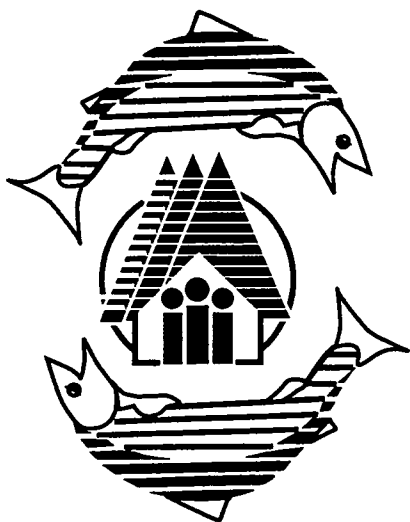


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FISHING FAMILY AND BUSINESS

# Resource Kit

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For an Industry  
in Transition

The Fishing-  
Dependent  
Families Project

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Oregon Sea Grant  
Oregon State University



**OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE**



# What's inside. . .

## **Life in a cyclical industry**

The fishing industry has always been characterized as cyclic; constantly changing, up and down. Fishermen have probably said "it's not like it was in the old days" since the first person fished commercially. But many in the industry feel that we are now in a period of fundamental change. This transition affects all those associated with the fishing industry—commercial and charter boat owners, operators, and crew; shoreside service providers; and perhaps most of all, their families.

## **Fishing is in transition**

Few will deny that nationally the fishing industry is at a crossroads in its development and Oregon is a part of this process. The future is full of challenges. Practically every business in the world has had to change its business practices in the 80s and 90s, and fishing is no different. This is not a

doomed industry but, rather, one whose emergence into the next decade will require adjustments in everything from management strategies to personal business planning. Inevitably these changes affect all members of the fishing family.

## **We can learn from the experience of others**

As you go through this packet, you will see a number of publications produced during the "farm crisis." Most of us at one time or another have compared fishing to farming. The publications written for farm families underscore that point. In most cases, by substituting the word fishing for the word farm, you'd think the document was written for the fishing industry. In a sense, it was, because many problems faced by farmers and their families are the same problems now facing us.

## **Coping with change**

Some people are challenged by change. Because of the skills they possess, adjusting business practices and home life is not a problem. For others, this transition period is stressful, producing anger and uncertainty that can tear families apart.

The materials in this packet were selected because they relate directly to managing family and business finances, keeping the family strong, worker and business diversification, and local sources of help. They were reviewed and selected by members of the fishing industry and other interested partners from the education and support community.

This packet was prepared to offer some help to all people affected by the changes in the fishing industry. By taking positive steps, doing something to plan and prepare for the future, you, your business, and your family will benefit.

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*The OSU Fishing-Dependent Families Project, funded by the Extension Sea Grant Program and OSU Extension Service, covers the entire Oregon coastline. For more information contact your fishing family coordinator or OSU Extension Sea Grant agent:*

### **On the north coast**

*Peggy Deveraux, 325-0473, or Jim Bergeron, 325-8027*

### **On the north-central coast**

*Connie Kennedy, 574-0882, or Ginny Goblirsch, 265-3463*

### **On the south-central coast**

*Herb Ocobock Jr., 888-9062, or R. C. Hinman, 997-8279*

### **On the south coast**

*Linda Brown, 469-8890, or Jim Waldvogel, 707-464-4711*

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# Fishing Family and Business Resource Kit

## Educational Resources for an Industry in Transition

### Contents

#### 1. Managing Business & Family Finances

The “family bookkeeper” may find the publications below especially helpful:

- Making the Most of What You Have
- Money Management \*
- Talking with Creditors
- Deciding Which Bills to Pay First
- Keeping a Roof Overhead

The “family financial planner” may find these publications helpful:

- Setting Spending Priorities
- Financial Planning: Family Goals
- Estate Planning for Families with Minor Children
- Casualty at Sea: A Crisis Preparation Checklist for Fishing Families

#### 2. Keeping Families Strong

The following publications may help with feelings that are common during times of transition:

- The Fishing Marriage
- Dealing with Blame \*
- Farm & Family: A Careful Balancing Act \*
- Taking Charge During a Transition \*
- Farm Stress \*
- Accepting Your Feelings
- Youth & The Rural Crisis: How Adults Can Help \*
- Identifying Sources of Support and Friendship
- Bartering
- Oregon Health Plan

And, since communication, goal setting, and decision making are critical during times of transition, the publications listed on the next page might be helpful:

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Fishing Family Decision Making  
Deciding to Stay In or Get Out \*  
Working Together: Managing Change in Farm & Family \*

### **3. Staying In or Changing Occupations**

To help make more informed decisions, the following publications might help workers or businesses:

Fisheries (An Overview & Vision)  
UPDATE: Federal Aid Package for the Salmon Industry  
A Brief Look at Business Finance Programs in Oregon  
Community College Resources for Fishing-Dependent Families  
Oregon Small Business Development Center Network

For workers who are looking to change occupations:

Finding a New Career \*  
Seeking Off-The-Farm Work \*  
Job Training Services in Oregon  
Dislocated Worker Outreach Program

### **4. Resources For Families & Businesses**

Enclosed is a listing of local resources plus the following publications:

Help for Finding Help  
What To Do If You Lose Your Job

*\* = Publications from another region that are relevant to what fishing families and businesses are going through. Just substitute the word "fish" wherever you see the word "farm" and see how similar they are!*

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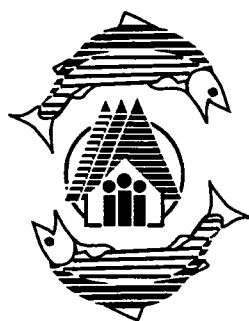
For many fishing families, income is both irregular and unpredictable. Fishing income can fluctuate widely and is often received in a few large amounts. Prices and costs can vary greatly from projected levels.

The fishing business and the fishing family often compete for surplus cash. Deciding whether to reinvest profits in the fishing business or to make expenditures on the home or the family is a difficult matter for fishing families.

Does your family have a system to decide how income will be divided between the fishing business and the family? Or does this present a conflict each time you receive income from fishing?

This section contains publications to help you manage business and family finances.

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# Making the Most of What You Have

When your income drops suddenly, your first concern may be to pay your bills and meet your day-to-day expenses. Instead, look at your total financial picture and determine which assets you might use to meet your obligations.

You have value as a person. Your skills, knowledge, and abilities are resources. They can help you make changes and survive a period of unemployment.

## Determining Your Net Worth

A net worth statement is a financial balance sheet. It's a calculation of your assets (what you own) minus your liabilities (what you owe). Preparing a net worth statement will help you get a clearer understanding of your financial resources and make decisions about how best to manage them.

Use Worksheet 1, "Net Worth Statement" to determine your net worth. The asset column is divided into the following groups:

*Liquid Assets* — those things that either are or can be easily converted to cash. Keep in mind that cashing in certificates of deposit (CD's) before they mature may result in an interest penalty.

*Marketable Assets* — financial assets that can be cashed in or sold for their current market value. Prices will fluctuate with market conditions.

*Other Personal Assets* — real estate and personal property that can be sold but usually not as quickly as the assets above. Assets such as vehicles, furniture, and appliances usually depreciate in value, so they are worth less now than when you purchased them, even though they are still in good condition.

*Non-Marketable Assets* — assets that cannot be sold or are more difficult to turn into cash. Withdrawing money from your retirement plan, pension, or Individual Retirement Account (IRA) before age 59-1/2 usually involves a substantial penalty.

### Calculating your assets

- Write down the current amount of cash on hand. Use the most recent statements for checking, savings, and money market account balances, and current certificate values.
- If you have government savings bonds, call a bank to find out what they are currently worth.
- Find out the cash surrender value of your whole or cash value life insurance policies by checking your policy or calling your agent.
- If you own stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, check a newspaper that publishes the information daily. They are available in most libraries.
- Use the current value of your house or other real estate — not what you paid for it. Your city or town assessor can tell you its full assessed value.
- Check a used vehicle guide (Blue Book) for the value of your cars and trucks.

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Adapted for use in Oregon from a University of Wisconsin-Extension publication (B3459-8).

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- To find out the value of your boat, camper, snowmobile, or any other recreational vehicle, talk to a dealer who sells used recreational vehicles.
- Make a conservative estimate of the value of household items and personal property, recording what you could get if you sold everything today.
- List the current value of your pension, IRA's, or other retirement plan, using the amount you would get if you were to cash them in today.
- Don't forget to add money others may owe you if you realistically expect to collect it.

#### Calculating your liabilities

- The balance of the mortgage loan on your house may be on your monthly statement. If not, ask the lender for the outstanding balance.
- Record the balance due on all credit cards, charge accounts, installment accounts, and other loans. Be sure to list the total balance due, not just the monthly payment.
- List any current unpaid bills, including what you owe the dentist, this month's utilities, telephone charges, etc.

After you have totaled both your assets and your liabilities, you are ready to subtract total assets from total liabilities. What's left is your net worth.

### Questions to Ask Yourself

Take a good look at what you have written down and answer the following questions.

- Where are most of your assets? Are they mostly in one item, your house or vehicle, for example?
- How much of your assets are liquid, or easy to turn into cash?
- How much do you have in bank accounts that can be used during your current financial emergency?
- How long will your savings last if you use them to pay current living expenses?
- What marketable assets could be sold or converted to cash to help pay current bills?

- How much equity do you have in your house? To calculate this, take your home's current market value and subtract the balance on your mortgage.
- Do you have any vehicles or other personal property that could be sold?
- Do you have cash value life insurance against which you could borrow?
- What financial assets do you have that you are not using?
- Are your liabilities much greater than your assets?
- Are you able to meet your current monthly bills and expenses on your reduced income?
- Are you behind in any of your payments?
- Is there a way to lower your interest payments by paying off any of your debts? Can you refinance any of your loans to lower the monthly payments?
- Are there any items you recently purchased on credit that could be surrendered or given back to the creditor to get out from under a debt?

### Other Important Assets

Don't forget that your family has other important assets that don't show up on the net worth statement. Assets such as education, experience, skills, and knowledge are hard to put a dollar value on, but don't overlook them as a resource to help meet expenses.

Use Worksheet 2, "Family Resources" to identify these important family resources. Talk to family members about ways to use these assets to help you through this period of reduced income as well as in the future. For more ideas, see EC 1396, *Bartering*.

## Liquidating Your Assets

Using your savings is one way to supplement your income during periods of unemployment. Be cautious, however, about using savings for things that aren't a high priority. Otherwise, you leave nothing for emergencies such as unanticipated repairs or medical bills. Setting spending priorities and decreasing expenses are essential steps in making the most of your assets.

Another source of funds to help carry you through a financial crisis is selling property that you may no longer need, could do without, or can't afford to keep. Survey your house, basement, garage, and attic for items that could be sold.

*Determining a selling price.* Do some research to find out what your items are worth. Visit resale shops and garage sales in the area to find out the going price for similar items.

*Finding a buyer.* You can't sell any of your possessions without finding someone willing to buy them. Think about ways you can inform prospective buyers of what you want to sell. Community bulletin boards in supermarkets, shopping malls, and laundromats are very popular for posting "For Sale" notices. Cards with small tear-off tabs listing your phone number and the item for sale make it easier for buyers to call you. Other inexpensive ways to advertise your sale items are radio call-in shows that allow for sale items and classified ads in newspapers or shoppers.

## Worksheet 1—Net Worth Statement

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Assets (What You Own) \$ Amount

#### Liquid Assets

Cash on Hand \_\_\_\_\_  
 Checking Account \_\_\_\_\_  
 Savings Account \_\_\_\_\_  
 Money Market Account \_\_\_\_\_  
 Certificates of Deposit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cash Value Life Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

#### Marketable Assets

Savings Bonds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Bonds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mutual Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Stocks \_\_\_\_\_

#### Other Personal Assets

Market Value of House \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Real Estate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Value of Vehicles \_\_\_\_\_  
 Value of Boats, RV'S \_\_\_\_\_  
 Furniture and Appliances \_\_\_\_\_

#### Non-Marketable Assets

IRA's \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pensions (current value) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount others owe you \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Total Assets

### Liabilities (What You Owe) \$ Amount

Mortgage \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Equity Loan \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vehicle Loan(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Installment Loans \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card Balances \_\_\_\_\_  
 Charge Account Balances \_\_\_\_\_  
 Personal Loans \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Unpaid Bills \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Debts \_\_\_\_\_

#### Total Liabilities

**Assets - Liabilities = Net Worth**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## Worksheet 2—Family Resources

Resource	Examples	What	Who
Skills	Skill in sewing baking, woodcarving		
Abilities Interests	Interest in gardening Ability to plan		
Job Training or Certification	Car repair, child care certification		
Attitudes	Willingness to accept change; flexibility		
Self- confidence	Willingness to take risk, try new things		
Creativity	New ideas, artistry		
Awareness	Sensitivity to needs of others		
Time			
Energy			
Other			

### References

"When Income Drops." Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University. 1983.

"Getting in Control of Your Finances." University of Minnesota. 1984.

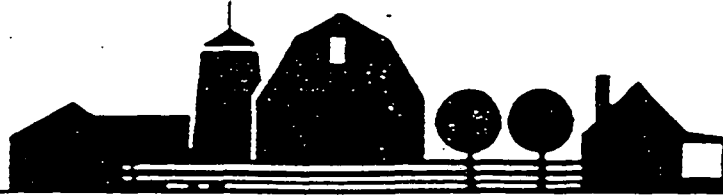
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Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, O.E. Smith, director. This publication was produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties.

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# FARM FAMILY LETTERS

LETTER #5

## MONEY MANAGEMENT

Do you find it difficult to know how much to spend each month for family living needs? Many farm families do. For many farmers, income is both irregular and unpredictable. Although living standards on the farm have become more and more comparable to those of non-farm families, there are some important differences in managing farm family income.

### DIFFERENCES

- Income is irregular and uncertain. Except for some enterprises like dairy and poultry production, farm income fluctuates widely and is often received in a few large amounts. Prices and costs can vary widely from projected levels.
- Housing expense is often low. For many farm families a large portion of their housing costs is included in the farm rent or mortgage payment.
- Food expenditures may be lower than for non-farm families. Home gardens and homegrown meat and produce can trim grocery bills.
- Insurance and health costs may be higher. There are usually no employers to pick up part of the cost of employee insurance plans.
- Farm and home compete for surplus cash. Deciding whether to reinvest profits in the farm business or to make expenditures on the home or family is a difficult matter for farm families.
- Household expenses are small compared to farm expenses. Controlling family expenditures may be difficult when a farm couple is accustomed to spending large sums for farm inputs.
- Business items are tax deductible. Many items, such as vehicles, office equipment, machinery, and travel expenses, can be at least partially tax deductible but are often used for family purposes as well.

### ESTABLISH A SYSTEM

Does your family have a system to decide how income will be divided between farm and family expenditures? Or does this present a conflict each time farm income is received?

Deciding how to allocate income between farm and home before it is received can prevent conflict. Here are some examples:

- Earmark a fixed percentage of all farm sales for family use. For many farm families, 10 percent may be reasonable. For high sales, high expense enterprises, such as cattle feeding, a lower percentage may be sufficient.
- Transfer a fixed amount to the household account each month for basic necessities. At the end of the year, allow a certain proportion of net farm income (10 to 15 percent, for example) for nonessential household expenditures during the following year. Use your list of priorities on the last page of this letter as a guide.
- Where off-farm income is available, it may all be channeled into the family expenditure account. Or certain enterprises on the farm, such as the sale of cull cows, dairy calves, or extra crops, may be designated for extra family income.

### SEPARATE ACCOUNTS

Do you have separate bank accounts for family and business expenditures?

Budgeting, financial record keeping, and income tax preparation are all simpler if a farm business bank account is set up separately from the family account. Money can be transferred from the business account to the household account according to your spending plan. Household expenditures can be monitored easily.

When no farm income is anticipated for several months, it may be useful to place some funds for future living expenses in a separate savings account. Gradually transfer them to the home account to discourage unnecessary spending.

### INCOME

What are the major sources of cash income for your household and farming operation? When are they most likely to occur?

Source of Income	How often or when?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

With this information, you can begin making a cash flow budget for your farm. By adding your best estimate of possible selling prices you can project cash inflows or income. Subtracting your best estimates of costs for feed, seed, fuel, chemicals, hired machinery and labor, livestock, repairs, taxes and other expenses tells how much will be left over for paying debts and family living expenses. It also helps to estimate how much short-term borrowing will be needed during periods of little or no income.

Once all projected income for the year is listed in black and white, calculate your average monthly income (divide the total by 12). This average amount will provide the upper limit for your family's average monthly expenses. Remember, it is better to plan on the basis of a low estimate. Do this even if you feel your income reduction is only temporary.

To see if your family is operating within its available income or how spending patterns could be improved, you need to take a serious look at expenses.

## EXPENSES

If your family has no clear idea where the money is going, a little detective work and a lot of communication will pay off. Look back through checkbooks, receipts or charge account records for amounts spent on food, clothing, long-distance telephone calls, entertainment, personal care items and household supplies. Begin cutting back and keeping track of outgoing dollars. Give each family member a small spiral notebook for daily expenses, or find a shoe box or spindle to keep labeled receipts.

When your family begins to see how money was and is being spent, it is time for a family conference. Lay out the records of anticipated monthly income and scaled-down expenses for all family members to see and evaluate. Subtract expenses from income: Is the remainder positive or negative after all monthly expenses are subtracted from monthly income? Do you have savings that can be used to meet expenses in an emergency? Are some expenses out of line with family priorities or expected income? Where can cuts be made so they cause the least sacrifice in family welfare?

It's easier to see the general pattern of spending if expenses are categorized. This reveals the percentage of income spent on food, housing, clothing, medical care, insurance and other items. There are no hard-and-fast rules for family spending because individual needs, tastes and economic circumstances are so important. Examining spending by category does highlight potential differences between a family's stated goals and priorities and its actual spending patterns and income.

If these differences are significant, the family needs to reach agreement on a plan for changing the way income is allocated.

If a family is operating "in the red" month after month, a couple of things must happen: expenses must be reduced, income must rise, or both.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Will failure to make certain household improvements result in higher maintenance or operating costs later?

Should household expenditures be financed with credit? How do consumer credit interest rates compare with farm interest rates?

Do your itemized personal tax deductions exceed the minimum standard deduction? If not, it is more profitable to borrow for farm expenses (business interest is always deductible) and pay cash for nonbusiness expenditures.

## HOW MUCH DO YOU ESTIMATE YOUR FAMILY SPENDS EACH MONTH?

ITEM	MONTHLY EXPENDITURE
Food, including restaurants	\$ _____
Clothing and personal items	\$ _____
House utilities and repairs	\$ _____
Health, including insurance	\$ _____
Recreation	\$ _____
Gifts and donations	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____
Education	\$ _____
Life insurance	\$ _____

Most families have a "want list" for such things as a family vacation, home improvement, or a recreation vehicle. Below list some possible extra expenditures you might make for the household, individual family members, or the farm enterprise, if income permits. Estimate the cost. Decide what priority you'd give this expenditure. Compare your ideas with those of other family members.

ITEM	COST	PRIORITY-HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW
Household	\$	
Personal	\$	
Farm	\$	



# Talking With Creditors

When your income drops and you realize you can't pay all your bills, it's important to face your debts and know how to talk to your creditors.

Your past experiences with creditors are important. If you have consistently paid bills when due, your creditors will be more cooperative than if you were late or didn't make regular payments. Creditors are in the business of lending money and/or providing services. They want to keep your business, but they also want to get paid.

Contact your creditors; don't wait for them to contact you. Explain your current situation. Tell them unemployment has reduced your income and you are not able to keep up with your complete payment. Frankly discuss your future income prospects so you and your creditors can figure out solutions to the problem. Most creditors would prefer to receive smaller payments on a regular basis than to begin in expensive collection procedures.

## Where to Begin

First, determine how much money you have to pay off your debts.

Figure out how much income you can count on each month and how much you need to pay for your essential monthly living expenses. You'll need to know who and how much you owe, as well as how you plan to pay them.

*Deciding Which Bills to Pay First*, EC 1393, can help you review your situation and figure out a plan to divide your income to pay your monthly living expenses and set priorities for paying bills. If there is a consumer credit counseling service in your area, call or visit them. They provide counseling to families on debt problems. (See list on back page.)

## Contacting Your Creditors

If there is no consumer credit counseling service, contact each creditor, explain your situation and work out a solution.

Be prepared to explain the following:

- The reason you fell behind in your payments
- Your current income and prospects for future income
- Other obligations
- Your plans to bring this debt up to date and keep it current, including the amount you will be able to pay each month

Visit local creditors in person. Visit the loan officer at your bank or credit union, the credit manager of local stores, the budget counselor at the utility company. Don't forget creditors like your dentist, physician, clinic, and hospital.

Contact out-of-town creditors by phone or letter. If you phone, write down the name and title of the person to whom you talked. Follow up the conversation with a letter summarizing what you and the creditor agreed. Keep copies of your correspondence as well as any reply.

Use the sample letter on the next page as a guide when writing to creditors. You may also use it as an outline of what to say when talking to a creditor.

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Adapted for use in Oregon from a University of Wisconsin-Extension publication.

EC 1394 • Reprinted January 1993



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## Sample Letter to Creditors

Use this example as a guide when writing or talking to creditors. Fill in the specifics of your situation in place of the information in parentheses.

	Date
	Your Address
	Your City, State, Zip
Company Name	
Street Address	
City, State, Zip	
Attention:	Delinquent Account Representative
Subject:	Your Name
	Your Account Number

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I am having some budgeting and debt problems. I am having trouble making my minimum monthly payment as a result of (a recent job loss or seasonal unemployment, etc.). I hope we will be able to agree upon an acceptable debt repayment plan.

I have taken a careful look at my financial situation. I have set up a realistic minimum budget for my living expenses and have developed a debt repayment program. I am hoping you will accept a reduced payment. Amounts will be increased as soon as possible until the debt is totally repaid.

I owe (12 creditors over \$7,500). My monthly take-home pay is (\$708). I have (\$242) left over after basic living expenses for debt repayment. I would like you to accept a partial payment of (\$50) per month to repay my obligation. You may expect the first payment on (July 1, 1992). I hope to be able to return to my original payment schedule on (date).

I hope you find this plan acceptable. I look forward to your letter of acknowledgment. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

As you negotiate with each of your creditors, don't agree to any plan simply to get off the hook. Be sure you will be able to follow through on the agreement. Establish a payment rate that is acceptable to both you and the creditor.

Here is a list of some alternatives to consider when negotiating with your creditors:

- Reducing the monthly payment
- Refinancing the loan

- Deferring a payment for a short time if you expect to get called back to work soon
- Reducing or dropping late charges
- Paying interest only on the loan until you can resume making monthly payments
- Voluntarily surrendering or giving back an item purchased on credit
- Selling the item and using the cash to satisfy, or partially satisfy, the debt.

Not all creditors will be willing to accept alternatives. However, they'll be more likely to work with you if you contact them before they contact you. They all want their money and would rather get some money on a regular basis than have to begin collection procedures.

If you fail to follow the plan that you and your creditor agreed upon, you will hurt your chances of getting future credit. Tell your creditors about any changes that may affect your payment agreement.

If you owe a large amount of money, and if your creditors won't accept reduced payments, you may have to consider more extreme alternatives such as bankruptcy.

## If You Don't Pay Your Bills

If you miss a payment, you will be faced with increasing pressure to pay. First you will receive a letter reminding you that you missed a payment and asking you to pay promptly. After that, you may receive a more direct letter demanding payment, or you may get a phone call.

If the bills are still not paid, they will probably be turned over to an independent collection agency. While the agency will try to get you to pay, the law protects you from certain actions. They can't use abusive language or threaten you with violence. They can't call you at unusual hours or threaten criminal prosecution. And they can't discuss your financial situation with others.

Here's what to do if you receive a call from a creditor or a collection agency.

- Identify the caller. Ask the name of the caller. Get the name of the creditor and the name, address, and telephone number of the collection agency. Get the exact amount of the account that is claimed to be due. Write down the date and time of each call.
- Don't get angry. Remain calm. Arguments don't settle anything. When you become angry, you may forget to obtain important information. Remember, creditors accused of being angry or abusive may say it was the customer who was angry and abusive.

- Dispute debts in writing. If you believe you do not owe the amount claimed or disagree in other ways, make your reasons known promptly in writing to both the creditor and the collection agency. Request a written statement of your account. Always keep copies of your correspondence for future reference.
- Ask in writing that creditors write rather than phone you.

## Creditors' Options

Creditors can take several kinds of legal action against you. These actions are often written into the sales contract you signed. If you fail to make payments, you will receive letters from a creditor's attorney or a collection company warning you of the intended action. Here's a list of possible actions a creditor might take.

- *Acceleration* — the entire debt is payable at once if you miss a payment. The courts can force you to pay by seizing your property and selling it.
- *Repossession* — the creditor can seize the item you bought or the property you used as collateral. If the sale of the property brings less than the amount you owe, usually you still must pay the difference.
- *Wage garnishment* — a court order that requires your employer to withhold part of your wages and pay your creditor.
- *Foreclosure* — if you do not make your mortgage payments for at least 3 months, your lender takes possession of your home and sells it to pay off the loan. You are responsible for the legal fees and difference between the selling price and the amount owed.

All of these actions are very serious and could jeopardize your ability to get credit in the future. You can reduce your chances of being harassed by creditors or collection agencies by working out solutions early.



## Oregon Consumer Credit Counseling Services\*

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Linn-Benton, Inc.  
201 West 1st  
P.O. Box 1006  
Albany, OR 97321  
Jan Amling, Executive Director  
Tel: (503) 926-5843

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Central Oregon  
1900 NE Division St., Suite 205  
*Mailing address:*  
P.O. Box 5578  
Bend, OR 97708  
Barbara Preble, Executive Director  
Tel: (503) 389-6181  
*Satellite offices:*  
LaPine  
Madras  
Prineville  
(Schedule appointments through Bend office)  
Tel: (503) 389-6181

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Lane County, Inc.  
P.O. Box 10845  
Eugene, OR 97440-2845  
Robertta Dubois, Executive Director  
Tel: (503) 342-4459

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Grants Pass  
(Serving Josephine County)  
1314 NE Foster Way  
Grants Pass, OR 97526  
Judy Gent, Executive Director  
Tel: (503) 479-6002

Consumer Credit Counseling Service  
of Southern Oregon, Inc.  
820 Crater Lake Ave., #206  
Medford, OR 97054  
Jan Safley, Director  
Tel: (503) 779-2273  
FAX: (503) 779-6412  
*Satellite office:*  
Klamath Falls: (503) 883-8118

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Coos-Curry, Inc.  
140 N 2nd St.  
Coos Bay, OR 97420  
Deborah L. Graham, Executive Director  
Tel: (503) 267-7040

Consumer Credit Counseling Service  
of Umatilla County, Inc.  
17 SW Fraser, Suite 324  
P.O. Box 582  
Pendleton, OR 97801  
John A. Amort, President  
Tel: (503) 276-3856

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Oregon, Inc.  
3633 SE 35th Place  
P.O. Box 42488  
Portland, OR 97242  
Lawrence Winthrop, President  
Tel: (503) 232-8139  
FAX: (503) 230-1640  
*Branch offices:*  
Vancouver, WA (206) 694-7564  
Longview, WA (206) 425-4520  
Gresham, OR (503) 232-8139  
Beaverton, OR (503) 232-8139  
Oregon City, OR (503) 232-8139  
McMinnville, OR 232-8139

Douglas Consumer Credit Counseling Service  
P.O. Box 1011  
Roseburg, OR 97470  
Linda Smith, Executive Director  
Tel: (503) 673-3104

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Mid-Willamette  
Valley, Inc.  
1900 Hines St. SE, #100  
P.O. Box 13609  
Salem, OR 97309  
Frank Lackey, Executive Director  
Tel: (503) 581-7301

\* These are non-profit counseling agencies. They do not lend money. They provide advice and counsel, without charge, about credit problems. There may be similar counseling available through other non-profit organizations such as churches or family counseling agencies.

Occasionally there will be an advertisement for credit counseling, but the purpose is to get your business: either to loan you money or to file a bankruptcy. Be suspicious of a credit counselor who is trying to loan you money or file a bankruptcy.



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# Deciding Which Bills to Pay First

When you're between jobs, the paychecks may stop coming but the bills keep coming. When you don't have enough money to cover your basic living expenses and pay all your creditors, you face some difficult financial decisions.

When your income is reduced, your spending habits must change. The sooner you change, the more likely your financial problems can be lessened. Your family should be part of the decision-making process, since their cooperation is essential to carry out your plans.

## Sizing Up Your Situation

When your bills exceed the money to pay them, contact the people to whom you owe money — your creditors — and explain your situation. Creditors will usually work with you to adjust your payments because they want their money.

Before you can talk to your creditors, you need to look at your situation and make decisions about how much and when you can pay. First, answer the following questions.

- How much income can you count on each month?
- How much money is needed to cover your essential monthly living expenses?
- How many creditors do you owe and what is the total amount you owe? Completing the worksheet "Debts Owed" on the next page can help you get a clearer picture of what and how much you owe.
- How long is your present financial situation likely to last?
- What assets (savings, items that could be sold) do you have that could be used to pay off your debt?

- What debts are the most important to repay first?
- What debts could be satisfied by voluntarily surrendering, or giving back, the item?

## Who Gets Paid First?

You are legally obligated to pay all of your creditors. If you can't pay all your bills, you must decide how much to pay to which creditors. One way is to divide available money and pay every creditor a share of what you owe. This is probably the fairest way, but it doesn't always work because each creditor must agree to reduce the amount they receive and extend the payment period.

A second method is to prioritize which creditors receive the most money. Decide which debts would result in the worst consequences for your family if they weren't paid or were paid less than the amount due. Ask yourself the questions below.

*What will affect my family's health and security the most?* Usually the house, utilities, food, transportation and medical insurance take priority. Don't be tempted to let medical insurance slide when money is tight. If anyone in your family becomes ill, uninsured medical costs could be devastating. Pay high-priority bills or contact the creditors at once to work out smaller payments.

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Adapted for use in Oregon from a University of Wisconsin-Extension publication (B3459-3).

EC 1393 • Reprinted January 1993



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*What will you lose if the bills aren't paid?* You can lose your purchases if the creditor holds the title of the property as security for the loan: a home mortgage or car loan, for example. Sometimes furniture and large appliance loans are secured loans. If you aren't sure which loans are secured, check the credit contract. Unsecured debts may have to take lower priority, although you are obligated to pay them too.

*How much do you still owe on the loan?* Determine how much you have paid on each loan and how much you owe. If you have only one or two payments to make on a loan, it's probably a good idea to finish paying it, getting that debt out of the way. You may be able to return newer items or sell them to pay off the debt. If you choose to voluntarily surrender the item, you'll still be required to pay the difference between the market value of the item and the amount remaining on the loan. But getting you out from under some of your debts can reduce the pressure you feel.

*What interest rate are you paying?* Pay off a higher-interest credit card balance first, to reduce the amount of finance charges you are paying. Until your financial situation improves, destroying your credit cards and closing your accounts may be a good idea. At least put credit cards away in a safe place so you are not tempted to use them.

*Is a consolidation loan a good idea?* Personal finance companies want you to think so, but generally a consolidation loan charges a high interest rate, often 20 percent or more. And, refinancing to smaller monthly payments will extend the number of payments you must make, adding to the total cost. While a single loan may make payment easier, that's a small benefit considering the additional costs involved.

*What about your credit record?* Nonpayment of bills is recorded on your credit record and can damage your ability to get credit in the future. That's why contacting all of your creditors immediately if you cannot pay your bills is important. If you can pay something on each debt, it's less likely that your problems will be reported on your credit record.

## Worksheet—Debts Owed

Creditor's name, address and phone number	Account number	Interest rate	Is debt secured? If so, by what?	Total balance owed
<b>Total</b>				

## Your Repayment Plan

Once you have calculated how much money you have for monthly living expenses and for paying off your debts, decide how much you can pay to each creditor, based on priorities you determined while answering the questions above. Work out a repayment plan that shows how much you plan to pay each creditor. Put this plan in writing.

If there is a consumer credit counseling service in your area, make an appointment and take this information with you. If there is no consumer credit counseling service, contact each of your creditors to explain your situation. You'll need to tell them how much you are able to pay and when you will be able to pay it.

Some businesses, such as utility companies, have special counselors for customers who can't pay their bills. These counselors can help you set up a budget plan to even out your payments during the year. They can also tell you if you qualify for fuel assistance or any available programs.

## Making It Work

Remember — no matter how bad your situation may be, don't ignore your bills and creditors. Prompt action is very important; let your creditors know you are having trouble before you miss payments and the situation becomes worse.

Once you have worked out a repayment plan, follow through with it and make the payments you promised to make. If you fall behind on your new commitments, creditors will be less understanding. If you fail to make the payments, creditors may hire a collection agency to make you pay.

Pretending you have no money problems won't make the problems go away. You and your family must face the situation honestly. Openly discuss spending decisions with all family members. This will help everyone realize that changes and sacrifices must be made for your plan to be successful.

Payment due date	Number of payments left	Original monthly payment	Date of last payment	Amount of last payment	Has legal action been taken?
Total					

## References

"Dealing With Creditors When Income Is Reduced." Cooperative Extension Service, Cornell University. 1983.

Maddux, Esther. "How to Get Out of Debt." Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia. 1985.

Thomas, Natalie. "Coping With Creditors." Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska. 1986.

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## For More Information

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EC 1391, *Setting Spending Priorities*

EC 1392, *Strategies for Spending Less*

EC 1393, *Deciding Which Bills to Pay First*

EC 1394, *Talking With Creditors*

EC 1395, *Keeping A Roof Overhead*

EC 1396, *Bartering*

EC 1397, *Making the Most of What You Have*

EC 1398, *Accepting Your Feelings*

EC 1399, *Living Better With Stress*

EC 1400, *Identifying Sources of Support and Friendship*

EC 1401, *How You Can Help When Your Mom or Dad is Unemployed*

EC 1402, *Deciding If Teens Should Work*

EC 1403, *Helping Children Cope*



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# Keeping a Roof Overhead

Keeping a roof overhead is an important concern when you lose income. If you rank your bills in order of priority, chances are housing is at or near the top of the list.

One of the biggest household expenses is housing. Housing expenses include mortgage or rent payments, insurance, taxes, household maintenance and repair, utility bills, furnishings, and cleaning supplies.

When your income drops, careful planning can help you avoid eviction from your rental unit or the loss of your house.

## Rent Payments

If you rent, tell your landlord about your situation before rent is due. Ask for a postponement until your income resumes. Offer to provide some service, such as painting, in exchange for rent. Suggest a smaller payment for a month or two, with the understanding that you will catch up when your income increases again. Often it "costs" money for a landlord to change tenants, so they may be willing to work with you. Be sure to get agreements in writing.

In Oregon, if you do not pay your rent according to the terms of the lease, you will be in violation of a contract. The Attorney General's office recommends that if you are in this position, you should consult with a lawyer.

If you are renting month to month, and you do not pay your rent when it is due, your landlord can take these steps:

1. After 7 days, issue 72 hours' notice and demand rent.
2. After 72 hours, go through courts to get forcible entry and unlawful detainer document and a court date.
3. Resolve issue in court.

## Mortgage Payments

With reduced or lost income, you quickly feel the stress of a sizable mortgage payment.

If your loss of income will be for only a few months, you may be able to cut back on other expenses to meet your mortgage payments.

**Important: If you miss a mortgage payment, you have defaulted on your contract and your lender can begin foreclosure on your home.**

If meeting your mortgage payment appears impossible, *contact your lender immediately.*

You may be able to skip a payment or arrange a lower payment. Take along a new spending plan that fits your reduced income.

Most lenders would rather avoid the time and cost involved in a foreclosure if another alternative can be worked out.

If your loss of income is going to last a long time or be permanent, you will need to consider other options. You don't have to live under the extreme stress and strain of meeting mortgage payments that are too high. Some options are:

- Taking in a roomer or renter and use the money towards mortgage payments.
- Renting the present house to someone else and renting less costly housing for yourself.
- Selling the present house and buying or renting less costly housing.
- Moving in with relatives or friends. Offer to share some of the housing costs.
- Deeding the house back to the lender. You may not lose much. For example, if you've been paying on a mortgage for 10 years, you have not paid for much of the home yet—only about 10

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percent. If by staying in this house you won't have enough money for food or other necessities, you may find it less stressful to leave the house and find less expensive housing.

## Other Housing Costs

### Insurance Payments

Homeowner or renter's insurance protects you in case of loss or damage to property. During times of reduced income, it's important to have property insurance.

If you can't make an insurance payment, call or write your agent or the company. There may be some leeway (10 to 30 days) in premium payment due dates.

Explain your situation and offer to consider a different payment plan. Check to see if smaller premiums are possible through:

- changing to a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual payment plan with the same coverage
- changing to a more basic coverage
- changing the deductible
- putting in fire proofing and some alarm options.
- examining coverage on outbuildings in relation to home

### Real Estate Taxes

If you are unable to pay taxes, contact your local county treasurer to learn about procedures used when property taxes are delinquent. Interest accumulates on unpaid taxes.

You'll receive notice of any actions. Take these notices seriously. Eventually, unpaid taxes will result in the sale of your property through auction.

Homeowners who are at least 62 years old and whose total annual household income does not exceed \$19,500 can apply for property tax defer-

ral through the County Assessor's office. The program defers payment of property tax until the property is sold (or changes hands). In return for deferring taxes, the state places a lien on the property.

### Utility Payments

Utility cut-offs can and do occur. Disconnection varies with weather and family conditions.

If you can't make full payments on your utility bill:

- Contact the company right away—*before the due date and before fuel is needed.*
- Propose a new payment plan based on your current ability to pay. Take along information about your income and expenses when you go to see your utility company.
- Check to see if you are eligible for your area's fuel assistance program through your local Social Services agency.
- Talk with family members to decide how you will safely reduce the use of your utilities to cut costs.

### Telephone Bills

Your telephone bill has a preferred pay date. If you don't pay within 10–15 days, you'll receive a notice of delinquency. At that time you will be notified when disconnection will occur.

To get service again, you may be required to:

- pay your prior bill in full
- reapply for service and pay installation charges
- pay a large deposit

Begin to cut expenses by eliminating all non-emergency long distance calls. (Write a letter instead.) Consider buying rather than renting your phone or changing to a less expensive type of phone service. Check with your phone company for ideas on cutting costs.



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# Setting Spending Priorities

Faced with reduced income, you'll need to cut back on spending and develop a spending plan to help you pay your bills. If your income will be reduced for more than a month, adjust your spending habits to maintain control of your finances.

Many people try to hide financial problems from themselves or family members. Not facing your problems can be very destructive because the worry and stress caused by financial uncertainty and lack of cash may be worse than the financial problem itself. It's important to look realistically at your situation and actively seek solutions to your problems, despite the discomfort.

Because spending decisions affect the whole family, talk with your family about your situation. Let them know you need to change your spending. Involve them in deciding spending priorities. If family members understand the tough choices that must be made and have a voice in making the decisions, they will be more willing to accept the decisions.

As your family talks about what is most important, be sure to listen to what others say. Supporting each other can help you pull together as a family and get through these hard times.

## How Other Families Handle Reduced Income

Studies show families respond to reduced income by cutting back on their spending for nonessentials such as luxuries, vacations, eating out, and home furnishings. As the period of unemployment or reduced income continues, many families

also report reduced spending for basic needs including food, shelter, transportation, and medical care.

Families also say they revise their budgets. Most make a new spending plan that includes a revised plan for getting the bills paid.

Fewer families report increasing their income or using more credit as ways to manage during unemployment. Borrowing or using credit to pay bills often brings only temporary relief. For those families who did increase their use of credit, the more they borrowed, the more unhappy they were with their financial situation.

The studies also found that families who quickly made changes in their spending habits were the most satisfied with how they were managing during unemployment. Families who didn't make changes felt more out of control and more dissatisfied.

## Making a Spending Plan

A spending plan is always an effective tool to help you get the most for your money. It is even more important when you have a sudden change in your income. A spending plan helps you:

- make decisions about how to spend your money;
- provide for needs before wants;
- match your spending to your current income; and
- prevent family arguments over money.

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Worksheet 1 on page 4, "Monthly Spending Plan," can help you set up a spending plan for your current income. By comparing your income and planned expenses before and after your income was reduced, you can see what changes are needed.

### Step 1 — Your Income

Add up your current total family income from all sources. Include Unemployment Compensation as well as income from other family members if it is used for family expenses. Use the take-home amount, or what you actually have to spend after deductions.

Do you receive income from any of these sources?

- Earnings from employed family members
- Unemployment Compensation
- Withdrawal from savings
- Tips or commissions
- Interest or dividends
- Social Security
- Child support or alimony
- Public assistance
- Veterans benefits

List your income now and before it was reduced on the spending plan worksheet.

### Step 2 — Your Monthly Expenses

If you had a spending plan before your income was reduced, you probably know how much you were spending for monthly expenses. If not, use old records, canceled checks, bills, and receipts to figure out how much you spent on the following categories.

- *Housing* — mortgage or rent payments, property taxes
- *Utilities* — electricity, gas, oil, phone, water, cable TV
- *Food* — groceries, eating out, school lunches
- *Transportation* — gas, car repairs and maintenance, parking, bus, taxi fares
- *Medical Care* — doctor, dentist, clinic, hospital, medicine, glasses

- *Credit Payments* — car payments, installment loans, credit cards, charge accounts
- *Insurance* — health, life, property, car, disability
- *Household Operations and Maintenance* — repairs, cleaning supplies, paper supplies, towels, equipment
- *Clothing and Personal Care* — new clothing purchases, laundry, dry cleaning, hair care, cosmetics, toiletries
- *Education and Recreation* — books, magazines, newspapers, lessons, tuition, hobbies, club dues, sports, pet expenses, entertainment, vacation, alcohol, tobacco
- *Miscellaneous* — child care, gifts, contributions, personal allowances, child support

Remember, not all your expenses are monthly. Property taxes, insurance premiums, and holiday gifts come once or twice a year. It's easy to forget about them and then not have the money to pay for them. Worksheet 2 on page 5, "Occasional and Seasonal Expenses" can help you identify and anticipate these expenses. You will need to set aside some money in your monthly spending plan to meet these occasional costs.

As you think about what you were spending and try to plan how much you can now spend, ask yourself these questions:

- Which expenses are essential to your family's well-being?
- Which expenses have the highest priority? The publication, *Deciding Which Bills to Pay First*, EC 1393, can help you determine this.
- Which areas can you reduce to keep your spending within your income?
- How much can you afford to spend in each category?

Adjust the amounts you spend in each expense category and enter the new amount in the column labeled "Adjusted Amount" on the spending plan worksheet.

### Step 3 — Balance Income and Expenses

Add up your adjusted expenses and compare the total to your current income. When your income is reduced, it may be very difficult to stay within your income. What can you do if your expenses are greater than your income?

- *Cut back on spending.* See EC 1392, *Strategies for Spending Less*, for suggestions, particularly for reducing flexible expenses.
- *Increase your income.* What are the possibilities for part-time or temporary work to help supplement your income during this period of unemployment? Use your non-dollar resources, too. See EC 1396, *Bartering*.
- *Look at your other assets.* What savings, investments or property do you have that could be used or converted to cash to meet expenses. See EC 1397, *Making the Most of What You Have*. Keep in mind that borrowing and using savings may be only temporary solutions.
- *Reduce your fixed expenses.* If too much of your income is going to fixed expenses such as housing or debt payments, there may not be enough money left to cover your other living expenses. You may need to refinance your loans, move to lower-cost housing, or surrender the property to your creditor to get out from under some of your debt. EC 1394, *Talking With Creditors*, and EC 1395, *Keeping a Roof Overhead*, may help.

### Making Your Spending Plan Work

Once you have a spending plan that sets spending amounts for essential family needs and balances your spending with your income, you'll have to stick to it. Writing it down is not enough. You must use the plan to guide your spending.

### Managing on a Seasonal or Irregular Income

If you are self-employed, seasonally employed, or receive income from tips or commissions, your family income may change from month to month. In that case, look ahead and carefully estimate your income. It may be helpful to

estimate your income for a whole year so you can see when and how much it changes.

Even though your income may change from one month to the next, many of your living expenses are the same each month. This mismatch of income and expenses creates uncertainty that can cause feelings of insecurity and increase family tension.

Reduce this uncertainty by establishing a monthly family living allowance. Use expenses you identified as part of your spending plan to determine your monthly living allowance, or what it costs your family to live each month.

When you receive income, deposit a major portion of it in a special savings or money market account where it will earn interest but still be readily available. Then, each month pay yourself by withdrawing the amount of your family living allowance and putting it into your checking account to pay your bills. Avoid the temptation to spend more money in the months when your income is greater.

As a family on a seasonal or irregular income, you may want to schedule some major expenses such as insurance premiums, clothing purchases, and non-emergency medical and dental care to coincide with times of more income.

### Summary

Living on a reduced income may be temporary or prolonged. Getting the most from your income during this time requires careful planning and wise spending decisions.

A spending plan based on what you and your family consider to be most important, can help you balance your spending with your available income and resources. Keeping track of your spending will help ensure that you have the money for the things your family needs most.

### References

"Coping with Unemployment." Texas Agricultural Extension Service. 1986.

Wilhelm, M.S., D.R. Iams, and C.A. Ridley. *Changes in Consumption Management During Unemployment and Their Impact on Economic Satisfaction*. University of Arizona, 1987.

# Worksheet 1—Monthly Spending Plan

Month \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_

	Before Income Was Reduced	Adjusted Amount
<b>Step 1 - Your Income (Take-home)*</b>		
Salary, wages .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Unemployment Compensation.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Other .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
<i>A. Total Monthly Income</i> .....	\$ _____	\$ _____

<b>Step 2 - Monthly Expenses</b>		
Housing — mortgage or rent payment.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Utilities — electric, gas, phone, etc .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Food—at home and away .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Transportation—gas, car repairs .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Medical Care—doctor, dentist, hospital .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Credit Payments—loans, credit cards .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Insurance—life, health, car, property.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Household Operations and Maintenance—repairs, cleaning supplies, etc.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Clothing and Personal Care—clothes, laundry, toiletries, etc .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Education and Recreation .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Miscellaneous—child care, gifts, allowances .....	\$ _____	\$ _____
Savings and/or funds set aside for seasonal and occasional expenses.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
<i>B. Total Monthly Expenses</i> .....	\$ _____	\$ _____

### Step 3 - Balance Income and Expenses

Total Monthly Income (A) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Monthly Expenses (B)

\* Because most bills are monthly, it's easiest to look at income and expenses on a monthly basis. Multiply weekly income by 4.33 and bi-weekly income by 2.17 to convert them to monthly amounts.

## Worksheet 2—Occasional and Seasonal Expenses

Some big expenses like property taxes and insurance premiums come up only once or twice a year. Others are seasonal, such as school clothes in the fall and holiday gifts in December. Use this chart to help you estimate these expenses and include them in your spending plan.

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>January</b>		<b>July</b>	
<b>February</b>		<b>August</b>	
<b>March</b>		<b>September</b>	
<b>April</b>		<b>October</b>	
<b>May</b>		<b>November</b>	
<b>June</b>		<b>December</b>	

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# Financial Planning *Family Goals*

A.M. Morrow and S.F. Krein

What would you do if you inherited or won a million dollars? How would you spend this wealth to gain the greatest happiness?

You say you'll never win a million dollars? Maybe not. But the chances are very good that, during your lifetime, you and your spouse will *earn* that much. You spend hours and hours earning money; why not spend time planning how to use it? This publication can help you begin your family financial planning.

Family financial planning is concerned with today and tomorrow. It involves determining goals and arranging resources to reach these goals while living as comfortably as possible. Financial planning means answering these questions about your family:

- How does our family want to live?
- What activities are important to our family?
- What do individual family members need and want?
- What financial resources are available to us?

## Values and goals are not the same

Values are your beliefs about what is "good" and what is "important." We don't achieve values; we express them through the accomplishment of our goals. Examples of values are safety, security, health, prestige, knowledge, and love.

Values influence how we use our time, energy, and money—and our use of time, energy, and money reflects the values we hold.

Goals are influenced by the values of the whole family and also by the values of individual family members.

Goals are often described as long-term, intermediate, and short-term. Long-term goals are general and take years to attain. Intermediate and short-term goals often are steps toward long-term goals.

For example, a long-term goal might be to have a satisfying retirement. Intermediate goals leading toward this goal might include

developing interests and friends outside of work, providing for a certain level of income, and maintaining good physical health. A short-term financial goal might be to deposit a specific sum of money in a retirement account this year.

A clear knowledge of goals makes it easier to allocate resources to reach them. In other words, knowing your goals means you have a better chance of achieving them.

Successful managers think about and plan for the future. They attempt to shape events, rather than letting events shape them.

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Alice Mills Morrow, Extension family economics specialist, Oregon State University, and Sheila Fitzgerald Krein, family economist. This publication was adapted in part from Extension Circular 1097, *Setting Farm Business Goals*.

Extension Circular 1267 / Revised June 1991

**Oregon State University Extension Service**

particular date). The net worth statement shows what financial resources you have. After looking it over, you may see that you have already taken steps toward meeting some goals.

The income/expense statement shows how your income has been spent in the past. By studying

this you may find ways to increase savings to work toward future goals.

Budget a specific amount of money to be saved on a regular basis.

## A special case: The family business

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If your family owns and operates a business, such as a farm, ranch, or woodland, your family goals and family business goals are interrelated. For example, deciding when to thin or harvest timber will depend in part on business factors (stage of timber stand development; existing market situation), and in part on family factors (when family members involved in the business will be available to work; when the family most needs additional income).

Family business goals and family goals may be competitive, independent, or complementary. A farm family may have one goal of investing more in the farm business and another of increasing family consumption. With a fixed amount of

money available, these goals are competitive, at least in the short run.

In a family business, the goals and their order of importance will differ among family members. This may result in conflict. To minimize or resolve this conflict, consider and discuss the goals of *all* family members. Family members should work together in setting the direction for the family business.

When the family business includes more than one family or more than one generation, it becomes even more important to consider and discuss the goals of all family members. Both business and family goals change with age. The ideas and concerns of a 30-year-old usually differ from those of a 65-year-old.

## Putting it in writing

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Transfer your list of financial goals to worksheet 2, or make a worksheet of your own. Before deciding on a plan of action, try to answer two basic questions that are related to all goals:

1. How much will it cost to reach this goal?
2. How much time do we have to reach it?

**Estimate the cost.** The first question may be the most difficult to answer. You don't know how much a new car will cost in 3 years, let alone the cost of retirement or a college education in 10 or more years. A good starting point is to figure out what these would cost today.

The costs of attaining most goals are likely to rise in the future. A 6% annual inflation rate will cause prices to double in 12 years (see "The Rule of 72").

To get an estimate of the future price, look into how much the price has changed in the last few years. Try to find out if future price changes are likely to be the same. Talk to the experts—for example, those in college admissions offices or directors of retirement centers—to get an idea of future prices. Put this figure in column one.

The figure may look very high, especially if it pertains to a long-term goal.

**How much time do we have?** Is it 6 months or 15 years? You have more time to save for long-term goals; so if you begin saving early, the amount you need to put away each year will be much smaller than if you wait. In column two, write the amount of time, or the expected starting and completion dates, for each goal.

The value of money changes over time. If you're planning a future expenditure, remember that a particular goal is likely to cost more than it does today. On the other hand, time is an asset, because with time savings earn interest.

With careful planning, you can usually make your savings grow at a rate higher than the inflation rate. Some financial experts suggest a reasonable annual rate of return is 2 to 3% more than the annual inflation rate.

The rate of return, the amount of money available to invest, the inflation rate, and the length of time are all important factors (although not the only ones) in determining if enough money will be available to attain a particular financial goal.

# Determining family goals

Think about the goals of individuals in your family and goals for the family as a whole. As your family grows and develops, goals will change. Financial planning means thinking ahead and anticipating changes.

See figure 1 for a list of financial goals common to many families.

Provide for daily living expenses  
Establish a credit rating  
Establish a savings program  
Set up an emergency fund  
Protect against financial risk  
Train for a career  
Plan for and make major purchases  
Plan for and take vacation(s)  
Save for down payment on a house  
Budget for repairs  
Protect against long-term disability  
Provide for the cost of having and raising children  
Provide for expanding household needs  
Maximize financial management skills of all family members  
Plan for change in life style  
Upgrade career/vocational training  
Build an education fund  
Plan for business opportunities  
Attain financial independence  
Establish and work toward retirement goals  
Maximize investments  
Secure reliable assistance for managing economic affairs  
Reevaluate and adjust living conditions and spending in relation to health and income  
Avoid excess taxation

Figure 1.—These financial goals are common to most adults at some stage of their family life.

There is no best procedure for setting goals; different individuals and families use different approaches. The following suggestions provide a starting point for developing a goal-setting system.

**Set aside definite times for goal setting.** To begin, try setting aside some time each week to list ideas about possible goals. Then, devote a few hours at the beginning of each month to review progress toward goals, to revise some, and to set new ones. Once you feel comfortable with the system, an annual goal review may be all you need. Try to involve the entire family in the goal-setting process.

**Assess what you've done in the past.** What were the major family decisions over the past 3 years? What were the circumstances surrounding each decision? Try to recall the alternatives that you considered. This process forces you to examine what your goals were in the past. Would your decisions be different today? How have your goals changed?

**Develop a list of short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals.** Generally, a short-term goal is one you plan to attain within 1 year; an intermediate goal, 2 to 5 years from now; and a long-term goal, longer than 5 years.

Examine the relationships among these goals. Are they complementary, competitive, or independent? Will the achievement of one goal help, hinder, or have no effect on the achievement of other goals?

**Have each family member develop lists of short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals.** Then, as a family, discuss and identify the areas of agreement and disagreement.

Next, develop one list of family goals. List them in order of priority. Using worksheet 1, list events that require financial planning and see how they fit into a timeline.

No family can predict what will happen in 20 or 30 years. But you can predict when parents will reach retirement age and when children will reach college age. You can be specific about events likely to occur in the next few years.

## Your family's financial situation

Have you already begun saving toward a particular goal? What resources are available that you can put toward each goal? To answer these questions, it helps to be aware of your financial situation in general. A family net worth statement

and an income/expense statement help you do this. (See EC 1381, *Financial Planning: Preparing and Using Financial Statements*.)

A net worth statement lists assets (what you own) and liabilities (what you owe on a



# Worksheet 1.—Future events requiring money and planning

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

List for the appropriate year, items or events your family would like that will cost more than you usually spend.

---

40 years

---

20 years

---

10 years

---

5 years

---

4 years

---

3 years

---

2 years

---

1 year

---

Now

---

## Worksheet 2.—Family financial goals

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

List the goals with highest priority first. Use additional paper if needed.

Goals	Approximate cost	Amount of time or ending and starting dates	Action to take
-------	------------------	---	----------------

**Short-term:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Intermediate:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Long-term:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

You can use a pocket financial calculator to determine the present and future value of money. You can determine how much you need to deposit today or how many monthly deposits you'll need to have a specific amount of money in the future. You can also determine how much your current savings will be worth in the future.

**There's help available.** Many people try to save a little each month for a specific goal. To find out how much you need to save each month, use a financial calculator or time value tables, or talk with a banker, accountant, or financial planner.

There are resources available to help you figure how much your goals will cost and how much you need to save to meet them. You might find that determining the cost of your financial goals is the easier step—and that making the time and effort to put the plan into action is the more difficult step.

But don't delay: The biggest problem is procrastination. Remember, time is money.

**Plan for action.** Now you're ready for the last step, writing a plan for action. First, include any resources you can devote to, or any steps you have taken toward, each of your goals.

Then indicate your future steps. They might include statements like:

- "Begin saving \$35 per month at 6% interest,"
- "Save 15% of next pay raise,"
- "By April, start saving about \$60 per month,"
- "Need to investigate savings and investment opportunities immediately," or
- "Use \$500 from savings to buy a savings bond for Jennifer's college fund."

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## The Rule of 72

This rule tells how long it takes for money to double at a particular interest rate. To use this rule, divide the number 72 by the interest rate. The answer is the number of years it takes for money to double.

For example, it takes 12 years for a \$1,000 investment to grow to \$2,000 with a 6% annual interest rate ( $72 \div 6 = 12$ ). In another 12 years, it will double again. With a 9% interest rate, the same \$1,000 takes only 8 years to double ( $72 \div 9 = 8$ ).

The Rule of 72 will also tell you how long it takes for prices to double at a particular inflation rate. Divide 72 by the inflation rate to obtain the number of years for the price to double.

---

Now evaluate worksheet 2. Is it realistic? Have you allowed enough time to attain your goals? If not, you might need to extend the expected completion date of one goal and/or defer the starting date of another goal.

It's important to evaluate your plan periodically as economic, personal, and family factors change. Remember that setting and reaching goals is an evolving process. As you reach some goals, new goals will develop.

The most important step is to begin. Start with the goals that have highest priority. There are many demands for your time, energy, and money. Writing your goals helps you set financial priorities.

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## Another publication on financial planning

Another financial planning publication is available from Oregon State University. To order a copy, send the following form and a check (*make it payable to OSU*) to: Agricultural Communications, Publications Orders, Administrative Services Bldg. 422, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331-2119. If you'd like more than one copy, please call us at (503) 737-2513 for a price quote.

Please send one copy of the following publication:

EC 1381, Financial Planning: Preparing and Using Financial Statements

I enclose my check for 75¢ for this publication (including shipping and handling).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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# Estate Planning for Families with Minor Children

A.M. Morrow

Most parents live to see their children's 18th birthdays. Most children never need guardians, conservators, or trusts. Statistically, it is unlikely that one parent will die while his or her child is a minor. It is even more unlikely that both parents will die. But it does happen.

For parents with modest estates and minor children, property and guardianship are the primary estate-planning concerns. (There is no estate tax on taxable estates of less than \$600,000. If the taxable estate exceeds \$600,000, tax planning is needed.) The parents need to decide how to provide income for their children if one or both parents die, to whom their property will be distributed, and how it will be managed to provide financial resources for their children. They also must decide who will care for their youngsters should both parents die.

Estate planning attorneys can help parents with minor children plan their estate and can help parents weigh advantages and disadvantages of various estate planning tools and techniques. The most difficult part of the planning for the parents is making complex family decisions relating to lifestyle, values, goals, and relationships.

Every family is different, so they all have different estate planning situations. Some families have one employed parent and in others both parents are employed. Some parents are single, either because they have never married or because their marriage has ended through death or divorce. When divorced parents remarry, they create families of "yours, mine, and ours." If a family has a handicapped child, extra planning is usually needed.

Let's look at the estate planning of some young families.

## A first marriage

Mary and John Douglas have typical young-family estate-planning concerns. In their early 30s, Mary and John have two children, ages 5 and 7. Mary and John assume that if one of them died, the other would use family assets to provide for the children. They discussed the possibility that the survivor might remarry and have more children, and they still felt comfortable leaving everything to the survivor. They accomplished this by titling car, house, and investments in joint tenancies with rights of survivorship so that if either spouse dies, the property will pass to the survivor. They also have named each other as beneficiary on their life insurance policies. They know that if their assets ever exceed a value of \$600,000, this may no longer be an appropriate plan.

But Mary and John also need a plan in case they both die prematurely. Their first idea was to prepare simple wills dividing their assets equally between the two children. However, they reconsidered this plan after learning that the court would appoint a conservator to manage property passing to the children while they are minors. Then, when the children turned 18, each would receive the property to manage, regardless of financial capability. Mary and John think their children are bright, but they still don't like the idea of their children managing \$100,000 or \$200,000 while so young.

Rather than leaving the assets to the children outright, Mary and John followed the estate planner's suggestion to make wills leaving everything to the surviving spouse or, if there is no survivor, to a testamentary trust for the children's benefit. The insurance

proceeds will also be paid to the trust if both parents die. In establishing the testamentary trust, the parents selected the trustee and prepared a trust agreement giving the trustee the power to manage the trust and use the income for the children. The trust will avoid the inflexibility of conservatorship.

For the Douglases, the most difficult part of creating the trust involved the family questions they had to answer—questions about what activities and experiences they consider important for their children and, if there is not enough income for everything, which of those are most important. Now they feel they have a flexible plan that will provide financial management tailored to their children's needs.

Mary and John also nominated a guardian for the children in case both parents die. The guardian has the power and responsibility of a parent and makes decisions about the child's upbringing: schooling, religious training, and medical treatment. The mechanical aspects of nominating a guardian were easy; it was done in their wills. The difficult part for the Douglases was deciding whom to nominate, but eventually they decided John's sister, Ruth, who lives nearby and has been very involved in the children's lives, would be the best choice. They also nominated a good family friend as an alternate in case Ruth cannot or does not want to be appointed when the time comes. Mary and John talked at length with both Ruth and the friend about their dreams and hopes for their children.

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*Alice Mills Morrow, Extension family economics specialist, Oregon State University.*



Mary and John don't expect this plan ever will be implemented. Still, they intend to review it periodically to check for financial or family changes that might require adjusting the plan.

### A family with a handicapped child

When there is a family member who will never be able to care for himself or herself, estate planning is more complex and more important. The Capizzis have been married 25 years and have two sons already finished with college. Their third child, though, is 10 years old and was born with Down's syndrome. Robin lives at home and most likely will never be able to care for herself completely. The Capizzis' estate plan must account for Robin's special needs.

The Capizzis have an estate plan that leaves everything to the surviving spouse, and both feel the survivor would use the assets to care for Robin. But because Robin could outlive both parents, they also need to plan for what will happen when they are gone.

At first, the Capizzis thought they might leave everything to their older children, Douglas and Kurt, and instruct them to care for Robin. But they decided that would not be fair to the boys nor to Robin. Instead, they will leave some assets outright to Kurt and Douglas and some in trust to provide income for Robin's support.

The Capizzis also knew if Robin has income, she would become ineligible for need-based government benefits. In addition, income might be claimed to reimburse the state if Robin ever has to be in a state-supported care facility. With help from their attorney and the Association for Retarded Citizens, they developed an estate plan that leaves Robin's assets to a "spendthrift trust," ensuring that trust assets will not be used in place of public benefits and that trust income will not make Robin ineligible for government programs.

Because Robin probably will not be able to make her own important decisions, the Capizzis have nominated Evelyn's sister, Louise, as guardian. Louise is well informed about Robin's

needs and care. The Capizzis know that this plan may have to be changed later as Louise ages. When they decide to name an alternate guardian, they will amend their wills.

### A second marriage

Recently married, both Mary and Richard Zinn have children from earlier marriages. Neither of them wants to leave everything to the surviving spouse; Mary has a 10-year-old daughter to think of, and Richard has two children, a 24-year-old and a 14-year-old. Richard's divorce settlement requires that a stated amount of insurance be for his younger child's benefit.

Mary and Richard own nothing in joint tenancy with rights of survivorship except their cars. Their other assets are titled in just one name—some in Mary's name and some in Richard's name.

Mary's will leaves the household contents to Richard and her other assets to a trust for her daughter's benefit. Her insurance proceeds will also pass into the trust. Mary was especially anxious not to have assets passing outright to her daughter since there is a chance the child's father, Mary's former husband, would be appointed conservator.

The trust agreement instructs the trustee to use income and as much of the principal as necessary for the care and education of Mary's daughter. Any assets remaining in the trust will be distributed in installments starting on her 25th birthday.

Richard's will leaves household contents to Mary. He also has named her as beneficiary on one of his insurance policies. Richard considered dividing his other assets and insurance proceeds equally between his two daughters. However, he decided distributing the estate in equal shares may not provide adequately for each child's needs. If Richard died, his 14-year-old would need more financial support than would his 24-year-old, who is already out on her own.

Richard has planned that all the assets earmarked for his children will pass into a trust. The income is to be

used for the care and education of his younger daughter. When she is 22, the assets will be distributed in installments to both daughters.

Mary and Richard used their will to name guardians for their minor children. Deciding whom to nominate was even more difficult for the Zinns than for most people because they had to discuss the plans with former spouses who are, after all, still their children's parents.

### Getting started

- Discuss your family's estate planning concerns and objectives.
- Gather the following information:
  - List of property owned and how it is titled
  - Amount of life insurance payable at death and name(s) of beneficiary
  - Death benefits from employment and Social Security
  - Existing wills, if any
  - Divorce agreements, if any
  - Marital contracts, if any
- Contact an attorney to develop your family's estate plan.

### For further reading

EC 1421, *Estate Planning: Your Will*. 50¢

EC 1375, *Planning in Advance for Health Care Decisions*. 50¢

FS 314, *Revocable Living Trusts*. No charge.

To order any of the publications listed above, send the amount shown to:

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## The Fishing-Dependent Families Project

# Casualty at Sea: A Crisis Preparation Checklist for Fishing Families

An injury, death, or vessel loss at sea is one of our greatest fears as fishermen's wives. Chances are this will not happen to you. But if it does, having organized your files using the information in the following checklist will help you deal with post-casualty demands with less stress. You will have an unbelievable amount of paperwork and other problems on your hands at a time when you are least able to cope. These suggestions come from people in the industry who have experienced a loss. Perhaps their hindsight will help others who find themselves in similar circumstances. All items pertain to vessel owners. Crewmen and their families should also pay particular attention to items marked with a "C."

### Casualty Preparation Checklist

#### Insurance

- \_\_\_ Vessel insurance adequate?
- \_\_\_ What are the limits of the vessel's hull and P.& I. insurance?
- C. \_\_\_ Life and health insurance adequate?  
\_\_\_ Marine insurance agent's name and phone number handy? Do you know your marine insurance agent or broker and feel comfortable talking with him/her? If not, get to know him better as he should be familiar with you, your husband, and your vessel.
- C. \_\_\_ Life and other insurance documents in your files where you can easily find them?
- C. \_\_\_ Beneficiary listings up to date?

#### Legal

You don't automatically need an attorney. If you are an owner, your vessel insurance company will select one if the need arises. But if you do need to find one, your family attorney will be the place to start. It's also a good idea to know of some good marine attorneys just in case. Be sure to select an attorney who is familiar with the Jones Act and the Death on High Seas Act. The attorney should also be familiar with federal and state court litigation practice, should the need to go to court arise.

- C. \_\_\_ Do you have the names and phone numbers of some good marine attorneys? Talk to several before choosing.
- C. \_\_\_ Do you have up-to-date wills for you and your husband? Where are they?

### Your files also should contain:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the last survey done on the vessel.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A sketch of the vessel locating all interior spaces (engine room, fo'c'sle, etc.) A blueprint would be ideal but these are usually difficult or impossible to obtain.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A list of all safety, navigation and other equipment placed on board the vessel since the last survey. Keep receipts handy.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A record of all vessel modifications completed since the survey.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A home video or photographs of the vessel showing location of safety equipment. Note date taken.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ A record of any safety training programs in which skipper and/or crew participated.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Safety, navigation, and other equipment maintenance and repair dates. Note those responsible for the repairs. An easy way to do that would be to keep receipts handy. Be sure to note on the receipts what work was done.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Date vessel was last drydocked for maintenance and what was done.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Names, phone numbers, and people to contact in case of emergency for all people on board.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Name and phone number of skipper or owner.

\_\_\_\_\_ When possible, know the approximate fishing location of the vessel for each trip.

C. \_\_\_\_\_ When possible, an idea of when vessel is due in port.

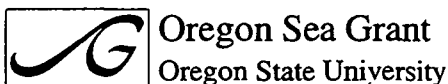
C. \_\_\_\_\_ When your husband is working away from home port, have a contact phone number on file: owner, fish plant, other fishermen. Establish a regular communication schedule with your husband if feasible.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have you considered what you would do if your husband was lost at sea but the boat salvaged?

### Handling the crisis

Ask for or accept help from a rational, clear thinking friend. If there's media coverage of the accident, discuss what you should or should not say to reporters with your attorney or insurance agent. In almost all cases, it's best to refer media to your attorney for comment.

During a search or rescue, keep yourself as well informed as possible. Go to the Coast Guard station if that's what you want to do. Ask other fishermen to help answer questions such as most likely areas the vessel was fishing, etc. If you are one of the crewmen's wives, call the owner if you are not being kept informed. Remember the owner's wife is every bit as upset as you are and is probably not thinking clearly. Keep communication lines open among all involved. Don't listen to rumors, which will run rampant and will only upset you needlessly.



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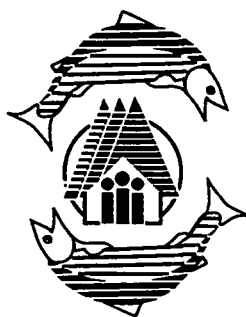
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A fishermen's wife once wrote, "The fishing marriage is unlike any other foray into wedded bliss. Keeping a relationship intact in this industry, like fishing itself, is no easy job. Fishermen's wives are a pretty resilient bunch, and fishermen are likely to see their catches in terms of mortgage payments and installments on braces..."

Balancing the fishing business and family life is a necessary task for all fishing families where the roles between work and family are less clear. When is a task fishing business or fishing family work? What if one family member wants more time focused on the family and the other wants more time focused on the business?

This section contains publications to help fishing family members understand the feelings common to all families in transition, and how to communicate and work together to keep their fishing family strong.

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\* These two articles, written by a fishermen's wife, take a candid look at the fishing marriage. The first one is from the perspective of the fishermen's wife; the second one is from the perspective of the fishermen. They have been copied, with permission, from *Pacific Fishing*, published monthly by Salmon Bay Communications, 206-789-5333.

## THE FISHING

# Marriage

Fishermen's wives take a sometimes wry, sometimes jaundiced look at their unique partnership.

The fishing marriage is unlike any other foray into wedded bliss. Few lifestyles offer, at first glance, a less snug harbor for a relationship. Separation, uncertain economics, the stresses of physical danger and the emotional overload of raising children with an absentee spouse—the common fabric of a fishing family's daily life—push the fishing marriage into the high-risk area for survival.

While the fishing community adds its share of marital casualties to the nation's high divorce statistics, the number of long and strong relationships that exist in the industry suggest that the successful fishing marriage is not an impossibility.

Nevertheless, according to the West Coast fishermen's wives who participated in a *Pacific Fishing* survey or submitted to personal interviews, keeping a relationship intact in this industry, like fishing itself, is no easy job.

Fishermen's wives are a pretty resilient bunch. They take for granted a lifestyle that the wives of grocers, bankers and postal clerks would find difficult to tolerate. The 5-day, 40-hour

week doesn't exist in fishing and payday doesn't come like clockwork, on the first and the fifteenth. The checks don't roll in until the fish are caught, and often it's weeks or months before the poundage justifies a day or two at home for the fisherman.

While the vagaries of fishing might seem intolerable to family and friends, most fishermen's wives find a way to cope with the worst of it and relish the best. "Things are hectic at times," says one mother of two whose husband is periodically away from home port for months at a time, "but the chaotic schedule and constant change are what keep me going. I might get crazy sometimes, but believe me, as a fisherman's wife, I've never been bored."

While most wives agree, after a year or two in the industry, that a 9 to 5 existence would bore them silly, every veteran of a fishing marriage will tell you there are times when they wished their husbands worked uptown instead of 5 to 10 miles offshore. "Both our babies were born when my husband was fishing," says one wife. "By the time he got in, it was all over." Another

Sometimes I don't feel like the kids even know their father."

wife claims, "The appliances wait until my husband leaves for fishing to break down and so does the car. And the kids wait till he leaves to fall out of a tree or come down with the flu."

Few hard luck stories, however, are unaccompanied by a reminder of where the "other half" is when things are bleak at home. "I have a hard time feeling sorry for myself," says one wife, "even in the worst of times. When I see how beat my husband is after a trip, I haven't got the heart to complain about the toilet overflowing or the fence falling down."

One woman, whose husband fishes from California to Alaska, but rarely delivers his catch at home, sees the industry as a real character builder. "If I wasn't independent and capable when I entered this marriage, I got there pretty quick," she says.

Most women will agree that it's a rare fisherman's wife who can't assemble a swing set, rewire a lamp, replumb a sink or jump-start a balky car. "They're skills born of necessity," one wife comments, "when there's no one else around to do them and you can't afford to hire help."

Despite the autonomy with which the fisherman's wife operates in her husband's absence, roles in the fishing marriage are by and large traditional. Perhaps it's the nature of the industry. There is no doubt that the work itself, the danger, the physical prowess it requires, reinforce the traditional masculine image of the man who masters it. There is a certain special deference shown the fisherman at home, different perhaps than that given the husband whose work is less visibly demanding.

"I do pamper my husband between trips," explains one wife, "partly because I feel like he deserves it, and

partly because he's hardly ever home. The nice things most wives might do for their husbands in an ordinary week, I've got to squeeze into a 24-hour turnaround."

Some wives say, however, that a balance is necessary, that a home in which one person is a "super citizen" is not a harmonious one. "I work hard, too," says one wife, "and could do with a little nurturing myself sometimes. No matter how willingly you bend to another person's needs, if it's not a two-way street, you begin to resent it."

Fishing absorbs much of the family's energies. Few fishermen's wives pursue careers of their own as demanding as fishing, primarily, they say, because conflicting schedules would result in virtually no time together as a family. "I'm not willing to sacrifice being with my husband when he's on the beach, for a job," says one woman. Another claims, "The kids make do with enough interrupted parenting. If I worked, the kids would really suffer, I think."

Sometimes finances make it necessary for the wife to work, however, and the family usually survives. One wife adds that she worked hard for her education and is determined to use it. "My family would be much less happy if I didn't work. They'd have a pretty frustrated wife and mother on their hands."

Nearly to a wife, those women married to skippers and boat owners feel they *do* have a career—in fishing. They see themselves, and their husbands agree, as the beach half of a fishing operation. One wife explains, "I balance the books, pay the bills, do the taxes, run errands, deal with fish buyers over price, cook meals for the boat and generally keep things smooth when my husband's on the beach so he can recharge and get out fishing again."

Another wife adds, "I'm kind of the auxiliary crewman. I've painted a few hulls in my day, redone the fo'c'sle, cleaned the galley, shoveled ice, hosed off the back deck and worked on gear. In fact, everything short of working on the machinery and fishing itself. It's my boat too and I like to take care of it."

Some brave souls join their husbands at the wheel or on the back deck. One fisherman's wife who's put in years on the ocean, describes life as a crewwoman graphically. "Some wives go fishing—it saves one crew share. She baits gear, she overhauls gear, she cooks, cleans and scrubs, she dresses fish, ices fish—in short, she does deck work, and if she can't do it already, she learns to swear! And of course, she is sworn at. She seems to be deficient in that she wasn't born knowing how to tie

**I**f his pillowcase doesn't smell a little like diesel, it really sinks in that he's not at home."

a bowline, clear a snatch block and splice line. And please, God, don't let her be seasick today of all days—save it for tomorrow when things may be going better. Her smaller hands will fit into that tight cranny between the pulley and the housing and her fingers turn into magnets so they don't drop the last bolt of that size on the boat into the bilge—so what if the boat rolls and she burns her cheek on the exhaust—the damned engine is running again and you'll save the gear after all. And all this," she adds, "while remaining cool, calm and efficient, looking beautiful and smelling good."

One woman who always fished with her partner before they decided to have a child, resents being called a fisherman's wife. "I'm a fisherman, the best crewman my husband ever had, in fact. When the baby gets old enough, we'll both go back on the boat. I don't like being left on the beach."

Most wives of fishermen will tell you the hardest part of maintaining a fishing family is raising the children virtually alone. "Single parenting is hard for anyone," one mother says.

"Sometimes I don't feel like the kids even know their father," one mother laments. "Even when he's on the beach, if they fall down they run right past their daddy and come to me with their skinned knee."

A mother of three explores the problem further. "After years of watching Little League games alone and running the kids to the hospital emergency room by myself, and helping them with their homework and taking them to the beach and listening to their problems and disciplining them, most times without Daddy there, I tend to see myself as *The Parent* with a capital 'P'.

If I'm not careful, I don't leave my husband any room, when he's home, to do any parenting at all."

It bothers lots of wives that their husbands miss watching the children grow up. "When my husband is fishing away from home, I try to write to him a little every day, to keep him current with what the kids are doing, what they've said, but still he misses so much. When they grow up, he won't have the memories of when they were little that I'll have."

Some children can't wait to join their fathers on the boat and most mothers encourage this, though having all their "eggs in one basket" on a rough ocean causes some anxiety. "I worry enough when my husband is out there. If I lost him I know being responsible for the kids would keep me sane. I don't know if I'd survive losing everyone."

While worry about their husband's safety is a topic some wives are uneasy discussing, most have worked out a way to deal with their concern without becoming obsessed by it. Most fishing wives have an abiding trust in their husband's good judgment, his ability to maintain a safe rig, and often know, down to the last detail, what lifesaving equipment is aboard their husband's boat. Some of that gear is aboard because the wives themselves have bought it or repeatedly suggested its purchase. As one wife points out, "Worry doesn't help—checking safety equipment does."

Often couples arrange a communication system that serves to reassure the partner on the beach; a VHF at home, messages passed through other fishermen, marine calls. Most husbands give their wives a firm idea when to expect them home, after which

the wife, unless she's heard differently, may feel it's time to contact the Coast Guard.

Some wives say they "trust in God" to protect their husbands or "pray for his safety a lot," while others relieve their worry, should a storm come up, by going down to the docks or the local marine electronics store and making contact with their husbands via VHF.

Good-byes when a fisherman goes off to work sometimes hold a special poignancy. As one wife puts it, "When my husband's just leaving for a trip, I get this gut feeling that I could never see him again. I don't trust the ocean for one minute. How do I cope? What else can I do but let him go?"

Loneliness, boredom and "no visible social life" are all aspects of life on the beach that fishermen's wives need to deal with in their husband's absence. Fishermen's wives often form each other's main support system. Meeting another fisherman's wife at the local burger stand with the kids for dinner is more or less standard procedure when both wives' husbands are out at sea. "There's nothing like a good visit with another fisherman's wife," says one mother of three. "No one else understands exactly what it's like going for long stretches without your mate."

Some wives prefer the social life afforded by fishermen's wives' meetings, church socials, and Little League games while others, with their husband's sanction, feel comfortable attending parties and other evening functions in their husband's absences. "My husband told me early in our marriage that if I depended on him for a social life, I'd be out of luck. He trusts me and getting out once in a while keeps me from going nuts."

Even when the fishing husband is on the beach, social activities are likely to be curtailed. "The only time we can make a party, go out to dinner or a show is when it storms. Going someplace special is always connected in my mind with arriving wet and windblown," one wife says.

"You can count on it," laughs another wife, "a wedding, a photo session, the kids' play at school. They always fall on the first day in two weeks my husband can get out on the gear. He always gives me a choice. He says, 'Is this wedding, etc., worth \$5,000 to you?' What kind of question is that?"

Wives will tell you, for this reason, that friendships with other couples in the industry are likely to be the more long-lasting. "Who else," says one woman, "understands the last-minute

11

There's never enough time to get normal between trips."

cancellations, the last-minute R.S.V.P.?"

While prolonged separations in fishing marriages might seem to invite infidelity to an extraordinary degree, extramarital affairs seem to occur no more frequently in this industry than in society at large.

Those fishermen or wives who do form relationships outside their marriages in their partner's absence often find out how "small" the fishing community is. Few extramarital activities in the industry remain private and news of infidelities can travel from California to Alaska as fast as an airmail letter or a phone call home.

Many wives comment that they don't worry about their husbands away from home and they hope their husbands don't worry about them. "He's got enough to think about out there without fretting over what I might be doing," says one wife.

Most couples agree that their commitment to one another need not diminish as the time apart or miles between increase.

The "empty bed blues," sung by fishermen and their wives alike, provide some humorous and ingenious suggested antidotes—from the classic cold shower to jogging, to reading *Newsweek* before going to bed. One wife comments that she hates to change the linens when her husband's gone. "If his pillowcase doesn't smell a little like diesel, it really sinks in that he's not at home."

Wives feel that their husbands' absences really rob them both of the talks, the intimate exchanges, the problem-solving sessions that non-fishing couples in viable marriages take for granted.

"There's never enough time to get normal between trips," says one wife. "Just when we're feeling comfortable

with each other, starting to talk, he's off again."

Some wives say that even when on the beach, their husbands are not always "home." "Half the time my husband's on the phone or having coffee with other fishermen—comparing catches, figuring out where to fish next. I know it's necessary, but I hate to share him on the beach."

Many wives voice frustration at not having the opportunity, during heavy fishing, to work through real problems concerning the kids, themselves or the marriage itself. "I don't like to argue with my husband before he goes fishing," comments one wife, "so I choke back a lot of what's bothering me even though I know it's not good for our marriage or our family in the long run."

Another woman says, "Thank goodness for the long drive to Fish Expo. I can fit in about six month's worth of things I've been waiting to say and wanting to ask in that trip." Still another looks forward to September, "so we can have a good fight and time to make up again before he starts his next fishery."

One wife, whose husband no longer fishes, regrets that she was so reluctant to burden her husband with family problems when he hit the beach. "I used to treat my husband like a child when he fished—I smoothed everything over when he was home and tried to handle every crisis by myself, but I think I shortchanged him in the long run. I believe he would have felt more a part of the family if I'd shared more with him."

One woman, when asked what she considered the best and worst thing about fishing, answered, "It's the same five-letter word—money. If you've got it it's great, if you don't, it can be awful." For all that comment's humorous intent, those who've experienced fishing's

"rags to riches and back to rags again" the economic roller coaster will tell you it's not that far off target.

"We were broke when we got married," one woman remembers, "and we're broke again." But there were good economic times in between and they'll come again."

Most wives agree, however, that lack of money puts a strain on their marriage like nothing else. "My husband gets so *down* when he's not catching fish," says one wife. "It's not just the bucks, it's the competition, the feeling of sliding backwards, not achieving. We still eat and have a roof over our head, but the atmosphere around here is pretty grim."

Another wife adds, "If we're not doing well financially, it means we don't see my husband for longer periods of time. It's those times that I wonder if it's worth it."

Most wives have learned to "make do" through the tough times. No one puts it better than this fisherman's wife who's survived 20 years of chicken one day and feathers the next!

"Fishing wives understand that the boat plays first fiddle, that the house, car, kids, and wives can all be sold or traded, but the boat is your salvation. So they redo last year's coat and get a home permanent because the jimmy is pelching blue smoke and needs an overhaul. And all," she adds with a smile, "without complaining."

Wives do feel occasional jealousy toward the boat. "I know it's silly to compete with a bunch of steel and wire," says one wife, "but every time it looks like we might get away for a while, something on the damn boat goes haywire."

One woman, whose family rig is named after a woman neither she or her husband ever knew, reached *her* pain threshold one morning at the mailbox. "There was this invitation to a gallery opening neatly addressed to my husband and his *boat*. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry."

Despite the tough times, the lows, the worries and complaints, few fishermen's wives express a desire for their husbands to change occupations. "My husband's doing what makes him happiest," says one woman. "You'd have to see his face just off a good trip to understand why I'd never ask him to give it up." These are women proud of their husbands, proud of the "honorable de" they pursue.

"My husband's job is a 'real one,'" one wife comments. "He catches fish. People eat them. I think he adds quality to people's lives and I'm glad to be a part of that."

Asked to describe their husbands, the wives will tell you that they're ambitious, capable, honest, intelligent and "work harder than any men [they've] ever seen." They are by and large, say the wives, good fathers, good husbands and good providers. They are also apparently cranky, cantankerous, moody S.O.B.s.

Some wives worry that their husbands are "not in very good health," "smoke too much," "drink too much coffee" and that the exercise they get, "like constantly gripping the deck with their toes or fighting the wheel in a strong current," serves only to build tension rather than release it. They're concerned that their husbands will lose their fingers in the gear, their hearing to the drone of the engine and the crackle of the radio, their eyesight to the glare of the sun and their sanity to the constant pressure of looking for fish.

A number of women see their husbands as romantics. "If he wasn't, would he be in fishing?" one wife asks. Another, taking the question a bit more literally, says "Romantic? If I can get him awake long enough, he's a real tiger!"

How do the wives see each other? As "extraordinary women" in many ways, helpmates and nurturers, good mothers and wives but interesting in their own right and proficient in their own pursuits as well. They describe themselves as "clever," "capable," "responsible," "slightly neurotic," "a little overweight" and "having mastered, after years of periodic poverty, the art of making a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

Many women see their senses of humor as well developed. As one woman puts it, "It's the only thing that stands between me and the funny farm."

These women *are* independent but still welcome the interdependence that their marriages offer. They play a special role, as they see it, as partners with their husbands in a unique industry. These are, after all, the women that fishermen have, since time immemorial, named their boats after—the *Ruth Ellen*, the *Ethyl D*, the *Signe II*, the *Garda Marie*.

And the spirit of those ladies from another era, their determination to keep their families together, their marriages alive, lives on in the wives of fishermen to this day.

by Sheila Shafer

# THE FISHING

## FISHERMEN TAKE A CANDID LOOK AT

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edia hype to the contrary, the average fisherman is not the freewheeling, pub-brawling, hard-drinking hell raiser that journalists and romantics imagine him to be. This is not to say there aren't fishermen in the fleet who do their best to keep this myth alive. By and large, though, fishermen are family men, more apt to be found, when on the beach, in the Little League bleachers than at the local tavern. They are more likely to see their catches in terms of mortgage payments, installments on braces and pairs of Nikes than fast women and fast cars.

These are men who work hard for their families and regret the time that fishing forces them to spend away from their wives and kids. And while they admit that fishing sometimes creates an inhospitable environment for marriage to survive in, for many it's the knowledge that their family will be there at the end of the trip that keeps them going when things get tough.

In a recent *Pacific Fishing* survey of West Coast fishermen, husbands described what they thought were the rough spots in the fishing marriage as well as the ways in which having a wife and family enrich their lives and enhance their careers.

A supportive wife, some fishermen will tell you, can contribute to her husband's fishing success in a way that fancy electronics and optimum gear can't even begin to. Most fishermen insist they couldn't do it without the wife who "helps paint the boat, keeps books, ties gear and paints crab buoys" or "prepares meals, buys groceries, arranges markets, makes ice appointments, lines up bait, buys parts and gear," or as one fisherman put it, "takes care of all the bothersome details so I can just fish."

On a more personal level, fishermen appreciate their wives because they are "encouraging," "always there to confide in," "interested in [their] work," "caring and sensitive," willing to "hang in there through good times and bad" and "get up at 2 a.m. anytime and cook a big breakfast to go crabbing on."

When asked to describe the ideal fisherman's wife, some men gallantly answered "mine" while others waxed more prosaic. The perfect wife, as they see it, is devoted, understanding and forgiving, patient and cooperative, cheerful, optimistic, "tight with a buck," "warm and loving when I'm home" and, suggests one fisherman, "a nun, preferably cloistered, when I'm gone."

Others believed the ideal wife would be one who fished alongside her husband or had at least been raised in a fishing family. Many thought a wife of independent wealth would be wonderful, one who had, suggested one fisherman, "a \$50,000 a year job as a consultant for the government" or, as another fisherman put it, was a "sympathetic, well-built heiress to a million dollars."

Though this seems to imply that the married fisherman

# MARRIAGE

## HOW FISHING AND MARRIAGE MIX.

would like some help providing a living for his family, few of these same fishermen were comfortable with the idea of their wives pursuing careers, especially ones as demanding as their own. One fisherman quite frankly admits, "I wouldn't like it as well; there would be less time for me and my needs. My business would be less important to her than it is now."

Others feel that their wives *have* demanding careers, in fishing. "Our business is a partnership," says one fisherman, "which wouldn't be possible if my wife pursued another career." Still others feel their wives should be at home while the children are small. As one fisherman put it, "If both parents were gone as much as I am, there wouldn't be much point in *having* a family." Another fisherman felt that a fishing marriage might be threatened if "a young wife gets a job and spends more time with other men than she does with her own husband."

Those who do have wives who work seem to have adjusted, though some admit to mixed feelings about the additional time it forces the family to spend apart. Others, of course, insist they would support their wives in whatever career they chose, while one husband, apparently weary of the grind, says, "I wouldn't mind if she took over the whole operation."

Most married fishermen are acutely aware of the price they pay to pursue their careers on the ocean: the time apart, moments lost with their families never to be recouped. One husband regrets the years of "not being home to share special times or events with my wife." Another believes the time away "makes it difficult to deal with problems, opinions, changes and decisions that are always a part of any relationship." Fishing husbands say they miss their "beds," "a good bath," "sitting down to a big hot meal at a table," "the pampering," "the kids," "the family evening scene," and, most of all, as one fellow puts it, "my nice warm wife on a

**“Try living on the edge for hours in a hostile environment with all the responsibilities of crew and family and personal fear weighing on every decision.”**

cold night." One fisherman says he misses "the feeling of being *with* [his] family, a part of it."

While most husbands understand and even value the degree of independence their wives develop in their absence, it is for some a cause for concern. "I appreciate the way my wife can take charge and handle everything when I'm gone, but sometimes it's hard to squeeze myself back into the household when I'm home again," says one fisherman.

Nowhere is the feeling of being a stranger more acute for some fishermen than with their own children.

"There's a period of adjustment for both my daughter and I when I return at the end of the salmon season," remarks one fisherman. "It takes awhile before she knows me again." Another says, "When the kids have troubles or get hurt, they always run to Mom. I suppose if I were home more, they might be more reliant on Dad, but maybe not."

Fathers who fish are keenly aware of how much they miss with their children—the classroom play, the baseball and basketball games, birthdays, holidays, the first step, first word, first tooth and a good share of the runs to the hospital emergency room and the 103-degree fever at 2 o'clock in the morning. And not, according to fishermen, without some flak from the kids themselves. "One complaint was always too much work and a lack of vacations, especially when the boys were younger," one fisherman recalls.

Wives complain too. Even the most supportive and cheerful, say fishermen, periodically succumb to the stresses that fishing puts on family life. Wives tend to balk, says one husband, when "priorities lean toward new gear or repairs rather than family needs." Another husband says, "My wife gets impatient when I get preoccupied with problems and don't hear when spoken to."

The classic complaints, of course, revolve around husbands being gone so often or for such long periods of time, though some wives have difficulty adjusting to their husbands *not* working for weeks on end. Says one fisherman, "Sometimes when I've been in a while because of bad weather, [my wife] gets the feeling she's being ripped off because her work goes on day after day and I'm just sitting around doing nothing."

He adds, "After we talk, or argue, about it, she realizes I'm not sitting because I want to be, and when I do return to work that it's usually more demanding than her work. I tell her, 'If

you don't think I'm doing my share, then come out with me next time and do what I do. This usually brings her back to reality."

There does seem to be a consensus among fishermen that their wives don't really understand what it's like "out there." "The physical work," as one fisherman puts it, "is the *easy* part." Another says, "Try living on the *edge* for hours in a hostile environment with all the responsibilities of crew and family and personal fear weighing on every decision. Add fallible machinery, physical, emotional and mental exhaustion and you've got some idea of the worst of it. Maybe my wife can conceptualize it, but *understand* it? Never. Not till she's been there herself."

Another cause for concern among fishermen is the degree to which fishing allows couples to grow apart. "I lose touch with my wife when I'm gone," says one fisherman. "Our lives are so radically different and midseason there's little or no chance of communicating those differences."

While most fishermen feel comfortable about their wives' fidelity and feel it "absolutely necessary" and "essential" to the life of their marriage, some admit fishing makes a trusting relationship more difficult. One fisherman claims that while he doesn't insist that his wife remain faithful in his absence, if she isn't, he doesn't want to hear about it. Another says that fishing "makes keeping track of things more difficult and makes it easier for suspicions to grow."

Of more concern, though, is the wife who fills her time while her husband's away with so many community service, church or school involvements that she hasn't time to "connect" with her husband when he's home. As one fisherman puts it, "As husband and wife develop separate interests, it can be a problem when the husband is home for short periods and each wants to talk about his own interests." The balance, for many, is difficult.

Few fishermen expect their wives to curtail their social lives entirely while they are gone, though most say they would be uncomfortable with a wife who parties or participates in social activities with other men while they're out "busting their rears to make a buck." They are most at ease when their wives' activities revolve around their church, the kids, fishermen's wives groups, sports activities or lunch out with women friends or participation in various "ladies' auxiliary activities."

**"I appreciate the way my wife can take charge and handle everything when I'm gone, but sometimes it's hard to squeeze myself back into the household when I'm home again."**

One fellow said any social activity his wife might choose "short of barhopping and whoring" was alright with him, while another claims his ex-wife's social life, which included "three trips to Europe" while he continued to fish, "got completely out of hand" and led to divorce.

Many fishermen say they have, both on their own and at their wives' urging, considered quitting fishing. The pressure fishing puts on the family relationship, the imbalance between the difficulty of the work and the financial returns, increasingly restrictive regulations in their fisheries, the children growing up and away at an alarming rate, and the toll fishing takes on one's health are all cited as reasons for contemplating alternatives to a life at sea.

Many fishermen say they are not where they thought they'd be in their career at this time in their lives. Most men will tell you, though, that they're

happier fishing than they would be in any other profession. They feel the independence it offers and the "honesty of the work" more than make up for any disappointment or discouragement they might feel, and add that their wives are glad to have them pursuing a career they feel good about as well.

Some wives are apparently even more encouraging than that. One husband reports that his wife "pushes [him] out the door come spring and cuts the mooring lines," while another swears, "My wife can't wait to get me out of the house so she can paint the bedroom or get her sewing done."

Money, in one way or another, seems to impact every relationship, though most husbands feel that hard times make the family "pull harder together." One fisherman says, however, that the degree of his wife's support and enthusiasm about fishing rises and falls in direct ratio to how much money he brings home. "Things get rosy when we're flush," he says. While fishing husbands are not always thrilled with the ways in which their wives manage money, many say they're glad they're not the ones at home fielding the calls from collectors and stretching the food budget over slim times.

Do fishermen make grouchy husbands? Some husbands admit there are times when they *do* bring their fishing difficulties home, though most say they are so happy to see their families at the end of a trip that they try not to take their troubles out on them.

What makes fishermen crabs? "Not being appreciated," says one fisherman, while another puts the blame on "the PFMC, breakdowns and 'going the wrong way'."

One fisherman says he "rarely treats [his] family as well as [he'd] like" between trips. "It depends on how hard I'm pressed, either by myself or them," he explains. "Sometimes I can't afford to break my concentration and make sure no one's feelings are hurt because I'm not 'tuned in.'"

Families, most fishermen agree, make you fish harder, though one husband says he fishes "more carefully," knowing how rough it would be on his family without him as breadwinner. By and large, though, few fishermen go through the jaws without the needs of their families on their minds. As one fisherman explains, "I stay and fish sometimes when I'd go in if it was only me. You set goals, when you've got a family, and to see them through you fish harder."



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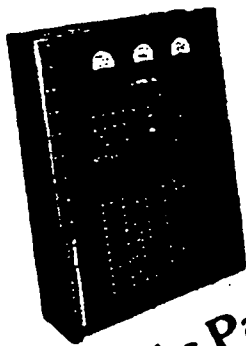
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Another fisherman describes a recurrent image that keeps him fishing tough. "I imagine my family as a robin's nest full of little birds with their mouths open," he says, "I have to produce. I don't have any option."

Fishing husbands, for the most part, seem to hold their wives in high esteem. They describe them as bright and sensitive, rational and considerate, loving, efficient, trusting and adaptable.

Their wives are great mothers, report

**"I imagine my family as a robin's nest full of little birds with their mouths open. I have to produce. I don't have any option."**

the husbands, understanding wives, hard workers, capable businesswomen, and, by overwhelming consensus, "not likely to win any award for keeping a tidy house."

Husbands see themselves as goal-oriented, idealistic, realistic, independent, and practical. They feel "some-what" to "very much" under pressure to produce, and report some high blood pressure and some ulcers as the side effects.

The husbands don't want much, they say, just "a nice life for the wife," "a good start for the kids," and "early retirement" to "a little farm somewhere" or "a sailboat cruise around tropical paradise."

Many fishermen will tell you that their families are their focus, their anchor, the impetus behind their success. It's with their families that these men find a respite from the grind, a place to renew body and mind and spirit before leaving the beach again.

Whatever the minor disappointments or expectations unfulfilled, most of these fishermen seem committed to the long haul "for better or worse." As one fisherman so graphically put it, "At age 90 my wife and I will be like two old geese, still pecking away at each other."

by Sheila Shafer





## Dealing with Blame

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### Help for Farm Families in Crisis

It's natural to look for someone or something to blame when things are not going well or when we are hurt or threatened. For example, persons threatened with the loss of the family farm may find their anguish eased a bit if they can find a place to put the blame. This publication looks at how and why people blame each other, with emphasis on the current farm financial crisis. We will discover how to avoid blame that hurts us and the people we are blaming, and how to handle self-blame and being blamed by others.

### Understanding Blame

The act of blaming may stem from a need to understand a difficult situation. Somehow it's worse to feel that the world has gone topsy-turvy for no reason than it is to point fingers at the "cause" of the problem. We think that if we can find out who's to blame, we may have some control over the outcome and over our own feelings.

When adjusting to a loss or a threat of loss, most people go through several stages of the "loss cycle":

shock and denial, anger, depression and withdrawal, willingness to talk, and acceptance. Only after the acceptance stage comes the return to meaningful life. People vary in the ways they move through these emotional stages and how long they spend at each stage. Sometimes we become stuck on a certain level and are unable to progress through the cycle.

Blaming occurs primarily at the anger and depression stages. It's only natural to feel anger when the farm, which has meant so much in the past and held so many hopes for the future, is in danger. It's important to remember, though, that while blame and anger are natural human emotions, they do not help in solving problems. We must move beyond blame, through each stage of the loss cycle, if we are to get on with the business of living.

### Who Is Blaming?

Where loss of the family farm is concerned, blame can come from many directions—from the community, from relatives, from the spouse, and from within oneself.

### The Community Blames

Lots of blaming and finger pointing are going on at the community, state, and national levels. When people say that it's only "poor managers" who are losing their farms, they are blaming the farmers themselves. These blamers apparently are ignoring the effects of the national economic situation including U.S. international trade policies, high interest rates, and the high value of the U.S. dollar in foreign markets. Also local loan policies, high land prices during the late 1970s, and bad weather in several recent years have taken their toll.

The above factors and others are beyond the individual farmer's control. Therefore, it is both unhelpful and inappropriate to label all those in difficulty as poor managers who are to be blamed for their own problems. The fact is that many different kinds of farm operations are in trouble—good managers and bad, large and small. Some were previously affluent; others have experienced many years of limited income. The group in trouble includes young, middle-aged, and older farmers.

Prepared by Virginia Molgaard, extension specialist in family environment, Iowa State University.

Material prepared as part of North Central Region Stress Management Program Focused on Farm Families, using data from NC164, *Stress, Coping and Adaptation in the Middle Years of the Family Life Cycle*. Project funded by Extension Service, USDA.

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Ames, Iowa 50011

Pm-1224 | October 1985

When local and national leaders minimize the problem by saying that the present farm situation is the farmers' fault, the farm family, which is already hurting, feels even more hopeless and discouraged.

### **The Extended Family Blames**

It is even more painful when blaming goes on within families. Many farm families today are in danger of losing farms that have been in the family for three and four generations. There is a love of the land itself, as well as a commitment to farming as a way of life, that makes it painful for the whole family when financial crisis threatens the future of the farm.

It is extremely hard for the older generation to witness the loss of the farm that they and their parents were able to hold onto through the Great Depression. Many older family members are remembering how they survived by economic measures such as gardening and canning, home butchering, sewing their own clothing, and finding leisure activities that didn't cost money.

What these people ignore are the major differences between these times and those of 50 years ago. One difference is that during the 1930s almost everyone was hurting financially. Now, some farmers and many nonrural people are doing very well economically and there is a tremendous gulf between farmers who are losing everything and their well-to-do neighbors or relatives in town.

Another major difference is that it's no longer possible to live on garden produce and a barter economy because of huge overhead expenses such as electricity and high interest on large loans. And children can no longer go barefoot in patched overalls to the neighborhood one-room school.

There are several reasons, then, that older family members have trouble dealing with their children who may be "going under." The older family members may be in pain from seeing the younger generation in danger of losing the family farm. Also, parents may have loaned money or cosigned loans for their farming sons and daughters, and perhaps have lost some or all of their savings for retirement. The fear of parents for their own future may be a frustration that is expressed through blame.

However, the guilt that many young and middle-aged farmers are already experiencing is made even worse when they are blamed by the older generation. Many farmers today who are losing family farms feel like failures who have betrayed a generational trust. At this point there may be little that they can do to win in the struggle to keep the farm, and the blame they feel from the older generation may lead to severe depression and lack of hope for the future.

### **Spouses Blame Each Other**

The story goes that when the boss is feeling grumpy he yells at the employee who goes home and yells at his wife. The wife, in turn, gets after the child, who then kicks the cat. The point is that it's easy to take out frustration with those closest to us. In a family that is in danger of losing the farm, everyone is apt to feel hurt, angry, and frightened. It's natural to point the finger of blame. Something is wrong and it must be someone's fault.

Symptoms of loss, such as anger and depression, make spouses' nerves raw; and irritability is a natural result. Just when husband and wife need each other most, each person's own painful feelings make it hard to be understanding and sympathetic.

One reason for blame and guilt is that spouses may be at different stages in the loss cycle. For example, the husband may be in the depression and withdrawal stage while the wife is still angry and blaming. In that case, the husband may feel that she doesn't care about him and his feelings. The wife, on the other hand, may feel that the husband isn't trying hard enough or has given up.

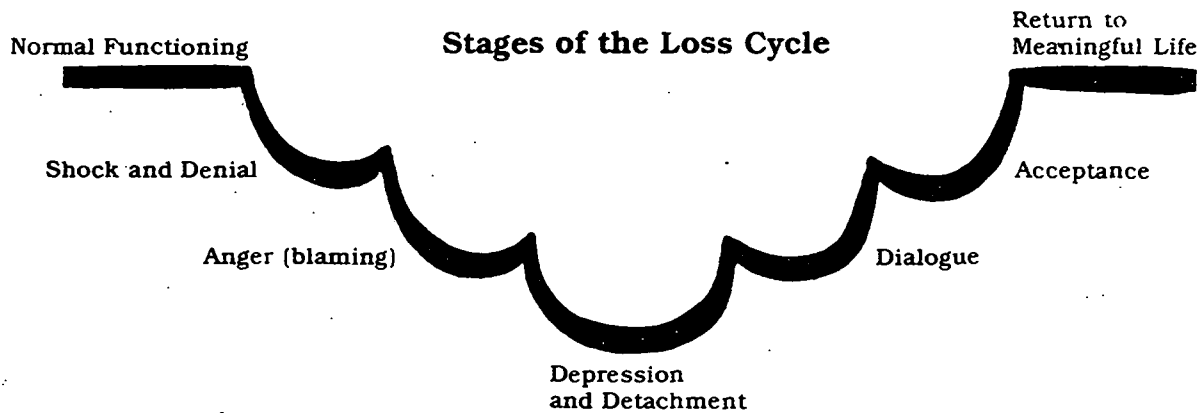
In another family, the wife may have reached the stage of acceptance and is trying to make realistic plans for the future. She may feel unsupported by a husband who is denying that there is a problem or is too depressed to do anything. It's easy to blame a spouse who's not feeling what you're feeling.

It may be helpful for couples to remember that it's unlikely for both people to be in the same stage at the same time. In fact, the situation may be even worse if both husband and wife are in the same stage, such as depression, and are unable to act or give support to each other.

Husband-wife blame might happen when the farmer stays awake at night trying to figure ways to cut corners on the farm operation. He may begin to blame his wife for spending more than he thinks she should on food, clothing, and other family expenses. Blame might also occur if the wife has brought land into the marriage. It might be easy for her and her family to blame the husband who has had direct responsibility for the farm operation. Or, a husband or wife might blame the spouse who urged buying a piece of land or machinery.

### **Farmers Blame Themselves**

"We're losing the farm and I'm the one who's been in charge. It must be my fault." After the stage of anger and blame against others, farmers



may begin to blame themselves—to feel guilt and failure. Others, especially those who have been taught that it's bad or sinful to be angry, skip the anger stage and go straight to the depression stage. They immediately blame themselves when there is trouble. These people tend to ignore the fact that problems may have been due to factors beyond their control. Instead, they play the "if only" game: "If only I hadn't bought so much land . . . If only we hadn't borrowed money from Dad . . ."

While some self-blame is natural, the intensity of guilt feelings and the length of time they persist can create a real problem for both the individual and the rest of the family. It is probably fair to say that the biggest reason for suicidal thoughts and feelings, particularly in the present rural crisis, is the sense of intense guilt and failure on the part of the farmer or another family member. Stories of those who jumped out of office building windows in 1929 and the early 1930s remind us of what lengths people may go to when they are caught in the stage of depression and self-blame.

### **Avoiding the Blame Trap**

There are ways to escape from the misery of self-blame or the hurt and anger of feeling blamed by others. Just as the willingness to talk with others is the way to move out of the loss cycle, giving and receiving support from others is a way to get out of the "blame trap." Here are some ways to begin:

1. Let people in the family know that you are blaming yourself or feeling hurt because others are blaming you. A spouse, for example, may be more supportive of you if he or she knows you are already feeling guilty.
2. If you are the spouse, parent, or other family member of a person who is feeling guilt or sadness, let the person know that you don't blame him or her. Try to tell the person that while you may be feeling anger over the situation, it isn't directed at him or her personally. Sometimes during difficult times, silence by family members can be interpreted as blame.
3. Remind yourself and other about factors beyond personal control that have helped create financial difficulty for farmers.


4. Talk to others in a similar situation. When you visit with a respected neighbor or friend who is also facing possible loss of a farm, you may see that he or she is not entirely at fault. That may help you quit blaming yourself.

5. Remember, "to err is human." Even if a decision turns out wrong, that doesn't mean you are a bad or stupid person.

6. Keep in mind that the future of the farm is separate from the future of you as a person and from that of your family. More and more farm families have faced and lived through the anger and hurt of losing the farm and have gone on to find new jobs and a new life.

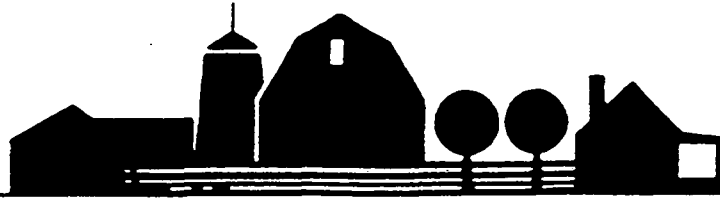
### **Moving Away from Blame**

While blame is a natural human emotion, in the long run it doesn't help in solving problems. Blame stands in the way of taking appropriate action. If blame goes on for long, families may miss the opportunity to help each other through what is already a painful situation. One farm couple who learned to stop blaming made this comment: "We may still lose the farm, but at least we've got each other."

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University of Science and Technology and the  
United States Department of Agriculture  
cooperating. Robert L. Crom, director, Ames,  
Iowa. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of  
Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

Cornell Cooperative Extension



# FARM FAMILY LETTERS

LETTER #1

## FARM & FAMILY: A CAREFUL BALANCING ACT<sup>1</sup>

Balancing work and family life is a necessary task for all families which becomes more important as the roles between work and family are less clear. Farm families' roles are often "confused": when is a task farm work or family work? What if one family member wants more time focused on the family? This newsletter will help your family address this balancing act.

### ASSESS AND SHARE

How would you respond to the phrase "My family is important to me because..."? It's probable that each family member would have different responses. This is natural because we each value things differently and each have different needs (which also change over the course of our lifetime!). Knowing our values and needs, and accepting others' values, is step #1 to the balancing act. If differences aren't discussed and resolved, they can create "value conflict" within the family. Look over the "What Do You Value" list on the back of this page and then indicate the importance of each statement to you. Which are more important; which are less important; which are of moderate importance?

**WHAT DO YOU VALUE?**

		More Important	Moderately Important	Less Important
1.	To live on a farm because it is a satisfying way of life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	To have good health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	To have freedom and independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	To have economic security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	To provide for a secure retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	To have most of the comforts and conveniences of life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	To improve farm operations before we improve our home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	To have what is needed for our home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	To provide a good environment in which to raise our children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	To encourage our children to continue the family tradition of farming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	To have friends and enjoy good times with them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	To do things that are new, exciting and different	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	To improve my occupational skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	To grow as a person or to develop intellectually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	To pursue a favorite hobby or sport (golf, fishing, crafts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	To actively participate in religious activities or grow spiritually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	To actively participate in voluntary activities or assist with worthwhile causes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	To be influential in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

After you have completed the value list, get together with your spouse and other family members and discuss the following questions:

1. Compare your responses to each of the items. What are the areas of agreement and disagreement? Where there is disagreement, discuss why each of you rated the item as you did. Try to understand why other family members feel the way they do.
2. Have you found time to do things together as a family? Discuss things you enjoy doing as a family that can be done for little or no money. Make sure you involve your children in decisions about what to do as a family.
3. Are there some major household projects that have been placed on "hold" due to family finances? How do the different members of the family feel about this? How important is the project? If important, can you find ways of moving ahead with it in the near future?
4. Are there some things your children want which are not possible because of finances? How do they feel about it? How important are these things? If important, can you find ways of meeting these needs?
5. Have you talked about farm and family finances as a family? Children can be understanding and supportive if they recognize that the family is strained for resources. Can you find ways of discussing financial issues as a family so the entire family can work as a team to address these issues?
6. What are your top three priorities? Circle them and share. Are there priorities that you can agree on? Notice that they may be family-focused, farm-focused or personally-focused. Your needs right now may be more in one area or may be distributed over all.

There are no right or wrong values. Values vary depending on our backgrounds, life experiences and the transition points in our lives. A young farmer may view things quite differently from one about ready to retire. It's important to be able to talk about our values. If you find it difficult, seek the help of a good listener, counselor or conflict mediator who can clarify what each is saying and facilitate resolution of communication barriers.

After discussing these questions, explore ways in which the family can be more supportive of each member.

### SUPPORT AND GROW

One way of being supportive is to acknowledge each other's strengths. All individuals and families have strengths. We are able to grow, to change, when we have a positive view of ourselves and our strengths...then we can gain the new skills we need to act on our own behalf. Some of your family's strengths will become apparent in the inventory on the back of this page.



**How's Your Family?...An Inventory<sup>3</sup>**

The following statements are true of some families; not so true of others. Please circle the number that best indicates how true each statement is of your family.

	<i>Almost never true</i>		<i>Sometimes true</i>		<i>Almost always true</i>
1. In our home, we feel loved and cared about.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our family talks things out when differences arise.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Our family has a sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5
4. All members of our family are permitted to be unique individuals.	1	2	3	4	5
5. There are activities which we all enjoy doing together.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We respect each other's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We have many contacts and connections with friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Discipline is moderate and consistent.	1	2	3	4	5
9. There is a sense of belonging in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
10. We spend a good deal of time together.	1	2	3	4	5
11. We can count on one another to be dependable.	1	2	3	4	5
12. In our family, not much blaming or fault-finding occurs.	1	2	3	4	5
13. We establish reasonable goals for ourselves.	1	2	3	4	5
14. We encourage one another to grow and develop.	1	2	3	4	5
15. We show appreciation for what we do for one another.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The members of our family pretty well know what the others believe in and stand for.	1	2	3	4	5
17. In our family, everyone has a voice in plans and decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
18. We spend time talking about our feelings, hopes, joys, sorrows, wants and needs.	1	2	3	4	5
19. In our family, differing opinions and viewpoints are welcome and listened to.	1	2	3	4	5
20. When conflicts come up, we are able to work them out.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Members of our family readily admit their mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Religion is an important resource in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Family members can find time and space to be alone.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Our family is open to change and flexible regarding rules and roles.	1	2	3	4	5

## BUILDING ON YOUR FAMILY'S STRENGTHS

From the inventory, you can identify some of the strengths in your family. Acknowledge these strengths...remember: we can grow and change best when we have a positive view of ourselves.

Seven indicators of family well-being are listed below. Quite simply, they are characteristics found to be present in studies of strong or healthy families. Together with your spouse and/or other family members discuss whether there are things you can do to strengthen these qualities in your family. Take pride in any qualities that are already present in your family life.

### Strong families...

1. Express appreciation
2. Share responsibility for family functioning (are democratic)
3. Are flexible and open to change
4. Are clear and open in communication style
5. Share some of the same values
6. Spend time together
7. Are connected to people outside the family

Balancing the varied roles within the farm family is a skill that takes planning, energy and time. Like any new skill we learn, we need to practice and evaluate how well we're doing. Make a plan to work on one or two specific areas during the next week, then talk it over and make any adjustments that you feel would improve your plan. After a few weeks, you will have gained a new "skill" and see other ways to better balance farm and family.

Cornell Cooperative Extension has additional resources to assist in making a better balance. Call your county's Cooperative Extension office for these publications.

- + "Balancing Work and Family Life", a five-part letter series from Cornell Cooperative Extension
- + Resource Sheets on different "ages and stages" in child development from Cornell Cooperative Extension
- + "Stress on the Farm", a home study course developed at Iowa State University

The next issue of **FARM FAMILY LETTERS** will suggest communication skills which promote family members' self-worth and strengthen their problem-solving techniques.

The Farm Family Letters were developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension Home Economists in Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga and Tompkins counties, N.Y. This letter was compiled by Nancy Potter, Home Economist, Tompkins County.

<sup>1</sup>From Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Session 2, Roger T. Williams, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987. Adapted by Nancy Potter, Home Economist, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, N.Y.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., pages 13 & 14.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., page 15.

# Farmers in

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# TRANSITION

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A Publication of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University

## Taking Charge During the Transition

*Katherine H. Graham and John R. Brake*

■ *Before we had the auction, I tried to imagine what life would be like without the farm. I tried to be positive about the changes and thought about all the things that we'd finally be able to do: take the kids camping, visit my parents, or just the two of us go off for the weekend together. Since we quit, my life has been worse than I ever expected. I wasn't prepared at all for the sudden and drastic changes. There's so much change.\**

Being forced to leave farming is a traumatic event that affects the lives of every member of the family. Painful adjustments have to be made in virtually every facet of family life. Handling the stress of these changes is difficult. The stress can be minimized, however, by understanding and preparing for these changes.

### Common Experiences

Every family faces a unique set of changes during the transition out of farming. There are, however, many common experiences.

#### Loss of Purpose

Routines in farming run deep; chores, milking, and seasonal activities are part of family life day after day, year after year. The loss of the farm interrupts these routines. Without them, farmers may suddenly feel they have no anchor and life has no purpose. Two farmers who were forced out of farming described their feelings this way:

■ *I've got no reason to get out of bed in the morning. It's like your life isn't worth much anymore.*

*I can't get used to the free time. Weekends are the worst for me. I don't know what to do with myself. That's how my life is now, I don't have any goals anymore.*

Without the farm routine to structure their daily activities, many farmers feel they lack direction. Loss of personal identity may accompany their feelings of purposelessness.

■ *While I was on the farm, I was an integral part of the farm and felt it was the place where I belonged. Now, I am a nothing; I have no job, no identity. How do you get a new identity for yourself?*

#### Loss of a Lifestyle

Selling the farm's assets marks more than the end of a family business; it signals the end of a valued lifestyle characterized by self-reliance, control over one's life, shared family goals, and a closeness to the land. As one dairy farmer said:

■ *Farming isn't just a job, it is a way of life. Every member of our family was involved in the farm, and we were very close to each other. Since we quit, things have been so different for everyone. My husband is gone for 10 hours every day. That has been a strain on our marriage. I work too, and with both of us gone, it has been really hard on the boys. We aren't the same family.*

#### Living with Uncertainty

There is a strong sense of security and stability that comes with owning a family farm. In contrast, there is much instability during the transition to a new life. Being forced out of farming means starting over—finding new jobs, new housing, new schools, new friends. With the constraints of limited financial resources and the magnitude of the adjustments, it can sometimes be several years before family members are settled.

■ *It's been a year and a half since we left and we are still in transition. We have four boys; no one wants to rent a house to a big family, and we can't afford a house. We lived in the farmhouse for two months after it was sold. Then we moved to another town in the middle of the school year. After eight months we left and moved here. We can't stay here either. It's hard not having any roots.*

## Problems in Meeting Expenses

Most farm families do not clearly separate living expenses from business expenses. Food, shelter, utilities, and transportation are often paid for by the business. It can be a shock to learn the off-the-farm costs of supporting a family.

- *What a surprise we had when we saw our paychecks didn't even meet what our family needed to live on. Our food bill was so high that I'd get mad at my wife for spending so much. Then I did the shopping and spent more than she! So much food came from the farm, our utilities were paid by the business, and, of course, the house came with the place. I can't believe how expensive it is to live! I remember when \$100 was almost nothing, and now \$100 is like gold!*

In most farm families the husband has primary responsibility for ensuring that expenses are met. Being unable to meet the family's basic needs can destroy his self-esteem and self-confidence and create a tremendous source of anxiety.

## Other Changes

The loss of friends, a lowered status in the community, marital difficulties, and the dependence on others for help can create additional sources of stress for the family.

## Handling the Stress

Most families have great difficulty handling the stress of losing their farms. Their approach to handling their problems is often the primary reason they have such difficulty. Instead of admitting they have problems and actively seeking solutions, they deny the problems exist or blame themselves or others.

## Blaming Oneself

Many farmers find it difficult to acknowledge that they were victims of their circumstances. They believe they were solely responsible for the loss of their farms when, in reality, many circumstances beyond their individual control caused their financial problems.

- *It was all my fault. I was in charge and so I am responsible. I've let myself, my family, and my parents down. I'm a failure.*

By dwelling on what they view as their misjudgments, they are unable to concentrate on building new lives. Their negative attitude affects all areas of their lives, particularly as they seek employment (see "Farmers in Transition: Searching for a New Career").

## Blaming Others

Some farmers blame others. They believe that someone else is responsible for their problems and for finding the solutions. Government agencies or programs or lenders are often singled out as the culprits.

- *It is their fault. If PCA hadn't changed policies and suddenly called in our loan, we wouldn't have these problems. I'm not going to do anything about this. It's all their fault. They've got to help us get out of this mess.*

## Denying the Problems

Another way farmers avoid their problems is by pretending they do not exist. Some cling to a hope that a miracle will occur and the problems will evaporate. Others never ask for or accept help from anyone, thereby refusing to acknowledge the seriousness of their situation.

- *I think with farmers it boils down to pride. You always hear about the independence of farmers. I think farmers think independence means you keep your problems to yourself and never tell anyone. That happened to us until we just couldn't pretend that we "were doing fine" anymore. You just don't want to admit to anyone that your problems are so bad that you are quitting.*
- *I just couldn't face it. It was like I was paralyzed. I knew things were getting worse and worse, but I just couldn't stop thinking that some miracle would save the farm somehow.*

Avoiding the problems increases both the financial and emotional difficulties. The problems worsen until finding solutions can seem so impossible that the family becomes overwhelmed and the task of starting over seems impossible. Self-confidence is lost and with it the sense of control. The transition out of farming is an extremely stressful and lengthy experience under these circumstances. Farmers who do not take control often emerge with low self-esteem and a defeated attitude.

## Taking Charge

Other families adopt a more assertive approach: they face their problems and actively seek solutions. They gather information from many sources about the challenges they are likely to face during the transition and seek help in making decisions. They talk to other farmers who have been forced to leave about their experiences. They consult professionals (Cooperative Extension agents, lawyers, lenders, accountants) for help in identifying their options and understanding the

implications. They read farm magazines and other sources of information.

- *My advice to anyone going out of farming is simple. Seek every avenue and every available option. Talk to anyone and get their opinion. It takes time and it isn't easy talking about your problems, but believe me, it is worth it. You'll be prepared for a lot of things that will happen and you'll also be in a better position to make the right decisions for your family. You'll stay in control of your life.*

Exploring options does not necessarily require costly fees. On the contrary, many services are free. One family, for example, consulted a free financial counseling service in their community to learn the best way to handle their creditors. Other families obtain food stamps. Others consult their local employment services. Departments of social services, family and children's services, job services, clergy, high school guidance counselors, and BOCES offices also provide assistance for free or at low costs. Most of these services are paid for by your tax dollars. Do not hesitate to use them if you need them.

Every family feels frustration, uncertainty, and anxiety over the changes and problems of making the transition to an off-the-farm life. With a positive approach, however, it is possible to remain in control and to progress through the transition quickly and with few problems. You will emerge with your self-esteem intact and with a positive outlook toward the future.

- *I don't consider myself a failure at all. We were just caught in some unfortunate circumstances and that ended the farm, but we certainly aren't defeated. I like what I am doing now. We are beginning to settle into our new lives, and things are as good as they can be. In some ways, when I consider how much time we spend together as a family now, this change was good for us.*

Even people who evade their problems often come to realize the importance of taking charge of their lives. As two farmers said:

- *I wish I hadn't just let things happen to me like I did. I didn't know anything about what I should do and so I just took things as they came. Now I regret some of the decisions I made. Declaring bankruptcy is one. That is hanging over me like a black cloud, and I am stuck with it.*

- *I really feel that I have lost control of my life. That's a scary feeling. I always thought that you, the individual, were in charge. But if you don't work to stay in charge, it's gone and hard to get back again. I wish I had been more in charge.*

## Points to Remember

Life changes of any sort are disruptive. With them come new responsibilities and sometimes problems. Generally these changes are minor, everyday events and adjusting is relatively easy. In contrast, a crisis such as losing the family farm is so dramatic that it is overwhelming.

Feelings of loss are common during crises. Being forced to leave farming may mean the loss of possessions or of support from friends and family. There is also the psychological loss of familiar routines, which can destroy one's sense of direction and purpose.

Crisis forces us to look at our lives from a new perspective, to question our beliefs and view our relationships with friends, family, and the world in a new light. Such questioning can produce anxiety, confusion, and sometimes fear.

The outcome of a crisis is not necessarily bad. In fact, some people end up better off than before. If you focus your attention on finding solutions, you will adjust to the changes and remain in control of your life.

\*The quotations used in this publication are paraphrased from interviews conducted with 28 New York State families who were forced from their farms for financial reasons. They were interviewed as part of a study of their experiences. See Katherine Graham, "A Description of the Transition Experiences of 28 NYS Farm Families Forced from Their Farms: 1982-1985" (M.S. thesis, Cornell University, 1986), for a complete description of the study.

### Other Fact Sheets in This Series:

Deciding to Stay in or Get out

Coping with the Loss of the Farm

Finding a New Career

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Leaving Their Farms

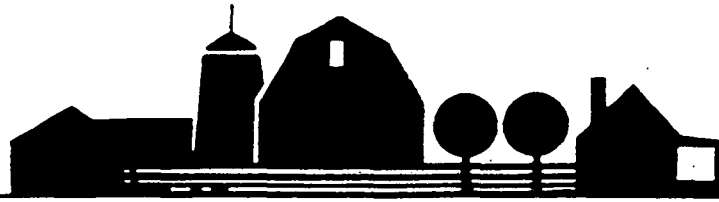
Prepared by Katherine H. Graham, Research Associate, and John R. Brake, W. I. Myers Professor of Agricultural Finance, Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University

The author wishes to thank Tom Maloney and Tom Shepard of Cooperative Extension, Jeanne Hogarth of the Department of Consumer Economics, and Erica Fox of Media Services for their assistance in reviewing this publication.

This publication is issued to further Cooperative Extension work mandated by acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. It was produced with the cooperation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, New York State College of Human Ecology, and New York College of Veterinary Medicine, at Cornell University. Cornell Cooperative Extension offers equal program and employment opportunities. Lucinda Noble, Director.

A toll-free information and referral service is available to help farmers in transition deal with financial, personal, or family stress.

NY FarmNet  
1-800-547-FARM



# FARM FAMILY LETTERS

LETTER #3

## FARM STRESS

Facing some facts and getting down to basics can be the first step in dealing with the various aspects of farm stress.

### STRESS CAN BE A GOOD THING

Stress is a natural, often stimulating part of anyone's existence. A holiday, family wedding, vacations, a move, going to new places, having new experiences are all joyful - growing - thrilling experiences that are stressful.

### OR STRESS CAN BE BAD

Often stress is distress, wasteful, destructive, anxiety filled. If we put first things first, we realize that stress can affect our physical health and our physical health can have a major effect on how we deal with stress. Personal energy, vitality, emotional and physical health can suffer from excessive stress.

Some illnesses are caused or aggravated by stress:

Hypertension	Asthma
Ulcers	Migraine headaches
Arteriosclerotic heart disease	Allergies

### TO RECOGNIZE STRESS

First be aware! Don't deny stress or your reactions to stress. Use this check list. Do you have these physical reactions:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listlessness   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia       | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach upsets | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart palpitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chest pain     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hyperventilation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent colds | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of appetite  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss    | <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive hunger  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight gain    |  |

Or do you have these mental/emotional reactions:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Concentration      | <input type="checkbox"/> Boredom                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetfulness           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack innovative ideas       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low motivation          | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low productivity        | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability            | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings (happy/sad) | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resentment              | <input type="checkbox"/> Nagging                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased sex drive     | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislike being with people   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislike talking with others |

### TO HANDLE STRESS

The old saying "Be Well To Do Well" can significantly reduce stress. Eliminate harmful patterns and habits; even if they seem "comforting" at the moment - they can only lead to deeper problems. Your physical well-being will help your emotional well being, so...

- Stop smoking.
- Avoid excessive caffeine.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Do not use mind altering recreational drugs.
- Take special care with over-the-counter and prescription medication.
- Eat regularly, start with a good breakfast. You are a food producer - remember food can make or break you. Eat a balanced diet, especially include plenty of fiber, fresh fruit and vegetables; limit fats, sugar and salt.
- Exercise. Your job is physically demanding but the demands can be irregular or even too hard on your body. Flexibility exercises and limbering up prior to work will prevent injuries to muscles and joints. A 30 minute walk 3 or 4 times a week will keep your head and mind in shape
- Allow enough time for sleep. Short mid-day naps can revitalize. Proper rest is essential to keep you alert and safety conscious for farm activity.

Also, your mental/emotional well being affects you physically, so...<sup>1</sup>

- Balance work and social activities.
- Keep up at least some of your hobbies.
- Maintain relationships; restore crushed or damaged relationships. The effort will increase your self esteem.
- Take care of your spiritual self.
- Take care of your social self. People function best in groups even if they don't feel like seeing those they know when depressed.
- Stimulate your mental self; keep your brain active.
- Make any situation as comfortable as you can. For example: at a church social, if being with the crowd is uncomfortable - don't leave - go work in the kitchen.
- Think positively whenever possible - convince yourself you're OK.
- Find someone who will listen. If you can't find a good friend, seek a professional at your church or Mental Health Association and talk.

### ALSO BE SURE YOU

Educate yourself before making big decisions and turn to support from individuals and organizations that can be of help - future letters will deal with these points in detail. Remember there is no merit in "going it alone", "doing it your (my) way" when there are better alternatives.

### AND

Health Professionals are an integral part of your support team, particularly, the family physician. Through regular health exams and not putting off acute care, they can best work with you in monitoring symptoms of stress.

### FINALLY

Each member of the family must work to strengthen the family unit. Couples need to work towards a satisfying marriage relationship. All must learn to share family power, promote open and easy communication and strive to solve interpersonal conflicts, family and farm problems. A strong, close family can provide a unified front against farm stress.

The above material was prepared by:

David E. Kwiatkowski, Assistant Director, Candor Family Care Center and Clinical Assistant Professor, Binghamton Campus, Upstate Medical Center, N.Y.

Lack of resources for needs also creates stress. This information could help reduce that stress:

### DOLLARS FOR MEDICAL HELP

When a factory worker loses a job there is often emergency help for family health care through New York's Medicaid program. But farm family cases are much more complicated due to the nature of their incomes, the kind of equipment and property they own, their assets versus losses, family composition and the fact that home and business finances are tied so tightly.

### IF YOU'RE IN TROUBLE DON'T GIVE UP!

There are sources of emergency hospital care such as Hill-Burton Funds at certain hospitals. Contact the business office of your local hospital to find out about such funds.

Your Public Health Nurses are a source not only of physical health care but information on what services are available.

Medicaid is being re-interpreted in some farm family incidences. Contact your local Department of Social Services for more information.



In all cases be prepared with family private and financial information to help you get what you need. For example, you may need:

- Proof of identity, age, residence of each family member
- Rent or mortgage proof & receipts
- Receipts of all forms of income, record of debts
- Bank Accounts
- Life insurance - Health insurance bills or policies
- Unpaid bills (especially utilities)
- Auto ownership and insurance
- School attendance proof

There is never any harm in calling and asking for information...The Department of Social Services in your county will supply you with a complete list of what you need and handle your case on an individual basis.

#### FOR MORE READING

A new Cornell Cooperative Extension series Balancing Work and Family Life has fact sheets on "Handling Stress" and "Time: A Precious Commodity." The fact sheets are available from your county's Cooperative Extension office.

We need to recognize that stress is often related to the seasonal time and financial demands of the farm. Watch for the next FARM FAMILY LETTERS on Time Management and on Money Management.

The Farm Family Letters were developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension Home Economists in Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga and Tompkins counties, NY. This letter was compiled by Marion Rutan, Home Economist, Tioga County.

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<sup>1</sup>From "You Can Help Yourself Out Of Depression" by Maureen Lutterman, Cooperative Extension - Sundance, Crook County, Wyoming. Adapted by Marion Rutan, Home Economist, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tioga County, N. Y.



# Accepting Your Feelings

In many ways, losing a job is like losing part of yourself. Your lifestyle suddenly changes. Schedules and routines that controlled a large part of your time are no longer there. You lose contact with former co-workers and friends.

People respond to unemployment with many feelings: anger, anxiety, outrage, self doubt. They may be hostile — lashing out at those closest to them. Or, they may become moody and depressed. Their tension may show up as restlessness, loss of appetite, loss of interest in sex, insomnia, and feelings of apathy and exhaustion. While some of these symptoms may be unpleasant, they are normal, predictable reactions of people experiencing a loss or critical change in their lives.

Recognizing these strong feelings, understanding why they may be present, and dealing with them in positive ways is important. Refusing to accept your feelings can lead to physical and emotional problems.

The first step to accepting feelings is to sort out and identify your feelings. Some feelings — often those that are painful — may become so buried you may not even be aware they exist.

## Anger Has Many Causes

One of the first feelings you will probably identify is anger. Anger is a powerful emotion that is often viewed negatively. Unchecked, it can escalate into a rage that may erupt in damaging emotional outbursts or be unleashed on family members.

Unchecked anger can be an emotional “time bomb” exploding when triggered by little things such as a glass of spilled milk or a spouse asking how the job hunt went today.

Looking beyond the anger, you may begin to uncover many other emotions hidden underneath. Anger may stem from feelings of failure, being unappreciated, exploited, manipulated, uncared for or humiliated. It may be caused by feelings of helplessness, worthlessness, frustration, anxiety, guilt, fear or resentment.

Once you begin to look at the variety of feelings behind the anger and to understand the hidden feelings, you can find ways to express your feelings positively.

## Getting Rid of Your Anger

- Look behind your anger. Remember exactly where you were when you first felt it. Who was with you? How did you feel at the time?
- Ask yourself if your anger is reasonable. Are you expecting too much from yourself or someone else? Are you looking at your situation objectively?
- Look at your reaction to the anger. Was the behavior justified? Did it increase your stress level or threaten your relationship with those around you? If so, look immediately for more appropriate ways to discharge your anger. Talk to others about your feelings, change what you can about your situation, view it more realistically, or use relaxation techniques to vent your stress. For details, see EC 1399, *Living Better With Stress*.

Adapted for use in Oregon from a University of Wisconsin—Extension publication (B3459-10).

EC 1398 • Reprinted January 1993



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- Anger is often fueled by blame. Blaming yourself or others is a way of avoiding the real problem. The energy you spend blaming could be better spent on working to understand your feelings.

## Damage to Self-Esteem

Feeling good about yourself, or having high self-esteem, is one of the most valuable assets you can have. Self-esteem develops as we grow from childhood into adulthood. The love and acceptance we get from parents, family members, and friends shapes our self-esteem. It's linked to how competent and successful we feel.

Having positive feelings about yourself is easier when things go well. When things take a turn for the worse, you often lose some of your self-confidence and begin to doubt yourself.

Whether it's your first time being unemployed, or whether you have been without a job before, you may feel a sense of loss that extends well beyond losing a paycheck. Work contributes to your identity. It helps define who you are and makes you part of a larger community. Working helps you feel you belong and are important because you have something to contribute.

Many unemployed people report going through a process of grief in response to a job loss. This loss is characterized by many complicated feelings such as shock, anger, loneliness, and depression. With the help of those around them, most people eventually work out ways of coping with their feelings. They make adjustments that help them recover from their loss and put it in perspective.

## Understanding Your Feelings

If you are not used to thinking about your feelings, identify them during this stressful period may be difficult. The following activity may help you recognize and accept your feelings.

Use the chart on the next page to list feelings you may have experienced since losing your job. As you read over the list, think about which feelings you have experienced and when you experienced them.

Remember, it's not unusual to have these feelings. They are all natural reactions to a job loss. Recognizing and accepting them is important to your health.

## Steps to Accepting Your Feelings

- *Recognize the feelings you are experiencing; don't try to ignore them.* Even though it may be painful, confronting your feelings and looking realistically at your situation are important parts of being able to handle it.
- *Talk with your family.* The feelings you have may be shared by other family members. By talking about your feelings, you can help each other express, vent and accept these feelings in constructive ways. Together you can provide support and reassurance to one another that can help build more positive self-esteem.
- *Talk with others.* Don't keep your feelings bottled up inside. Talking to others who have been or who are in similar situations can provide needed support. By discussing your feelings, you'll find you're not alone. For more information see EC 1400, *Identifying Sources of Friendship and Support*.
- *Take mental health breaks.* Think of ways to reduce the emotional tension and stress you're experiencing. Take time for the things you enjoy. Include regular physical exercise in your daily routine to help you work off your worries and help your overall well-being.
- *Make the most of your time.* Don't get in the habit of sleeping late or spending your time in front of the television. How many times in the past have you wished you had more time to spend with your children, to work on projects around the house, visit friends, go fishing, or catch up on some reading? When stress is high and you're feeling down, you may not be in the mood to try new things. But these feelings don't last forever. Once you have worked them through, put your time to good use. Working on projects, starting a hobby or doing volunteer work can help you feel more productive and may lead to new employment opportunities.

Feelings

As a result of losing my job,  
which of these feelings  
did I experience?

When did I feel this way?

Feelings	As a result of losing my job, which of these feelings did I experience?	When did I feel this way?
Loneliness		
Anger		
Depression		
Hate		
Fear		
Resentment		
Happiness		
Anxiety		
Guilt		
Love		
Sadness		
Relief		
Gratitude		

- *Evaluate your situation.* If it looks like the loss of this type of job may be permanent, shift gears and begin looking for other types of work. You may want to get help analyzing your skills and finding out about any additional training that can help you qualify for another job or career.
- Recognize the need for professional help. The feelings associated with a job loss are very powerful and may be difficult to deal with on your own. Talking to a trained professional can help you work through your feelings and restore your self-esteem.

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## For More Information

This publication is one of 13 available in the set, *Managing Between Jobs*, from the Oregon State University Extension Service. The publications provide information to individuals and families facing underemployment and unemployment.

Each title is available without charge. You may order up to six no-charge publications without charge. If you request seven or more no-charge publications, include 25 cents for each publication beyond six. Send order and payment to:

Publications Orders  
Agricultural Communications  
Oregon State University  
Administrative Services A422  
Corvallis, OR 97331-2119

EC 1391, *Setting Spending Priorities*  
EC 1392, *Strategies for Spending Less*  
EC 1393, *Deciding Which Bills to Pay First*  
EC 1394, *Talking With Creditors*  
EC 1395, *Keeping A Roof Overhead*  
EC 1396, *Bartering*

EC 1397, *Making the Most of What You Have*  
EC 1398, *Accepting Your Feelings*  
EC 1399, *Living Better With Stress*  
EC 1400, *Identifying Sources of Support and Friendship*  
EC 1401, *How You Can Help When Your Mom or Dad is Unemployed*  
EC 1402, *Deciding If Teens Should Work*  
EC 1403, *Helping Children Cope*




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Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, O.E. Smith, director. This publication was produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties.

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# Youth and the Rural Crisis: How Adults Can Help

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The rural crisis reaches beyond the farms and ranches struggling for survival. Its effects are felt on Main Street, in the schools, in the sense of community well-being, and in family relationships.

For many rural families, economic conditions have taken a toll in sleepless nights, depression, illness, divorce, child abuse, and suicide.

Families that are faced with the loss of a farm or business have likely experienced a prolonged period of worry and tension. Parents whose efforts have been devoted to economic survival may lack time and energy for their children. The constant pressure of work and worry can result in increased family conflict and a gradual erosion of the quality of relationships.

## **The Grief of Losing a Family Farm or Business**

Coping with the loss of a farm or family business is a very painful time for a family. Family members will likely experience strong anger and hostility, deep depression and self-pity, debilitating guilt, and helplessness. They may begin to feel like outsiders in their own communities. Every member in the family shares in the sorrow, which doesn't end with the sale of the farm or business.

The grief and pain following this loss is similar to the grief felt over the death of a loved one. It follows certain predictable stages, including: shock, confusion, strong emotions, guilt, and finally recognition of the loss, and recovery. The stages of grief often overlap. Some may last only a few minutes - others, months. Even years later the pain can recur. Planting time, birthdays, anniversaries, or a TV commercial advertising farm machinery can trigger it.

### **Shock**

The first stage of grief over the loss is shock - a numbness. There is an emotional inability to accept the reality of the loss. Everything inside shouts "No!" The mind struggles to escape, often taking refuge in asking the unanswerable "Why?" Tears may be a first reaction for some. Others may become hysterical. Emotional explosions can

occur. Some may be unable to cry. In extreme cases it may be weeks or months before something suddenly triggers the release brought by tears. Still another sign is withdrawal. The very private person may say little, but he or she still needs to be supported and comforted.

During the period of shock and denial, the best role of a friend is physical presence and accepting listening. The family needs physical touching - someone to offer a hug, a hand on the shoulder, or a warm handclasp. A few words of assurance are important. This is not the time for explanations, cliches, or even religious comfort because words cannot be heard. Just being there is enough.

### **Confusion**

The second stage of grief is one of mental confusion. The grieving family may feel out of touch with the ordinary happenings of life. There is a need to cry and cry, to talk and talk. The substance of the talk may sound foolish. Actions may be out of character. Records may be scattered and appointments forgotten. Some families shy away from decisions during this period; others plunge recklessly into actions which they may later regret. For most families, it is wise not to make major decisions during this time. A trusted relative or neighbor may need to be called in to help with everyday decisions.

### **Strong Emotions**

When the reality of the loss begins to sink in, family members may experience strong feelings of helplessness, hurt and frustration. Anger may shoot out in all directions - to bankers, the government, agricultural advisers, neighbors, family members, and even God. Feelings of "How could they do this to us?" are common.

During this time, some individuals can get caught up in shame - "I shouldn't feel this way!" "How can I say such things?" It is best to get these feelings out, not let them simmer inside and block the grieving process. Not everyone experiences emotional outbursts. Some individuals can allow anger to surface and simmer away silently. For most of us, talking helps release feelings of anger.

## **Guilt**

Guilt follows the anger stage. It is important to remember that the stages of grief are overlapping. Guilt and anger may intertwine. Family members may realize things they should have done and didn't. They may want another chance to erase the failure. This is the period of "if onlys." During this time, thoughts of suicide may surface. What is needed is a listener, someone who can accept how they feel. Judgments or criticisms at this time, even though well-intentioned, only make matters worse.

## **Recognition**

This is probably the most painful stage of the grieving process. The reality of the loss of the farm or business is fully felt. Feelings of sadness, depression, and self-pity are frequent. The family may feel overcome by the task of putting life back together again. During this time there is a great need for a close and patient friend, one who can be present frequently and regularly, and who will not downplay the magnitude of what was lost.

## **Recovery**

Feelings of relief are difficult to admit and acknowledge openly. There is "light at the end of the tunnel," as well as some energy to cherish what has not been lost. Feelings of relief are the beginning of the recovery stage. As hope grows stronger, a new life starts with constructive efforts to reach out and build anew. Recovery doesn't occur at once. Anxiety and guilt still recur. Yet there is a beginning.

The road to recovery following the loss of the farm is a rocky one. Some families can cope and accept this loss sooner than others. Often friends, neighbors, and communities find it difficult to help. Clergy, bankers, and other professionals may not be prepared to work with either the number of farm families or the complex feelings and thoughts that emerge as farm families learn to accept their loss. Compounding the problem is the reluctance of many farm families to reach out during their period of grief.

## **How Economic Stress Affects Rural Youth**

Rural families are typically committed to a way of life, one that emphasizes independence, ties to the land, and

involvement in the community. When these ties are broken, children, especially adolescents, are likely to experience a *loss of hope*. Parents and children view their farm operation or small business as a long-term effort that will be an important part of the family's future. The death of this dream leaves young people mourning a future that will never be.

Family economic stress can also make children *afraid of what will happen to them*. They may have heard their parents argue about money and how their livelihood will be affected. Children may worry that they will have no place to live or nothing to eat. They may fear that their parents might divorce. Anxious comments about the legal aspects of the problem may leave children worried that the county sheriff may take one or both parents away. Older children may be concerned that their parents' frantic pace could put them in danger of an accident or illness. Some children worry that their parents may commit suicide or become violent.

Among teenagers *the loss of peer status* is a possible consequence. In a society that places a premium on success, family financial problems are often seen as a personal failure. Like their parents, children may feel embarrassed about their family's misfortune, especially when insensitive peers make cruel comments at school. Lack of transportation and new clothes can further isolate young people from their peer group.

Another consequence of stress for young people involves a *deterioration of academic performance*. Teachers report that many rural children are distracted from school work by financial problems at home. A sense of despair or "what's the use if we lose the farm?" may prevail. As a result, children tend to think only from day to day - not the distant or even near future. Some students may become cynical or withdraw into daydreaming to avoid the reality of the painful situation.

Finally, children may *feel isolated from parents and friends*. The most stressful time for a family is the period preceding foreclosure or business failure. Parents are extremely busy in a desperate attempt to save their operation. They are also likely to do all they can to keep their situation hidden from the rest of the community. These conditions isolate children from parents who

are too busy to notice and from neighbors who are not even aware of their suffering.

Long term consequences of continued family stress may include truancy and running away from home, suicide, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy.

### **Stress signals**

Children and adolescents suffering from the effects of stress may show some of the following behavior patterns. While many of these physical reactions and behaviors are typical for most children at one time or another, they should be viewed as danger signals if they are extreme, if they occur often, and if many of them appear at once.

#### *Primarily in young children:*

- increase in temper tantrums.
- self-punishment through slapping, head banging or calling self bad names.
- highly demanding of adults, although usually fairly self-sufficient.
- restless - unable to carry out sustained play.
- preoccupied with frightening images of monsters or other violent, threatening figures.
- talks compulsively about physical dangers or threats.
- stimulates self constantly by prolonged thumb-sucking, masturbation, rocking.

#### *Both young children and adolescents:*

- noticeable change in eating and sleeping habits.
- decline in the quality of school work.
- lack of emotional responsiveness - seems bland or depressed.
- sullen, defiant and overly sensitive to mild criticism.
- withdrawal from friends and family.
- aggression against others, even adults.
- sleep problems - bothered by nightmares, grinding teeth.
- signs of physical distress: trembling hands or facial twitches although apparently well; rigid facial expressions from taut muscles; clumsy on easy manual tasks due to muscular tension; more frequent illness; complains of headaches and fatigue.

#### *Primarily in adolescents:*

- drug and alcohol abuse.
- unusual neglect of personal appearance.

- a sudden, forced cheerfulness after a period of depression.

It is important to note that not all children develop problems as a result of disruptive events or difficult circumstances.

### **Recovery: Strengthening Resiliency in Children**

A number of researchers have been interested in why some children, despite poverty, handicaps, or a miserable home environment, are able to adjust to or overcome misfortune or sustained life stress.

"Resiliency" is one way of describing this quality. Young people who are resilient despite long-range stress often:

- have the support of a trusted adult outside the family - a favorite teacher, a close relative or neighbor, or a member of the clergy.
- have a constructive, problem-solving approach to life.
- have learned a sense of responsibility and caring, and are willing to help others.
- believe that, in the end, things will work out - a positive view of the future.

When economic conditions threaten the family, individuals within the family cannot depend on one another exclusively as a source of support. Their intense personal suffering can weaken their ability to care for each other. Others in the community - relatives, friends, neighbors - are needed to provide support.

#### **Take notice**

The first step is for adults to be aware of what is happening to young people under stress, and to watch for the danger signals that indicate that a situation is becoming too much for the young person's ability to cope.

#### **Reach out**

Once a parent or adult friend realizes that a child is suffering, the next step is to make an effort to reach out. Concern has to be translated into action.

Parents can help by setting aside some time to relax and enjoy the company of their children. Reading to a child, playing games, or going for a walk are statements that parents care, that their child is an important



part of their life. Such activities can diffuse stress and help children relax, give them an opportunity to talk, and send a clear message of caring.

Parents can also try to maintain the child's involvement with school, friends, and other activities. If they attend church for example, they could encourage their children to continue to meet with the church group. The same would be true for 4-H club and other activities.

Maintaining the child's normal, everyday activities also has the advantage of providing contact with other caring adults who can offer support and encouragement at a time when parents themselves are under stress.

Others in the community can help by working to strengthen community support for families, creating opportunities for families to gather and re-establish their sense of connection with others. The goodwill and active support of neighbors is a formidable resource that rural families desperately need.

### **Listen**

Third, friends and families *must take the time to listen*. An important way to put stress into perspective is to talk about it with someone willing to listen. Listening is a powerful form of support because it conveys acceptance and caring. It also provides an opportunity for a young person to "think out loud" and better understand how he or she is reacting to the problem and what other alternatives might be open.

Caring and listening let children know we believe in them. Caring also means helping young people put the problem into perspective so they won't unfairly blame themselves or their parents.

### **Help youth understand**

A fourth important form of support is to *help children understand what is happening*. Parents can try to include children in discussions about the nature of the problem facing the family. Sometimes parents may not inform their children about economic problems because they want to protect them. One or both parents may not want to discuss the seriousness of the situation because they hope to remedy the problem in secret. Or they may worry that a child may not be able to keep such conversation confidential. But keeping children in the dark makes them feel like outsiders and prevents parents from

gaining the support of their children as the family faces and attempts to overcome the challenge.

Giving children the information they need to understand the adversity helps develop the constructive problem-solving approach to life characteristic of resiliency.

### **Forward thinking**

Finally, but possibly most important, adults can encourage *forward thinking*, talking with children about their future and nurturing a feeling of confidence or faith that things will work out. For older children this may involve re-thinking career goals.

As part of this future focus, adults should also encourage children to treat each other with compassion and support. Children in families who are coping with farm foreclosure or business failure can be important sources of strength for other children going through a similar experience.

Adults who care must take the initiative to reach out, to show children they care by helping them understand, by listening to them, by encouraging them to look positively to the future.

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(Adapted from Charles A. Smith, *Cooperative Extension Service, Manhattan, Kansas.*)



# Identifying Sources of Support and Friendship

## The Support Network

People experiencing unemployment report they feel better if they have the support of family and friends. Your informal support networks are the personal ties you have with others. Friends, relatives and other people you turn to for comfort, advice or help are your "support system."

Your informal support network helps in many ways. For example, they can:

- listen to your concerns
- brainstorm ideas and help you think about alternative plans
- comfort you when you're down
- help with material needs

## Your Support Network

To help you identify your support system, answer the following questions. Write in the names of people who give you support now.

- Who listens to me when I need someone to talk to?
- Whom do I look to when I want to share good or bad news?
- Who appreciates me?

- Who appreciates me for what I do?
- Who stands up for me, even when they might not totally agree with what I'm doing?
- When I need advice, to whom do I go?
- When I have a problem, to whom do I turn?
- Who helps me make decisions when I need to think through options and consequences?

Adapted for use in Oregon from a University of Wisconsin-Extension publication (B3459-12).



The people you named for each of these questions are an important part of your life. You depend on them. They form your informal support network. In turn, you also give them support.

As you look over the people you named, ask yourself these questions:

- Are there one or two people (spouse or friend) whose names show up often? Am I leaning too heavily on these members of my support network? Depending on a limited number of people can cause them to feel burdened.
- Are there needs I have that are not being met? Which of these needs are most important to me now? I may have different needs in the near future and require different people in my support system.
- Who else could fill the needs I have?
- Who could help me meet my needs if I were to take the risk of asking? Think about people who can help me with problem solving, not just family and friends who reinforce current feelings.
- What specific steps could I take to expand my support network? What things can I do this week? Next week?

## Building a Support Network

Part of your daily goal should be making and finding friendships that will add to your support network. This process is like making a patchwork quilt: a variety of different pieces are added over the years. Sometimes an unusual piece adds some special quality that you had not expected. Sometimes, too, you'll need to patch over places where the material has faded or worn thin.

Supportive friendships often come about indirectly from working and socializing with others. In order for this to occur, it is often necessary to first take time for others.

- volunteer your time to community groups and organizations
- visit your neighbors
- join a club or hobby group

Your support system may help you through the stress of unemployment. By reaching out to others and taking advantage of their support and friendship, you can gain strength to deal with your problems and an ability to take control of your situation.

In addition to your personal support network, you can call upon community agencies for support.

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Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, O.E. Smith, director. This publication was produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability—as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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# Bartering

When there's no job and the pay-check dwindles, you're not without resources. Take stock of all non-dollar resources you have as a family. Among these assets are time, knowledge, possessions, property, and creativity.

Swapping resources with others is a time-tested way to stay in control when money is tight. Be creative. Think through the assets you have. List these skills, talents, interests or craft items. Next try to match your skills and goods to community needs. Try making your first swap with a friend, neighbor or relative to build your confidence.

## Why Barter?

Bartering is a way out of a "money mentality." It places value on human resources and not commodities. It increases cash flow and buying power, stretches resources, extends goods and services to those on low or fixed income, taps relatively wasted talents and resources, and can involve all family members.

The challenge of bartering is making the right exchange. Some communities have a clearing-house, groups or publications to help. There are also national groups and clubs for this purpose. One obstacle that discourages some individuals from bartering is determining value for value. Any material expense should be paid before services are rendered and should be paid for by those receiving goods and service.

Determine your expectations in advance to avoid misunderstandings.

## Guide to Successful Bartering

- Know *who* will supply needed materials. Usually it is the receiver, but the provider

in some cases may have the needed tools—such as a lawn mower. When materials must be purchased, work together to determine specifics, cost limits, quality of materials, deadlines and other details that could become irritants.

- Don't assume anything. Be sure to agree on the details of exactly what will be done. Be sure expectations are clear to all. In some cases a contract or written agreement may be necessary.

### When You Provide a Service

- Be sure you are clear on details of expected service. Don't take on tasks that are over your head.
- Keep the receiver well informed on your progress. Inform the receiver also of any problems or delays.

### If You Receive a Service

- Carefully explain and supervise work to be done. Don't be caught with a completed job that is not what you expected.
- Don't hesitate to check the provider's qualifications.

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the value of bartered services must be included in gross income. If you are bartering on a small scale, this is not a concern. If you are bartering extensively, it is. For example, if you arranged with your landlord to paint the house in return for 3 months rent, the income you received for providing the painting service is the dollar value of 3 months rent.

Adapted for use in Oregon from a University of Wisconsin—Extension publication (B3459-7).

EC 1396 • Reprinted January 1993



OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE

## Barter Ideas

### Appliance Repair

- small kitchen appliances
- large kitchen appliances
- television, radio
- air conditioner, furnace

### Arts and Crafts Making/Teaching

- fine arts/painting/sculpting
- fiber arts/macrame/knitting
- applied arts/flower arrangements

### Auto

- jump starts/emergency services
- oil change/tune-ups/maintenance
- wash/wax/interior cleaning

### Carpentry

- construction bookcases/fences
- furniture repair/refinishing

### Child Care/ Elderly Care

- occasional
- day care in your home
- home nursing

### Companionship

### Entertainment

- singing
- playing musical instrument
- juggling/magic

### Food Preparation and Serving

- special occasions/catering
- products/cakes/cookies/pies
- canning/freezing/drying

### Food Production

- fishing/hunting
- berry picking
- garden produce

### Home Repair/Maintenance

- painting
- insulation installation
- plumbing
- electrical work
- minor fix-up
- wall papering

### Hair Care

- cut/trim
- coloring
- permanent/sets
- braiding

### Housework

- window washing
- floor care/carpet shampooing
- vacuuming/dusting
- dish washing
- laundry

### Moving and Hauling

- furniture
- trash
- garden supplies
- wood

### Office

- typing/word processing
- bookkeeping

### Pet Care

- sitting/walking
- feeding
- grooming

### Photography

- portrait
- special events

### Sewing

- alterations/mending
- custom made
- handwork

### Shopping

- grocery
- errands

### Transportation

- errands
- rides

### Vacation Property Maintenance

### Yardwork and Gardening

- tree trimming
- grass cutting
- garden tilling
- planting/weeding/watering
- hedge trimming/edge trimming
- yard sitting



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The following material was taken from a booklet about the Oregon Health Plan. To receive a copy of the entire booklet, contact HealthChoice, Inc. at 1-800-359-9517.

# OREGON HEALTH PLAN

## Are You Eligible for the Oregon Health Plan?

If you answer "yes" to the questions below, you may be eligible:

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*Use gross income.  
Gross income is  
income before  
any taxes or other  
deductions*

---

- Are you a US citizen or a legal alien?
- Do you live in Oregon?
- Is your income less than the 100% Federal Poverty Level column below?  
or
- Are you a pregnant woman with income less than the 133% FPL column below? (Count your unborn as a member of the family.)  
or
- Do you have children under age 6 and is your income less than 133% FPL column below? (Only children under age 6 may be eligible.)

### FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL (FPL) GUIDELINES Until April 1995

SIZE OF FAMILY	100% FPL (MONTHLY)	133% FPL (MONTHLY)
1	\$613	\$816
2	\$820	\$1,091
3	\$1,027	\$1,365
4	\$1,233	\$1,640
5	\$1,440	\$1,915
6	\$1,647	\$2,190
7	\$1,853	\$2,465
8	\$2,060	\$2,740

For more information, call HealthChoice, Inc. at 1-800-359-9517

**If your whole family already receives medical care through the Division, this page does not apply to you.  
If you are eligible for Medicare,  
you are *not* eligible for the Oregon Health Plan.**

## How to Apply

**Come to an information session** about the Oregon Health Plan. People will be there to help you fill out the forms. They will help you choose a health plan. Call 1-800-359-9517 to find out when and where the sessions are scheduled in your area.

An application and Rights and Responsibilities forms are included with this booklet. If you come to a session or mail your application, you will need **copies of**:

- Proof of income for this month
- A Social Security card for anyone you are applying for, or proof that you have applied for one

Some of you may also need to bring or mail:

- Proof of alien status
- Proof of pregnancy and due date from a medical provider
- Health insurance information if any family member has insurance
- Divorce decree

Please return your completed application and above copies to the address on the application. It must be received within **30 days** of the date stamped on the application or the start of your coverage may be delayed.

Coming to an information session will be the best way to learn more about the Oregon Health Plan. You can ask any questions you might have, and hear answers to other questions that might be helpful. There will be information sessions held in many towns around Oregon each month.

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*Mail your materials promptly or the start of your coverage may be delayed*

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## *The Fishing-Dependent Families Project*

# Fishing Family Decision Making

Decision making is critical for all families, especially during times of transition. When resources are plentiful, management of those resources can become relaxed. In times when resources are scarce, such as now, careful management of these resources is crucial.

What this means is not just management of economic decisions—manipulating the cash flow. It means communicating about goals. It means taking into account the various family members' values and role conflicts. It means sharing responsibilities. It might mean improving a family member's knowledge, attitudes, or skills.

Individual decisions are different from family decisions. If we think it is sometimes hard to make an individual decision, multiply that effort by three or four. That's why family decisions are so difficult. Family decisions involve all family members, not just one family member making an individual decision for the entire family.

### **Fishing family decisions need to be family decisions**

If a major commitment of resources is made toward an economic decision but not all family members are included in the decision or not all members are willing to devote the time, energy, or money needed, then achieving the goal is more difficult. Precious resources can be lost as a result.

When families are asked about the resources that are available to them, they most often mention time and money. In addition, family members have human resources available to them, such as energy, skills, ability to learn new skills, and attitudes.

Ideally, family decisions meet the needs of all family members. In real life, that is not always possible. However, if family members have a voice in making major decisions, they will have an opportunity to work out value or role conflicts.

### **Listening is an essential skill for family decision making**

True listening is not letting someone's words go in one ear and out the other as you are thinking about something else. True listening is devoting your energies to what that family member is saying. It might be asking her a question about what she said to clarify what you heard. Sometimes this technique is necessary because there may be an unstated need being expressed. Someone also may be clarifying a need with themselves; the questioning can help them in this task.

Tensions will arise during family decision making. That's normal; however, don't let it get out of hand. Give yourselves some time-outs, like a walk around the house or delaying the discussion until tomorrow. Make a commitment to get back together at a certain time before calling it quits.



Family decision making is not always easy in the short run. It can take a lot of time. It can sometimes be frustrating. In the long run, it helps the family achieve what it wants. Family decision making can sometimes help families see that one decision may be better than another for the business or the family.

Family goal setting has two stages. The first stage sometimes happens subconsciously. This stage makes it possible to get to the point where the goal can be stated. It includes identifying important values, investigating alternatives, resolving conflict by working on differences in values, and blending opposing solutions to meet the needs of several people at the same time.

### **Once you know your goals, then you can meet the task of allocating resources**

Until we figure out exactly what is most important to the family and then resolve the differences in values, family goals are unclear. When fishing family goals are not clear to family members, fishing family resources will be used less efficiently than they could.

Have you or the family ever felt frustrated about where money is being spent? When you feel this way, it's time to assess where the money is going and to compare it with the family goals. It's possible to do both but have no connection between them; that is where the frustration comes. There should be a direct relationship between the goals and where the resources are going. If there isn't, one or the other must change.

That frustration may arise because the goal-setting process hasn't occurred. Or it may arise because it has occurred individually but hasn't been communicated to the family.

Family decision making is a continual process. Circumstances or people change so that decisions often need to be re-evaluated even after you think they are complete. People have different thinking styles and different personality traits. Take advantage of all family members' strengths as you work your way through this process together.



Oregon Sea Grant  
Oregon State University



OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION  
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# Farmers in

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# TRANSITION

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A Publication of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University

## Deciding to Stay In or Get Out

*Katherine H. Graham and John R. Brake*

- *Sometimes I get asked why we stayed on the farm so long when there were such obvious financial problems. I ask myself that too. But, you know, when you are right in the middle of it, it is impossible to take a step back and ask yourself what is happening. Things are getting worse and worse and you feel so much anxiety, confusion, and hopelessness that you can't think straight. To work out problems as big as these, you need to have a clear mind. But you can't do it when you feel this much turmoil. It is just not possible to think clearly.\**

Farm families facing financial problems experience considerable stress. Creditors, family members, and others demand that they address the situation. Unfortunately, anger, fear, guilt, and despair often interfere with the ability to solve the problems effectively. Impulsive decisions may be made, often with unfavorable results.

Dealing with financial problems requires the same management skills used to run the farm. A realistic look at your farm's financial situation, along with serious consideration of options, including selling, can minimize both your short- and long-term financial and emotional stress.

### Monitoring Your Situation

The first step before making any decisions is to assess your farm's financial condition. Although farmers under severe financial pressure are often aware of their general situation, they typically do not have a precise accounting of their finances. Maintaining up-to-date records in financially trying times may be difficult. Strong emotions, such as confusion, depression, and anger, can interfere with analytical thinking.

The following quiz was developed by agricultural economists at Cornell University to help you evaluate your financial situation. The purpose of the quiz is to help you begin to identify areas that require attention. It is not intended to take the place of professional financial analysis.

### Financial Health Quiz\*\*

Circle the answer that best describes your farm business.

1. Percent equity in my business is \_\_\_\_\_
  1. 75 percent or more
  2. 50 to 74 percent
  3. 25 to 49 percent
  4. less than 25 percent
  5. don't know
2. In the past three to five years the equity (net worth) of my business has \_\_\_\_\_
  1. increased
  2. stayed the same
  3. decreased
  4. don't know
3. Debt payments are \_\_\_\_\_ 20 percent of my cash receipts.
  1. less than
  2. about equal to
  3. more than
  4. don't know
4. Last year the debt-to-asset ratio (total farm debts over total farm assets) for my farm was \_\_\_\_\_
  1. under 40 percent
  2. between 40 and 69 percent
  3. between 70 and 100 percent
  4. more than 100 percent
5. My farm bills are \_\_\_\_\_
  1. paid on time
  2. paid but some are past due
  3. increasingly hard to pay, and some are rolled into scheduled payments
  4. don't know the status of my bills
6. The net cash income (cash operating receipts minus cash operating expenses) of my farm has \_\_\_\_\_ over the past three years.
  1. been increasing
  2. been constant
  3. been decreasing
  4. don't know

7. Within the last year, my lender has rejected \_\_\_\_\_ of my loan request(s).

1. no portion
2. part
3. all

8. In the past year, I \_\_\_\_\_ paid my loan payments on time.

1. always
2. usually
3. sometimes
4. rarely

## Scoring

To calculate your score, add up the numbers next to each response you selected. Match your score with the following descriptions.

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

8-12 points: Your business is in excellent financial health.

13-17 points: Your business is weak in a few areas. Those questions in which you did not circle a #1 indicate areas that need improvement. Focus on improving in these areas.

18-22 points: Your business has serious problems. You should seek assistance from a professional adviser to improve your management practices.

23-31 points: Your business has extreme financial problems and is in very poor health. Seek immediate and intensive assistance from a professional (Cooperative Extension or financial) adviser. Do not delay!

If your score indicates that your business has a few weaknesses but is generally sound, changing some of your management practices may take care of the problems. If your situation is more serious, you may want to consider selling off assets, cutting back on inputs, or taking an off-farm job to supplement your income. If your score indicates extreme financial problems, the best solution may be to sell the farm.

## Going out of Farming

Most financially stressed farm families do not consider the option of selling their farms. They see selling out as a threat and an admission of failure. So, despite severe financial problems, they resist even considering this possibility.

- *I couldn't bring myself to make the decision to quit farming. My wife, who did the books, kept trying to tell me that we had to think about it, but in my mind it was giving up. It was almost two years before I listened to my wife. She was right from the beginning—we should have gone out then.*

Despite their efforts, many financially stressed farm families are eventually forced to leave farming. Unfortunately, most who face the prospect of getting out delay for months or years before carrying out this decision. Delaying the decision can be costly. With time, not only does their financial situation worsen, but they deplete the resources needed to start a new life.

To an outsider, delaying getting out of a failing business might not make sense. To farm families, however, and those involved with them, it is understandable. Selling a farm means the loss not only of income but of a lifestyle, an identity, and a heritage. As one farmer said in describing her feelings at the thought of losing her farm:

- *The farm is like a member of the family. When you lose it, it is like losing a part of you. Something dies that can never be replaced. That's why we just couldn't bring ourselves to take that step for over a year.*

The prospect of losing the farm puts tremendous strain on the entire family. Many farmers who have decided to leave describe the period in which they were making the decision as one of the most stressful of their lives.

- *There was so much pressure on us. We had cut so many corners, but still we couldn't make our payments on time. Things were so up in the air about what was going to happen with the dairy situation. We didn't know if it was going to get better or worse. We felt trapped; damned if you do and damned if you don't. The whole family was tense, my husband especially. He couldn't sleep at all. The kids began to have trouble in school. And I cried so easily. It was a terrible time for us.*

Families often struggle for months or even years before they make the final decision, torn by the strong desire to stay in farming on one hand and their worsening financial condition and uncertain future on the other.

The timing of a decision to leave farming is extremely important and can make a significant difference in the severity of the losses suffered. Most families leave under one of three circumstances related to timing: they do not make a decision and are forced out; they wait until the stress of the situation pushes them to make a decision; or they sell before the situation becomes critical.

## Being Forced Out

Some families delay so long that eventually they are forced out by their creditors. One dairy farmer described his experience:

- *I was never able to bring myself to a decision. Instead I just blocked out the problems and held on to the hope that somehow it would all work out. My lender foreclosed on me, which still makes me feel so ashamed. I had always thought of myself as a strong person; I guess I'm not.*

Farmers who are forced out commonly feel humiliated; they feel they have lost control of their lives and their ability to make decisions. Farmers pride themselves on their independence and ability to "take charge" of their lives, so they are apt to feel self-condemnation long after they have been forced to leave.

## Being Pushed out by Severe Stress

In the most common situation, the family decides to leave farming under extreme stress. Typically, the financial situation, pressure from creditors, and other circumstances intensify as the family tries to avoid leaving the farm. Eventually, the level of stress becomes unbearable and the family decides to sell to relieve the tensions and pressures.

- *It got to the point where I couldn't get out of bed in the morning and face the cows. We cut down on grain, and they were getting thin. The bills were still piling up, and we were getting so many notices. One day when the milk check was its lowest ever, I decided then and there that I had had it. It was time to get out. That night we called the auctioneer.*

As this quotation illustrates, the decision to sell is often made impulsively, only one step ahead of foreclosure actions.

Some farmers postpone selling for years. A livestock farmer in New York, for example, said he knew he would have to get out four years before he put his farm up for sale.

A lengthy delay can have serious consequences. The farm's finances continue to deteriorate until the stress becomes extreme. When the farm is finally liquidated, the liabilities equal or exceed the assets and a once sizable equity has eroded to little or nothing. Following liquidation the family may have to declare Chapter 7 bankruptcy. One New York State farmer described his situation:

- *We lost everything we had—22 years down the drain. We were stupid to wait so long. All that work, all that love, and all our dreams are gone. We came out with absolutely nothing. We had to declare bankruptcy, which makes starting over very difficult.*

Once the equity is gone, there is nothing to show for all the years of effort and little or no cash reserves to get the family resettled. One family in New York, for example, could not afford to buy a reliable car so that the woman could work at a job in town that would have provided much-needed supplementary income. Some farmers are forced to accept the first job offer they get so they can put food on the table. Many families are forced to live in less-than-adequate housing.

- *We stay in this house because we have no alternatives. We don't have enough money for a down payment. And if we rented in town we couldn't save a cent. So we stay here. FmHA can throw us out any time. It's hard living with this much uncertainty.*

By delaying the decision to get out and letting their equity erode, many farm families place themselves in a vulnerable position. The transition out of farming is difficult enough without adding the burden of lingering financial problems. Time and again, families have said, "If only we had left sooner, things would be much easier for us now."

## Deciding to Get Out

A few families leave farming fairly quickly after realizing they are in financial trouble. These families love farming but view getting out as a wise management decision. They have established decision rules—financial criteria that are used to determine that it is time to sell. One farmer described his decision rule and how it worked:

- *I promised the wife that when our equity went below 55 percent we were going to call it quits. Over the past three years I've watched our equity slip. We hit 52 percent this year and that meant one thing: time to quit. It was hard carrying through with that decision, but when I see what problems others have when they try and hang on till everything is gone, I know we were right in getting out.*

Another former farmer said that he knew his business was no longer viable when a loan application was rejected. Another realized that his debt load was so high that the only way he could get himself out of the "hole" was by working for 10 years without borrowing. Once he realized that improving his financial situation was impossible under these conditions, he decided to liquidate the farm.

Decision rules can alert you that you need to consider leaving. They can prevent the delay that often results in the collapse of the business and the family losing everything it has.

Decision rules can help you maintain control over your life and prevent you from feeling the humiliation of a forced exit or the unbearable stress of "being under the gun." Self-respect is retained. As one farmer said, "We made the decision, it was not made for us, and we were the ones who said what we were going to do; no one else told us anything." Naturally, as with any life change, deciding to sell creates stress. Unlike farmers who are forced to leave, however, someone who decides to sell has greater financial and personal resources to adjust to a new life.

## Getting Help

It is difficult to make decisions when you are feeling financial pressure. Monitoring the financial health of the business, evaluating options, and establishing decision rules require clear thinking. Often it is valuable to consult someone who is familiar with the business but not personally involved for help in making decisions. Cooperative Extension agents, accountants, and professional financial advisers are useful sources of help. These advisers can help you determine your options and bring an objective point of view to the decision-making process.

## Points to Remember

1. Monitor your farm's financial situation carefully so you can identify and correct problems promptly.
2. If getting out of farming is the best decision, do so quickly. If you delay, the business's equity is likely to decline, which will create excessive problems during the transition period.
3. Set decision rules to force yourself to act.
4. Seek the advice of professionals. They can provide a fresh outlook on your situation and help you assess your options.

\*The quotations used in this publication are paraphrased from interviews conducted with 28 New York State families who were forced from their farms for financial reasons. They were interviewed as part of a study of their experiences. See Katherine Graham, "A Description of the Transition Experiences of 28 NYS Farm Families Forced from Their Farms: 1982-1985" (M.S. thesis, Cornell University, 1986), for a complete description of the study.

\*\* This test is adopted from the Farm Financial Health and Practices Test by Wayne Knoblauch, George Casler, Ed LaDue, and Stuart Smith, Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University.

## Other Fact Sheets in This Series:

Taking Charge During the Transition

Coping with the Loss of the Farm

Finding a New Career

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Leaving Their Farms

Prepared by Katherine H. Graham, Research Associate, and John R. Brake, W. I. Myers Professor of Agricultural Finance, Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University

The author wishes to thank Tom Maloney and Tom Shepard of Cooperative Extension, Jeanne Hogarth of the Department of Consumer Economics, Christine Ranney of the Department of Agricultural Economics, and Erica Fox of Media Services for their assistance in reviewing this publication.

This publication is issued to further Cooperative Extension work mandated by acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. It was produced with the cooperation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, New York State College of Human Ecology, and New York College of Veterinary Medicine, at Cornell University. Cornell Cooperative Extension offers equal program and employment opportunities. Lucinda Noble, Director.

A toll-free information and referral service is available to help farmers in transition deal with financial, personal, or family stress.

NY FarmNet  
1-800-547-FARM

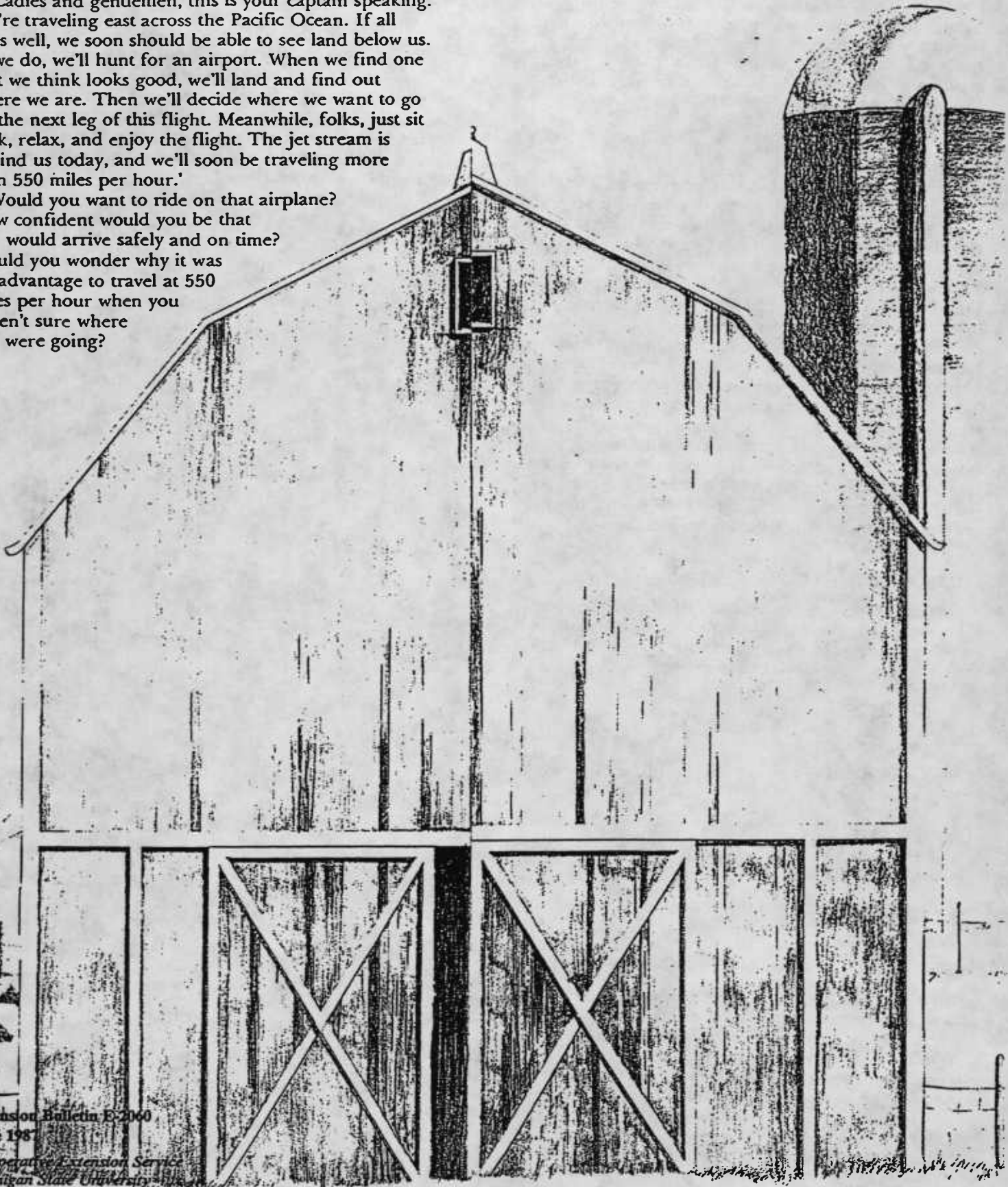
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## Managing Change in Farm and Family

"Imagine that you are on an airplane that has just taken off from Honolulu for a flight to the mainland. What would you think if this announcement came over the intercom?

'Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. We're traveling east across the Pacific Ocean. If all goes well, we soon should be able to see land below us. If we do, we'll hunt for an airport. When we find one that we think looks good, we'll land and find out where we are. Then we'll decide where we want to go on the next leg of this flight. Meanwhile, folks, just sit back, relax, and enjoy the flight. The jet stream is behind us today, and we'll soon be traveling more than 550 miles per hour.'

Would you want to ride on that airplane?  
How confident would you be that you would arrive safely and on time?  
Would you wonder why it was an advantage to travel at 550 miles per hour when you weren't sure where you were going?



In the same way that the airplane pilot needs to know where the flight is going, how it is going to get there (what route), and when it is to arrive, effective management of family and farming operations depends on your knowing where you are going, how you are to get there, and when you are to arrive. However, if you feel that you lack a clear view of your "destination," and are uncertain of how you will reach it, you are not alone. Most people have a continuing concern for the future, but few actually identify their goals and then practice goal-directed management." (Gessaman and Prochaska-Cue, 1985)

## FARMING IS UNIQUE

Farming is one family business where work and family life are very closely meshed, often with several generations working together. While operational goals are often set for the farm, family goals which are every bit as important are sometimes ignored. Farming impacts heavily on family relationships and the lifestyle of the family. In addition, the farm operation is affected by the family.

The farm provides income for the family to meet goals while the family provides capital, money, and human time and energy, to meet the farm goals. While working together in a business can provide much satisfaction, it can also be a potential source of trouble. Unfortunately, in many farm businesses, the needs of the business consistently outrank the needs of the family. Since the farm and household are resources for one another, how does a farm family work toward setting goals that balance both farm and family?

## THE VALUES OF GOAL SETTING

Goals are a very personal aspect of life. While your family and farm goals may be similar to those identified by others, they will be unique to your family and its farming operation. Goals can help you:

- Maintain or change direction
- Remain consistent
- Utilize resources (time, money, skills) more effectively
- Be more productive
- Bring family members closer together by working toward the same end
- Build a family mutual support system

## MESHING FARM AND FAMILY GOALS

Farm and family goals must be planned together. Unless all members of the family see that the goals are mutually satisfying, they may be working at cross purposes. It's also important to realize that goals change. New interests emerge, priorities change, and some goals prove to be unattainable. When this happens, goals need to be modified.

The farm may have congruent goals of survival, profit, and the best use of productive resources such as increasing capacity by buying more livestock and

land or investing in new equipment for greater efficiency.

On the other hand, family goals may have divergent components. One may deal with living standards for the family. For example, parents may see a need for remodeling the kitchen. Another may deal with the development of a sense of self-worth or professional competence of its members, particularly for younger members of the family. One of the children may want to participate in the school band which necessitates the purchase of a musical instrument and after school practice, which means less help with farm chores.

There may be a conflict between the farm and family goals when only so much time, money, energy and skill are available. Relationships among family members may be affected. Resentment may



build in members who perceive that their wishes are continually superseded by everyone else's.

### WHO SETS THE GOALS?

The question of who is part of the goal setting process may interfere with effective goal setting. Sometimes a family may not realize that all members of the family are affected and should have a voice in the decision making.

All too often, the relationships established in the business — identifying one particular person as the "boss" — carry over when making family decisions. Thus the family's perception of "who should be involved" when farm and family goals are determined is critical. Lack of agreement about who does what, and who decides what, needs to be overcome.

### HOW ARE GOALS IDENTIFIED?

Goals have three components:

1. Direction — Where do we want to go?
2. Resources — How can we get there?
3. Time orientation — When do we expect to get there?

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GOALS CONFLICT?

It's only human to experience conflict but how does it start? Sometimes we agree on the goals but differ on how to get there. Other times, conflict results when one family member perceives that not including his goal is a threat to his knowledge, values, sense of "right" or "territory". Problems family members commonly have in working together include:

1. Domination by one family member.
2. Disagreement on defining the problem.
3. Disagreement on how to solve the problem.
4. Bad experience with past conflict management efforts.
5. Too much expected from one or more members.
6. Fears: loss of independence, fear of rejection, fear of disrespect.
7. Personality conflict.
8. Difference in values and lifestyle.

Conflict management calls for confrontation. Confrontation is never pleasant, but you can minimize hostility and reach a workable solution. Gaining cooperation from everyone will mean:

1. Treating the other person with respect. This is both verbal and nonverbal respect. How you look at each other, your tone of voice and selection of words will convey respect or disrespect.
2. Each person must listen until they experience the other side. This means *really* listening to the other person. Active listening means understanding the content of the other person's ideas, the meaning it has for that person and the feeling that person has about the idea.
3. Each person is allowed to state his/her views, needs and feelings.

Chances for miscommunication within families are great when you consider that each person is interpreting what is being said based on his/her values, beliefs and experiences. When unsure about the other person's meaning or intention, check out your interpretation before responding or acting. It only takes a few minutes to ask "Do you mean...?" or "Do I understand that you think...?" Often, as positive communication increases, goal priorities become *more mutual* and better balanced between farm and family.





## A GOAL-SETTING ACTIVITY

One plan of action for goal setting would be:

1. Each family member identifies 5 goals for the farm and 5 goals for the family.
2. Together, the family talks about each of the proposed goals and mutually agrees on 5 for farm and 5 for family.
3. Together, both sets are combined and prioritized from the most to the least important. Attention should be paid, long-term, to whether or not everyone's interests are represented.
4. Cross check the farm and family goals for any potential conflict of interests or needs.
5. Begin working toward farm and family goals.

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Authors: Irene Hathaway and Anne K. Soderman  
Extension Specialists  
Department of Family and Child Ecology

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, W. E. H. Lindner, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

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Nobody out there understands as well as you do that there is a wide range of complex issues, both short and long term, contributing to the uncertainties facing many people in the commercial fishing industry. You are living day in and day out with management decisions, unusual ocean conditions, environmental concerns, increased competition for limited fish resources, and changing world markets.

This section contains publications to help fishing family members to make more informed decisions. If you are going to make the changes to “stay in,” or to “change occupations,” here are some resources to help you.

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*\* This document was part of the Report to the Governor, "Benchmarks: Key Industries, Oregon" June 1993. Gil Sylvia, Hatfield Marine Science Center, was the chair of the Fisheries Industry committee that developed this document.*

## Fisheries

### Overview

The U.S. fisheries industry is at a crossroads in its development. Many major fisheries are already fully utilized or over capitalized. Important market issues are relegated to secondary roles as state, regional and national fisheries management agencies contend with allocation issues and environmental problems, including threatened and endangered species. Yet, global markets remain weak, and U.S. per capita consumption of seafood has shown a steady five-year decline. The diversity of the U.S. industry has confounded attempts to develop national consensus in addressing regulatory and market issues.

The issues confronting the Oregon industry reflect these national problems. Some fisheries face difficult regulatory and market hurdles. However, expected increases in global seafood demand during the second half of the decade—combined with development of new market strategies—may improve opportunities in national and international markets. While large expansion in primary production is not expected, value-added processing, together with expansion of new fisheries and aquaculture opportunities, can potentially lead to moderate industry growth. However, actual growth will depend on the cooperation of industry leaders to formulate and implement management regimes consistent with solving regulatory problems and improving value-added production.

### Vision

Industry leaders have the following vision:

*Maintain the greatest long-term sustainable harvest of all fisheries and to attain the greatest utilization and added-value benefits from seafood through: 1) Proper resource management which support the cultural practices inherent in Oregon's traditional fishing industries and communities; and 2) Continued development of the most appropriate harvesting and processing technology and marketing approaches; and 3) Maximizing public-private-academic relationships with the Fishing Industry.*

The Oregon industry confronts a challenging future. This diverse and regionally important industry will continue to face difficult regulatory issues while looking to improve market opportunities. Important strategies will center on developing public

policy that allow the industry to control use of the resource while generating investments for improving product quality, value-added production and market development. New public policy will need to address contentious fisheries problems, including changing scenarios in resource allocation and conservation.

Today there are new developments which may significantly affect the structure of the future Oregon Industry. Pacific whiting fishermen and processors are joining together in an association to contend with fisheries management problems, product quality issues, and value-added products. Development of quality assurance will be a key strategy in focusing industry commitment and cooperation. Competitive pressures in global seafood markets and demand for reliable supplies and for more consistent quality product will compel the entire Oregon seafood industry to address product safety and product quality problems. The region's reputation for environmental consciousness and a relatively pristine marine environment may lead to development of increased production of quality seafood products bearing "Oregon" and the "Pacific Northwest" labels. Improvements in seafood technology, particularly in the areas of value-added processing and packaging, will allow "Oregon" value-added products to compete successfully in the national and international marketplace. Meaningful quality standards will provide the industry with opportunities to sell its products in quality conscious markets in Europe and Asia. Trade agreements (if consummated) will provide greater opportunities to export "Oregon" value-added seafood in international markets.

Another important trend will be full use of previously underutilized species. Implementation of management regimes which allow fisheries entrepreneurs to "stake a claim" in new resources will provide the incentives for new fisheries and market development. Direct marketing by fishermen and processor entrepreneurs will increase opportunities in niche marketing in national and international specialty markets. Aquaculture, although presently a relatively small industry, may be able to develop unique opportunities in freshwater and coastal marine sites.

The Oregon fisheries industry, although relatively small, have a national reputation for innovation and adoption. If industry leaders, in cooperation with state government can co-develop management regimes which are not only market oriented but solve regulatory and environmental issues, then the future of this industry looks promising. The "Oregon" label may indeed be a symbol of quality in national and international markets. However, status quo management policies which are micro-management oriented, lead to compressed seasons, or fail to address environmental issues, will lead to an industry that must focus on short-run issues and cannot develop long-run strategies for new product and market development. The "Oregon" name will then be associated with second tier commodity producers which are unable to control their own destiny.



OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

# Fishing-Dependent Families Project

A project created by local people for local people to provide practical information on ways to deal with the economic, personal, and social stresses created by the challenges and cyclical nature of the commercial fishing industry.

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August 15, 1994

TO: Interested Persons

FR: OSU Fishing-Dependent Families Project

RE: UPDATE: Federal Aid Package for the Salmon Industry

The most common question we have been asked by salmon fishermen recently is "what about this money from the government?" While there is still much confusion and uncertainty in exactly what form federal aid to dislocated salmon fishermen will take, the following is a summary of what we do know of this date:

## 1) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

### a. Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

On August 2, 1994, President Clinton signed an emergency declaration to provide disaster unemployment compensation for northwest coastal salmon fishermen through FEMA. This means that anyone, including fishermen, who is unemployed as a result of the El Nino affect on the salmon fishery and resulting season closure/reduction (a.k.a. salmon "disaster") who is not otherwise eligible for unemployment compensation may now be eligible for unemployment compensation through the State of Oregon Employment Division.

### b. Mortgage and Rent Assistance

A program which has been available under other FEMA disaster declarations has been mortgage and rent assistance for those who are facing foreclosure or eviction as a result of the disaster. This program has been denied as a benefit under the current salmon disaster declaration. We understand that the State may file an appeal. In order to do that, the State needs to know numbers of people who are facing foreclosure or eviction directly related to the salmon "disaster." If you or someone you know is in this situation, please contact Jerry Baugh, Oregon Economic Development Department, 503-986-0123, immediately.

## 2) U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

### Low Interest Loans

Low interest (4%) loans are available to eligible coastal businesses, including fishing vessels. These are for businesses which have suffered substantial economic injury as a result of the salmon season closure/reduction. Substantial economic injury is the

inability of a business to meet its obligations as they mature and to pay its ordinary and necessary operating expenses. These are working capital loans to help you through the disaster period after which it is expected you will be able to repay SBA for the loan.

For more information or to apply, call the SBA in Texas at 1-800-366-6303. If you need help in completing the forms, contact your local community college Small Business Development Center for assistance. Some are listed below:

Coos Bay = 269-0123 (Jon Richards)

Lincoln City/Newport = 765-2515 or 994-4166 (Mike Lainoff)

Tillamook = 842-2551 (Mike Harris)

Seaside = 738-3347 (Ken McCune)

### 3) U.S. Department of Commerce

#### Emergency Aid

\$12 million of a total of \$15.7 million dollars in emergency aid is being made available to salmon "workers" affected by the season closure/reduction in California, Oregon and Washington. Commerce had originally indicated that the funds would be available to affected workers.

Who will get what and in what form is still not known. Commerce is considering a variety of proposals including but not limited to direct grants to fishermen, permit buy backs, jobs programs, and at-sea research using fishing vessels.

### 4) Dislocated Worker Outreach Program

It looks like job possibilities will be emerging for fishermen, families, timber workers, and others dislocated from their businesses. It is anticipated that at least some of these jobs will be in the area of habitat restoration. To receive more information, including referrals, register for the Dislocated Worker Outreach Program by contacting:

Tom Robinson, Coordinator, Dislocated Worker Outreach Program  
748 NW Lee, Newport, OR 97365, 503-265-6037.

You should also register at your local employment office if you are looking for work. Workers for at least some of these emerging job possibilities will come through employment office referrals.

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The OSU Fishing-Dependent Families Project, funded by the Extension Sea Grant Program and OSU Extension Service, covers the entire Oregon coastline. For more information contact your Fishing Family Coordinator or OSU Extension Sea Grant Agent:

*On the North Coast, Peggy Deveraux, 325-0473, or Jim Bergeron, 325-8027*

*On the North-Central Coast, Connie Kennedy, 574-0882, or Ginny Goblirsch, 265-3463*

*On the South-Central Coast, Herb Ocobock Jr., 888-9062, or RC Hinman, 997-8279*

*On the South Coast, Linda Brown, 469-8890, or Jim Waldvogel, 707-464-4711*

The Extension Sea Grant Program, a component of the Oregon State University Extension Service, provides education, training, and technical assistance to people with ocean-related needs and interests without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.



OSU Extension Sea Grant



OSU Extension Service



## *The Fishing-Dependent Families Project*

# A Brief Look at Business Finance Programs in Oregon

### **Oregon Business Development Fund**

The Oregon Business Development Fund (OBDF) is a revolving loan fund. Manufacturing, processing, and regionally significant tourism projects are eligible. The OBDF provides long term, fixed rate financing for land, building, equipment and machinery, and permanent working capital. Loans will be made only where there is a demonstrated creation of new jobs or retention of existing jobs. The program places particular emphasis on rural areas and on businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

The maximum loan is 40 percent of eligible project costs. A private lender is required for a portion of the project. Refinance of existing debt is generally ineligible. OBDF loans may not exceed \$250,00 per project. The fund gives preference to projects that will create a minimum of one job per every \$15,000 of OBDF investment.

### **Oregon Capital Access Program**

The Capital Access Program (CAP) is designed to increase the availability of loans to small businesses in Oregon from banks. The program is non-bureaucratic and flexible. A CAP loan is a private transaction between borrower and lender. CAP may be used to cover the full amount of the loan or line of credit, or a portion of it.

Businesses interested in the program should inquire at commercial banks in their communities. The following banks are participating lenders in the CAP program: Bank of America, Bank of Astoria, Key Bank, Bank of Newport, Pacific State Bank, U.S. Bank, Valley Commercial Bank. Check with your local bank to see if it participates in this program.

### **Oregon Entrepreneurial Development Loan Fund**

The Oregon Entrepreneurial Development Loan Fund (EDLF) allows the Oregon Economic Development Department to make initial loans of up to \$15,000 to entrepreneurial businesses. An additional follow-up loan of up to \$10,000 may be made. The maximum term for a EDLF loan is five years.

An EDLF applicant must provide a minimum of 20 percent of the amount of the loan in equity. Applicants must be enrolled in or have completed a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) small business management program. Applicants must prepare a business plan and have it reviewed by a certified entity. An expenditure plan must be prepared. Applicants must satisfy two of the following conditions: the business must have been operating for less than 15 months; it must have revenues of \$50,00 or less for the previous 12 months; or it

must be owned by a severely disabled person. Contact your local SBDC for an application package and assistance in completing the package.

### **Oregon Industrial Development Revenue Bond Program Description**

The Economic Development Commission issues industrial development revenue bonds for manufacturing, processing, and tourism related facilities in Oregon. Only manufacturing projects, exempt facilities (such as docks or solid waste facilities) and bonds for non-profit organizations are federally tax exempt. A major goal of the program is the creation of employment through the formation and movement of capital to value-added manufacturing.

The key feature of some revenue bonds is their tax-exempt status which lowers the overall cost of capital. An eligible company may borrow up to \$10 million through this bond program. Not more than 25 percent of the proceeds of the bond can be used to acquire land. Typically, the minimum size of a bond is at least \$1 million.



Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability—as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### **Oregon Credit Enhancement Fund**

The purpose of this fund is to provide guarantees to banks to increase capital availability to small business firms, thereby assisting them to create jobs. To be eligible, a borrower's business cannot employ more than 200 full-time employees. Manufacturers, processors, natural resource industries, distribution, new technology, and some other businesses qualify. Retail businesses do not qualify. Some service industries are eligible. A full list of eligible and ineligible businesses is available in the application packet.

The fund is administered through the Oregon Economic Development Department. The fund guarantees bank loans, including working capital loans. Banks will originate and service the loans.

Program eligibility is restricted to companies that "trade in markets for which national or international competition exists." Fifty-five percent of the guarantee authority is reserved for value-added wood products and agricultural firms. Twenty percent is set aside for emerging small enterprises.

Enrolled banks in the Oregon Credit Enhancement Program are: Bank of Astoria, Pacific State Bank, Oregon Pacific Banking Company. Check with your local bank to see if it participates in this program.





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## The Fishing-Dependent Families Project

# Community College Resources for Fishing-Dependent Families

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### Resources available at all community colleges

The community college system offers many different resources to community residents and students. And you do not have to be a student at the college to use many of these resources! Since resources vary in each college, contact your local community college to see which of the following resources are available to you:

- *Career & Placement Service Office* has testing for career interests, computer programs related to information on various careers, college catalogs from most in-state and many out-of-state colleges, occupation handbooks, other reference materials on careers and occupations, and a staff member who can counsel and refer you to other resources.
- *Counseling staff* for academic and career counseling.
- *Placement testing* for academic evaluation. Tests for writing, reading, and math skills are available at no cost to the student.
- *Financial Aid Offices* provide assistance with financial aid, scholarships, loans, etc.
- *Tutoring Centers* provide help for students who are having difficulty in enrolled classes.
- *GED Centers* help folks who need to acquire a General Education Diploma.
- *Remedial courses* are designed to upgrade skills required by other vocational, transfer, or diploma programs.
- *Displaced Worker Programs* help folks who have lost their jobs.
- *Small Business Development Centers* are federally funded programs that offer training and counseling for people going into or operating small businesses.
- *Student Support Services* provide varied support activities for students.
- *Workforce 2000 Programs* are preparing people for the workplace of the 21st century.

### Clatsop Community College Maritime Science Department

Clatsop Community College in Astoria offers Commercial Marine Training programs, which help new and experienced commercial fishermen upgrade their skills.

Classes are offered for individuals at entry skill levels and for mariners employed within the industry. Most classes are 40 hours, 8:00 AM–5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. See descriptions below.

#### Radar Observer Program

There are three levels of classes available (*5-Day Original Endorsement, 3-Day Recertification, and 1-Day Recertification*) ranging from the 5-day U.S. Coast Guard approved program for licensing, to instruction on plotting, to just the exam for recertification.

#### Marine Safety Training

This 3-day class includes conducting on-board drills, use of survival equipment, treatment of hypothermia, fire fighting, and hands-on training in life rafts and survival suits. (Also available in other locations on the Oregon Coast.)

### **Limited Scope License Classes**

There are two levels of classes available (*5-Day Limited Scope* and *3-Day Endorsement*) ranging from operating passenger carrying vessels in inland waters of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, to a 3-day endorsement that adds the Columbia, Willamette, and Snake rivers to your license.

### **Commercial Fishing Vessel Crew Member Training Program**

The crew member training program gives individuals the basic knowledge and skills necessary to become employed as deckhands on vessels in the commercial fishing industry. The program has 11 different classes, covering topics such as commercial fishing and deck seamanship, fishing gear types and safety, watch keeping, marine safety, vessel operations, knots-splices-lines and rigging, net mending, handling-repair and storage of fishing gear, basic navigation, and cooperative work experience.

### **License Training Program**

This program helps mariners seeking deck licenses, up to 1,600-ton Master-near coastal, to learn the major skills necessary to pass a Coast Guard exam. Mariners at all levels are welcome to come in and take portions of the instruction or the entire course.

### **Other classes and more information**

Other classes available include Safety and Stability, Tides and Currents, and Pot Fisheries. To get a copy of the schedule of classes with information on cost and course descriptions, contact the Maritime Science Department, Clatsop Community College, 1653 Jerome Street, Astoria, OR 97103, telephone (503) 325-7962.



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# The Business of Small Business

## The Network

### *Program*

The Oregon Small Business Development Center Network provides assistance and resources to Oregon's small businesses. The Network links the resources of federal, state, and local governments with the private sector, community colleges, and other educational organizations.

### *Purpose*

The Oregon SBDC Network is committed to strengthening the business side of small business. Small firms (50 or fewer employees) account for 96 percent of Oregon's businesses, and employ 47 percent of the private work force. Our goal is statewide economic growth through support of small businesses.

### *Members*

Oregon has one of the most comprehensive networks of small business development centers in the country. There is a Small Business Development Center at all 16 of Oregon's community colleges and three state colleges. The state Network office at Lane Community College in Eugene coordinates the program. (See the map on the reverse side for the center nearest you.)

## Services

### *Business Counseling*

- Free
- Confidential
- One-to-one
- Provided by:
  - Center Staffs*
  - Business Professionals*
  - Qualified Volunteers*
  - College Faculty*

### *Business Training*

- Classes
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Conferences
- Tailored Programs

### *Business Resources*

- Books
- Periodicals
- Videotapes
- Microcomputers
- Business software

### *Business Services*

- Referrals
- Contacts
- Information

## Special Services

### *International Trade*

To help Oregon businesses develop overseas trade opportunities, the Network has established The Small Business International Trade Program. The program provides counseling for developing potential products, information on international trade regulations and requirements, and assistance in developing international business and marketing plans.

### *Technology Transfer*

The Network offers special assistance with technology transfer (commercialization of technology). The OSBDCN assists businesses with data base searches, counseling, research, feasibility studies and operational plans, and Small Business Innovation Research proposals.

### *Publications*

A number of specialized publications have been produced by members of the Oregon SBDC Network. Publications include local business directories, collections of resource materials, business and marketing plans, and business start-up kits. For a list of available publications, contact your local Small Business Development Center.

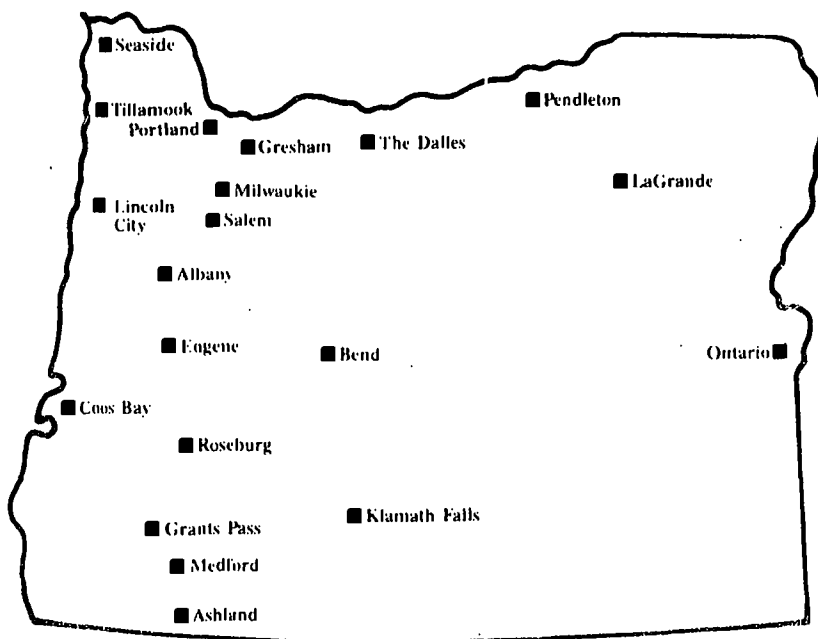


# Oregon Small Business Development Center Network



## Oregon Small Business Development Center Network

# Helping Build the Best-Run Businesses in America



### Oregon SBDC State Network Office

*Lane Community College*  
99 W. 10th Ave., Suite 216 Eugene, OR 97401  
(503) 726-2250; FAX (503) 345-6006

### Albany

*Linn-Benton Community College*  
6500 S.W. Pacific Blvd. Albany, OR 97321  
967-6112

### Ashland

*Southern Oregon State College, Ashland*  
Regional Services Institute Ashland, OR 97520  
482-5838

### Bend

*Central Oregon Community College*  
2600 N.W. College Way Bend, OR 97701  
383-7290

### Coos Bay

*Southwestern Oregon Community College*  
340 Central Coos Bay, OR 97420  
269-0123

### Eugene

*Lane Community College*  
1059 Willamette St. Eugene, OR 97401  
726-2255

### Grants Pass

*Rogue Community College*  
214 S.W. 4th St. Grants Pass, OR 97526  
471-3515

### Gresham

*Mt. Hood Community College*  
323 N.E. Roberts Gresham, OR 97030  
667-7658

### Klamath Falls

*Oregon Institute of Technology*  
3201 Campus Drive, South 314  
Klamath Falls, OR 97601  
885-1760

### LaGrande

*Eastern Oregon State College*  
Regional Services Institute  
LaGrande, OR 97850  
962-3391

### Lincoln City

*Oregon Coast CC Service District*  
4157 N.W. Hwy 101, P.O. Box 419  
Lincoln City, OR 97367  
994-4166; 765-2515

### Medford

*Southern Oregon State College, Medford*  
229 N. Bartlett Medford, OR 97501  
772-3478

### Milwaukie

*Clackamas Community College*  
Harmony Center  
7616 S.E. Harmony Rd.  
Milwaukie, OR 97222  
656-4447

### Ontario

*Treasure Valley Community College*  
88 S.W. 3rd Ave. Ontario, OR 97914  
889-2617

### Pendleton

*Blue Mountain Community College*  
37 S.E. Dorion Pendleton, OR 97801  
276-6233

### Portland

*Small Business International Trade Program*  
One World Trade Center  
121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 210  
Portland, OR 97204  
274-7482

### Portland

*Portland Community College*  
123 N.W. 2nd Ave., Suite 321  
Portland, OR 97209  
273-2828

### Roseburg

*Umpqua Community College*  
744 S.E. Rose Roseburg, OR 97470  
672-2535

### Salem

*Chemeketa Community College*  
365 Ferry St. S.E. Salem, OR 97301  
399-5181

### Seaside

*Clatsop Community College*  
1240 S. Holladay Seaside, OR 97138  
738-3347

### The Dalles

*Columbia Gorge Community College*  
212 Washington The Dalles, OR 97058  
296-1173

### Tillamook

*Tillamook Bay CC Service District*  
401 B Main St. Tillamook, OR 97141  
842-2551

This publication was produced with funding from the following agencies:



U.S. Small Business Administration  
722 S.W. Columbia St., Suite 500  
Portland, Oregon 97201-6605



Oregon Economic Development Department  
775 Summer Street  
Salem, Oregon 97310

# Farmers in

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# TRANSITION

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A Publication of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University

## Finding a New Career

*Katherine H. Graham and John R. Brake*

A job search is difficult under any circumstances. For farmers forced from their farms, the task may seem impossible.

- *When you've had a job you've gone to every day of your life, you can't think about what it means to look for one. I don't know how to begin looking for a new job.\**
- *I thought it might be difficult to find a job, but I never knew that it would be this bad. I just can't seem to figure what I really want to do.*
- *Having been on a farm all my life, I don't know if I have any skills. It is hard to know what is out there. I can't seem to find any job that is right for me.*

This fact sheet describes the three essential steps in an effective job search. Discussion of the services provided by professional career counselors and placement offices and a list of reference books on finding employment are also included.

### A Career versus a Job

A job is more than a paycheck. It reflects who you are, your success in life, and your position in the community. It also affects your well-being.

Farmers traditionally see farming as a life-long career. Their identities and self-worth are closely related to their work. When they are forced from their farms, they thus lose more than their paychecks. They also lose the purpose and value in their lives.

- *I took the first job that was offered: driving a school bus. It was something to do, but it wasn't what I wanted. There was nothing to the job except a paycheck. I felt that my life meant nothing. It wasn't worth a nickel.*

- *When I was on the farm, I got up every day and started a new day of my life. Now I get up and just go to a job. Life isn't the same anymore. There isn't much to it.*

As these comments illustrate, dissatisfaction with one's job can have demoralizing effects. The issue for displaced farmers, then, is to find not just a job but a satisfying career.

### The Importance of a Positive Attitude

Employment searches require perseverance, resourcefulness, and, above all, a positive attitude. A positive attitude helps you deal with the emotions, reduce the stress, and overcome the obstacles of your search. In short, it increases the probability of success. In contrast, a negative attitude often generates frustration and discouragement.

- *You have to have the right perspective before you start looking for a job. Try and think of this: today is the first day of the rest of your life. A lot of people never get this chance. They are stuck in a job they hate and never get out. This is an opportunity to do something new. I think this helps when you are out there "selling yourself" for a job.*

The man who made this statement had spent most of his working life on a farm and was deeply hurt when he was forced to sell. Once he got over his anger, however, he saw his job search as an opportunity, not a burden.

Maintaining a positive perspective while looking for a job can be difficult. Farmers who are forced out often see themselves as failures and suffer from feelings of self-doubt.

- *I wonder if I will flop at another job as I did at farming. How can I think about doing anything else?*

It is critical that you overcome these negative feelings. Remember, most farmers are being forced out because of economic conditions beyond their control.

## The Job Search

There are three basic steps to an effective job search: assessing your skills and interests, identifying appropriate areas of employment, and locating employment.

### Assessing Your Skills and Interests

Your self-assessment will be your foundation for defining who you are and what you have to offer an employer. The assessment serves several purposes: it identifies your marketable skills and abilities, builds self-confidence, and helps you identify which professions best match your abilities and interests.

To begin your self-assessment, you must identify your specific skills and abilities. This step is not easy. People tend to take their skills for granted and think they have few talents.

■ *I don't have any marketable skills. Farmers are jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none. This is why it's very difficult for us farmers to get jobs.*

Actually, nearly everyone has many skills that could be readily applied to a variety of professions. This exercise will no doubt point out that you have marketable skills, too.

How do you identify your skills? One farmer suggested a method that worked very well for him.

Take a piece of paper and write down all the skills you have. For starters, can you fix plumbing? Do carpentry? Fix machines? Cultivate crops? Raise animals? Devise financial reports? Manage employees? How about organizations? Are you on any committees? Do you hold any offices? Don't worry whether you like the task, and don't worry if it doesn't seem very practical. Just write everything down.

This brainstorming exercise should get you started. Now think back a few years and include past activities. Family members and friends may be able to help you.

For the next step, do the following:

Take a new piece of paper and write down the first skill, for instance, carpentry. Then write a paragraph under it describing exactly what you did. Try to include as much detail as you can. For example, did you build an addition to the house or erect a pole shed? Did you supervise others? Did you do all the planning? Was your work successful? Maybe write several paragraphs. Do this for each of the skills on your list. Now you have both identified and described your skills.

As you write, think of ways to quantify your accomplishments. If you implemented a new record-keeping system for expenses, for example, include that you reduced your expenses by X percent. Quantifying your accomplishments is a way to provide evidence of your skills.

The next step of the self-assessment is to identify your interests—activities you enjoy doing and that give you energy. Skills and interests often overlap, but not always. Maybe you have fixed the plumbing in your house and barn many times but disliked the task. Plumbing would not be a suitable choice for a profession.

Go through your skills list and mark those activities that you enjoy doing. Among the tasks that do not interest you, identify "transferable skills" that could be used in activities you do like. You may not want to be a plumber, for example, but your success in doing this task shows that you are able to analyze a problem, evaluate possible options, and implement solutions. These skills are evidence that you take initiative and have problem-solving ability, two skills useful in any profession, and thus strengthening your marketability.

### Identifying Appropriate Employment

The next step is to determine the characteristics of your ideal job. These characteristics relate to your interests, skills, values, and goals. Not every job or career possibility will meet your criteria. In fact, most people find only a few professions fit them well. Determining what is important to you in a job helps focus your search, boosts your self-confidence, and increases your chances of success.

Many people overlook this step entirely. Instead of seeking appropriate employment, they panic and apply for every available position, thinking they are increasing the probability of an offer. In fact, many of these positions would not be suitable for the applicants even if they were offered the jobs. Time and effort are wasted that could be used to look for more appropriate employment. The result of this haphazard approach is often an unsatisfying and unsuitable job.

■ *I panicked after the auction and grabbed the first job I could find. I was a salesman. Deep inside I knew it wasn't right, but I took it anyway. It was terrible; I just couldn't make sales. To get out of the job, I accepted another. But I know this one isn't right for me either. I really don't know what is right for me anymore.*

To get you started in describing your ideal position, answer the following questions (don't worry whether your list of characteristics matches or does not match your previous work experience):

- Do I want to work indoors, outdoors, or both?
- Do I want to work on a farm, in agriculture, or in another industry?

- Do I want to be supervised or completely unsupervised?
- Do I want to work alone or in a group?
- Do I want to work in the same community I'm in now or move to another community?
- Do I want to work with machines, animals, or plants?
- Do I want a very secure position?
- Do I want to be challenged by learning new skills?
- Do I want to participate in decision making?
- Do I want many responsibilities?

This list is only the beginning. Come up with more questions and characteristics on your own.

Once you have completed your list, rank your characteristics in their order of importance to you. Number 1 should be absolutely essential to any job, number 2 next important, and so on. Ranking can be frustrating, but rarely do you find employment that has everything you want, so it is also essential.

■ *More than anything else, I had to have a job that let me work outside. Being indoors would drive me crazy, so I got into construction. I also wanted to work on my own. But that was second to being outside.*

Ranking your characteristics helps you identify possible fields of employment and appropriate positions. By concentrating your effort and energy on a few specific areas, you are likely to increase your chances of finding a satisfying job.

### Locating Job Opportunities

Your list of skills and the characteristics of your ideal position will probably not match exactly. The areas where there is overlap, however, should suggest fields of employment best suited for you. The problem then is to find out about whether and what employment opportunities exist.

Most people who are on a job search turn first to the help-wanted sections of their local newspapers. Although they are one way to learn of openings, studies have shown that newspapers list only 20 percent of all available openings. Further, newspaper advertisements receive many replies, reducing the likelihood of your being hired.

A second and much more effective way to find out about employment opportunities is by talking to people who hold positions in fields in which you would like to work. These informational interviews are valuable in any employment search and serve several purposes. First, by talking to other people, you become familiar with available positions, their responsibilities, and employment outlook. Second, you refine your criteria for employment. For example, based on your interests and skills, you may think you would like to be an animal technician. Once you talk to a technician, however, you may discover that the job does not meet your most important criteria for employment. Third, you may

learn about job possibilities you had not considered. The animal technician may help you realize, for example, that your skills and interests are well suited to a job selling animal nutrient supplements. Fourth, you can learn about unadvertised openings and the names of people to contact. And, finally, an informational interview gives you a chance to discuss your qualifications and "sell yourself," so you may be remembered for future vacancies.

Farmers have a significant advantage over people in many other occupations in that they meet a wide variety of professionals every day on their farms. These people—feed dealers, mechanics, veterinarians, builders, accountants, computer representatives, artificial inseminators, insurance salespeople, electricians—are a valuable network for the farmer who is looking for a job.

■ *A farmer's best asset is the network of people he or she meets every day. This more than anything else will be a help in finding a job. We stayed in this community for that reason. By talking to this network you can find a lot of information on these jobs, how these people got their jobs, what skills they needed, the company they work for, whether jobs are open in their company or in other companies, and a whole lot more. This network is the most valuable resource a farmer has.*

### Employment Counselors and Services

Some farmers go through the three steps outlined above and find satisfying jobs without assistance. Others turn to professional counselors for help in solving problems, thus speeding the progress of the search significantly.

Counselors are available through many organizations and agencies:

- Local high schools, agricultural and technical schools, and community colleges. Call to learn more about their services.
- State and private employment agencies. The quality of these services varies considerably.
- Job Training Partnership Program (JTPP). This program offers numerous services to farmers looking for employment, including training, career counseling, and skills assessment. JTPP is listed in the phone book under your county. In some counties, it is called Employment and Training Office.
- Cooperative Extension. Although extension agents are not career counselors, they are excellent sources for the names of counselors, referrals for informational interviews, and leads on unadvertised openings.

Your meeting with a professional will be greatly enhanced if you go through the three steps above

beforehand. The counselor will then be able to give you specific recommendations.

Other sources of information about employment and positions include the following:

- Career offices in local colleges. Libraries in many agricultural, technical, and community colleges have extensive collections of books that describe professions, directories with job-related information, how-to guides, and other sources of information.
- New York State Job Service. This agency posts positions in state and local government, agencies, and businesses. Check in your local phone book under "New York State."

## A Reminder

Finding a satisfying job takes time. Nationally, the average employment search takes 16 weeks. Start your search as soon as you think you will be leaving farming. Time and effort will greatly increase your chances of finding a satisfying new career.

## Recommended Books

The following books are available in most bookstores, libraries, and college placement offices. They can also be ordered from the publisher.

### General Job-Search Skills

- Figler, Howard. *The Complete Job Search Handbook*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1980.
- Bolles, Richard N. *What Color Is Your Parachute—A Practical Manual for Job Hunters and Career Changers*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1984.
- Bolles, Richard N. *The Quick Job-Hunting Map*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1976.

### Interviewing Skills

- Medley, H. Anthony. *Sweaty Palms*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1984.

\*The quotations used in this publication are paraphrased from interviews conducted with 28 New York State families who were forced from their farms for financial reasons. They were interviewed as part of a study of their experiences. See Katherine Graham, "A Description of the Transition Experiences of 28 NYS Farm Families Forced from Their Farms: 1982-1985" (M.S. thesis, Cornell University, 1986), for a complete description of the study.

### Other Fact Sheets in This Series:

Deciding to Stay in or Get Out  
Taking Charge During the Transition  
Coping with the Loss of the Farm  
Neighbors Helping Neighbors Leaving Their Farms

Prepared by Katherine H. Graham, Research Associate, and John R. Brake, W. I. Myers Professor of Agricultural Finance, Department of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University

The author wishes to thank Professor Jeanne Hogarth of the Department of Consumer Economics, Tom Shepard of Cooperative Extension, Bill Alberta of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Career Center, and Erica Fox of Media Services, all at Cornell University, for their assistance in reviewing a draft of this publication.

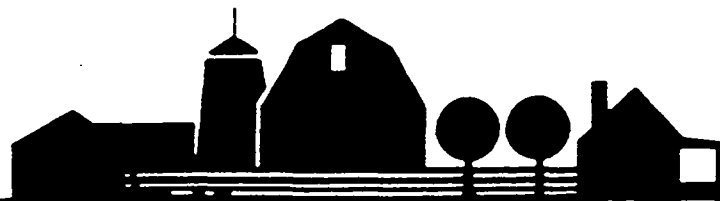
This publication is issued to further Cooperative Extension work mandated by acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. It was produced with the cooperation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, New York State College of Human Ecology, and New York College of Veterinary Medicine, at Cornell University. Cornell Cooperative Extension offers equal program and employment opportunities. Lucinda Noble, Director.

A toll-free information and referral service is available to help farmers in transition deal with financial, personal, or family stress.

NY FarmNet  
1-800-547-FARM

3/93 2C MS 870218





## FARM FAMILY LETTERS

LETTER #8

### SEEKING OFF-THE-FARM WORK

Farming and family often are very closely tied. People usually are in farming because they want to be ...so when it is necessary to look for off-the-farm work, that's a new and somewhat scary experience. Family members looking for off-farm jobs can be their own worst enemies. There can be feelings of personal failure. One can feel paralyzed by the tough decision to be made -- to look for work off the farm or even to sell the farm and leave the community. Roger Williams, Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin, talks about the two hurdles farm families face in seeking an off-farm job. "Both are internal; they are the beliefs farmers and farm family members have about themselves, about their skills, and about their ties to the community."<sup>1</sup>

#### I'M JUST A FARMER

"The first belief goes something like this: 'But I'm just a farmer. What else could I do?' When farmers or their family members say this to themselves and others, they can become immobilized by their own negative self-talk. In reality, there are few people who possess the range of skills held by persons with farm backgrounds. Among other things, they are: crop specialists, herdsmen, chemists, veterinarians, servicemen, bookkeepers, carpenters, welders, installers, handymen, managers of people, managers of information and things, teachers, consultants, researchers, planners, evaluators, problem-solvers, and risk-takers. Farmers [and farm family members] often belittle themselves. When they do this, they fail to recognize the wealth of skills and talents which could be mobilized for other work.

#### I DON'T WANT TO MOVE

"The second belief . . . goes like this: 'My roots are in this community. This is where my life began and this is where it will be lived out.' Many farm families have lived their entire lives in the same community and the thought of moving elsewhere can be scary or difficult to imagine. Because of these feelings and beliefs, some families may not even consider looking for work outside the community. Yet, if the community is small or holds few job opportunities, it may be essential to look for work in other areas.

"Thus, two of the keys to finding some kind of 'life outside farming' are 1) don't belittle yourself or downplay the skills and talents you have, and 2) don't limit your options to those available in the immediate community.

"There are several other keys to finding work that is satisfying. Some involve understanding yourself -- your hopes and dreams, your accomplishments, your skills, and what you really enjoy doing. Others involve understanding the world of work -- who gets jobs, how and why they get them, and where to look for them. A few of the keys are outlined below."

### UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF<sup>1</sup>

1. **Get in touch with your lifelong dreams, hopes and goals.** It is our dreams and our hopes which can energize us and give us the motivation to get on with life. You've probably dreamed many a dream as your tractor droned on and on during spring plowing or fall harvesting. Allow those dreams to float back through your mind now -- What is it that you've always wanted to do?
2. **Jot down all of the major accomplishments in your life.** When things aren't going well, it's easier to identify personal or work-related failures than it is to identify successes. Yet, this is not a time for negative thinking. Reflect back over your youth and your adult years -- jot down your major accomplishments and successes. Which of these accomplishments do you feel really good about?
3. **Make an exhaustive listing of all your skills and talents.** Tracking down your "transferrable skills" -- those which can be used in other work settings -- is essential for finding satisfying work. This is your chance to identify each and every skill or talent you've developed over the years! Include personal skills (listening, nurturing, volunteer skills, use of humor) as well as work-related skills. [Complete the "Knowing Your Skills" worksheet. Where you have the most check marks indicates those groups of skills in which you are most proficient.] Reflect back on the list of accomplishments you just made--what skills were used in achieving your goals in life?

### USE PROFESSIONALS TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS AND TALENTS

**N.Y.S. Job Services** (a program of the N.Y. State Department of Labor) is a key agency to contact for free counseling, interest and job skill assessment and referral to a variety of training programs. The staff will help determine one's aptitude for various occupations and serve as a referral agency to a variety of training programs. Use this service whether you are the farm wife looking for part-time work, the farm owner, farm worker or family member working on the farm. They can help you prepare a resume.

Before you go to this office, though, have a general idea of what assistance you need. It will help the vocational counsellor be more productive. And, don't tell them you're looking for "just any job".

**Vocational and Career Counselling Services:** find out what programs and courses are available at B.O.C.E.S., Ag and Tech schools, and the Career Counselling Center located at your nearby community college. If you are an alumni of a state college or university, use their career counselling office to help you.

## KNOWING YOUR SKILLS<sup>2</sup>

### Helping Skills

- Caring for others
- Being sensitive
- Listening & understanding
- Counseling/guiding
- Working with others
- Motivating others
- Sharing
- Host or hostessing

### Instructing Skills

- Explaining
- Teaching
- Advising
- Leading discussion
- Encouraging
- Helping other to help themselves

### Mechanical skills

- Physical coordination
- Growing things
- Animal care
- Traveling
- Stamina
- Outdoor work
- Working/cleaning/tending
- Cooking
- Crafts
- Designing
- Operating machinery
- Using tools
- Repairing/fixing
- Assembling/installing
- Building/construction
- Lifting, balancing, moving
- Precision work

### Problem Solving Skills

- Gathering information
- Researching
- Finding the root of the problem
- Problem solving
- Testing ideas
- Reviewing

### Leadership Skills

- Self-directing
- Managing time
- Persisting
- Confronting problems
- Taking risks
- Making hard decisions
- Inspiring others
- Influencing others

### Management Skills

- Delegating
- Organizing & coordinating others
- Planning
- Designing things
- Setting up procedures
- Supervising
- Evaluating
- Hiring
- Developing potential

### Communicating Skills

- Writing reports, letters, memos
- One-on-one conversation
- Public speaking
- Editing
- Reading
- Creative writing
- Using humor
- Making radio and tv presentations
- Performing

### Creative skills

- Imagining
- Inventing
- Experimenting
- Predicting
- Designing new things
- Expressive, verbal, written skills
- Creating music/art/photography
- Visualizing colors/shapes
- Writing poetry/plays/stories
- Playing musical instruments
- Drawing
- Singing

### Observing Skills

- Sensing/feeling
- Listening/awareness
- Observing
- Learning quickly
- Assessing
- Using logic

### Numerical Skills

- Bookkeeping
- Managing budgets
- Counting
- Working with numbers
- Financial planning
- Cost analysis
- Keeping deadlines
- Keeping records/filing

## DEVELOP YOUR RESUME

A resume is important. It helps you to think through what skills and assets are and it puts on paper a summary of your experiences that will help land that job.

Don't just list farmer under the employment section. Clearly list those skills that you used to run a successful operation. This is called a functional resume and it really emphasizes your qualifications and abilities.

## UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD OF WORK<sup>1</sup>

1. **Recognize that the vast majority of jobs are hidden.** When people look for jobs, they typically look through the want ads in a newspaper or seek out the help of an employment agency. Yet, only about 20% of the jobs ever become listed in want ads or with employment agencies. The vast majority of jobs -- about 80% -- are filled through word of mouth. Someone mentions that his or her organization has a job (or jobs) available and the word soon gets around. Thus, the most important strategy is to keep your eyes and ears open and to **make sure everyone you know is aware that you are looking for a job.** Make looking for a job a full-time effort!
2. **The best jobs go to the best job hunters -- not necessarily to the best qualified persons.** Hunting for jobs is a skill in itself. It requires the ability to uncover jobs that are hidden, the ability to demonstrate you are able to handle those jobs, and the persistence to do what's necessary to land one of those jobs. Here's where it's important to understand what your skills are and how they can be applied in a different work setting. Be assertive, have confidence in your abilities, and make the case that you are the person best able to do the job.
3. **Certain qualities are important in any job.** There are some qualities that employers look for in almost all employees. These include: energetic, friendly, hard-working, honest, quick learner, careful, on time, dependable, efficient workers, and willing to go the extra mile. You probably exhibit many of these qualities in your life. Make sure you highlight these qualities -- don't hide your light under a basket!
4. **Employers are more likely to hire people they know.** A simple fact of life is that it's people who hire other people for jobs. And those people feel more comfortable hiring people they know or hiring a person who is known by someone else in the company or organization. Thus, it's important to get to know the person who does the hiring or some other person in the organization. If there is someone who will say "I know a person who would be great for this job!" your chances of getting the job are improved nearly 100%.
5. **You need to know what you want to do and where you want to do it.** If you know this, you will be miles ahead of the vast majority of job seekers. Spend some of your time figuring out exactly what you would like to do and where you would like to do it. Then, spend the rest of your time seeking out that job and the people who can help you get the job. [The New York State Job Service and other career counselling programs at community colleges can help you decide what you want to do, and where the jobs are.]

6. Remember, some jobs may need to be created. It's quite likely that the best job for you doesn't lie out there in the job market -- it may need to be created. This is where you are at a definite advantage. You already have skills as an independent business person. Why not use these skills to create a new business operating out of your home or in your community? What are the needs in your community? Can your skills and dreams be tapped by forming a business which would address these needs?"

### DEVELOP YOUR LEADS

To summarize you have worked on developing a positive attitude about yourself.

- You have assessed your skills and personal qualities
- You have prepared a resume
- You have decided what occupation(s) you'd like to pursue

And, now it is time to develop your leads, including visiting the employment agencies and reading the newspaper.

Make an extensive list of family, friends, business people, personnel in agriculture-related agencies, Extension Agents, and persons who work in industry or service organizations. Begin to make personal and phone contacts and let everyone know you are looking for work.

Remember ....

- ... a vast majority of the jobs are hidden ...
- ... the best jobs go to the best job hunters ...
- ... not necessarily to the best qualified ...
- ... its people who hire other people for jobs .

### WHERE TO GET HELP

1. Private Industry Council (P.I.C.): provides classroom training, on-the-job training and other employment programs.
2. N.Y.S. Job Service provides job search assistance and is the key agency to determine eligibility for such programs as on-the-job-training, vocational rehabilitation, veteran's programs, mature workers (over 55) training assistance, job clubs, opportunities for youth, subsidized job-specific training and assistance for dislocated workers. Because of new federal and state aid to farm families, one may find himself-herself eligible for a variety of training and assistance. Please inquire!
3. Small Business Development Center located at your closest S.U.N.Y. school is a nationwide organization designed to work with business or those thinking about starting a business. They provide one-to-one free counseling to those in business or thinking about buying or starting a new business.
4. The library in your area has many helpful resources for your career planning. The following page lists a number of references and aids that are available. Check with the librarian on how to find them.

## CAREER PLANNING

### What to do?

- Occupational Outlook Handbook and Quarterly (C.C. Ref. HF5381 .A1 036)
- Dictionary of Occupational Titles (C.C. Ref. Z7164 .02 U5)
- Monthly Labor Review (Periodical)
- Guides to specific careers
- What Color Is Your Parachute, A Practical Manual For Job Hunters and Career Changers, Richard N. Bolles

### Where to Study and Train?

- Lovejoy's and Barron's Guides (C.C. Ref. LA226 .L6)
- The College Blue Book (C.C. Ref. LA226 .C685)
- College catalogs
- Admissions test practice books
- Civil Service examination practice books

### Where to Work?

- Where The Jobs Are (C.C. HF5382.5 .U5 M45)
- The National Job-Finding Guide (C.C. Ref. HF5382.5 .U5 U47)
- Finding Your Best Place To Live in America (C.C. HT123 .B665)
- The Best Towns in America (E158 .B37 1983)

### Whom To Work For?

- Annual reports and Corporate directories
- Occupational/professional associations - Encyclopedia of Associations
- CPC (College Placement Council - Annual (C.C. Ref. HF5382.5 U5 C6 v. 1-3)

### How To Get And Keep The Job You Want?

- How To Write Better Resumes by Adele Lewis
- The Perfect Resume (C.C. HF5383 .J25)
- Guerrilla Tactics In The Job Market (C.C. HF5386 .J3x)
- Interview videotapes - VC #6
- Careercycles: A Guidebook To Success In The Passages and Challenges of Your Worklife (C.C. HF 5381 .C263 1983)

The Farm Family Letters were developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension Home Economists in Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga and Tompkins counties, N.Y. This letter was compiled by Virginia G. Houseknecht, Home Economist, Schuyler County.

This is the last in the series of FARM FAMILY LETTERS. Please return the attached evaluation to us. Thank you!

<sup>1</sup>From Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Session 9, Roger T. Williams, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1987. Adapted by Virginia G. Houseknecht, Home Economist, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County, N. Y.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 43.

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An EEO Program

# JTPA

**Skills Training**

**Career Assessment**

**Job Placement Assistance**

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## What Is JTPA?

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), a federally funded program, was implemented on October 1, 1982. It is designed to aid the economically disadvantaged, the dislocated worker and those experiencing barriers to employment.

JTPA provides vocational assessment and training for qualified applicants. Staff will help prepare you to market yourself and obtain stable and challenging employment.

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## What Services Are Available?

### *Vocational and Classroom Training*

- Basic Computer
- On the Job Training
- Programs for Math and Reading Skills Development
- GED Preparation

### *Tuition Assistance*

Available for vocational classes offered by community colleges and technical training schools

### *Job Market Preparation*

- Assess interests and current labor market trends
  - Identify marketable experience
  - Review transferable skills
  - Target prospective employers
  - Prepare resumes
  - Practice Interviews
- 



## Who Is Eligible?

All Participants must be:

- 14 years of age and older, and
- A citizen or work eligible alien, and
- A resident of the county in which you apply for services, or
- As a Dislocated Worker, a resident of Oregon

In addition, applicants must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Economically disadvantaged according to guidelines established under the Job Training Partnership Act.
  - Youth with employment barriers.
  - Unemployed due to lay off in an occupation with limited opportunities.
  - Laid off due to plant or business closure.
  - Self-employed in a declining industry.
  - Long-term unemployed (at least 15 of the last 26 weeks or 8 consecutive weeks prior to application)
  - Dislocated from the Fishing or Timber Industry
- 

## Where Do I Get Information?

For information and assistance contact the coastal JTPA office in your area:

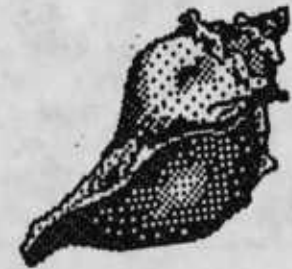
**Community Services Consortium BETA**  
Lincoln County, Newport 265-8505  
Lincoln City 996-2113

**MTC Training & Placement Services**  
Clatsop County, Astoria 325-1156  
Columbia County, St. Helens 397-6495  
Tillamook County, Tillamook 842-6675

**South Coast Business Employment Corporation**  
Coos&Curry Counties, Coos Bay 269-2013

For other locations in Oregon contact:  
**The Oregon Consortium & The Private Industry Council, Inc.**  
Albany, 1-800-888-7611

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*JTPA: A Partner with Fishing – Dependent Families*

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# GOVERNMENT CONTRACT ACQUISITION PROGRAM

GCAP

Dislocated Worker Outreach Program  
Tom Robinson, Coordinator  
748 NW Lee  
Newport, OR 97365  
503-265-6037

To: Dislocated Timber and Fishery Workers  
Employment Department Circulation

From: Tom Robinson, Outreach Coordinator

RE: Registration for information services

I am conducting a pilot project which aims to assist workers who have lost their usual work in timber and commercial fisheries. The assistance offered is information and referral service to guide workers in job search, especially in seeking "Jobs in the Woods" under President Clinton's Forest Plan. This is a free service which is in addition to other services already offered by state and federal agencies.

Much of the information I have to offer is clarification of the various programs available. I have also been able to develop some lists of possible job opportunities and businesses which will receive resumes from the dislocated work force.

If you would like to be placed on my mailing list to receive this kind of help and updates, please fill out and return the enclosed registration form immediately.

Feel free to share this letter with anyone who might like to register.

## Regional Offices

Bay Area / GCAP  
320 Central, Suite 201  
Coos Bay, OR 97420  
Phone 503/269-0709  
Fax 503/269-0920

Portland / Environmental  
One World Trade Center  
121 SW Salmon, Suite 300  
Portland, OR 97204  
Phone 503/229-5625

Portland / GCAP  
123 NW 2nd Avenue, Suite 400  
Portland, OR 97209  
Phone 503/227-4191  
Fax 503/227-4511

Eugene / GCAP  
Athum Building  
99 W 10th, Suite 337 B  
Eugene, OR 97401

Southern Oregon / GCAP  
State College / SBDC  
229 N Bartlett  
Medford, OR 97504

Dislocated Worker Outreach Program  
Tom Robinson, Coordinator  
748 NW Lee  
Newport, OR 97365  
503-265-6037

### Dislocated Worker Registration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Usual Work: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been out of that work? \_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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When fishing families are facing the economic, personal, and social stresses created by the challenges and the cyclical nature of the commercial fishing industry, it helps to know three things: Who can I count on for help, where can I go, and what's the best way to ask for help.

Whether you are a boat owner or a crew member, a processing plant worker or a gear supplier, married to a fisherman or have one as a parent, you are likely to be going through a lot of feelings and changes associated with the transitions being faced by the commercial fishing industry.

This section contains a brief list of local resources in your region and some helpful tips on getting the help you need.

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## The Fishing-Dependent Families Project

# Help for Finding Help

When fishing families are facing the economic, personal, and social stresses created by the challenges and cyclical nature of the commercial fishing industry, it helps to know where to go for help. Family members or friends are great sources of support. Sometimes it's important to increase your family's "social world" by finding out about the places, people, and community groups that could lend additional support during times of transition.

Asking for help in the American culture isn't easy. You may have neighbors or fellow workers who seem to mind their own business and are very busy with their lives. And some of the "family-service" agencies are based in the "deficit model"—to get help you must have failed or have some inadequacy. If you are like most fishing families, you are proud, independent, and hard-working, which makes it more difficult to ask for help. Across the nation, farm, timber, and fishing families, who have sought financial, legal, emotional

or mental assistance during times of transition, over and over again express the feeling, "If only I had come earlier and not waited to long."

Still, it can be discouraging to telephone agency after agency only to find out that it's "someone else" you should be calling. Some examples of places where fishing families have received help are the county OSU Extension office, a lawyer or accountant, the local community college, food pantries, or human service agencies. For personal problems from financial strain, visit with the family doctor, minister, close friend, support group, or a professional counselor.

In this publication there is a brief listing of resources you might want to contact. In many counties or communities there is an Information and Referral office you can call to get a thorough list of community resources. Listed below are some quick pointers that might be helpful when you call an agency to get help:

- **Be specific.** Know what you are looking for before you call. Explain your need or problem clearly.
- **Be polite but firm.** Do not lose your temper and hang up, even if you really feel like it. Even if the person on the other end of the telephone cannot help you directly, ask, "Can you tell me of another resource that might be of help?" Be assertive but patient. If you persist, you'll get the information you need, or at least be on the right track.
- **Try to call in the morning.** This is often a good time to reach the agency person you need.
- **Be prepared.** If the agency requires an information gathering interview, ask what they need and take all relevant legal and financial papers with you to the meeting. If you feel overwhelmed, take someone you trust with you. Be sure you understand what is going

to happen and what your responsibilities in the situation will be, including those of a financial or legal nature. Take notes!

- **Get the name of everyone you talk to.** If someone is rude, refuses to help, or is impolite, don't lose your temper. Remain calm and demand to talk with their supervisor.

- **Don't apologize when asking for help.** Remember, everybody needs a hand up sometimes. And, if you or a person you are calling for cannot afford even a minimal fee, say so. Many agencies have financial support available for the low-income person or family. Some agencies may also have free volunteer services.

- **And finally, check out all available options!**



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# What To Do If You Lose Your Job

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Losing a job is traumatic, whether it means loss of the entire family income or a second income upon which your family's standard of living depends. Is there anything you can do to ease the burden of such a crisis? Definitely yes.

Once you're over the initial shock, don't panic. Don't blame yourself or think the world has come to an end. Don't blame your spouse for what has happened or take out your frustrations on your family. Don't stop making all credit payments, or ignore the fact you are now unemployed.

Do begin to make plans for finding new employment.

Financial affairs still are in the family's control. The following guide will help you maintain present resources and survive the financial crisis.

## **Communication is a Family Affair**

Include your family in the decisions that must be made. As a family, discuss how income is spent, what is important, and what is not so important. What must the family have in the next week, the next month, the next 2 months?

Communication helps the family share concerns and decide what alternatives are available and what actions are necessary. Communication also means listening. This is not easy for many people, yet it is a skill that can be learned.

Active listening includes giving full attention to understanding the feelings of another person. Remember your whole family probably is upset. Accusing one another of being responsible for the problem won't help anyone.

## **First Things First**

### **File for Unemployment Benefits**

If you are not working, write, call, or visit the Employment Division office nearest your home (look in the telephone directory under Oregon, State of). They will give you information on how, when, and where to file your claim. If you are eligible for benefits, your first check will be mailed to you in about 3 weeks. Need does not determine eligibility for benefits.

The unemployment insurance program is financed by employers to pay benefits to workers who are unemployed because of conditions beyond their control (such as weather or the economy).

If for any reason you are denied benefits, you may want to check with the appropriate social agency for information on possible financial assistance under some other type of program.

In addition to unemployment insurance, the Employment Division provides free placement services. Seek out these services, whether or not you are eligible for benefits.

### **Remember, If You Lose Your Job—**

- You still can control your financial situation, if you plan carefully.
- File a claim for unemployment insurance benefits.
- Communicate with your family. Analyze what is important and as a family decide on a plan of action.
- Don't default on payments. Go to your creditors, explain your situation, and work with them to make adjustments.
- Be prepared to change your standard of living, at least temporarily, so you don't give up essentials.
- Begin to make plans for finding new employment.

EC 1059

Reprinted November 1993



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## Think About How You or Your Family Use Money

- Is there a “get even” philosophy that results in overspending or running up the bills with credit cards?

- Is there compulsive buying, because “tomorrow it may not be so cheap,” or because “we might be even less able to afford it then,” even though the item is not needed?

- Is money withheld as a punishment or used as a bribe?

- Is money spent as a way to work off frustration or to ease boredom or anxiety?

Now is the time to abandon such self-defeating actions. Now is the time to tighten the purse strings and eliminate needless spending. Set the family up for success, not failure, by thinking positively. Remember, don't use money to play games with yourself and your family.

Your immediate goal is to survive financially and emotionally until future goals are decided. Whether or not unemployment benefits are available, the family's income will be drastically reduced.

Discuss what your family really needs and what they would like to have. Postpone buying what the family would like and does not need now. All fixed expenses, such as rent or mortgage payments, installment payments, insurance premiums and any other payments due on a specific date must be paid. Flexible expenses usually include food, vacation, and recreation, areas in which the family can make choices. These expenses can be reduced by eliminating waste or unnecessary expenditures.

One of the most difficult things about being unemployed is to

realize your family cannot spend as much as it did. Pretending to yourself and to others that nothing has changed will not make it easier. Spending less is a must.

## Take a Financial Inventory—Now

How much does the family own? Take a few minutes to calculate your family's net worth—the result just might boost your spirit. Add up the total value of all your belongings and deduct from the figure the amount you owe. Remember to calculate everything owned at current market prices, not purchase prices.

## Where to Cut Corners?

To balance your budget and reduce spending, you have to know exactly how much money you have coming in and going out. Take all the check stubs and receipts and estimate what is spent on flexible expenses—those expenses incurred after you pay for housing, installments, insurance, taxes, and other bills. You may find that your family doesn't have a clear picture of where the money is going. In that case try to:

- Write down every item on which money is spent for 2 or 3 weeks. Also, note your mood or that of any other family member when making a purchase.

- Put a lid on your spending.

- Agree within your family that every purchase over a certain amount will be brought to the family for discussion prior to purchase.

- Look for upcoming bills, such as an insurance payment due twice a year.

- Make a shopping list and weigh the importance of each item. Reduce the number of shopping trips.

## Check Debts/Bills

### Do You Have Any Outstanding Loans?

Don't ignore bills. Immediately contact your finance company, bank, credit union, and department stores about revolving charge accounts and installment loans, and make an appointment to explain your problem. Here are some solutions your family and your creditors might work out:

- Work out smaller payments for a short period.

- Refinance the loan, that is, make another contract for smaller payments over a longer period of time. New payments will be smaller in size but the overall costs for the loan will be larger.

- If there is a consumer credit counseling service in your area, contact them. They provide counseling to families on debt problems. (See list on back page.)

- If all else fails, a consolidation loan may be considered. You take out one loan, pay off all bills at once, and then have one debt to pay off to just one creditor (usually extending over a longer period of time). Again, each payment will be smaller, but you will commit yourself for a longer period of time, usually at a higher total cost.

### What About Monthly Mortgage Payments?

Are they too high for you to pay? Go to your lender and ask the officer in the mortgage lending department that you be permitted to pay interest only for a certain period of time, or postpone one or two payments until you have pulled yourself out of your financial crisis.

## What About Insurance Premiums?

Now that you're unemployed, it is especially important to think of insurance coverage for your family.

Check your existing permanent life insurance policy or call your agent. In many life insurance contracts there is a so-called automatic premium loan clause. This clause says the company will deduct from the cash value of your policy or use your dividends to pay the premium.

Chances are that you were insured under your employer's group health and accident and life insurance plan. In most cases, your group policy will allow a 30-day grace period after you leave the company. You will be permitted to reapply for insurance within this period of time. You will not be asked to undergo a medical examination, but the premiums for your individual policy will be higher. The premium will be adjusted according to your age and the type of policy. Check with an insurance agent as soon as possible. Do not forget to evaluate any permanent insurance your family has.

If you own a car, don't let your automobile insurance lapse. Do talk with your insurance agent to see if premiums can be reduced by eliminating optional coverages and/or increasing deductibles.

## Use Savings

### If Cash is Required

Use emergency savings or take out a loan if you can get one. This will depend on your individual circumstances, but there are some disadvantages either way.

When you take money from your savings account it will no longer earn interest. If you take out a loan, you pay interest for the privilege of using someone else's money.

If the family decides to withdraw money from a savings account, take money from a regular account first and leave any certificates of deposit untouched. You'll lose interest on the certificates if you cash them in before they mature.

Another solution might be a passbook loan. You'll lose interest on the savings account and pay interest in addition, but the total cost might be less than the interest on another type of loan.

In any case, think carefully about taking on any additional debt while you're unemployed.

## Turn to Social Agencies\*

If you are not eligible for unemployment benefits or benefits are insufficient, contact the Adult and Family Services Department or the Human Resources Department. (Look in the telephone directory under Oregon, State of.) Several programs such as Food Stamps and Medicaid are available for families needing financial aid.

If you want to find out if you are eligible for food stamps, apply to your county food stamp program. Eligibility is determined by your family's financial resources and family income.

When you apply for the Food Stamp program, take this information along:

- Rent receipts
- House payment book
- Utility bills
- Proof of income for all working members of household, including all benefits such as Social Security, public assistance and unemployment benefits
  - Bank books, or any papers showing what you have in savings
  - Proof of medical bills (doctor, hospital, etc.)

*\*Note: These are general guidelines. Particular details may be subject to changes based on new state and/or federal regulations.*

## For More Information

The following publications from the Oregon State University Extension Service provide information to individuals and families facing underemployment and unemployment.

Each title is available without charge. You may order up to six no-charge publications without charge. If you request seven or more no-charge publications, include 25 cents for each publication beyond six. Send order and payment to:

**Publications Orders**  
**Agricultural Communications**  
**Oregon State University**  
**Administrative Services A422**  
**Corvallis, OR 97331-2119**

EC 1391, *Setting Spending Priorities*

EC 1392, *Strategies for Spending Less*

EC 1393, *Deciding Which Bills to Pay First*

EC 1394, *Talking With Creditors*

EC 1395, *Keeping A Roof Overhead*

EC 1396, *Bartering*

EC 1397, *Making the Most of What You Have*

EC 1398, *Accepting Your Feelings*

EC 1399, *Living Better With Stress*

EC 1400, *Identifying Sources of Support and Friendship*

EC 1401, *How You Can Help When Your Mom or Dad is Unemployed*

EC 1402, *Deciding If Teens Should Work*

EC 1403, *Helping Children Cope*



## Oregon Consumer Credit Counseling Services\*\*

### Albany

CCCS of Linn-Benton, Inc.  
201 West First  
P.O. Box 1006  
Albany, OR 97321  
Jan Amling, Executive Director  
Phone (503) 926-5843

### Bend

CCCS of Central Oregon, Inc.  
1900 NE Division Street, Suite 105  
P.O. Box 5578  
Bend, OR 97708  
Sherry Evertson, Executive Director  
Phone (503) 389-6181

#### *Satellite offices:*

LaPine  
Madras  
Prineville  
*Schedule appointments through  
Bend: (503) 389-6181*

### Coos Bay

CCCS of Coos, Curry, Inc.  
140 North 2nd Street  
Coos Bay, OR 97420  
Deborah L. Graham, Executive  
Director  
Phone (503) 267-7040

#### *Satellite office:*

Gold Beach, (800) 248-7040 or (503)  
247-7043

### Eugene

CCCS of Lane County, Inc.  
1690 Pearl  
P.O. Box 10845  
Eugene, OR 97440  
Roberta Dubois, Executive Director  
Phone (503) 342-4459

#### *Satellite office:*

Florence (503) 997-8990

### Grants Pass

CCCS of Grants Pass  
(serving Josephine County)  
1314 NE Foster Way  
Grants Pass, OR 97526  
Judy Gent, Executive Director  
Phone (503) 479-6002

### Medford

CCCS of Southern Oregon, Inc.  
820 Crater Lake Avenue #202  
Medford, OR 97504  
Jan Safley, Director  
Phone (503) 779-2273

#### *Satellite office:*

Klamath Falls (503) 883-8118

### Pendleton

CCCS of Umatilla County, Inc.  
17 SW Frazer, Suite 324  
P.O. Box 582  
Pendleton, OR 97801  
Vera Hettick, Executive Director  
Phone (503) 276-3856

### Portland

CCCS of Oregon, Inc.  
3633 SE 35th Place  
P.O. Box 42488  
Portland, OR 97242  
Lawrence Winthrop, President  
Phone (503) 232-8139

#### *Branch offices:*

Beaverton (503) 643-5049  
Vancouver, WA (206) 694-7564

#### *Satellite offices:*

Gresham (503) 669-7979  
Longview, WA (206) 425-4520  
McMinnville (503) 434-2882  
Oregon City (503) 650-4635  
The Dalles (503) 296-4445

### Roseburg

Douglas CCCS  
849 SE Mosher  
P.O. Box 1011  
Roseburg, OR 97470  
Linda M. Smith, Executive Director  
Phone (503) 673-3104

### Salem

CCCS of Mid-Willamette Valley, Inc.  
1135 Edgewater Street NW  
P.O. Box 13609  
Salem, OR 97309  
Frank Lackey, Executive Director  
Phone (503) 581-7301

\*\* These are non-profit counseling agencies. They do not lend money. They provide advice and counsel, without charge, about credit problems. There may be similar counseling available through other non-profit organizations such as churches or family counseling agencies.

Occasionally there will be an advertisement for credit counseling, but the purpose is not really to provide counseling. The purpose is to get your business: either to loan you money or to file a bankruptcy. Be suspicious of a credit counselor who is trying to loan you money or file a bankruptcy.



This publication was reprinted from a Northeast Management/Consumer Education Guide, a joint effort among the Cooperative Extension Services of the Northeast States and the District of Columbia. Adapted for use in Oregon by Alice Mills Morrow, Extension family economics specialist, Oregon State University.

Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, O.E. Smith, director. This publication was produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability—as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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