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# Monthly Safety Blast

*Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education*

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## Stress Management

Farming and ranching can be stressful professions, and that stress can have a multidimensional effect on a person. There are numerous uncontrollable factors, such as unpredictable weather, unfortunate equipment breakdowns, time limitations, and economic markets that cause stress in the lives of farm families. Stress is a physical response to perceived life-threatening events. Each person responds differently to stress, but some common symptoms of chronic stress include changes in a person's sleep patterns, fluctuation in a person's weight, fatigue, restlessness, and physical health conditions such as headaches, ulcers, or high blood pressure. Besides the physical effects, stress can also hinder interpersonal relationships at work and home. Chronic and uncontrolled stress can be harmful to your health and well-being.

The following are some simple ways that a person can decrease stress:

- *Exercise:* Strive to exercise three times per week for a minimum of 30 minutes.
- *Caffeine:* Reduce or eliminate caffeine from your diet.
- *Humor:* Laughter might help to reduce your stress, so explore ways to add some laughter.
- *Talking:* A strong network of friends and family can help provide the necessary support.
- *Relaxation Techniques:* Simple relaxation techniques that can help you reduce tension.
- *Sleep:* Recommended amount each night is 7-9 hours.
- *Nutrition:* Make sure that you are eating balanced meals throughout the day.
- *Breaks:* Take some time away from the stressful situations.

### Getting Help:

There are times when things get too difficult, and you might need professional help. Professional help can include your family physician or health care provider, a mental health professional, or a support group.

Listed below are some signs that indicate that you should seek professional help:

- *Depression*
- *Changed sleeping patterns*
- *Abusive behavior*
- *Suicidal thoughts*
- *Hallucinations*
- *Consideration of changes in your marital status*
- *Inability to express positive feelings*
- *Excessive alcohol intake*
- *Feelings of guilt, isolation, panic, or being overwhelmed*



### Resources:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/live-healthy-live-well/healthy-minds/dealing-with-stress/education-series/>

*Monthly Blast written by SW Ag Center Outreach Education Coordinator, Nykole Kafka, MS, CEP*

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