**Supplementary File –Tables and Quotes**

**Table 1** –*Interviewee* characteristics, Grey County, ON (N = 16)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Farmer characteristic  | Number | Percent |
| Gender |
|  Male | 6  | 38 % |
|  Female  | 10 | 62 % |
| Age |
|  30-39 | 9 | 56 % |
|  40-54 | 2 | 13 % |
|  55-65 | 4 | 25 % |
|  65+ | 1 | 6 % |
| Employment status |
|  Farm manager | 13 | 81 % |
|  Farm spouse (not primary manager)  | 3 | 19 % |
| Children |
|  Yes | 13 | 81 % |
|  No  | 3 | 19 % |
| Marital status |
|  Married, no children | 2 | 12 % |
|  Married, children at home | 9 | 57 % |
|  Married, children not at home  | 3 | 19 % |
|  Divorced  | 1 | 6 % |
|  Widow/widower | 1 | 6 % |
| Number of years farming |
|  3 - <7 | 1 | 6 % |
|  7+ | 15 | 94 % |
| Career change to farming (due to job shift or marriage)  |  |  |
|  Yes | 5 | 31 % |
|  No | 11 | 69 % |
| Mental health challenge  |
|  Yes | 9 | 56 % |
|  No | 7 | 44 % |
| Working status |
|  Full time | 13 | 81% |
|  Part-time (off farm work) | 3 | 19 % |
| Ethnicity |
|  White | 14 | 88 % |
|  Other | 2 | 12 % |

**Table 2** – Characteristics of interviewees’ *farms*, Grey County, ON (N=16)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Farm characteristic | Number | Percent |
| Type of farm (>N as some multiple categories) |
|  Mixed (organic and conventional)  | 1 | 6 % |
|  Ecological (organic but not certified) | 11 | 61 % |
|  Certified organic  | 2 | 11 % |
|  Ecological - Organic community supported agriculture  | 2 | 11 % |
|  Cash cropping (both conventional & organic) | 2 | 11 % |
| Products (>N as most multiple products) |
|  Cattle | 8 | 25 % |
|  Hay | 4 | 13 % |
|  Chickens/poultry  | 4 | 13 % |
|  Vegetables | 4 | 13 % |
|  Dairy cows | 2 | 6 % |
|  Lamb | 2 | 6 % |
|  Pork | 2 | 6 % |
|  Other animal (eggs, sheep, wool) | 3 | 9 % |
|  Other horticultural (cut flowers, fruit, hops) | 3 | 9 % |
| Number of acres  |
|  <80 | 3 | 19 % |
|  80 - <100 | 11 | 69 % |
|  100-400 | 2 | 12 % |

**Additional quotes**

Around climate change, there may be a tipping point:

*The changing climate, there is a point where it gets exasperating and that is very challenging.* Charlotte, 30-39

*[The fact that] the next generation wants to know about their food makes me feel good.* Sophie, 30-39

Farmers also described being overworked, with no end in the risk and uncertainty in sight:

*The uncertainty and risk of running your own farm is just beyond the conception of anyone who works for a company and it is just going to get worse...I have had one day off since July 5th, other than that I have been working 8-12 hours a day.…Working in snow storms on tractors, on slopes on ice with half ton bales of hay. I have got nothing to show for it…[laughs]. I am surviving that is all I can say. It is just not an easy thing to solve.* Paul, 30-39

Some farmers described moving from another career into organic farming:

*We wanted to get away from the rat race and do something that had a concrete meaning to it that I can understand. It is a choice based on changes we have seen in farming to farm organically.* Sally,55-65

*Oh, for sure, the size and price of equipment is a real problem for people who are cash cropping. I don't do that so it doesn't affect me.* Mary, 65+

*“From my little niche no, but it is hard for me to comment on that because I am pretty small- scale and un-industrialized. I am a little bit blissfully oblivious to those changes.”* Charlotte, 30-39

*We don't have to have the really old school 100-acre presence farms, but certainly 500-1000 acres a family, or a set of siblings working together and many multiples of that, rather than large farms with thousands of acres to me, it is the better scenario, the more resilient scenario in a lot of ways, and the more pleasant scenario for everybody living in the countryside.”* Emily, 30-39

*If I won the lottery tomorrow, I would probably buy another farm to see what I could do with it...[laughs].* Richard, 55-65

“*We have these lives and we deal with loss and grief a lot. [Approximately,] 99.9% of farmers will have a really bad day when they lose an animal. Mentally, emotionally, it really sucks. That part is so hard.”* Sophie, 30-39

With respect to health services:

*I don't see a great deal of strength in the current medical system. If I go to my doctor, it would be...for her to remove my sutures. For my general health, I try to take care of that myself.”* Mark, 40-54

*I tried to reach out to medical services and there was not that support in my area at all. I did start telling people because I had another loss. The support I did garner was private support.* Sophie, 30-39

*If I required something, I certainly could do it and I try to take care of my body as much as possible and will spend money going to osteopaths and massage therapists to help my body. If my mind was getting screwed up and I needed to go see a therapist, I would do that as well.* Mark, 40-54

*I dealt with [my mental health issues] a lot by myself and alone.* Sophie, 30-39

Reluctance to use health services may also be due to embarrassment.

*Go to the emergency department and ask to see the crisis team. It is sort of embarrassing…* Margaret, 40-54

*I don't feel like I love or trust my GP... If I could deal with something on my own, I wouldn't go to talk to her about anything. If I was having a mental health issue, I would NOT go to her…[laughs].* Jenny, 30-39

A minority of farmers found the services to be adequate and accessible:

*We have had a good repertoire with our [medical] services that way.* Emily, 30-39

*My chiropractor and my registered massage therapist are the main people that keep me productive and out of pain during the … growing season.* Paul, 30-39

*When you work for yourself, you don't have access to insurance or benefits or unemployment insurance or work security…The government tells you, you are the bad guy. Farming doesn't offer you benefits. You don't have that access...That, I think, would cause major mental health issues, just worrying… really wears you down.* Ela, 40-54

*Something is not working here because we can't even afford a massage.* Sally, 55-65

Rural community observations:

*I think when most people think of the rural community, they think of the oldest rural community, which is strong. I can see it, but I am not part of it. Everybody knows everybody, and there are things that happen, but that is not my reality.* Charlotte, 30-39

*That is crazy! I just told you that all we do is work, but now I am telling you that all we do is volunteer. So, for instance, my husband sits on the board and is in charge or is working with a team to produce regulations and rules for industry.* Sophie, 30-39

*I would guess that in the conventional farming community there is a little bit less of [discussions around mental health] because the community is older and male dominated, and it is a group that doesn't really discuss their feelings.*  Emily, 30-39

*I can think of friends who had trouble with stress or anxiety levels. It was through the community that they dealt with it.* Emily, 30-39

Issues with government and representation:

*If we don't advocate for it, we don't get to speak up. If you don't talk to your politicians or vote, then how do you get to have an opinion?* Sophie, 30-39