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# NEWS & INFORMATION

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**Extension offers one-to-one services for financially distressed farmers**

ST. PAUL, Minn. (3/22/2017)—University of Minnesota Extension today announced it will begin offering one-to-one financial counseling to farmers in serious financial stress.

“We know that due to a variety of factors, including on-going low prices, some farmers find themselves facing difficult circumstances,” said Bev Durgan, Extension dean. “With our new program, Extension offers distressed farmers help in understanding their financial situation and exploring options to keep their farms functioning as a viable enterprise.”

To set up a confidential appointment with an Extension farm financial analyst, farmers can call the Farm Information Line at 1-800-232-9077.

The Extension program is expected to run for two years and will be modeled after similar services offered in states including Kansas and Iowa. It will augment services currently available in Minnesota, including the [Farmer-Lender Mediation program](http://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/farmer-lender-mediation/), which is overseen by Extension, and the state Department of Agriculture’s [Minnesota Farm Advocates](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/about/commissionersoffice/farmadvocates.aspx) assistance.

Financial analysts include retired agricultural business professionals from Extension and other organizations. The program is set up to provide analysts at geographically diverse locations in Minnesota. They’ve undergone training to update their capabilities and will work closely with current Extension colleagues.

“Compared to the 1980s, the magnitude of the financial stress on Minnesota farms is not as widespread. That’s good news, but it may also keep the many farmers in difficult circumstances from seeking the kind of help that they need,” said Extension agricultural economist Kevin Klair, who leads Extension’s [Agricultural Business Management](http://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/business/) program. “That’s why we’re working with a variety of agriculture interests in Minnesota, including the banking industry, to reach out and let farmers know we can help them explore their options.”

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