

PUTTING THE FAMILY FIRST IN FAMILY FARMS

Farm family members work long hours tending to the farm, the animals, and the equipment, and then come home and spend time thinking, talking, and stressing about the weeks ahead. Although most of farmers' time needs to be spent working, there are still a few strategies that can be used to prioritize family during the busy season. Here are just a few:

- Make the most out of a rainy day and do something fun as a family.
- Children and youth feel good when they feel like they are contributing to the farm. Give them a task that they can take ownership over.
- Schedule to eat a meal together once a week. If finances and time permits, perhaps go out for dinner to minimize workload.
- Take five minutes before sitting down at the dinner table to process the day, especially if it was particularly stressful.
- Celebrate both the on-farm and off-farm successes of your family members! Your child may have won a volleyball game, helped with calving, or got their driver's license. Celebrate with a high five and a warm hug.
- Farming as a family adds pressure on a relationship. Try to schedule something for you and your partner to do just the two of you on a rainy day or while completing a task on the farm.
- When farming is your life it's hard to discuss anything else. Try to make a conscious effort to discuss other topics that are important to your family, including upcoming milestones and family members' interests and hobbies.

There is no denying it: farming is stressful. However, if you are able to carve out a bit of time for you and your family, you will surely notice your stress levels go down.

Kori Kuryvial and Emily Freiberg make up the Farm Family Outreach team and experience living, working, and having families on farms in southern Alberta. They are passionate about helping others find confidential resources that will help support farm families' wellbeing.

Visit www.fcss.ca for more information.

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