



Season 6 Episode 1—Managing Stress in the Agricultural Industry

January 27, 2026

Announcer

The Alabama Crops Report Podcast, your trusted information source for Alabama agriculture.

Josh Lee

Hello, everybody, and welcome to the Alabama Crops Report podcast. We don't have our usual group here today. We've got a little bit of fill-ins, including myself. So, I'm Josh Lee, the Extension cotton specialist. And I've got a good group of us. Today we've got, Dr. Chandler Gruner.

Chandler Gruener

So. Yeah, I'm Chandler Gruner, I'm the Extension soil health specialist. And then we have our guest today.

Kali Gilbert

Kali Gilbert. I am an Extension agent, and I cover the area of health and wellness.

Josh Lee

Awesome. Well, thank you, Kali, for being here. We do appreciate it. We're kind of going to switch gears a little bit. And, from our normal podcast and topics, I know here we're talking about, you know, seed fertilizer and yields are usually the name of the game. And I'm going to refrain from talking a lot about cotton today.

Josh Lee

You know, this isn't the highlight of it, but I think I'm going to sneak it in somehow, you know, in this, in this podcast here. But I think one of the biggest things that I've seen and I, I deal with it myself, is how do we deal with stress and how do we effectively manage our stress?

Josh Lee

You know, as a grower and even as as your Extension specialist, times can be really hard. And it's really good to know, you know, what resources are there. How can I manage stress myself? And, you know, what are the best ways that I can mitigate, you know, something from happening. So, I think it's a really good idea.

Josh Lee

You know, it ain't just a good idea. It's something that we need to do. So, we're going to take a few, you know, take some time and talk about some topics, some, resources and all that that are available to you, myself and the growers here in the state of Alabama. So just to kick it off, you know, one of my things was like relaxation.

Josh Lee

And, you know, a lot of times, myself included, I'm like, I don't really relax. That's not my, you know, that's not my thing or whatever. But you know, Chandler, I'm going to start with you and then we're going to circle back and I'll answer this question myself, you know, how do you relax and take a break from daily stressors, like what's something that you're good you're going to go to.

Chandler Gruener

So, like relax and stress is like that's kind of changed over time. So, I think what many of us have has changed. And you know, maybe when we were younger, kind of one thing. And then as you kind of progressed, as you get older, you kind of find different things, especially as if you have a family and you start to have kids and wife and all that stuff starts happening like myself.

Chandler Gruener

It's like it changes kind of how you relax and where you kind of go and what you kind of do. And so maybe at one point in time it would have been going for a run, spending some time motorcycle riding or whatever. But that's not always going to work nowadays with, you know, the family dynamic going on. I don't have the ability to step away fully.

Chandler Gruener

And so, I have to find different ways and unique ways, you know, maybe it's listening to a podcast, maybe it's sitting there watching like a 20-minute episode of a TV. Just quietly relax. Maybe it's reading a book or something for 20, 30 minutes. And so, there's kind of some of that different things like that. So, it's kind of altered over time with me.

Chandler Gruener

And so, I can't really say there's been one item that has worked. And so, some of the things I've used in the past, I still work, you know, fishing or whatever could work. But, you know, that isn't always practical. Like I said, with the situation.

Josh Lee

Sure. Thank you. Chandler okay, Kali, what's your what's your go to method?

Kali Gilbert

Well, I think some of the biggest issues that I see with you know, people finding that thing to help them relax is allowing themselves to have that relaxation. Sometimes people call it hobbies, sometimes people call it, you know, just something fun that they enjoy doing. And sometimes being able to take that step back and realize that we can still have those hobbies and those things that we enjoy is incredibly difficult for some people.

Kali Gilbert

I know, like my spouse really struggles with that a lot. You know, he's always like, I've got to go work. I got to go do this. So, I think really sitting down and honing in to something that you enjoy doing, whether that be like, for me, it's reading for my husband, it's hunting. You know, those types of things, being able to identify something you love to do.

Josh Lee

Sure. No thank you, Kali, I you know, I'm going to I'm going to piggyback off of that with your husband dealing with daily stress, going out to the woods. I'm a hunter myself. I'm not. I'm not the biggest hunter. And there's a bunch of people much, much, much better than me. But I do enjoy getting out in the woods.

Josh Lee

So a very, very nice break even dealing with daily stress, you know, man, I especially when I was finishing up school, there were times where I just, I didn't I didn't want to work. I didn't want to do it. I was like, man, I but I've got to get this done. And one of the biggest things I did was just sort of walk away from it from a good like hour, even taking a walk, thinking about something else.

Josh Lee

I usually had a I had a handful of podcast I'll listen to as well, along with some, some music or whatever. And I just put that on and go for a walk, go for a little walk. And, it really comes back. When I come back, I'm refreshed and I'm pretty sharp and that problem I've been fighting on for an hour, I can now solve in like ten minutes.

Josh Lee

Yeah. So. And, you know, I don't want to believe it because I'm stubborn and I want it to work immediately, but, No, it's a very, very helpful tool.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah. Just removing yourself and stepping away for that deep breath. Or maybe go have a cup of coffee if it's early enough in the morning for you to still enjoy a cup of coffee. I think taking a break is incredibly beneficial, even if it is just for an hour or so.

Josh Lee

Sure, sure. And you know, when we when we go into that, you know, we talk about, you know, relaxing and, you know, where do we go to socialize and I think socialize. And you know, Chandler, you made a great point. You know, that changes with time. Mine's going to be a little different than yours because you know, you're a family man.

Josh Lee

You've got everything going. How is I you know, I'm a little different. But I think for a good, you know, socializing part, that's a really good part of stress management is talking to people. You know, you don't want to isolate yourself. And I know I've done that, too, with a bunch of work that comes in. I'm like, all right, I can't talk to anybody.

Josh Lee

I, I get bad and I'll put my phone. I'll put my phone completely away from me, when I've got a lot of stuff to do. And I know that's not the most ideal thing, but man, I get major productive. But overall, you know, when we're trying to, you know, relax and socialize, you've got to get in, you know, with your family, your friends and, you know, different places.

Josh Lee

A favorite restaurant or somewhere. It's definitely a comforting place, you know, especially if you, you know, it's almost like the reward at the end. And, you know, you really look forward to it with your friends, family, whoever you're getting with. So, I definitely think that is a good thing. Chandler how about yourself, man?

Chandler Gruener

Yeah, like a place to like, socialize, like favorite restaurant. That's kind of a good one, you know, especially people that work in that community. Maybe it's like a local coffee shop or breakfast joint that's like open for breakfast and lunch. That's like a good place to hang out, have good conversations. I've always enjoyed stopping by them places when I'm out traveling about the state and talking with people kind of gets me refocused, and I can see that they can refocus a little bit and they can hear kind of some different things that are going on.

Chandler Gruener

And, you know, when you start realizing that everyone's kind of talking about the same things or feeling the same pressures or stresses and stuff, it's kind of like, you know, that you feel a little bit of relief knowing that there's others kind of going through the same thing or similar things to you, or having some situation that's kind of similar kind of helps you relax because you're like, oh, I'm not alone in this.

Chandler Gruener

There's other people that are dealing with it too.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah, humans are, you know, inherently social beings, whether we want to admit that or not. You know, you may be as introverted as they come, but you still got to talk to somebody somewhere, you know, like you mentioned, you know, breakfast joints, coffee shops, you know, religious organizations or, you know, different types of, you know, groups like, you know, farmers federations, those types of, you know, things you gather together and, you know, socialize with people that are like minded, even if you're just talking about you know, the weather that day, it's you're talking, you're getting out there, you're seeing people, and it really stimulates our mind and gives us that really good, you know, community

Kali Gilbert

feeling that we so long for, even though, again, sometimes we don't want to admit to that.

Josh Lee

Yeah.

Chandler Gruener

Yeah. What the Extension events that we've been having like a lot of times before and after. And we always see the producers, they kind of hang around, start talking to a lot of farmers and stuff or talking and they kind of get that conversation. You know, you see that kind of building up and, you know, some of that connection building.

Chandler Gruener

So maybe they haven't seen each other for a little while because harvest season or it's planting season. So, they're having a little bit tough time to have that conversation. But they sit down because there's like, oh, there's this Extension event going on in the county. So, they sign up together because like, oh, I know you're going and I'll go too.

Chandler Gruener

And so we'll all get together. And so, they'll kind of socialize a little bit and learn something. So, it's kind of another cool place. We've seen people get together.

Josh Lee

Yeah, I 100% agree with that. Chandler I always enjoy the interactions before and after you know, our Extension meetings and stuff. It's a really good time to you know, obviously we're going to talk. We're going to talk. You know cotton with me. We're going to talk cotton and we're going to talk that. But we talk about a lot of other things too.

Josh Lee

A lot of these folks I haven't seen in months, I know some, you know, and a lot of them I went to graduate school with. So, it's good just to catch up, see what's happening, you know, see what's around the place. So, I, I do think it's a very good opportunity. I think it's one of the more vital pieces of an Extension meeting that we have.

Josh Lee

And it's not on the agenda, but it's kind of an understood thing that you're going to be there and you're going to be there and talk.

Kali Gilbert
Yeah.

Josh Lee

So, for sure. And you know, we already Kali, you kind of alluded to this as well. And this is a really good point. You know we talk about you know, turning to somebody or you know, something for advice. You mentioned, you know, you get together with like-minded people. And I think that was that was a really, really good statement because, you know, when I, when I'm trying to figure something out that, you know, stressing me out or I can't, I just can't figure it out.

Josh Lee

It's something new. Most of the time I can't talk to my folks about this. They, they're like, Josh, we don't know. We know what you do, but we're not in your same realm. And, I've got some really good buddies from grad school and stuff, and they're always there, and I always give them a call, and that's who I really turn to for advice.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah, we, you know, typically gravitate towards like-minded individuals. Anyways. So having someone that understands the things that you're going through and may have even been through that situation themselves could be a really good like mentor or guide or just that shoulder to kind of, you know, or that ear to listen, the shoulder to lean on the ear to listen.

Kali Gilbert

So, yeah, awesome.

Josh Lee

So, when we, when we get to thinking about, you know, as Chandler and I, I've traveled around the state as specialists, we've been able to meet a bunch of different folks. And it's always it's that's to me, that's part of the job. It is. No, it ain't. It is part of the job. But it's a fun part of the job to me.

Josh Lee

I enjoy it. But one of the, you know, one of the things we, you know, I've sort of picked up on is, you know, figuring out the stress management of our growers, you know, and we're there to support our growers. And I want to make sure that they have all the resources and all the capabilities, you know, to be 100% successful on their farm.

Josh Lee

You know, just thinking about, you know, looking at some signs and stuff, stressors and stuff that are, you know, weighing on the growers minds. I just like to go around and just mention, you know, some signs that we you may have may or may or may not have picked up on. Probably myself, I may have not picked up on probably need to.

Josh Lee

That's why we've got you here just to learn this stuff. But I'll, I'll start this conversation off. So, I'm going to speak on my behalf. And just from how I've been, how I've been raised, guys usually don't want to talk about their issues. They're going to carry their burden, and they're going to say, I got this.

Josh Lee

And I say that too. I say, I've got this and I'm hardheaded, and I'll go and move on. But it gets to a point sometimes especially, you know, farming is hard and farming is a gamble. I know we have all this technology and we have everything, but, you know, some catastrophic event like a hurricane or just some simple mishap can take that crop you've worked on away.

Josh Lee

And it amazes me. That's just one of the things that farming amazes me at. And that's why I enjoy so much researching it and just learning about it. But definitely something that weighs on your mind. It weighs on your mind at night. It weighs on your mind. If you're on vacation, that kind of stuff. So, you know, some of the things that I, I see, you know, as a, as a specialist and again, I'm an outside specialist looking in, you know, grow growers ask and they do they ask a bunch of questions, which I want them to ask a bunch of questions.

Josh Lee

Yeah, but I think they're asking production style questions and not more of like, you know, are there resources that I can help me or, you know, what do you think? And I'm there to provide my, you know, expertise the best way I can. Yeah. So.

Chandler Gruener

And so, yeah, when you're talking about, like, the resources and stuff. So like, Kali, do you know, like, certain resources that maybe growers could reach out to, like maybe a, let's say, like at a national level, like, is there what is the best way? And then we'll kind of start a national kind of focus on maybe more of a state and then kind of local resources is kind of the way I think about going through this here.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah. So, I will say that there is the 988 crisis line, and a lot of people look at that crisis line as that is, you know, kind of and all be all this is the end of the road kind of thing. And I've got to call this number, but it's actually confidential. And you can call and talk to them even if you're not to that point.

Kali Gilbert

So like say you've just had a really bad couple of weeks and you just want someone to listen to you or you just kind of vent. You don't want to put it on anyone else. In your family, in your household. The 90 day crisis line, is a really great resource. They recently shortened the number. It used to be A one hundred number, and you had to remember that.

Kali Gilbert

But they shortened it to nine, eight eight so that we can all remember that. So it's very simple. It's similar to 911 but it's 988. So that's one of them. One of the other ones is the Farm Aid Hotline. So that's one 800 Farm Aid. So, 1-800-327-6243. And that is kind of more geared towards farming and production, individuals.

Kali Gilbert

So they are very knowledgeable in what may be going on. And particularly if there is like a hurricane or something that does come through and really impacts your crops or any of the other things that you may have going on on your operation. So that is another good resource for you to reach out to locally. The Alabama Department of Public Health does have a mental health unit.

Kali Gilbert

So that mental health, those mental health workers are available statewide as well as we have obviously Extension. We can help direct you to those resources. Are we counselors know. But, you know, a lot of times Extension agents are some of the only people these farmers really see, especially if they are very reclusive individuals. So being able to have that knowledge and direct them and notice those signs and symptoms is a really great first step to take.

Kali Gilbert

As you know, that really local level.

Chandler Gruener

So yeah, those sound like great resources. I know I've heard about the 988. I hadn't actually heard about some of the other ones. So that's kind of good to know that there's some other ones out there. I figured there was, but I wasn't really sure in the space where it is. But you keep mentioning the signs and symptoms.

Chandler Gruener

So like, maybe I'm a producer and I'm like, you know, facing something like we're talking about like hurricanes come in or something.

Josh Lee

New pests.

Chandler Gruener

New pests.

Josh Lee

a lot of market uncertainty. There's a list.

Chandler Gruener

Yeah. There's a lot of fun things that always come in throughout the year. And so what are something like maybe, you know, I'm kind of like, oh, I'm in fine, I'm in fine. But am I really find like, what are some

of these signs that maybe we don't think about as a sign, but that is creeping in on us like we don't realize it?

Chandler Gruener

Yeah.

Kali Gilbert

And that's really hard with farming, because a lot of the signs and symptoms that come along with that or some that we associate with, oh, it's been a late night and I've been working really late or I'm just not hungry. I'm just too hot. You know, some of the symptoms include, you know, not sleeping, withdrawing from your community, being quick to anger with your family, lack of sleep are some as well.

Kali Gilbert

So those are some of those early symptoms, especially if it's persistent and it doesn't go away. If it's something like I had a late night, I'm gonna be tired for a few days that will eventually go away. But if it's to the point that you're losing sleep consistently over time or you're missing meals, losing weight, you know your body's missing out on that vital nutrition that it needs that can really have that snowball effect on your health, as well as your mental health.

Chandler Gruener

So, yeah, it sounds like your body kind of tells you a lot of things that maybe we don't always listen to or answer to, kind of in a way.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah. And I feel like a lot of times people go to the you gotta pick yourself up by the bootstraps and get over it kind of thing. But, I always tell my husband, this is that it's just trying to relate it to a farming thing is if the tractor has a weird clunk on it, you're not going to ignore it, because eventually, if you ignore that clunk, then maybe the tractor is going to break down and you're not going to be able to make harvest, and it's going to be a big snowball effect of things that, you know, is not necessarily what you're wanting.

Kali Gilbert

Your body's the same way. If you're getting those symptoms and you're getting those indications that something is wrong, don't ignore it because it can become a bigger issue. It's easier to address it head on when we first realize it, and it's okay to accept help. There's no shame in that.

Chandler Gruener

Yes, it sounds like we shouldn't just put it off, be like, oh, I'll get through the holiday season. I'll get through harvest. I'll get through the holiday season. Then I'll, you know, next spring, it's like, I'll deal with it. Then it's like. But then also now you're getting ready for planting. It's just going to be a cycle.

Chandler Gruener

It's just going to feed itself. It's, you know, it's better to sit down and start sorting out now why it's a little issue. Maybe it's just simple oil change and change a little. Yeah. Few items on the tractor to get it going down the road. Instead of it being a whole new motor or a whole new tractor.

Josh Lee

Yeah, yeah, I think that's a really great analogy, Kali, you said with the tractor I was thinking about when I was sitting here, I was thinking about a check engine light and how I ignore it on my car. But, you know, that's definitely something that we need to keep in mind. You know, if you've got that mental check engine light on, there's something, something's up.

Josh Lee

And, you know, you know, we're here, that we're here to help. And I want to make sure that we're 100% successful on the farm, of course, but it starts with you. If we don't have you, that's, you know, that's 100% successful. You know, you've got to set everything up for success. It starts with you. You're the most important, valuable asset to the farm.

Kali Gilbert

It doesn't continue on without you. So yes. You here, you know your family. I need you here. You're valuable. And I don't want anyone to ever feel like they're not valuable.

Josh Lee

No. So with that, you know, what are some avenues and stuff that growers can receive information and find information. You know, if I don't really I don't want my, you know, I don't want my neighbor knowing or anything like that. You know, I want to keep it to myself and I don't want I don't want my wife to know about it because she's going to worry even more than she does already.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah. So 988 is confidential. So, if you do want to talk to someone specifically, yes, you are able to reach out to that number. You don't have to give them any of your information. Nobody's going to know as well as the USDA has a lot of like, resources, not necessarily someone to talk to, but resources, handouts, pamphlets, those types of things where you can go online and look up those, bits of information as well as we did write a quick article, about farming and mental health back in May during Mental Health Awareness Month.

Kali Gilbert

So, Extension does have a few of those resources. There are some, probably you know, county Extension directors and Extension agents as well that I know took a course called QPR. So, question, persuade and refer. So, they are great resources. And they are certified in first aid QPR. So, they're able to help you locate those resources.

Kali Gilbert

If you're not tech savvy or if you happen to forget that, as I said, the USDA site and you need someone to remind you because we all tend to be forgetful sometimes. So, there are members out there, out in the world and have those good resources for us. So yeah.

Josh Lee

So basically, you know, from a from my aspect, it's like I can pick up the phone, my Extension agent and they can get in contact with somebody and use what, how it sounds so that, that I like an easy avenue and that kind of stuff. So that's one of the things that I think about as well.

Kali Gilbert

You work and I think you know, Extension agents really, truly care about the people. I'm obviously to work in Extension. I feel like you have to have a heart for the people, and especially when y'all develop those deep relationships with your producers, going on those farm visits, doing those programs, spending all that time together afterwards, talking. So, you know, I know that there are a lot of Extension agents out there that would have absolutely no problem with being able to help you get to somewhere with someone that can help you, even if they're not that one that can help.

Kali Gilbert

They can help you find someone.

Josh Lee

Sure. Kali, I agree with that. You know our agents are here for you on the farm, here for you. Not just not just putting the seed in the ground and again, your specialist are here too. I mean, we're all this is all a collective effort. It's not a one. It's not a one-man band. We're playing a bunch of different instruments, so.

Chandler Gruener

Yeah. So, like, that's what I kind of you kind of notice you kind of pick up on is there's a lot of ways to, like, great resources out there available to you. You can talk to some different people. And so, you know, your Extension agent, someone you're probably familiar with, you know, coming out on your farm, maybe looking at your cotton or soybeans or something.

Chandler Gruener

So there, you know, good communication source. And then you can always go in and talk to, you know, restaurants to your friends or whatever. It's your local breakfast joint or your co-op or whatever, you know, resource you have available. But then when you start thinking about like the online resource, that's another good point is like, maybe you're more of a reclusive person.

Chandler Gruener

You want to sit down and just kind of study the materials online and you want to read about. And so that's kind of good to know that you can talk about it. Yeah. And so, I also I think the 988 also has a texting line. Kali on it. Yeah, correct me on that. But that might be another good resource.

Chandler Gruener

Like maybe you're like I don't know if I want to call or talk on the phone. I'd rather just sit there and text and type. And so yeah.

Kali Gilbert

You definitely can call or text that line. I think that that's a really convenient, especially like, say you don't want your spouse to know, it is a way that you can kind of talk through those things still in your home, still in somewhere that you're comfortable. But also remain confidential as much as you want to be.

Chandler Gruener

Yeah. Because maybe you're sitting in you know, downstairs and you're like, oh, I can text on my phone someone in the next room, they won't really know what's going on. They just think I'm looking at videos or whatever else they really know. So, it creates a anonymity. Even within a house that you can kind of stay. Yeah. Privatized.

Kali Gilbert

Absolutely.

Josh Lee

Sure. So you know and are there I know we just talked about a bunch of tools and assets, but I think with those tools and assets, you know, we're able to sort of manage and, you know, have a stress management, almost like a program tailored to them, to your specific person. Correct? Kali. Yeah. Okay. Very nice. So that would be, you know, a tailored to you.

Josh Lee

It's not the catchall approach. It's specific which makes you more it sets you up with the correct tools for success.

Kali Gilbert

Yes. Because everyone's different. Everyone's going to experience that stress differently. And everyone has different experiences. As much as, you know, you want to say, hey, I also went through something similar. It will never be the same thing that you went through. So, being able to talk to a person and allowing that person to help individualize their responses to you, it's not like an AI chat bar, it's actual individual.

Josh Lee

It's a real person.

Kali Gilbert

On the other side of that phone. And that is really beneficial because you're talking to someone real. They're helping you work through your individual problems. And yeah, they might have talked to someone about the same thing about 15 minutes ago. But again, you're different and you deserve different responses and you deserve being able to work through those in a way that is comfortable for you.

Josh Lee

It's awesome. Thank you, Kali. So, one of our final wrap ups here is and this is a hard question to answer here. So, I saved it for the last one you know. Yeah. How do we go about breaking the stigma of asking for help when it's needed?

Kali Gilbert

Yeah.

Josh Lee

Even if we don't want to recognize if it's needed.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah. It's hard because, I feel like that's been something in our, like, southern culture that has carried on for a really long time. You know, the man should be very stoic. Pull yourself up by the bootstraps. You know, let's not complain about this. And breaking the stigma is really about, you know, one allowing yourself to get past those thoughts that you've heard your whole life?

Kali Gilbert

Again, back to the tractor analogy. You know you're not going to be okay if we continue to ignore things, and if you want to continue to break those. I wouldn't necessarily say a generational curse, but if you want to break that stigma and move past that, you or that individual change and how we speak to others is also that individual change too, you know, making sure that we are kind to people, we don't brush them off.

Kali Gilbert

Oh, I saw, you know, Joe down the street and he has kind of been drawn himself away. And he's been real quick to anger. You know, maybe he just needs to be left alone. You know, we break that stigma by being there for other people and being there for our family members. I went to a couple of women in ag events where I have had a conversation about mental health and, you know, allowing those, you know, spouses or, girlfriends or daughters to be able to see those things.

Kali Gilbert

You know, sometimes it's easier to have that conversation with family members, you know, sometimes. So being able to, you know, just educate, allowing people to know what's a sign what's a symptom. Is it okay to talk about it is totally okay to talk about it. You know, we had to normalize it. And so that just comes with acceptance and comes with, you know, really a lot of positive self-talk.

Kali Gilbert

I know that that's not the most fantastic answer, but a lot of that positive self-talk can really help in the long run.

Josh Lee

Yeah. No, I think that's good. And one one thing I'd like to add on to Kali is, is you mentioned it earlier, is picking up the phone. I, I'm bad about not calling good buddies of mine from, you know, from years

past, but man, it it only takes a few seconds to just pick up the phone. And when I pick up the phone with these guys, I'm on.

Josh Lee

I'm on a call from almost over an hour. You know, we always I feel like we always call and talk when we're driving, you know, as Extension specialist growers. You know, anybody working in this room, you know, we drive a lot. So I think that's really good. Just get in the truck and pick up the phone. Especially if somebody you hadn't really heard from.

Josh Lee

In a little bit and you're sort of concerned about them. It's always good to just pick it up and just check in. Just just talk about talk about whatever or.

Kali Gilbert

Just a text, you know? Hey, I was thinking about you. You know, that one little text could really be a pivotal point in someone's mental health is being able to know that someone does care about them. So sometimes you may not have the opportunity to call you really busy, but you have that person on your mind and on your heart reaching out to them.

Kali Gilbert

Just to let them know that you care is really, really beneficial. Sure.

Chandler Gruener

Sure. Yeah. Because we've been talking about like signs that we can see in ourself, but that like we kind of mentioned a lot of the signs just now of like seen in other people of like, you know, the holding back and the kind of recluse in a way a little bit and kind of some of them different things and change in like what you mentioned about changing the habits, like noticing that in others.

Chandler Gruener

And that's a big thing is like we started noticing that happen in other people giving them a phone call saying, hey, like, I haven't seen you in a while, or you didn't come out to the Extension event last week and you, you normally out and about, it was like, just check and see if everything's okay. Making sure, you know you didn't have a flat tire.

Chandler Gruener

Some just, you know, start the conversation that way. Like it doesn't have to be oh, we didn't see you like everything okay. Yeah. Like, oh, do you have a flat tire? Do I need to. Do you need some help or something or tractor or have given you issues?

Josh Lee

Yeah. Chandler, I think that's a really good comment because one of my questions is like, how do I intervene without being too much? And I think that's a that's a really great way to just start the conversation and, you know, not, so abrupt and just blunt. You know, you think it's a, you know.

Kali Gilbert

You don't want to like, you know, make someone's hard stop. And worse. And so, you know, if so-and-so didn't show up to a meeting, don't be. Oh, is your mental health bad? Like, don't.

Josh Lee

You know.

Kali Gilbert

Don't lead with that because that scares people off. But say they are someone that was like, yeah, I just had a bad day or yeah, I just didn't feel good. Well, continue to check on them because eventually those signs can, you know, kind of add up and then they start to get more comfortable with you. Or if you hear comments like, yeah, I just really don't need to be here anymore.

Kali Gilbert

You know, when you hear comments like that, encourage them. Like, yeah, you're really important. We really enjoy having a part of this community, and I really like to be around you or you know, a lot of times people are not going to be really direct about, I'm going to do this or, you know, it'll be just passive comments like, oh, you know, there's just no point anymore or there's just no point in being here and nobody wants me around.

Kali Gilbert

A lot of times our interventions can be saying, hey, no, you're important. I need you here. Hey, how can I help you? How can, you know, be there for you? Because I want you to still be here 100%.

Josh Lee

Sure. So, I think with this, we're going to we're going to wrap everything up. Kali, do you have any final comments or anything for our listeners here on the Alabama Crops Report Podcast?

Kali Gilbert

Yeah, I just want, you know, all of the growers and anyone that listens to this to know that, you know, being in this position isn't a sign of weakness, and you don't have to pull yourself up by your bootstraps, being able to say you need help or even just text 988 or do a little research.

Kali Gilbert

That's strength. That is you continuing on. I know a lot of people really want their, you know, farms to continue on with their families for generations. That's how you create that generational wealth, that's how you're there for your family. You continue the farm, you continue that legacy. So, it's not weakness. It's a strength. So, I want everyone to kind of step back and really think about that as a strength within yourself, in your important and your valued and Extension is here for you.

Josh Lee

Very nice. Thank you. Kali, Chandler, you have anything else?

Chandler Gruener

I, I don't have any closing thoughts. I just like I think that's a great point. Like it's okay to ask for help. It's okay to reach out. It's not a thing like, you know, maybe it's a national level, maybe it's local level, maybe just contact and Extension, like every little thing can build together. And so, it's, you know, don't think you need to like, you know, rush out and go do a whole bunch of things at once, just, you know, start small, like talking to a friend.

Chandler Gruener

You know, if you're feeling this stress, just start small. I don't think, you know, be like, oh, that's too much work. It's too much work. It's not too much work. Just pick up the phone, you know, talk to a friend or go visit the local co-op. Talk to a friend there. Just start small. Just have that conversation. You know, maybe you'll realize that this is good, this is beneficial to me, and you'll start having more conversations.

Chandler Gruener

And that'll help break down that stigma and help, you know, increase your conversation. You'll feel more comfortable and you'll feel better about going through that. Progressing on.

Kali Gilbert

Yeah, there's only one you and you're valuable and we need you here.

Josh Lee

Right. So, with that thank you. Kali. Again, you know, the most valuable asset on the farm is you. So that's what we want to protect and make sure that it's working 100% for sure. With that, we're going to wrap up this episode of the Alabama Crops Report podcast. We thank you for tuning in and we look forward to listening again. Thank you.

Announcer

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