

Learning to deal with stress effectively

by Debbie Stull

CHEPSTOW—Stress is a word everyone recognizes and farmers, like everyone else, must learn to deal effectively with stress.

Dr. Henry Feenstra, a child psychologist with the Grey County Board of Education for the past 17 years, spoke on stress to about 60 people at the Bruce County Farm Safety Association's first annual banquet in Chepstow Thursday evening, Nov. 26.

Feenstra described stress as "pressure put on the whole system" which in turn causes internal tension.

"Stress may not always be a bad thing," he said. "In many ways, at the right times, stress can get someone moving. It helps people to change things and forces you to make decisions instead of putting them off."

"It's when stress becomes distress, when things get out of hand, that it becomes a problem. Stress on the farm leads to an increase in family problems, health problems and financial problems."

In the farming community, Feenstra said he has seen stress change. About seven years ago, young rural kids had pressure put on them by their peers when they had to do without things during a period of high interest rates.

"I have seen pre-occupied, worried parents wondering about providing for their families. I have seen family break-ups and passing on the blame during that time."

That generation of "bankruptcy stress" on the farm is gone and now farmers are facing different forms of stress.

Feenstra outlined a stress management system for the family. "The farming community has to know what the stresses are. You have to figure out honestly what is causing the stress and most need help to figure it out so get someone to help."

Then one should separate the stresses into those which you can control and those you have no control over, he said. "Most people bitch about what they have no control over. If you can separate them you're halfway home."



WINNERS OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL POSTER COMPETITION received trophies from Keith and Alice Weeden at the Bruce County Farm Safety Association's banquet. The winners are, left to right, back row: Keith Weeden, Charles Schiestel from Sacred Heart School in Teeswater, Cory Beltz from Sacred Heart Senior School in Walkerton, and Alice Weeden; front row, Marijke Hennink from W.E. Thompson School in Kincardine, and Russel Hurtz from Hillcrest Central School in Teeswater. (Stull photo)

Farmers have no control over the weather, interest rates and gas prices while they do have control over whether or not they purchase new machinery.

"If you're going to put your energy into the things you have no control over, you've wasted your energy. You only have so much energy so work on the right things."

"The best stress management is to get out of the business if you can't manage the stresses you have some control over."

General suggestions he offered farmers in regard to reducing stress included taking holidays, regular body care and relaxation.

"Even farmers have to learn to relax. Farmers have always wanted to project the image that they're harder working than they are."

"I don't think you can afford not to take a holiday. If you don't, you are creating some of your own problems."

Participation Lodge

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space to meet the increasing demand for short-term respite care. Efforts by the Board of Directors and staff have lead to the institution of a Community Outreach program which takes services to individuals who wish to remain at their own home. In addition, a 6-unit apartment project will be located at the new St. Francis Place Apartments in Owen Sound and administered by the lodge staff. The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services funds the Community Outreach program and has approved the apartment project as well as increasing the funding for permanent residents from the current twelve to fourteen in this new residential wing.

Administrator Howard Levitt stated that "the need for services required by physically disabled individuals in this area will continue to be pursued by the lodge. We want all physically disabled people to enjoy many of the things most of us take for granted."

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Mrs. Alice Weeden, of RR 3, Paisley, receives an award of Appreciation from the president of the Bruce County Farm Safety Association, Lynn Fielder, at the Association's first annual banquet in Chepstow, November 26. One of Weeden's efforts in her willingness to promote safety was manning the Association's booth and displays at the Chesley Agri-Fair and the Paisley and Port Elgin Fairs.

Obituary

Joseph Rodger Cumming

A former Elderslie Township farmer, Joseph Rodger Cumming of Hanover died at the Hanover and District Hospital on Monday, June 27, 1988, in his 79th year.

Predeceased by his first wife, Christena M. Lewis, he was the beloved husband of Beatrice Kennedy. Dear father of Jack and his wife, Helen of Elderslie Township and Douglas and his wife, Loreen of Owen Sound.

Also surviving are seven grandchildren and one sister, Laretta White of Chesley.

He was predeceased by two brothers, Russell and Elgin and two sisters, Stella Grice and Edna Porter.

The family received friends at the Emke-McFadden Funeral Home in Chesley Wednesday afternoon and evening.

The funeral service was held from Geneva Presbyterian Church in Chesley on Thursday, June 30 at 2 p.m. with Rev. William Lennips officiating.

Interment in the Chesley Cemetery. The Paisley Aldworth Masonic Lodge No. 235 held a memorial service at the funeral home on Wednesday evening.

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