The WI Farm Center – Here When Farmers Need Us

Dan Bauer & Mark Schmitz

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)

WI Land+Water Webinar: March 9, 2023

DIVISION OF AG DEVELOPMENT

- Wisconsin Farm Center
- Marketing & Outreach
- International Agribusiness Center
- Economic Development

WISCONSIN FARM CENTER

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 7:45 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

1-800-942-2474 | FARMCENTER@WISCONSIN.GOV

FARMCENTER.WI.GOV

Since the mid-1980s, thousands of farm families have turned to the Wisconsin Farm Center, which provides services to farmers, often in cooperation with university, government or private sector resources. Services include:

- *Financial and business consultation*
- *Succession and transition planning*
- *Conflict, legal and financial mediation*
- *Herd-based diagnostics*
- *Veteran farmer assistance*
- *Farmer Wellness Program*

All services are free and confidential.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- **Financial & Business Consulting**
- **Succession & Transition Planning**
- **Conflict Mediation**
- **Herd-Based Diagnostics**
- **Veteran Farmer Assistance**
- **Farmer Wellness**

MEET THE FARM CENTER STAFF

Dan Bauer
Program Supervisor

Mike Lochner

Kevin Plante

Mark Schmitz

Karen Endres

HERE WHEN FARMERS NEED US!

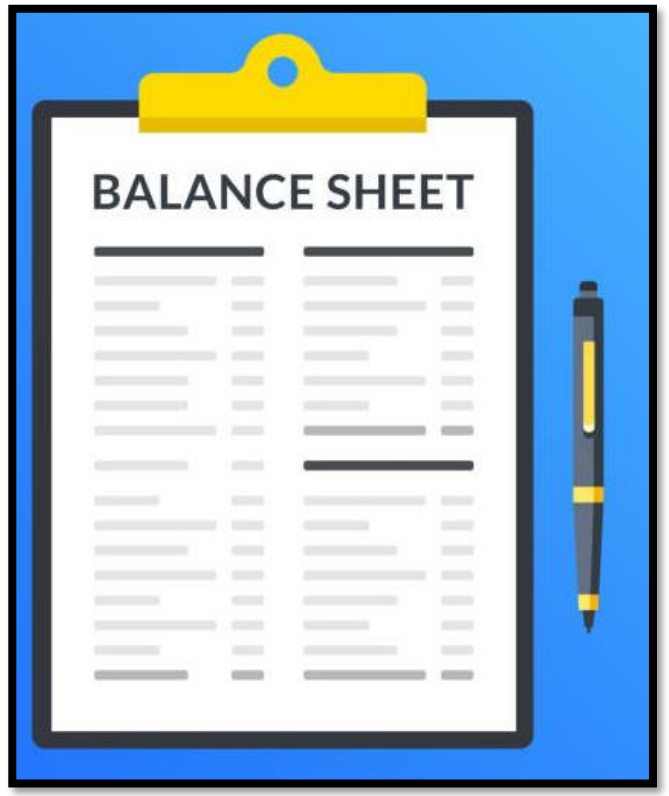
FARM CENTER STAFF MEET WITH YOU

STRENGTHS

- Broad mandate under state law
- Privacy protection under state law
- Skilled staff working with a team approach
- History of successful collaboration with other government and non-government organizations
- Objective third party with an independent view

FINANCIAL CONSULTING

- Review balance sheets
- Review cash flows
- Analyze profitability & viability
- Analyze debt structure

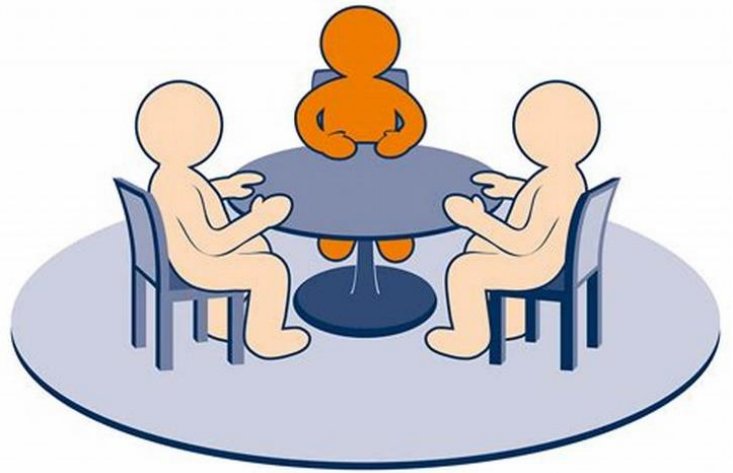


TRANSITION PLANNING

- Financial stability
- Operating agreements
- Tax implications
- Estate planning

FARM MEDIATION PROGRAM

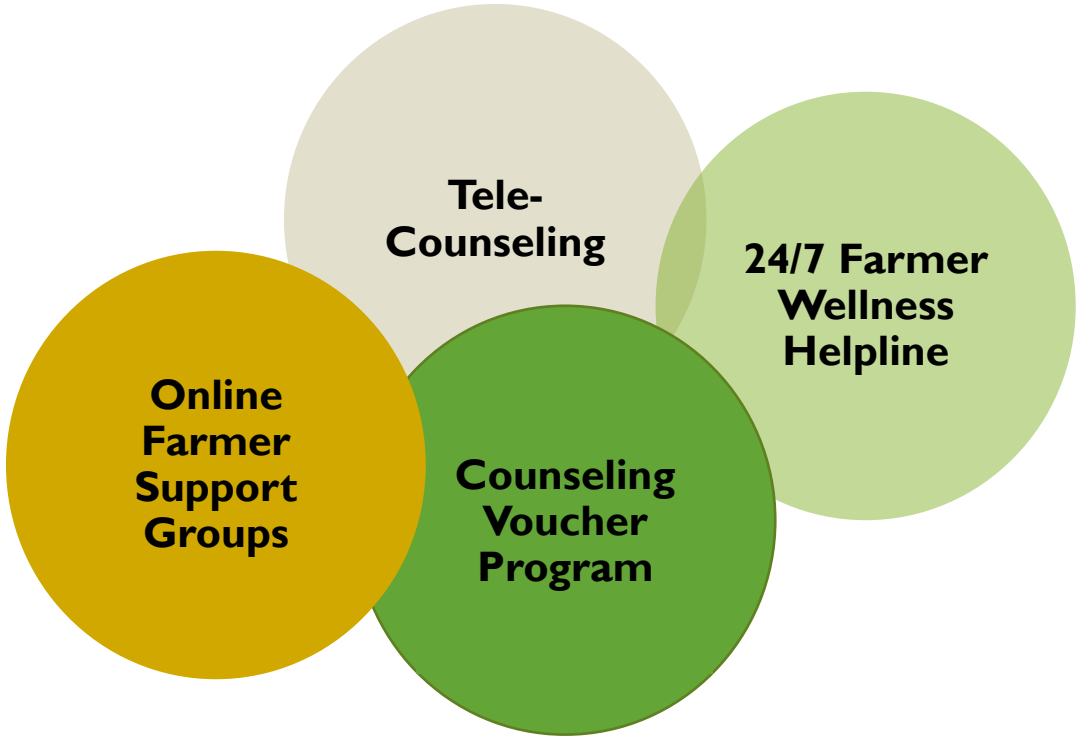
- Helps farmers confidentially resolve disputes at no cost to participants
- Utilizes certified volunteer mediators
- Participation is mandatory for USDA program disputes
- Participation is voluntary for other disputes



HERD-BASED DIAGNOSTICS

- Non-regulatory staff veterinarian focused on diagnosing unresolved production or disease concerns
- Can partner with local vets, nutritionists, etc.
- Available at no cost to dairy farmers
- On-farm analysis, comprehensive reports, recommendations

WI FARMER WELLNESS PROGRAM
MULTIPLE OPTIONS TO REDUCE BARRIERS & MEET NEEDS



24/7 FARMER WELLNESS HELPLINE

(888) 901-2558

- In-the-moment counseling
- Available 24/7/365
- Staffed by team of experienced stress counselors
- Free and confidential
- Unlimited calls

TELE-COUNSELING

By Request
(800) 942-2474 or (888) 901-2558

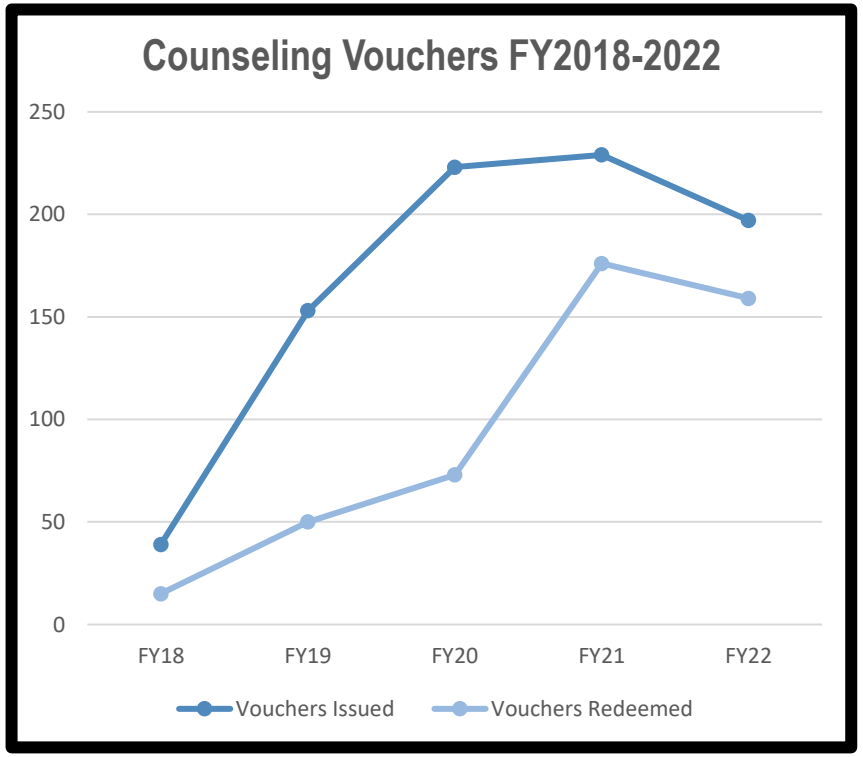
- Ongoing/scheduled counseling
- Available via phone or web video
- Licensed mental health professional familiar with rural WI and farming
- Free and confidential
- Unlimited sessions

Jes Beauchamp, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

COUNSELING VOUCHER PROGRAM

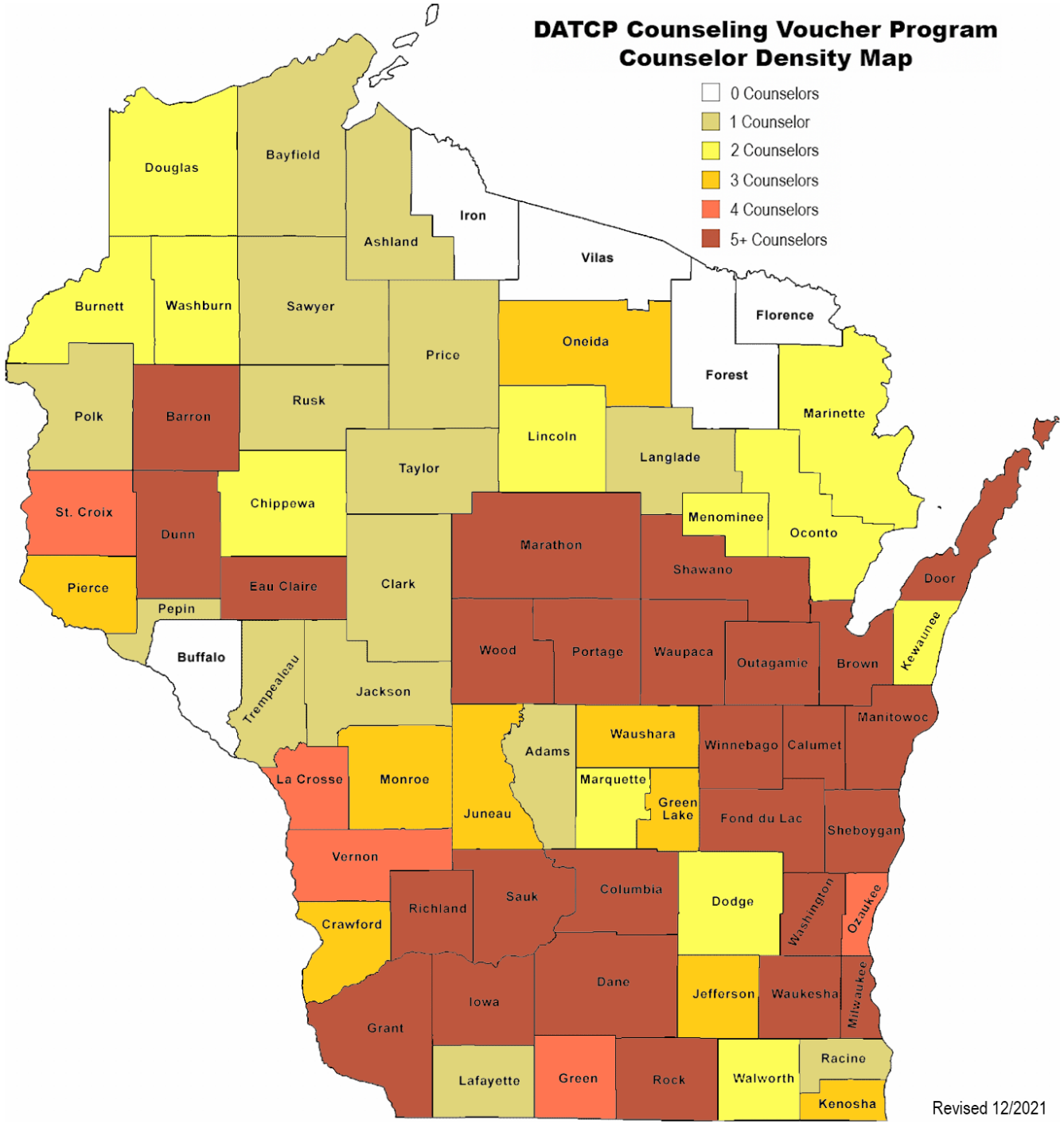
By Request
(800) 942-2474

- Ongoing/scheduled in-person counseling
- Covers cost of appointments
- FY22 data (July '21 – June '22)
  - 159 vouchers redeemed; 2nd all-time high
  - 81% estimated voucher redemption rate; all-time high



Counseling Voucher Provider Network

- +240 licensed counselors in provider network
- In 67 out of 72 counties



Revised 12/2021

ONLINE FARMER SUPPORT GROUPS

- Held online via Zoom
- Led by trained peer leaders with assistance from a licensed mental health professional
- 60 minutes per session
- Participants can choose to be anonymous on screen

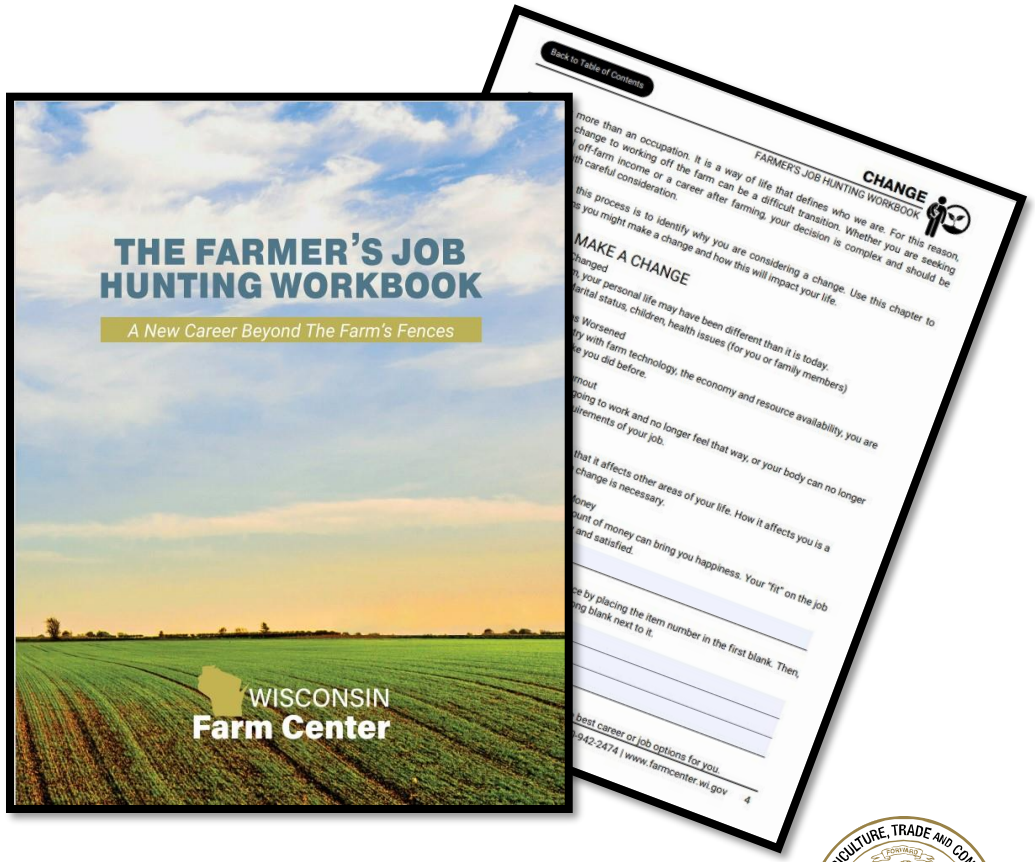
RURAL REALITIES PODCAST

- 20 episodes in catalog and growing
- Over 1,500 downloads to date
- Popular episodes include:
  - Breaking the Stigma on Mental Health
  - Use a Positive Mindset & Gratitude to Handle Daily Farm Stress
  - Discussing the "Undiscussabull"

***Available at https://farmcenter.wi.gov and on most popular podcast platforms**

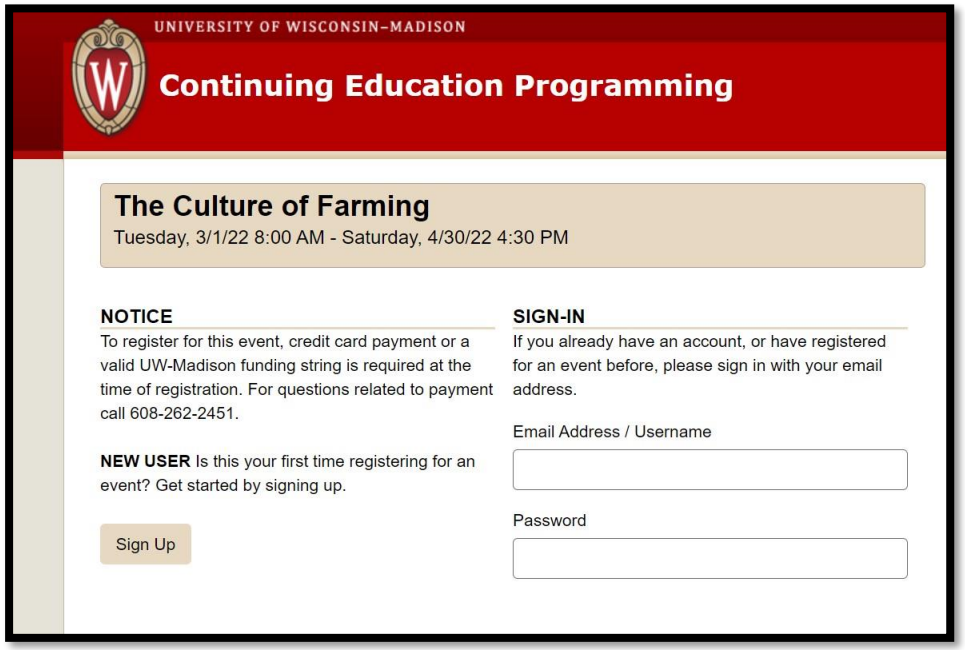
THE FARMER'S JOB HUNTING WORKBOOK

- Self-paced workbook for farmers
  - Setting goals
  - Dealing with the stress of change
  - Identifying transferable skills
  - Resume & cover letter writing
  - Interview skills



UNDERSTANDING FARM CULTURE
FREE ONLINE COURSE

- Five modules each with a 15 to 20-minute video followed by interactive questions
- Self-paced and can be viewed in any order
- Designed for industry professionals that work with farmers, but may not be from farms themselves
- Hosted at University of Wisconsin-Madison Continuing Education Website



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FARMER WELLNESS PROGRAM

Given the challenging nature of farming, the Wisconsin Farm Center is providing several resources to help farmers cope with stress. All services are free and confidential.

24/7 Wisconsin Farmer Wellness Helpline
1-888-901-2558

Around-the-clock support for farmers struggling with suicidal thoughts, depression, or anxiety.

Tele-Counseling
1-888-901-2558

Free, confidential counseling sessions by licensed mental health professionals. Available by phone or video.

Counseling Vouchers
1-800-942-2474

Vouchers to assist with the cost of in-person counseling services with participating mental health providers.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

THANK YOU!

Questions or Discussion?

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24/7 WI Farmer Wellness Helpline – (888) 901-2558

Dan Bauer & Mark Schmitz

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Dan Cell: (608) 400-9474; Mark Cell: (608) 590-5287

Wisconsin Farm Center – Division of Agricultural Development

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