



Effective Wellness Strategies for Farm Stress

Each of us copes with the stresses and challenges of life on a daily basis. We rely on different “tools” or strategies that we are familiar with from our toolbox of coping approaches. When it comes to farm stress, we need to find those tools that help us manage stress and make decisions for our health, our families and our future.

First, think about your strategies for using resources or coping with stresses that can be used and whether they are effective. In other words, what is the right “tool” to use from your current coping toolbox? Perhaps you need to learn a new wellness strategy or use a different tool in your stress management efforts. A listing of wellness tools for times of farm stress is in this publication. Use the following points to explore this topic:

- **Assess current strategies being used to manage stress.** Brainstorm and **list other possible options.**
- Explore whether what you are using as a coping strategy in relation to a specific need is working. Be open with yourself and/or others. What are you doing? **Does the approach you are using have a helpful effect or a harmful effect? Does it promote your wellness?**
- **Assess whether a change in coping strategy is needed.** What might need to change?
- **Focus on using wellness strategies that are most effective** and work for you and your circumstances.
- You may need to **learn new wellness strategies or adopt different ways of managing stress** that you have not used before. Practices such as mindfulness can help in managing stress. Changing the way you work and schedule time can also be examples. Being open to new coping or wellness practices is helpful.

Scenario –

The doctor diagnosed you with mild to moderate depression in the last month. How are you coping with this issue?

Effective Coping Strategies		
List Current Coping Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Example: Putting off needed equipment repairs due to fatigue, little interest)• (Example: Avoiding church due to feeling down)•• List Possible Coping Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Example: Get some knowledgeable help to do needed farm work with me – sibling)• (Example: Give pastor a chance to hear my current stresses, talk over how to keep hope active)••	What are you doing? Is it working? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Example: Current – making things feel worse)• (Example: Current – adds to feeling alone, difficulty of doing tasks)•••	Do you need to make a change? What kind? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Example: Need someone to help with motivation; attend to key farm needs)• (Example: Need a person or people to balance the load of concerns being felt; talk over how things feel)•••

Useful Tools for Your Wellness Toolbox in Times of Farm Stress

1

Exercise 20 minutes or more daily (walk, swim, ride a bike, etc.).
Physical activity enhances feeling good.

Physical

2

Get a medical checkup with a local health care provider.
Stress can cause or add to physical challenges.

3

Spend 10 minutes to plan your day and priorities.
A few minutes of planning reduces stress and helps you stay focused.

Mental

4

Take regular five- to 10-minute breaks in your day to relax and recharge.
Doing this multiple times a day renews your energy.

5

Write down three things that you are grateful for daily.
Conscious gratitude calms your mood.

Emotional/Spiritual

6

Share concerns with a counselor or other professional.
A listening ear helps lift your burdens.

7

Take 15 minutes each day for uninterrupted conversation with a spouse or family member.
A few minutes of planning reduces stress and helps you stay focused.

Personal/Relational

8

Get involved or stay connected with a friend or group of friends.
Doing this multiple times a day renews your energy.

9

Discuss the needs of the farm operation but do not let them occupy all other aspects of life.
Plan other daily work tasks to shift your focus.

Work/Professional

10

Seek constructive feedback on your farm operation and ways to grow or improve.
Others can share ideas or assist in new ways.

11

Create a family budget and seek to live within your means.
This helps give you a sense of financial control.

Financial/Practical

12

Select three healthy habits you will try to practice daily.
Start today!

My Wellness Commitment

Circle or list at least three wellness tools you can begin doing today and post this in your home, office or vehicle as a reminder.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

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For more information on this and other topics, see www.ndsu.edu/extension

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