

Farm/Ranch Stress Management Plan

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Farm/ranch families can reduce or eliminate stress if they plan ahead. With these nine steps, family members can tailor a plan to fit their situation.

Farm/ranch families experience some of the same stresses that non-farm/ranch families do, like rising food and energy costs. In addition, they face the stress of machinery breakdowns, unpredictable weather conditions, and the heavy pressures that accompany planting and harvesting. By meeting together to plan ahead, farm/ranch families can reduce or eliminate much of the stress they feel. This final leaflet in the series provides nine steps to create a farm/ranch stress management plan that will work for you.

1. The **specific stressful problem** we want to solve is (e.g., our short tempers during harvest):
2. The **roadblocks and barriers** to solving this problem are (e.g., not taking time to notice symptoms early and to think before yelling):
3. Some **early warning symptoms** of this stressful problem are (e.g., family arguments, Dad's neckaches, Mom withdrawing):
4. Some stress relief **methods** that work well for us are (e.g., neck rubs, talking about the pressures):
5. Some possible ways we could solve the problem identified in #1 are:
 - By controlling **events** (e.g., postponing daughter's elective surgery until after harvest):
 - By controlling our **attitudes** (e.g., the worst that would happen if we didn't get this field's hay baled by nightfall is that our hay would get wet — we've survived worse problems):
 - By controlling **responses** (e.g., instead of using our usual "you statements" to blame each other, we could use "I statements" to ask directly for what we want):
 - By using **resources** (e.g., asking a family member for a neck massage before falling asleep at night):
6. We are aware that we know ourselves better than anyone else. So if we were to write the **best prescription** available to cure the problem identified in #1, here's what we'd plan:
7. The **personal benefit** we'll get from using our plan is (e.g., we'll eliminate the distress of being short-tempered with each other during harvest):
8. The **price** we'll have to pay is (e.g., we'll have to remind one another to think before yelling and ask for what we want):
9. A way we'll make sure we get a **reward** for our new behavior is (e.g., when we notice fewer arguments, we'll point it out and cheer us on):

After you have put your plan into action for a week or two, you might meet together again to evaluate your progress and perhaps revise your plan or set up a new one to solve another farm/ranch stress problem.

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