

Beneficial facts for Farmers from

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THE EVOLVING FARM FAMILY

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Farming families feel their lifestyle offers something non-farm life can't match: the opportunity to work and play together. It's why they value their lifestyle so highly. But, the farm family has changed over the years.

In This Issue:

	Page
Farm Fire Prevention Tips	4
Thank You	5
First Aid "101"	5
Mailing List Update	7



Benefits and Liabilities of the Farm Family Lifestyle

In addition to being around animals, many families in one study mentioned specific aspects they like about their lifestyles. These include:

1. Independence.
2. Positive environment for raising a family.
3. Easy to blend work and family.
4. Privacy and open spaces.
5. Ability to teach children responsibility, strong work ethic, healthy goals and values through hands-on experiences.
6. Family works together. Everyone is involved.
7. Sharing of work and personal life is great source of strength for marriage and family.
8. Chance to interact with other generations.

There are also negatives when living as a farming family:

1. Crushing workload resulting in exhaustion and stress.
2. Less quality time with family.
3. Lack of time as a couple.
4. Little sleep during prime seasons.
5. Farming comes first.
6. Not always able to succeed even with hard work.

Role of Wives

There are generally two types of farm wives – helpers (cook, clean, do bookkeeping, give moral support), and partners (make decisions, do farm work). Studies show that most women are satisfied with working the farm with their husbands. But, with the decline in farm economy, many wives work off the farm, primarily working in clerical, education and health care. While there are benefits to working off-farm, such as more money and health insurance, there are

also negatives. Those may be the in-law's disapproval, separateness that develops between spouses and the lack of time to get things done. This "double-duty" can be stressful; working doesn't stop with the outside job. The wife continues to be responsible for household chores and child care, and many continue to do the bookkeeping. Overall, farm husbands seem generally supportive, but miss the togetherness they once had.

Couple Time

Carving out a time to spend as a couple or away from the farm is real challenge - wives have more kid time than husband time. Couples find it hard to take vacations due to lack of money for hired help and inability to trust others to do the job.

Tough times for farming can mean tough times for marriages. When money gets tight or when a couple is facing possible lifestyle changes, differences in how each spouse copes can spell conflict. One factor that can help a couple get through these times is good communication:

1. Give your full attention to you partner.
2. Be open and respectful of each other's opinions.
3. Pay attention to unspoken feelings.
4. Relate your feelings in a simple, direct way.
5. Don't blame or evaluate.

Children on the Farm

Many parents rely a lot on their children in operating the farm. Some young children even hold very responsible roles (milking, record keeping). One benefit is that the whole family works together, and the children learn responsibility. But there are also negatives. Some parents feel school, extracurricular activities and friends are more important to a child's development at this stage of their lives. Children may be given high expectations, which

are sometimes unrealistic. Also, adequate sleep and time for homework is needed for school, which they may not be getting due to chores. There is a need to evaluate the child's abilities and developmental stage before giving him or her farming responsibilities,

Intergenerational Issues

Farming is an occupation where a high percentage of owners transfer their business to someone in their family. The farm will go from one generation to next rather than to non-family members.

Due to strong lifestyle identification, older farmers find it difficult to retire from farming. This is especially true if they have limited outside interests. Therefore, many farms started as some kind of partnership or working agreement with a parent, in which the parent goes from full-time farmer to advisor. Because both generations usually live on the farm together, the parent/child roles are affected. There are differences in what and how decisions are made, in attitudes about time spent working, and in the way things are done. Some children have problems with parents who want to be actively involved in the farm, but who no longer are physically or mentally capable. Strategies to help in these situations include:

1. Outline responsibilities of all active farming partners.
2. Develop a plan for transition of farm responsibilities and ownership.
3. Cultivate interests that don't relate to farm work.

Stress and the Farm Family

Even when things appear to be going well, farm families face challenges that create financial and emotional stress. These include: price uncertainties of crops, unpaid bills, medical

insurance, credit loans and drought or flood. By and large, weather and financial accounted for stresses felt by majority of farmers. Research found that stresses differ between the genders: men tend to be more stressed by the farm operations, women by the family or interpersonal concerns, balancing work and family and chronic tiredness.

Help for Stress

In times of stress, whether it be financial or personal, farm families may need to turn to the community for understanding, information, counseling, and other support. Some families can draw upon their own internal resources to bounce back from most of the stresses and strains of life. Others cannot. When the stresses are more than ordinary, external assistance could help with how the stress is handled. A recent study showed that families needing help preferred getting it from extended family, friends and others in the community.

Ways to help families in need:

1. Provide families seeking support with the opportunity to talk.
2. Provide them with information as they move through decision making.
3. Identify families not seeking help but in need of support.

Some signs to identify such families needing help are:

1. Changes in routine: stopping attendance at houses of worship, community events.
 2. Increase in illness or accidents.
 3. Decline in personal, farm or home appearance.
 4. Changes in children's behavior: acting out, academic declines, school absences, showing signs of neglect or abuse.
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If any of these signs are evident, a tactful and caring approach can be made to the family as a whole, or to individuals. If help is needed beyond what the supporter can give, there are other resources: financial, legal, personal or family counseling.

Families are part of a community. Therefore, when any family is affected by financial, social, emotional and/or physical stresses, the community is affected. When the community is strong and able to support families through challenges and crises, then families stand a better chance of coming through those hard times. When communities are not able to respond to families in need, then the long-term survival of those communities is in question. Given the cyclic nature of farming, farm families need social and mental health support systems.

Many small to mid-size family farms are going out of business because of conflicts, finance or corporate farm takeovers. But, the farm family, moving from generation to generation, does exist.

References:

Iowa State University Extension
(www.extension.iastate.edu)
University of Minnesota Extension
Service (www.extension.umn.edu)
University of Illinois at Urbana-
Champaign (www.news.uiuc.edu)
Maryland Cooperative Extension
(www.agnr.umd.edu)
Wisconsin Week (www.news.wisc.edu)
www.geocities.com/cranberrybogs



By William B. Luckenbill, Senior Instructor
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Farm Fire Prevention Tips

Although farms do not fall within the inspection jurisdiction of Fire Officials and Fire departments in New Jersey, there is still a great concern for fire prevention and the safety of the farm family. There are many areas of concern on the farm, so we will start with some of the most common items and expand that knowledge at a later time.

The primary area of concern is the structure that the farmer and his family live in. We want to focus on several items as we do a self-inspection of the dwelling.

First, we will look at smoke detectors to determine that there is at least one operating detector on each level, and that they are less than ten years old. Research shows that thirty percent of detectors fail at ten years, and that increases to fifty percent after fifteen years.

Second, we want to look at all the heater and hot water heater flue connections and be sure they are in good condition (no rust through), and that they are sealed (gas tight) where they join the chimney. This is an important way to keep carbon monoxide out of the home.

Third, we want to look at all gas connections to appliances in the home. Farms usually use propane, which is heavier than air like gasoline, and would cause a serious fire hazard in confined spaces.

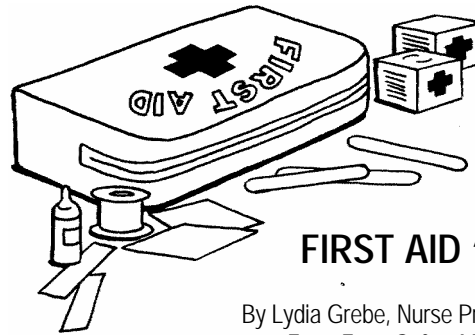
Fourth, we will look at the clothes dryer exhaust system to be sure it is not clogged and functioning correctly. A build up of lint can cause overheating of the appliance and result in a fire.

The last item we will look at in this installment is our use of extension cords, three way plugs, plug adapters and similar items that could fail and cause a fire. These cords should only be used on light appliances, such as lights and small radios that draw 15 amps or less. The cords should not go under rugs, through doorways or walls, nor should they be nailed to any surface as permanent wiring. They are *temporary, temporary, temporary*, and are not designed for daily use. New wiring, done by a qualified electrician or in accordance with the National Fire Code, NFPA 70, is the right way to do it. Wiring books and guides are available at bookstores and major hardware stores.

Well, we got a start on our self-inspection program, so be honest about what you find, correct it, and live safe.

Thank You . . .

To all of you who attended the Farm Safety Twilight Meeting. You made it a great success;
To the Farm Bureau Women's Committee and the Farm Bureau for sponsoring the Meeting;
A special thank you to Roger and Ruth Kumpel and their family for letting us hold the Meeting at their farm.



FIRST AID "101"

By Lydia Grebe, Nurse Practitioner
From Farm Safety Meeting

Lacerations, Cuts, and Abrasions

For minor cuts and abrasions, the goal of care is to prevent infection. The steps to achieving this are as follows:

- Immediately cleanse the wound and the surrounding skin with soap and warm water, wiping away from the wound, and follow this by rinsing with large amounts of clean water or sterile saline solution. (Sterile 0.9% saline solutions may be less painful than plain water.)
- Hold a sterile gauze pad over the wound until bleeding is controlled. Elevating the affected body part may help this process.
- Apply direct pressure with the palm of your hand. If bleeding continues, keep adding gauze pads – **DO NOT REMOVE THE FIRST PAD.**
- Bandage the sterile pads in place with rolled gauze, a belt or cloth tie.
- If the wound appears minor and only needs simple first-aid treatment, call your healthcare provider to determine if your tetanus booster needs to be updated. Usually, if you have had a booster within 5 years, another tetanus injection is not needed.
- Elevate the injured extremity for 24 hours to reduce swelling.
- Change dressing daily, or if it becomes wet or soiled.

A wound or laceration is considered to be a **medical emergency** if:

- Blood is spurting from the wound.
- Slow bleeding is continuing for more than 4 to 10 minutes.
- The wound is a deep puncture wound.
- The laceration is long or deep and may require stitches to close it. Stitches usually need to be done within the first 4 hours following the injury.
- The wound cannot be completely cleaned or a foreign object (glass, wood, metal shavings) is present that does not wash out.
- The wound has been contaminated with dirt/soil or manure.
- The wound is from a bite: animal or human. (Approximately 95% of cat bites become infected, whereas only 5% of dog bites become infected.)
- The cut or laceration is on the face or anywhere a noticeable scar would be undesirable.
- If you think that a nerve or tendon is cut, especially if the wound is on your hand, and there is a loss of sensation or motion below the wound.

DO NOT apply a tourniquet unless you must risk the loss of the limb in order to save the person's life.

Seek medical attention either at the nearest emergency room and/or call 911.

SPLINTERS

Wash your hands, and the skin around the splinter with soap and water.

Place a sewing needle and tweezers in boiling water for about 5 minutes or hold over an open flame to sterilize.

If the splinter is sticking out from the skin, gently pull it out with the tweezers at the same angle that it entered.

If the splinter is not deeply embedded below the skin and is clearly visible, gently loosen the skin around the splinter with the needle and then remove the splinter with the tweezers at the same angle that it entered. Be sure that you have removed the **ENTIRE** splinter.

After the splinter is removed, wash the area with soap and running water, then bandage.

If the splinter breaks off in the skin or is deeply lodged, call your healthcare provider about removing it and check on whether you need a tetanus booster.

Observe for any signs and symptoms of infection: redness, swelling, pus, and red streaks. Seek medical attention immediately if any of these symptoms occur.

BURNS

Heat, chemicals or electricity can cause burns. The goal of treatment is to prevent contamination, control pain and prevent shock.

NEVER APPLY BUTTER, MARGARINE, GREASE OR BAKING SODA TO BURNS.

BURNS THAT COVER MORE THAN 15% OF BODY SURFACE AREA ON AN ADULT, OR 10% BODY SURFACE AREA FOR A CHILD, OR BURNS ON THE FACE, HANDS, OR FEET REQUIRE PROMPT PROFESSIONAL ATTENTION.

- If the skin is not broken, immerse the burned area in clean, cool running water or apply a cool compress (can be made

from a clean towel soaked in cold water) to relieve pain. If there are broken blisters, use only cool running water.

- Place a clean bandage (preferably non-stick) over the burn and bandage loosely.
- Seek medical attention.

POISONING

Symptoms of poisoning vary according to the substance ingested; these may include unconsciousness, seizures, confusion, or illness.

Keep syrup of ipecac and activated charcoal in your first aid kit.

What the poisoning victims breath may reveal:

ODOR	POSSIBLE POISON
Alcohol-like	Alcohol
Bitter Almonds	Cyanide
Garlic -like	Phosphorus, Arsenic
Gasoline-like	Petroleum Products
Pear-like	Chloral Hydrate
Shoe Polish-like	Nitrobenzene
Stale Tobacco	Nicotine
Sweet	Acetone
Violets	Turpentine

Treatment for Poisoning

For treatment of poisoning, have the numbers of the local poison control center and hospital emergency department near all telephones.

DO NOT INDUCE VOMITTING UNLESS A PHYSICIAN OR POISON CONTROL CENTER INSTRUCTS YOU TO DO SO. Call 911.

Give the paramedics, physician or hospital personnel the container and any remaining contents. This is important because the type of poison will determine the treatment needed.

TICK REMOVAL

Use tweezers to firmly grasp the tick's head as close to the skin as possible. Pull gently but steadily.

After removing the tick, clean the bite with alcohol.

If you cannot remove the tick, see your healthcare provider.

NEVER use a lighted cigarette or match to remove a tick.

References:

American Medical Association (1993). Pocket Guide to Emergency First Aid, New York: Random House.

American Medical Association (2000). Nurse Practitioner's Clinical Companion, Springhouse, PA: Springhouse Corporation.

Hess, C.T. (2002). Wound Care 4th Edition, Springhouse, PA: Springhouse Corporation.



MAILING LIST UPDATE

Enclosed with this letter is our "Agricultural Mail List Reactivation Form." **Please take a few minutes to look over the form, fill it out, and mail it back to us.** That way you can keep on receiving our newsletters, crop updates, farm alerts, and meeting notices. Unfortunately, if we do not receive your update form, we will have to remove your name from our mailing list.