

Questions to consider when starting the conversation about childcare in your farm family

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The goal of this handout is to help farm families have a conversation with your family about childcare, farm safety, farm business planning, and quality of life.

Why think about childcare?

Childcare is an essential service supporting the agricultural workforce while also enhancing children's safety. Yet, it is expensive and often can be difficult to find. Strong agricultural business management plans address the variety of risks that can impact the operation and viability of the enterprise including childcare.

- In a recent CDC funded study, three quarter of farm families with children under 18 had experienced childcare challenges in the last two years due to affordability, availability, and quality.
- Childcare needs change as children age and depend on if school is in session or out.
- Childcare has direct economic impacts by affecting the farm's production and marketing systems which in turn affect farm viability, risk management, farm safety, mental health, and family quality of life.
- Many farmers don't consider childcare in their business planning, although the risk can be significant.



Here are some questions to consider

- How do childcare needs in the family affect the way you run your farm business?
- Which areas of the farm and what tasks place the children at risk for accidents?
- How do your childcare needs vary in the fall, winter, spring and summer.
- Who will provide childcare?
- Are childcare and/or summer camp costs part of your business plan?
- Can the income from your farm cover the costs of childcare?
- What is the trade off between paying for childcare vs. paying for a farm employee?
- How do goals of the farm change based on the needs of the children?
- Looking ahead to potential life changes—such as having a baby, kids going to school or college, or eldercare for a parent—have you planned for the ways these transitions might affect your childcare needs, business plans, and overall finances?

Additional information and resources:

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