



Stress is made apparent in a variety of ways as a person responds physically, mentally or emotionally to existing pressures or concerns. Each person is affected differently, and becoming familiar with common ways in which stress affects a person is helpful. This material will help you understand and assess where you are in the farm/ranch stress zone.

How do you know you are feeling stressed? List examples of “feeling stressed” in each of the following categories.

Physical

(Example: Having low energy; etc.)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Mental

(Example: Having difficulty concentrating; etc.)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Emotional

(Example: Feeling hopeless; etc.)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Social

(Example: Withdrawing from social activities; etc.)

1) _____

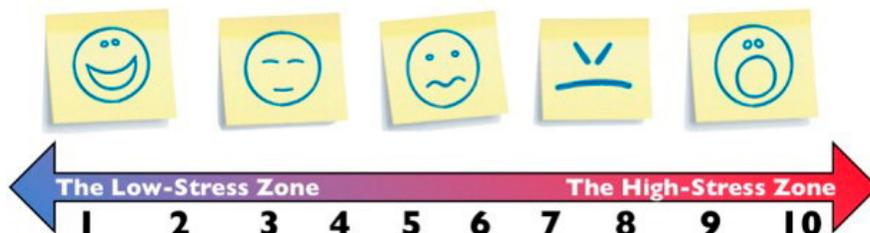
2) _____

3) _____

Rural Stress

Your Personal Stress Zone

Privately assess where you might be in the “Stress Zone” on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = low stress and 10 = high stress). This may vary at work, at home or on a given day, so assess where you are “in general” rather than at specific times.



Common Farming/Ranching Pressures

Some unique pressures can occur in farming/ranching or rural areas that may result in feeling stressed. Identifying key sources of rural stress can be helpful in figuring out how to approach and manage such stresses. List any that you feel might be of importance to you.

Farm Financial Stresses

(Example: Dealing with low commodity prices, poor yield outlook, etc.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- _____
- _____

Family Financial Stresses

(Example: Unavailability or limited access to health insurance, large upcoming expenses, etc.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- _____
- _____

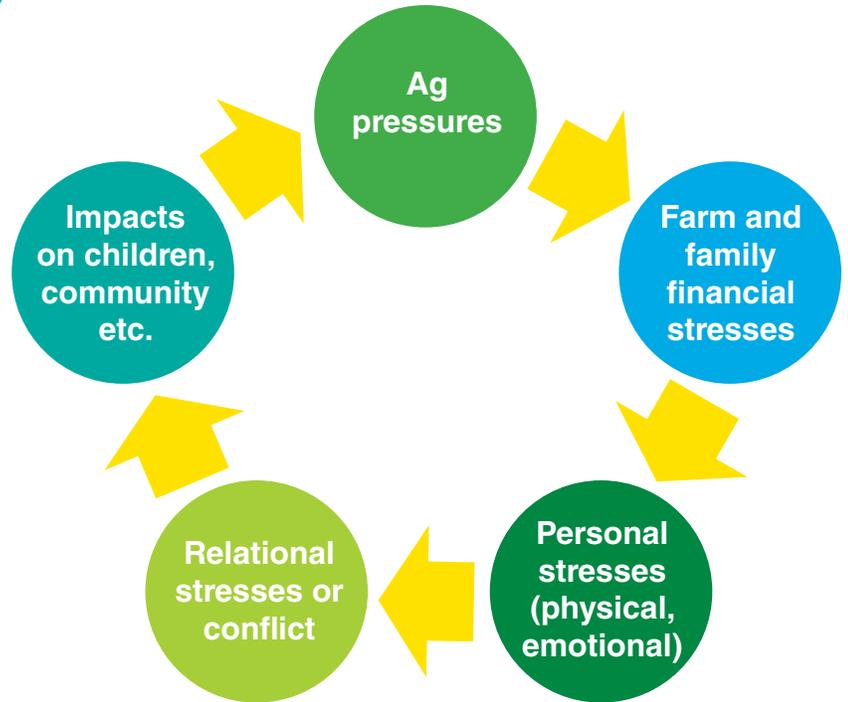
Individual or Relationship Stresses

(Example: Difficulty in communicating with spouse/partner, changing family dynamics, etc.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- _____
- _____

Rural Stress and Individual/Family Wellness

This cyclical model indicates how stress often develops in agricultural/rural contexts, such as farming and ranching, and then impacts farming operations, individuals, families and communities. This information can be helpful to understanding the cycles of stress.



- **Rural stress** can have a challenging effect on individuals and families due to the **agricultural pressures** that interact with each other.
- Individuals and families who work in agriculture are tightly linked to the **agricultural system** (top circle), and pressures in the agricultural system then lead toward stresses on the farm financial situation and/or the family financial situation (right circle).
- **Economic stresses** occurring in the farm financial setting and family financial setting (right circle) can raise challenges and stress levels for individuals, leading to heightened levels of personal stress that have physical, emotional and mental impacts (bottom right circle).
- Individuals experiencing increased **personal stresses**, such as anxiety, depression or physical fatigue (bottom right circle), may find themselves having greater difficulties or conflict in their family or business relationships (bottom left circle).
- Stresses or conflict experienced in **relationships with others** (bottom left circle) may generate further stresses or unhealthy outcomes, such as relationship difficulties, parenting difficulties, frustration or stress for children or less involvement in the community (left circle).
- A healthy response to stresses occurring due to challenges in agriculture will incorporate all of the elements in this system. In other words, focusing on farm financial pressures but neglecting relational stresses or conflict with a spouse or employees is not sufficient. Take steps to find and use coping strategies and resources that are useful in each area.

Understanding Depression and Accessing Resources

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings usually don't last long and pass within a few hours or maybe a couple of days. The situation is different when someone struggles with depression.

When people are experiencing depression, they feel down or discouraged for a longer period of time and cannot just shake off the feelings. They may have trouble sleeping, difficulties with appetite, inability to concentrate or feel tired all the time.

Knowing the signs of depression can help you understand when you, or others around you, may need help from a family member, friend or community professional. Please consider the questions in the brief assessment tool for depression on page 4 to understand what to watch for and how you might help yourself or others.

To take this brief screening online and get further feedback, click on "Depression Test" on the Mental Health America website at <https://screening.mentalhealthamerica.net/screening-tools>.

How Are You Feeling?

Below is a list of the ways you may have felt or behaved recently. Think about the past two weeks and answer **how often** you have felt this way for each item. There are no right or wrong answers, only what applies to you.

| | Not at all or less than 1 day | 2-5 days | More than half the days (6+ days) | Nearly every day for 2 weeks |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Having little interest or pleasure in doing things, usual activities | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2) Feeling down, depressed or hopeless | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3) Having trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4) Feeling tired or having little energy (could not “get going”) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5) Having a poor appetite or overeating | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6) Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure, or have let yourself or your family down | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7) Having trouble concentrating on things, such as watching TV or focusing on important things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8) Moving or speaking so slowly others could have noticed, or the opposite, being fidgety and restless | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9) Having thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10) If you checked 1-3 on any items, how difficult have these issues made life for you in your work, at home or with other people? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Total Score | | | | |

Scoring and Assessment – The possible score is from 0 to 27. The score is the sum of the first nine items. The last item is to help you assess how much your recent feelings and actions are affecting your health. If the score is 5 to 11, you may be at risk or showing symptoms for depression. If the total score is 12 or more, you may be experiencing depression. People with such a score should consult with a doctor, qualified health professional or counselor for further health assessment.

Selected Resources List – Managing Farm and Ranch Stress

This is a list of selected resources that may be useful for finding further information and support in the process of working in agriculture and related fields, managing stress and accessing resources for support:

- **Call a state helpline** – Most states have a toll-free, 24-hour helpline for health and human services information and referral. In North Dakota, the number to call is 2-1-1.
- **Refer to a local health-care provider or local mental health professional** – If you or someone you know needs help, connect with a local professional, such as a clergy member, medical professional, law enforcement, school counselor or social worker. Explore the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ MyHealthfinder website to learn more: <https://healthfinder.gov/>.
- **Visit the NDSU Farm Stress website for further information** – NDSU Extension provides a website with information on managing farm/ranch stress at www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmranchstress.
- **Use the Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** – SAMHSA has an online confidential system for locating support or treatment resources in your area. Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or visit <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>.
- **Visit the Psychology Help Center, American Psychological Association** – The APA has an online resource center that provides information on daily physical and emotional well-being. Available at www.apa.org/helpcenter/.
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (available 24/7)** – Call or text 9-8-8 or chat live at <https://988lifeline.org/>.

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