

Top tips on managing stress

1. Treat yourself as your farm's number one asset. Make your health and wellbeing a business priority.
2. Build rest and recovery into your daily and weekly work schedule. All top sports teams build in downtime as no one can go 110% all the time without a break.
3. Prioritise during busy times. What are the top two tasks you need to work on today? Once you're feeling back in charge your stress levels will go down.
4. Look after the basics. Eat well, get enough quality sleep, keep active and get 'farm fit' for busier periods.
5. Talk to friends and stay connected. Others have been there and everyone needs support. If you're in a relationship talk things through together.
6. Get off farm and do stuff you enjoy - fishing, walking, team sport, kids' sport, football, contributing at community events- whatever helps recharge you.
7. Think in ways that keep things in perspective and that help boost your mood.

“ Being mentally and physically exhausted, as I've discovered, isn't a lot of fun for me or the people around me – nor does it make good business sense. If we don't look after ourselves, we can't look after our farms or our families ”

Will Evans, Farmers Weekly

What is burnout?

Burnout is a way to describe feeling physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted. It is accompanied by feelings of ineffectiveness, lack of accomplishment, cynicism and detachment.

It's your body letting you know that it can no longer cope with the demands you are placing on it and that you need a break. It can sneak up on you like a slow leak in a tractor tyre. Health, relationships and family life can suffer. It can also make you more at risk of accident and injury.

“ I think farmers are classic at looking after their crops and their stock and machinery, but they just work themselves into the ground. Burnout is a real thing, so in order to be sustainable as a business you actually have to look after yourself ”

A Dairy Farmer

Find out what works for you then **lock it in.**

Whatever your concerns don't suffer in silence.

Call our free confidential helpline

0300 123 2825

shropshireruralsupport.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1126085



Shropshire Rural Support

FEELING STRESSED?

Here are some questions that can help you get through.

Am I getting enough sleep?

Am I talking to someone about what's on my mind?

Am I eating well and keeping physically active?

Am I having down-time to recharge?

Do I have a list of what is realistic to achieve each day?

Using those questions to make small changes can be a big difference.



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Handling ups and downs

Farming has its share of highs, lows and challenges particularly in farming businesses. Heavy workloads, combined with things outside a farmer's control such as weather and market prices, can tip the scales.

Research shows that stress and fatigue are also contributing factors to accident and injury on the farm.

The good news is that knowing the warning signs and acting on them helps to manage stress and prevent burnout.

"You need that strong commitment to keeping yourself well, because the farming environment can be very challenging **"**

An Arable Farmer



Signs of unhealthy stress - what to look out for

Your body

- Breathing problems
- Chest tightness
- Upset stomach e.g. nausea, diarrhoea, constipation
- Tension, aches and pains
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Feeling 'wired' - unable to relax
- Lower immunity, catching any little bug going around and taking longer to recover
- Reduced sex drive

Your mind

- Thinking feels pressured and thoughts are intrusive
- Difficulty making decisions
- Forgetfulness
- Poor concentration
- Poor problem solving
- Easily distracted
- Lack of self-worth

If you are concerned about yourself or someone else, talk to someone.

Contact your doctor, Shropshire Rural Support, the Farming Community Network or Samaritans

Your emotions

- Worrying excessively
- Feeling overwhelmed, stuck or trapped
- 'Short fuse' - bursts of anger often at small issues
- Tearfulness
- Feeling down
- Feeling lonely
- Loss of motivation and enjoyment
- Reduced self-confidence

Your actions and behaviour

- Sleep problems eg. can't get to sleep or wake up often, or sleeping too much and can't get out of bed
- Poor eating
- Withdrawing from people and activities
- Unhealthy alcohol, tobacco and caffeine use
- Becoming reactive rather than proactive
- Avoiding situations or issues e.g. not returning phone calls or opening invoices
- Delaying demanding tasks e.g. dosing sheep

Checklist developed by Sarah Donaldson, TEA Health and Wellbeing in conjunction with Farmstrong NZ