

Are Farmers And Ranchers Happy?

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

On September 11, 2011, Michele Payn-Knoper of Cause Matters Corporation (www.causematters.com), located at Lebanon, Indiana, wrote, "After a decade of working with agricultural advocacy, I've heard thousands of complaints from farmers and ranchers across the U.S. and Canada. Frankly, it's tiring."

"It seems as though farmers and ranchers are never happy."

Payn-Knoper was commenting about dissension among the many agricultural organizations and members of the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, which was formed to strengthen the image of, and to enhance public trust in, today's agricultural industry.

I wondered if Payn-Knoper's comments in 2011 were as much about how farmers and ranchers feel about themselves as about how they want the public to view them. My wonderment about this was strengthened this past week when three newspaper reporters—one from Los Angeles, another from Washington DC and the other from Lincoln, Nebraska—called to ask me how farmers and ranchers are feeling about themselves in these days of high land prices, combined with the uncertainty of what the next farm bill will look like.

How do farmers and ranchers feel about themselves? Several recent studies examined if people engaged in agriculture are happy.

Surveys by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health regularly report that farming is one of the most stressful and dangerous occupations, with high rates of fatalities due to stress-related conditions such as hypertension and nervous disorders. Agricultural work is strenuous and producers have little control over many of the factors that determine their success or failure.

According to CollegeGrad.com (cited by Krista Sheehan on April 14, 2010 at www.answerbag.com), "Although the job is difficult, many farmers feel that the disadvantages of the job are heavily outweighed by the advantages."

Farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers feel a sense of pride knowing their hard work provides food and other important necessities of life, such as fuel and fibrous materials for their families and the larger community of consumers everywhere.

"People who work in farming, forestry and fishing are happier than others," according to a 2012 survey of National Well Being published by the British Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Reviewers of the ONS study commented that they thought

investment bankers and corporate lawyers would be happiest because of their large salaries, but the happiest workers in the U.K. were those involved in the agricultural occupations. Like in the U.S., fishers and foresters are grouped with farmers in the U.K. as part of the agricultural occupation.

Are organic farmers happier than conventional farmers? To the best of my knowledge, no studies have been undertaken that investigate this question directly. However, analysis of both types of agricultural production

yields interesting comparisons that might have a bearing on the matter.

Organic farmland currently comprises about one percent of the land farmed in the U.S. However, USDA statistics indicate the amount of land devoted to organic production methods doubled between 1990 and 2002, and doubled again between 2002 and 2005. This trend is advancing ever faster as the demand for organic foods increases in the U.S. and in many other parts of the world.

As conventional farms become larger and consolidated, job growth in this segment of agriculture is slowing, while job growth in the organic segment is increasing rapidly. I have heard claims that it is easier for the children of parents who farm organically to get started in farming than for the children of parents who farm conventionally because of higher start-up costs for conventional operations, but I have yet seen hard data about the subject.

Striving for happiness has lots of traps, for farmers and non-farmers alike. How we evaluate ourselves is critical to being happy, says Dr. Russ Harris, the Australian physician and psychotherapist who wrote The Happiness Trap: How to Stop Struggling and Start Living in 2008.

Treat yourself kindly, says Harris. Allow yourself to mess up, make mistakes and learn from them. Happiness results from accepting yourself as a human being who is not perfect but who is capable of learning from your efforts.

Financial gain from our efforts is less important than liking what we are doing. It seems that agricultural production is an occupation that makes most of its participants happy.

Even though fraught with stress, farming is fulfilling. Life on a farm or ranch is a good thing!

Dr. Rosmann is a psychologist who lives with his wife on their Harlan, Iowa farm. Contact him at: www.agbehavioral-health.com.

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Dr. Mike
ROSMANN

Visiting Hours

Tips On How To Deal With Allergies

BY ROB BROEKEMEIER, FNP
Avera Medical Group Pierce

It's that time again! I have already seen many people over the last few weeks suffering from allergies. If you are one of the 60 million Americans that suffer from seasonal allergies, you certainly can relate. It can be miserable and very frustrating. Seasonal allergies are also known as allergic rhinitis. This is the group of uncomfortable symptoms that occur when your body is exposed to a specific allergen.

An allergen is a typically harmless substance, such as grass or dust, which causes an allergic reaction. Pollen is the most common allergen for most people. When your body comes into contact with an allergen, it releases histamine. This is a natural chemical that is actually intended to defend the body from the allergen. However, this chemical causes many uncomfortable symptoms that include runny nose, sneezing, and itchy eyes.

As many of you know who suffer from this condition, it can interfere with your everyday quality of life, so it is important to find treatment. Common allergens that can cause this condition include pollen, dust, animal dander (old skin), cat saliva, and mold.

Pollen is the biggest allergen culprit, especially during certain times of the year. Tree and flower pollen is more prevalent in the spring, while grasses and weeds produce more pollen in the summer and fall months. Allergies can happen to anyone at any age, but they tend to be genetic. You are more likely to develop allergic rhinitis if your family has a history of allergies. According to the National Institutes of Health, the chances are even higher if your mother has a history of allergy problems. There are also substances that can trigger this condition or make it worse.

THESE INCLUDE:

- cigarette smoke
- chemicals
- cold temperatures
- humidity
- wind
- pollution
- hairspray
- wood smoke
- fumes

THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS OF THIS CONDITION INCLUDE:

- sneezing
- runny nose
- stuffy nose
- itchy nose
- coughing
- sore throat
- itchy and watery eyes
- dark under-eye circles
- frequent headaches
- eczema-type symptoms (extremely dry, itchy skin that often blisters)

- hives (red, sometimes itchy, bumps on the skin)
- excessive fatigue

Minor allergies usually only require a physical exam. However, your health care provider may recommend specific tests. Skin prick is one of the most commonly used tests to determine specific allergies and may be beneficial to design a specific treatment regimen and plan. By using the results of this test, your health care provider can better recommend treatment. Another common allergy test is a blood test, sometimes referred to as a RAST test. This test measures the amount of immunoglobulin (Ig) e antibodies to particular allergens that are present in your blood.

A RAST test is also very helpful when developing a treatment plan. Allergic rhinitis may be classified as seasonal or perennial (year-round) and plays an important part in specific treatment. The main stay treatment for allergies typically includes a multi prong approach centered on the individual and their presenting symptoms. Treatment includes one or all of the following: antihistamines, decongestants, eye drops, nasal sprays and in severe cases immunotherapy (allergy shots).

Antihistamines effectively treat allergies. They can also help prevent this condition because they block histamine formation in the body. Some over-the-counter versions may be helpful, but remember to always talk to your health care provider before starting a new medication, especially if you take other medications or have other medical conditions. Decongestants are used over a short period of time to help relieve stuffy nose and sinus pressure.

Talk with your health care provider before use if you have high blood pressure. You can temporarily use eye drops and nasal sprays to relieve itchiness and other symptoms related to allergies. However, don't use either product on a long-term basis unless advised by your health care provider. Lastly, it may be recommended that you consider immunotherapy if you have severe allergies. Commonly known as allergy shots, this treatment plan is used in conjunction with medications to control your symptoms. These shots are intended to decrease your immune response to particular allergens over time. They do require prior testing and most time consultation with an allergist or a specialist in allergies.

Even with all the medication options, the best treatment is prevention and avoidance. Preventing allergy symptoms means managing your allergies before your body has a chance to adversely respond to substances. The American Academy of Al-

lergy, Asthma and Immunology recommends starting medications before seasonal allergy attacks. For example, if you are sensitive to tree pollen in the spring, you may want to start taking antihistamines before an allergic reaction has the chance to occur.

Another effective way to prevent allergic rhinitis is to steer clear of the allergens that cause your symptoms. This is known as avoidance. For instance, stay indoors when pollen counts are high, and take showers immediately after being outside. Also, clean your home to remove pet dander, mold, and dust. Avoidance is not always possible unless you are willing to live your life in a plastic bubble, which for some people with severe allergies may have truly contemplated. It is a struggle, but being proactive has its benefits. Ultimately the outcome of treatment depends

on your unique condition.

Seasonal allergic rhinitis is usually not severe, and can be managed well with medications. However, severe forms of this condition will likely require long-term treatment. Some patients may even develop sinusitis (inflamed nasal passages that can cause breathing difficulties and pain) or asthma along with this condition. Whether your allergy symptoms are mild or severe, your health care provider is here to help. Allergy symptoms and treatment is a point of interest for my family, since my wife and I suffer from allergies. If you are one of 60 million who deal with this condition, please be active and don't suffer in silence. There is help. I or one of my colleagues at the Avera Medical Group in Pierce would be more than happy to discuss this with you and help develop a plan of treatment.



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Watt - Whitley

Sara Watt and Ben Whitley announce their engagement.

Parents of the couple are Kevin and Marcia Watt, Yankton; Troy Whitley, Yankton; and Cate Whitley, Sioux Falls.

The bride is a sophomore studying social work at the University of Sioux Falls and is currently working as an Enrichment Coordinator at Lutheran Social Service's Hilltop After-school and summer program.

The groom is a junior studying business administration at the University of Sioux Falls and is currently working as a teller at First Premier Bank.

The couple is planning a June 8, 2013, wedding at the Calvary Baptist Church in Yankton.

YC Board Of Trustees To Meet April 26-27

Sixteen members of the Yankton College Board of Trustees will gather at the Summit Activities Center for the annual spring board meeting to be held in two parts: the Information & Action Planning Session, Friday, April 26, at 1 p.m. and the Action Session, Saturday, April 27, at 9:30 a.m.

Topics on the agenda include: approval of up to 20 \$1,000 scholarships to be awarded for the 2013-14 academic year, including three new scholarships: (the George & Kay Means Memorial Scholarship, the Gross Family Scholarship and the Charles A. Alseth Scholarship); viable options for the future of the College; re-election of members whose terms have expired and a Spring financial update. The YC Alumni Advisory Board will also hold its meeting at 10 a.m. Friday, April 26, at the SAC to discuss plans for the 2014 All-Class Reunion, regional reunion possibilities and other topics, which will be shared at the Friday afternoon Trustee meeting.

On Thursday, members of the Legacy Committee will meet at 7 p.m. at the Yankton College office after a tour of the Mead Building. The Scholarship Committee and the Nominating Committee will convene on Friday morning to finalize their recommendations.

The Board of Trustees and the Alumni Advisory Board travel from all corners of the nation and many parts of the Midwest to attend these meetings held twice each year to foster the ongoing affairs of the College and alumni relations.

A no-host dinner is scheduled at Murdo's for the Trustees, Advisory Board, friends of YC and their spouses Friday evening.

For further information, call the Yankton College office at (605) 665-3661.

MILITARY

PFC. WESLEY M. WILL

Army National Guard Pfc. Wesley M. Will has graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C.

During the nine weeks of training, the soldier studied the Army mission, history, tradition and core values, physical fitness, and received instruction and practice in basic combat skills, military weapons, chemical warfare and bayonet training, drill and ceremony, marching, rifle marksmanship, armed and unarmed combat, map reading, field tactics, military courtesy, military justice system, basic first aid, foot marches, and field training exercises.

Will is the son of Mike and Barb Will of 399th Avenue, Delmont.

He is a 2012 graduate of Parkston High School.

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