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Stress in Agriculture

As I write this, there's snow on the ground and 25 mile per hour winds. If your agricultural enterprise requires you to be out in these conditions, it's likely added some stress to your life. By the time you read this, the forecast is for more sunshine and temperatures approaching freezing – but that doesn't mean your stress magically goes away.

Some of the joy of being involved in agriculture is the autonomy to make our own decisions and take risks to attain a favorable outcome. With that, however, can come a great deal of stress. On top of that, there are multiple facets of production agriculture over which we have no control. We can do *some* things to mitigate price/production risk or reduce weather effects, but total control is out of our hands. When we have weather events like we just went through, or look long term at input prices, stress can start to add up.

There's no 'one size fits all' solution to managing stress. They are as unique as we are as individuals. There are, however, resources available to help. If the issue is resolution of a legal or financial matter, maybe the Kansas Ag Mediation Service is the place to start. The Kansas Arability Project provides some excellent resources if you are dealing with a physical disability challenge, but is also a great place to look for farm stress resources as well.

A coalition of organizations together host the Kansas Ag Stress Resources webpage at: <https://www.kansasagstress.org/>. This group of collaborators has banded together to provide multiple levels of stress assistance to benefit youth to older adults and individuals to families.

Not sure where to start? The Kansas Ag Stress Resources page is a great first stop. Additional resources are available in a Kansas AgrAbility publication from K-State Research and Extension entitled *Managing Stress - Tips and Resources*. In addition to some of the above, it provides other helps as well. Find it online at <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3568.pdf> or request a copy (confidentially) via e-mail to dhallaue@ksu.edu.

Above all, don't hesitate to reach out. A conversation with a friend/family member *may* be what it takes to ease your mind. Trusted clergy or mental health professionals can be helps, too. The autonomy we enjoy in agriculture is great, but a *little* help isn't a bad thing, either.

Christmas Tree Disposal

K-State Research and Extension Forester Charlie Barden is all about making the most out of plant material. As a forester, he obviously loves tree plantings, but he's also interested in what you do with trees *after* they've served their purpose. One tree that will soon have served its purpose is your Christmas tree.

Without stealing his thunder, I can tell you he's got some neat ideas for your 'ready to discard tree' for bird and fish habitat enhancement – including instructions for sinking that tree in a pond. He also shares tips for recycling the tree in to landscape mulch and even garden stakes next spring. Check out his ideas in the latest edition of the KSU Horticulture Newsletter at: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/horticulture-newsletter/>.