Maine Family Farms: Life and Business in Balance #4800

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Bulletin #4800, Maine Family Farms: Life and Business in Balance

Maine Family Farms: Life and Business in Balance

By Associate Extension Professor Leslie Forstadt and Associate Extension Professor Tori Jackson, University of Maine

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With the 2012 Census of Agriculture numbers available, a portrait of Maine farmers reflects lives that are complex, with much to keep in balance. There are more than 8,000 farms in Maine, an increase of 12 percent since 2002. Of these, 49 percent list their primary occupation as farming, with the average age of the principal operator 57 years old. Among women farmers, 57 percent list their primary occupation as farming, and 38 percent of them are in the “beginning farmer” category, with 10 or fewer years of farming experience on the present farm. The principal female operator is 53 years old on average, but there are young women too—24 percent of primary women farmers are under the age of 44 years.

The needs of farmers at each life stage are unique, as choices about farming practices, child rearing, business growth, and succession planning enter into decision making.

This series, Maine Family Farms: Life and Business in Balance, provides a starting point for farm families to think about issues that range from family conversations to managing stress and sharing ideas about life and business balance.

Titles include:

- #4801 Why “Thank You” Matters: Expressing Appreciation
- #4802 Running Successful Farm-Family Meetings
- #4803 Farm and Family—Finding Balance
- #4804 Understanding Roles in the Farm Family
- #4805 Recognizing the Signs of Farm Family Stress
There are rewards and stressors at each stage of farm business and farm family life. This series of publications was designed with the people of Maine’s farming industry in mind. Interpersonal and intrapersonal needs are addressed, as readers are encouraged to think about, discuss, and access resources to support the personal experiences and relationships in family farming. We hope that these fact sheets will help foster farm family sustainability.

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