



DIBS

Dairy Issue Briefs



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Plummeting prices in the dairy industry are creating critical cash-flow and long-term survivability issues on Ohio's 3,328 dairy farms. These issues are also likely to be causing significant stress and strain among family members. OSU Extension's Dairy Working Group, a collaboration of OSU Extension Educators and Specialists discuss:

Observing Signs of Stress and Depression

It is no surprise that significantly reduced milk prices have caused a strain on every dairy farm. This strain has also likely caused additional stress among family members. Each individual reacts to stress differently and the more prolonged the stress event the more likely a person will become depressed and may have suicidal thoughts. Use this as a guide to detect problems and take corrective action. The entire document can be found at http://mtt.caes.colostate.edu/current_issues/depression

Signs of stress may include:

- Changes in routine
- Care of livestock declines
- Increased illness
- Increased farm accidents
- Appearance of farm declines
- Children exhibit signs of stress

Signs of chronic or prolonged stress can be divided into three categories – physical, emotional, and behavioral. Signs of each may include:

Physical

- Headaches
- Ulcers
- Sleep disturbances

Emotional

- Depression
- Anger
- Anxiety

Behavioral

- Irritability
- Withdrawal
- Acting-out

Prolonged stress can result in depression and suicide. Signs to watch for in each may include:

Depression

- Poor appearance
- Negative thoughts
- Physical problems
- Low self esteem

Suicidal Intent

- Anxiety or depression
- Alcohol/drug abuse
- Suicidal plan
- Cries for help



Getting Help:

- Listen and watch for signs and symptoms.
- Contact your local church or your local county health department to learn what agencies are available to help you.
- Share the contact information with the person or family in need.

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More DIBS are posted on-line at <http://dairy.osu.edu>.

Source: *Farm and Ranch Family Stress and Depression: A Checklist and Guide for Making Referrals*, Dr. Roger T. Williams, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Dr. Robert J. Fetsch, Colorado State University.

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