



Beginning Farmer Webinar

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This webinar is being offered as part of a Southern Extension Risk Management Education grant, titled “Reducing Human and Financial Risk for Beginning, Military Veteran, and Historically Underserved Farmers through Farm Stress, Wellness, and Safety Education”



SOUTHERN
EXTENSION
RISK MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION

VIRGINIA —————
Beginning Farmer & Rancher
COALITION PROGRAM ————

STRESS ON THE FARM:

GETTING THROUGH AND THRIVING

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What's So Good About a Farm?



Shared and individual
responsibility

Shared and individual
income

Clean(er) air

Community atmosphere

TOP HAZARDS

Machinery and equipment

Animals

Environmental

Internal



STRESS

Can't live without it



“Stressed” is “dessert” spelled backward

(so it can't all be bad!)



The three faces of stress

Distress

- pain or suffering affecting the body, a bodily part, or the mind
- a state of danger or desperate need
- great pain, anxiety, or sorrow; acute physical or mental suffering; affliction; trouble.

Eustress

- stress that is deemed healthful or giving one the feeling of fulfillment

De-stress

- to relax your body or mind
- to stop feeling the effects of stress

How can stress be good?

Stress is not always a bad thing

Stress is simply the body's response to changes that create taxing demands



EUSTRESS – Positive Stress	DISTRESS – Negative Stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivates, focuses energy• Is short-term• Perceived as within our coping abilities• Feels exciting• Improves performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Causes anxiety or concern• Can be short- or long-term• Perceived as outside of our coping abilities• Feels unpleasant• Decreases performance• Can lead to mental and physical problems

Prolonged Stress

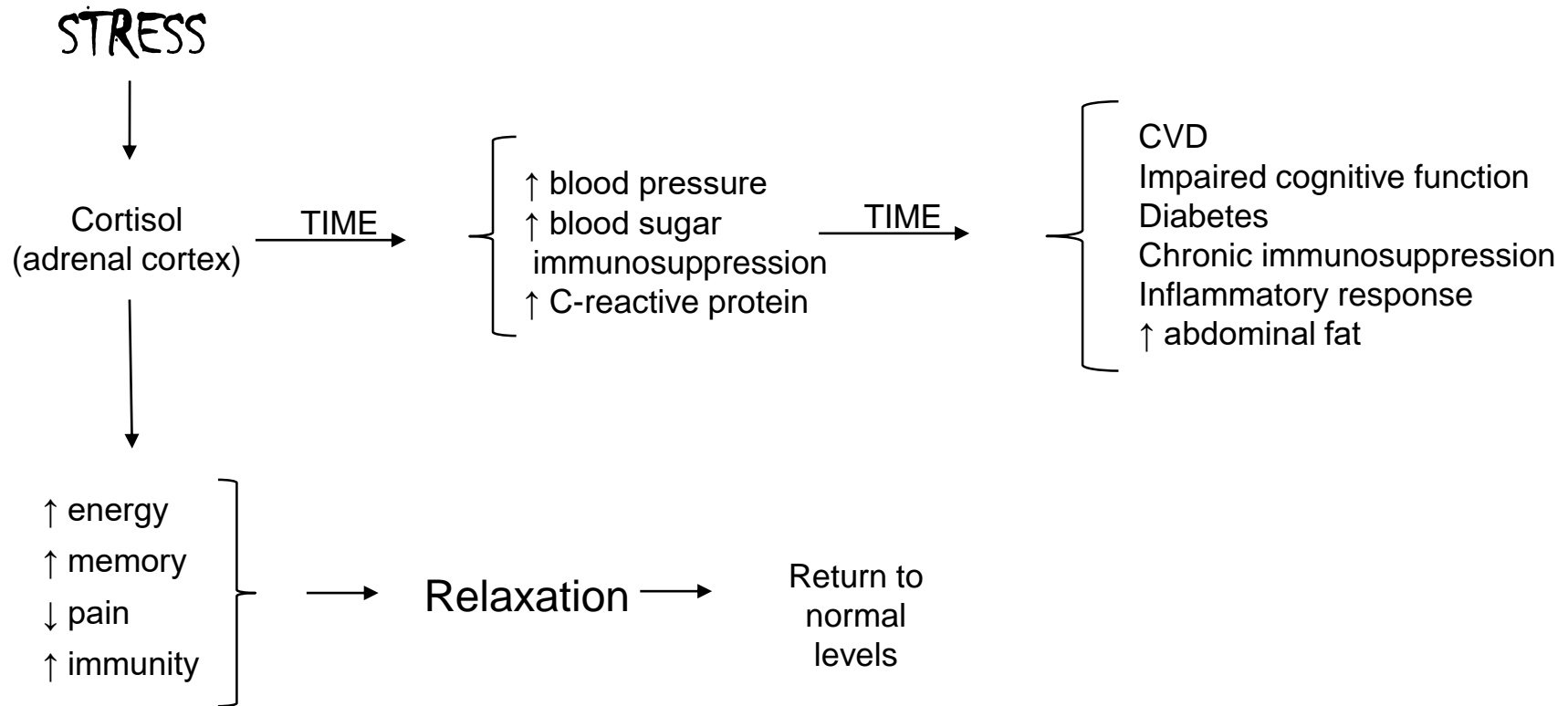


Stress causes the body to produce cortisol

Over time cortisol damages the interior of the blood vessels, creating the basis for hypertension.

It also deposits in the brain and may have a role in dementia and other neurological conditions

Bottom line: excessive cortisol secretion does more harm than good





Current stressors

7 STRAIGHT QUARTERS OF FINANCIAL
DOWNTURN

WEATHER THIS YEAR

WAL-MART – THE LATEST
TARIFFS AND TRADE WARS

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS



Suicide Risk

Farmers and agricultural workers have higher rates of suicide deaths than any other occupation in the US.

84.5 per 100,000 among the farming, fishing, and forestry group (McIntosh, et al., 2016).

1990-1998 (3 Southeastern states)

- Age 75-84 O.R. 2.0 (CI: 1.70-2.45)
- Age > 85 O.R. 2.6 (CI: 2.02-3.54)

What are the signs of stress?

Easier to recognize in others than in yourself!

Eating too much, or not at all

Weight loss or weight gain

More easily irritated or bothered

Sleepy more (or less)



More signs of stress

Easily discouraged

Headaches

Hard to focus

Forgetful



Possible Consequences of Stress

Poor decision making

Anxiety

Depression

Suicidal thoughts



Signs of stress on the farm

Forgetting the task at hand

Misplacing tools (more than usual)

Feeling overwhelmed



Signs of stress on the farm

Unreasonable anger

Destroying things in a fit of rage

Increased use of abusive or salty language

Panic attacks

Taking things out on family, workers, animals or things

Rushing

Lets talk about stress reduction

An ounce of prevention



Are you stressed yet? There's a solution for that!

It's normal – do something about what you can actually control

Organization- a top priority

Repair and replace

Pay those bills!

Keep a calendar

Sort papers once a week- respond, toss, file but don't "re-pile"

Work changes

Livestock: example: rethink calving season

Crops: switch to crops that require less labor, are more weather resilient

Schedule maintenance

Work around weather

Layer for temperature changes

Have a plan A, B, and C

Work in groups

Have a phone list of contacts for breakdowns and repairs



Stress busting

Goal: Address your stress every day

AM and PM:
Stretch out stress



Stress Busters

Just breathe.

B reathe	five slow deep breaths
R est	7 hours sleep; short naps
E xercise	walking, cardio, mental, your faith
A ttitude	be positive
T alk it out	a friend; your dog; your faith
H elp someone else	Releases good hormones
E at right	fruits & veggies; low protein at night

Suggestions

Build stress reduction into your risk management plan

Make it a line item in your budget and your calendars

- Vacation
- Equipment that saves time or energy
- Regularly scheduled “down time” and repair time
- Preventive maintenance for yourself



Develop a mantra

Counting to ten

Press at the base of thumb

The best laid plans...

Plan your day and your week

Build in “down time” to address emerging issues

Write it down!

Have alternate plans (for when it rains)

Cross off your “to do” list

Just say NO



Stress Management

Sometimes stress overwhelms us

- **Talking it out**
- **Professional assistance**
- **What about pharmaceutical intervention?**
- **It's all on the table and acceptable!**

We all need a little help now and then



Sometimes (well, everyday) it's a balancing act

...



Source: Sealy Tractor Website – Mishaps and Funny Farm Photos,
<http://sealytractor.com/photos.php>



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