



# Managing Stress and Pursuing Wellness – Recognizing Stress

Rebecca McFarland  
Frontier Extension District  
Family and Child Development

Falling net farm income, unpredictable weather, low commodity prices, trade disruptions and the high cost of healthcare can cause incredible stress on farmers and ranchers. Stress is the body's normal reaction to anything that disrupts normal life. Small amounts of stress can actually help us be productive and learn to manage stress better. However, many people learn to screen out unpleasant circumstances and related stresses. Attempts to avoid or screen out warning signs and your body's physical signals of stress and strain too long, can invite serious problems such as: hypertension, mental health issues, broken relationships, heart disease and declining health. It's important to recognize the early warning signals of stress in your body, your actions, your emotional life and relationships. Signs of stress may include:

## Physical Symptoms

- Head aching
- Back or neck muscles tense, aching
- Stomach upset or distressed
- Breathing short or labored
- Low energy
- Body fatigue, tiredness

## Behavior Symptoms

- Difficulties with sleep
- Inability to relax, concentrate
- Getting angrily easily
- Trouble making decisions
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs
- Difficulty being flexible

## Emotional Symptoms

- Irritable about little things
- Sense of frustration, anger
- Impatient, restless
- Feeling discouraged, hopeless
- Withdrawal, isolation
- Anxiety, panic feelings

## Relationship Symptoms

- Communication difficulties
- Conflict with family members
- Lack of satisfaction
- Verbal or physical outbreaks
- Strained interactions
- Avoiding others

“Feeling stressed” is different for each person. Are you familiar with how your body “feels” when you are stressed? Visit [The Farm/Ranch Stress Zone](#) to assess your stress zone or contact Rebecca at 785-229-3520 or [rmcfarla@ksu.edu](mailto:rmcfarla@ksu.edu) for more information.

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