

## Do Some Farmers Push Themselves Too Hard?

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

When I was speaking last month at the annual meeting of the "Women in Agriculture" in Iowa, several wives said their husbands don't know when to quit working. The husbands insist they can't take time away from the farm operation because no one else "can do it right," or "as well."

One woman said "I tell him he married me, not the farm." Another said, "I buy tickets to football games and concerts so he has to go with me, or I go alone or with a friend. Eventually he starts to 'get it'. He knows we need to be together as a family."

There are two sides to the matter and I am familiar with both. For my first dozen years of farming I felt compelled to not take time away from farm work that needed to be completed. I learned "the hard way." I lost several toes in a combine "accident" when I was overworking.

I have counseled many farm couples trying to resolve struggles over spending quality time together as a couple or family. The adage, "The family that prays together stays together," can be adapted to "The family that plays together stays together."

Why do farmers have a difficult time "letting go," even if only for a few hours to days? Dutch cultural anthropologist, Dr. Lizzy van Leeuwen, suggests farmers are motivated by a genetic inclination toward perfectionism.

Lizzy stayed with Marilyn and me for 10 days in June this year. Lizzy interviewed dozens of farmers and scientific authorities, mainly in the Netherlands, but also in other European countries and recently in the U.S.

Her theory is consistent with psychological studies that showed successful farmers buckle down when faced with adversity and tenaciously rely on their own judgment. In previous articles I often have cited Australian, Scottish and American studies that helped give rise to the contention that an inherited drive, called the Agrarian Imperative, instills farmers to work incredibly hard.

The traits associated with this drive have become concentrated in successful farmers, and to an unknown extent in other successful persons who carry the same genetic expression. Research shows less successful persons exhibit fewer characteristics of this genetic expression.

There is a downside to this genetic predisposition. Dr. van Leeuwen suggested successful farmers' pervasive preoccupation with perfectionism and need for interpersonal control, even at the expense of themselves and their families, incline them to be more sensitive than usual to perceived criticisms.

Farmers, especially those who feel stressed, become angry toward persons who disagree with them or they assume others are judging them negatively and become unnecessarily harsh on themselves, even to the

point of feeling depressed. Dr. van Leeuwen theorized their sensitivity to criticism contributes to the high rate of suicide by farmers.

Problems in relationships and depression/suicide concerns are primary reasons why farm families seek help. An analysis of reasons why 44,000 persons involved in agriculture called farm crisis hotlines and helplines affiliated with the Agri-Wellness network during a 26 month period (Sept. 1, 2005-Oct. 31, 2007) indicated callers were concerned about marital/family problems — 24.6 percent, problems in daily living — 27.7 percent, feeling depressed or suicidal — 27.7 percent, stress over finances — 14.3 percent, alcohol/drug abuse — 4.9 percent, gambling — .6 percent and unclassified issues — .2 percent. Females initiated 54.5 percent of the calls.

The farm and ranch callers described their marital/family problems and problems in daily living as breakdowns in communication, angry outbursts—usually by an overworked husband/father, abusive treatment of others, and growing disintegration of the family unit. Two percent of the callers who said they felt depressed also reported suicide attempts, plans or thoughts.

The cost of overworking is considerable. Spouses, children, parents and extended family members feel disregarded by the person who is overworking. Their willingness to help the distressed farmer gradually tapers off as they grow cynical that he/she will change.

The overworked and distressed person can experience deteriorating physical and behavioral health.

Only the overworked person can decide how much work is enough. Taking time to recreate with the family and to restore one's body and mind are investments in oneself. No one else can do that for the stressed farmer.

I have heard heart-breaking stories from aging farmers who said their main regret was they wished they had spent more time enjoying life with their families instead of working so hard. Regrets, instead of accomplishments, clouded their retirement memories.

There is still time before harvest begins to take a vacation. There is no time like now to make a permanent behavioral change for the good of all.

Marilyn and I miss our stimulating discussions with Lizzy. She is back home, working on her next book (about farmer suicide).

Besides our intense debates, Lizzy told us her favorite times in the U.S. were her walks with Marilyn on the dirt road that borders the east side of our farm. She didn't care that Marilyn had spotted mountain lion tracks on the road earlier.

Dr. Rosmann and his wife live near Harlan, Iowa. He can be contacted at: [www.agbehavioralhealth.com](http://www.agbehavioralhealth.com).

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Dr. Mike ROSMANN

### Visiting Hours

# Back To School Means Time To Get Back To Nutrition

BY SARA GERMAN, RD, LN  
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

With school starting up, many of us are looking forward to getting back to a routine after a summer full of unstructured "relaxation." It's a perfect time to make healthy changes and start new habits. A recent article on [eatright.org](http://eatright.org) (the website for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics) provides guidelines for packing a safe and healthy school lunch. Here are some more tips for boosting your family's nutrition this academic year:

- Be a good example. Almost all of us need to eat more fruits and vegetables, so start incorporating more into your own diet. Another category we need to get more of is whole grains. If you don't eat the whole wheat pasta and brown rice, don't expect your kids to!
- Get your kids involved. Take them

grocery shopping and allow them to pick out fruits and vegetables to try — then ask them to help you prepare these foods at home. Kids are much more open to trying a new healthy recipe if they make it "themselves"!

- Start the day off right. We all need breakfast — it's hard to concentrate with a grumbling tummy. Breakfast doesn't need to be elaborate — dry cereal or yogurt parfaits with fresh fruit are great options. Look for cereal with six grams or less of sugar and two grams or more of fiber.
- Re-think lunch. Most cafeterias are making an effort to include healthier lunch options. Talk with your kids about what foods are available and ways they can make healthy choices. Packed lunches aren't necessarily healthier — it all depends what you put inside the lunch box.
- Prepare healthy snacks ahead of time. Make "snack boxes" by cutting up

fruits and veggies and storing them in individually-portioned containers in the fridge. (Or, buy ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables, such as apples or baby carrots.) These make perfect on-the-go snacks, easy to eat at home or traveling to after school activities.

- Make dinner a family affair. While this can be a challenge with today's hectic schedules, kids who eat with their families have healthier diets overall. It doesn't have to be a five-course meal. The important thing is to get everyone around the table, eating the same meal together at the same time.
- Have fun! Have dips and sauces available to make fruits and veggies more attractive. Cut foods into interesting shapes. (Research has proven that sandwiches taste better when cut into triangles. Just kidding.) Have theme nights. Come up with silly questions to spark dinner conversation.

## Champions!



Amy Beran, Ag Lender and Justin Wagner, Ag Lender, were honored at the Annual Celebrity Round Robin Showmanship Contest

## Local Ag Lenders Take Top Honors

First National Bank South Dakota Ag Lenders Justin Wagner and Amy Beran participated in and were honored to be named Grand Champion and Reserved Champion at the Annual Celebrity Round Robin Showmanship Contest at the 2013 Yankton County 4-H Achievement Days. The contest tested the

participants on their ag knowledge and ability to showcase livestock trained by the Yankton County 4-H Members. First National Bank South Dakota is a proud supporter of Yankton County 4-H and would like to wish the 4-Hers the best at the upcoming South Dakota State Fair.

## SAC Offers Swim Lessons This Fall

The Summit Activities Center will be offering American Red Cross Swimming Lessons this fall. The classes will be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings and will run from Tuesday, Sept. 24 through Thursday, Oct. 24.

Swim lessons will include Aqua Tots, Preschool, and Red Cross Level 1 through Level 5. Registration for CURRENT Summit Activities Center members will begin Monday, Aug. 26, during normal business hours. Registration for the general public and online registration will begin Tuesday, Aug. 27, at 11 a.m. Online registration is available through the City of Yankton website at [www.cityofyankton.org](http://www.cityofyankton.org).

- 5:20-5:55 p.m. — Preschool, Preschool, Level II, Level III
- 6:35 p.m. — Preschool, Aqua Tots, Level I, Level II
- 6:40-7:15 p.m. — Preschool, Level I, Level III, Level V
- 7:20-7:55 p.m. — Level I, Level II, Level III, and IV

For further information, call 668-5234 or visit the Summit Activities Center at 1801 Summit Street, Yankton. Don't forget to follow the Yankton Parks and Recreation on Facebook.

## Local Students Win Gehl Scholarships

A graduate of Cedar Catholic High School in Hartington, Neb., has been awarded one of the Gehl Foundation's two \$20,000 collegiate scholarships for the academic year that begins in the fall of 2013.

Madison Schulte, daughter of Manitou Americas, Inc., employee Lyle Schulte, was announced as a winner. Schulte is a graduate of Cedar Catholic High School, where she received the President's Award for Academic Achievement each year. She also achieved Honor Roll/Straight A Honor Roll each of the four years.

During her high school career, Schulte participated in golf and jazz band and tutored peers.

In addition to her school-related activities, Schulte pursued volunteer work with the Norfolk Rescue Mission, the Orphan Grain Train and Mercy Meals. She also participated in the March for Life in Washington. Schulte plans to attend the

University of Nebraska at Kearney, where her field of study will be Speech Pathology.

Two local students whose parents work at the Yankton Gehl plant were also recipients of the Gehl Foundation's \$1,000 scholarships. They were: Houston Arens, son of Charles Arens; and Michael Rucker, son of Kevin Rucker.



Madison Schulte, right, is pictured here with her mother, Carole, and her father, Lyle.

### Reminder: Put Out Garbage Before 7 a.m.

The City of Yankton would like to remind residents to have their garbage placed by 7 a.m. on the day of their scheduled pickup.

Two 33-gallon containers with lids and handles are allowed per household.

AM 1450  
**MORNING COFFEE**  
WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY  
**Wednesday, August 21**  
7:40 am Vermillion Chamber (Steve Howe)  
8:20 am Hy-Vee Foods (Chef Staci)  
**Thursday, August 22**  
7:40 am Yankton Chamber (Carmen Schramm)  
8:20 am Yankton Conv/Vis Bureau (Lisa Scheve)

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**Hertz-Bures**  
Ali Hertz and Joseph Bures, both of Sioux Falls, SD, announce their engagement and upcoming marriage. Parents of the couple are Rhonda and the late Charles Hertz of Owasso, OK, and Ernie and Deb Bures of Tyndall, SD.

The bride-elect is a 2005 graduate from Menno, SD, and a graduate from Nursing School at the University of South Dakota. She is currently employed as an RN at Sanford Hospital in Sioux Falls, SD.

The groom-elect is a 2004 graduate at Bon Homme High School and a University of South Dakota graduate of Physical Therapy. He is currently employed at Prairie Rehab in Sioux Falls, SD.

The couple is planning an August 24, 2013, wedding at the Messiah New Hope Church in Sioux Falls, SD.

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