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## Be aware of holiday-induced stress

By John DuPuis

The holidays are almost upon us and the relatives are coming, money is tight and the last turbo man action figure has been sold out for weeks. The holidays can be a stressful time for everyone and can overload a person who is already dealing with a lot of stress. Here are some signs of high stress:

**A CHANGE IN ROUTINES.** People may stop attending church or other regular functions.

**INCREASE IN ILLNESS.** People may experience more upper respiratory illness, backaches or other chronic conditions.

**APPEARANCE OF FARMSTEAD DECLINES.** The farm family no longer takes pride in the way farm buildings or grounds appear.

## We're here if you need speakers

The Wisconsin Farm Center staff can help your conference attendees better understand farm financial planning, next-generation ownership transitions, herd health or on-farm energy issues. Farm Center staff can also explain mediation and arbitration services, services for minority farmers and much more.

The Wisconsin Farm Center does not charge for services. Call us, or

**CARE OF LIVESTOCK DECLINES.** Cattle may not be cared for in the usual way and show signs of neglect.

**INCREASE IN FARM ACCIDENTS:** The risk of accidents increases due to fatigue or loss of the ability to concentrate.

**CHILDREN MAY SHOW SIGNS OF STRESS.** Children may act out; show a decline of performance at school or be increasingly absent; they may also show signs of abuse or neglect.<sup>[1]</sup>

There are many things you can do to help to deal with stress. Try not to worry about things you have no way of controlling. Try to take at least a short time each day to do something you enjoy or find interesting. Taking time for yourself is a good way to stay grounded and regain control. Make a schedule of things you know you have to do and determine when you will do them. For example, If it is six a.m. then I do the morning milking. If it is a week before the end of month then I will pay these bills. You can also use this technique for positive reinforcement. If a family member starts to irritate me, then I will pause and think about how I care for them before reacting. Try to focus on the positive. Stress can often come from thinking something bad is going to happen. Take some time to write down some things you see as positive and when you feel stress coming on review the list.

Unfortunately stress is a part of everyday life. But by taking steps to recognize it and steps to alleviate it, you can lead a happier, more productive life. Happy Holidays!

[1] From Farm Family Stress: A Checklist by Roger Williams

## Federal tax update

The House and Senate voted to approve the tax extenders package containing some key provisions for farmers and ranchers. The bill now goes to President Obama for signature.

Section 179, which deals with expensing and bonus depreciation, is of particular interest to farmers. It allows a higher deduction level for certain capital expenditures, such as machinery and equipment. During 2013, farmers and ranchers were able to expense up to \$500,000 in capital investments, but

recommend a friend in need call us.



The Farm Center's John DuPuis speaking during a Farm Center volunteer training workshop.

### Encourage motivated ag professionals to apply to be Alice

Alice in Dairyland is one of the most widely recognized communications professionals in Wisconsin agriculture. Her job is to teach Wisconsin children and adults about the value, economic impact and future of the state's \$88 billion agricultural industry.

Those interested in applying for the job as Wisconsin's 68th Alice in Dairyland have until Monday, Jan. 5, to submit application materials to DATCP. To help those interested in applying for the job, DATCP has developed a short video called "Making Alice." Watch it at [youtube.com/widatcp](http://youtube.com/widatcp).

If you know a hard working spokesperson and writer, encourage her to apply.

the amount was lowered to \$25,000 this year. The bill would reset it back to \$500,000 and would allow 50 percent depreciation levels in the first year of machinery purchases.

Farmers should talk to their tax advisors to take advantage of tax planning with passage of this bill. As always, buy machinery your operation needs to be more successful, efficient, and profitable - not just to avoid taxes.

## Welcome, Angie Sullivan



**The Wisconsin Farm Center is happy to welcome Angie Sullivan as its newest team member. Angie is an agricultural program specialist and will work directly with Wisconsin farmers and farm families. She will focus on organic, grazing and specialty-crop operations. She started working at DATCP's Wisconsin Farm Center earlier this month.**

Her position is one of two new positions in the building that were developed to work as a team to support Wisconsin's grazing, organic and specialty-crop sectors and to help Wisconsin farmers and food businesses reach their potentials in these markets.

Angie most recently worked for 13 years at Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) first as a contractor for the MOSES conference, then as staff as an Organic Specialist. Prior to that, she owned and operated a three-acre vegetable and flower CSA and had a small livestock enterprise, which included dairy goats, sheep, poultry and honey bees. She also managed the St. Croix Falls Farmers Market.

Angie's counterpart, Theresa Feiner, will work as a member of DATCP's Wisconsin Agriculture and Food Center. Theresa

Learn more or find application materials [here](#).



67th Alice in Dairyland Zoey Brooks spoke with WGN Radio's Orion Samuelson this month about Wisconsin agriculture in his radio studio in Chicago.

will work directly with businesses along the agricultural supply chain, including retail manufacturers, processors, aggregators and distributors.

Together, Theresa and Angie will work to identify opportunities, address market-access barriers and connect farms and food businesses to resources.

To learn more, call Angie Sullivan at 608-224-5095.

## Use 30x20 grant to reach your dairy innovation goals



The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is now accepting applications for the next round of Dairy 30x20 grants. Farms looking to innovate could use the grant money to cover the costs involved with business planning, financial analysis, farm transition planning or farm transfers. Projects such as designing new milking parlors, robotic milking systems or waste-handling systems would qualify for the grant.

Applications are due to DATCP by Jan. 15, 2015. Application materials and more information are available at [http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Dairy Farming/Grow Wisconsin Dairy Grant](http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Dairy_Farming/Grow_Wisconsin_Dairy_Grant).

These grants are just one service of the Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20 Team. DATCP can help farmers connect with dairy resources year round. For more information, call toll-free at 855-WI DAIRY (855-943-2479) or email [GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov](mailto:GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov).