moving to congregate care setting."
- "As long as reasonably possible plan to stay in our home on the farm."

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3 GREATEST CONCERNS/OBSTACLES?

- Mobility – 13 responses
- Health – 10 responses
- Finances – 4 responses
- Snow removal – 3 responses
- Someone to help – 2 responses
- Housekeeper – 2 responses
- Internet – 2 responses
- Lawn care – 2 responses
- Don't know of any/ No concerns – 5 Responses
- Additional responses

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WHAT COULD BE DONE TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS?

- What things make these plans easier to achieve?
- If you received \$1000 to help lower cost for you to remain in your home, how would you spend it?

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IF YOU BECAME PHYSICALLY DEPENDENT ON OTHERS FOR CARE, WHERE WOULD YOU PREFER TO BE? (RANK 1-3)

	1	2	3	TOTAL	SCORE
farm home	91.67% 33	2.78% 1	5.56% 2	36	2.86
relatives' home	0.00% 0	78.79% 26	21.21% 7	33	1.79
nursing home/assisted living	8.82% 3	20.59% 7	70.59% 24	34	1.38

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HOW DO YOU CURRENTLY RECEIVE INFORMATION AS A FARMER IN THE COUNTY?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Local newspaper	60.00% 21
Internet	54.29% 19
Word of mouth	42.86% 15
Television	40.00% 14
Radio	37.14% 13
Community non-profit organization	20.00% 7
Church (fair community)	37.14% 13
Magazine	37.14% 13
Other	17.14% 6
Please list specific source for any box checked above:	57.14% 20
Total Respondents: 35	

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HOW DO YOU CURRENTLY RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES AVAILABLE AS AN ADULT OVER 60 IN THE COUNTY?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Local newspaper	35.30% 13
Internet	21.21% 8
Word of mouth	35.30% 13
Television	18.18% 6
Radio	21.21% 7
Community non-profit organization	18.18% 6
Church (faith community)	30.30% 10
Magazine	24.24% 8
Other	18.18% 6
Please list specific source for any box checked above:	Responses 54.55% 19
Total Respondents: 33	

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HOW DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION?

- Newspaper – 12 responses
- Internet – 11 responses
- Mail – 8 responses
- Radio – 8 responses
- Magazines – 7 responses
- Word of Mouth – 6 responses
- TV – 4 responses
- Email – 3 responses
- Family/Friends – 3 responses
- Church – 2 responses
- Facebook – 2 responses
- Phone/Text – 2 responses
- Doctor – 1 response
- "Something I can read"
- "Any way it comes in, source doesn't matter"

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DOES YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE RELIABLE INTERNET CONNECTION?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.00%	27
No	25.00%	9
TOTAL		36

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DO YOU USE THE INTERNET ON A REGULAR BASIS?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	66.67%	24
No	33.33%	12
TOTAL		36

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WHAT IS YOUR COMFORT LEVEL WITH RECEIVING INFORMATION?

- No interest – 6 responses
- Low interest – 3 responses
- Medium interest – 2 responses
- Completely Comfortable – 11 responses
- Don't have internet/working on getting it – 2 responses
- "Comfortable – but not going to spend an hour or more on the computer"
- "Information ok – not willing to commit to meeting"
- "No zoom"

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SHARE ABOUT AGING ON THE FARM

- "Difficult to keep up farming technology. Property taxes rising. How am I going to get everything done every Spring? Time gets compressed because of farming demands. Time management. Sons not enough time, enough money."
- "Driving. Think ahead. Updated house when necessary. Handicapped accessible bathroom. Eliminate trip hazards. One story - stops - ramp. If husband did everything who should I call?"
- "Biggest issues: Copper in lines, so only satellite internet available – this has always been a problem. Better call coverage low-cost internet."
- "Farmers different mindset. Lifestyle, independence, calling. If you live in town, it's just another day. Open, still do a lot of things on farm. Not family farm. "I'm not married to the farm. I'm not letting anyone else down by selling the farm. It's land. Legacy."
- "Living in the country and farming is a good life. But, getting too big is asking for more headaches and problems than what it is worth. Now, it is easy to be a small farmer than at an older age. Able at this age to do the work necessary to run the farm."
- "Anybody has to keep active. Pride in work, love for land, love for being in the country. Positive person. Safety is a major issue."
- "Economically insure government. Too much stimulus/ too low interest."
- "Limited access."
- "Most people are too stubborn to move from farm. Farm is fine once immobile. Then "tipping point."

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SHARE ABOUT AGING ON THE FARM (CONTINUED)

- "If I had no heirs, I would seek someone who is committed to farming. Someone who is in the position, needs help to farm. Would need help to be established. FSA County Ag agency. Beginning farm program. Something to help people in that position to beginning farmers. This is not happening now. "3rd generation off the farm, that still owns the land, is the scary one." Never put sweat into it."
- "All of a sudden, it just surprises you. You don't think it's going to happen the next day. Limitation becomes obvious. Things we don't do anymore because of physical limitations. Lack of socialization with COVID/aging. Kids keep you connected. Farming keeps you connected. People stopped by. Miss seeing other people. Like to go somewhere. We can go outside and do things on the farm. Family running farm it's nice to see what happened. 9-year-old grandson. That is why people want to stay on the farm."
- "Rather stay in house I am used to. Bedroom/bathroom 1st floor."
- "No retirement benefits. Built things when young. Cannot put money aside for retirement."
- "The best way to age is on the farm."
- "Born and raised in county, it is where I want to grow old. Especially with family that also live on the farm."

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NEXT STEPS

- Seek Partners = Identify Stage 2 Funding
- Refine and Remove Identified Barriers to Accessing Existing Services
- Improve Mechanisms for Communication and Connection in Rural Communities
- Develop and Expand Rural Faith-based and Multi-sectorial Non-profit Partnerships
- Expand Partnerships/Replicate Survey in Additional Minnesota Counties
- Improve Strategies to Address Needs for Healthy Aging and Rural Caregiver Support in Agricultural Communities

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QUESTIONS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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THANK YOU

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