

OVERWHELMED

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I am thankful to have an opportunity to work in the field of agriculture. I love the science behind what we recommend, as well as the people across the state and nation that I get to work with. I appreciate the hard work and determination of producers across the state. There are a lot of jobs that need to get done on the farm, usually with few people to work at them. There can be very specific times of the year that you might get overwhelmed by the amount of work that needs to be done, and the pressure that comes with an overloaded schedule. There may be five things that need to be done, with time for only two or three.

So how do you deal with this? You need to recognize that you may not be able to get everything done. Time and money are usually two things we never have enough of. So you have to prioritize the tasks, trying to determine which you will do first, second, and so forth. The best thing to do is to think about each of the tasks or practices and ask yourself a couple of questions.

Which tasks solve one of my biggest problems? If one or two of the practices solve a major issue you have on the farm, then they should probably be moved up on the priority list. Answering this question requires that you know what some of your biggest problems are, however.

What is the economic cost/gain of this practice? Everything comes back to money at some point. How much will this practice make you, or maybe how much will it cost you if you don't do it.

How time-sensitive is the practice? If a practice can wait for a month without losing effectiveness, then maybe that is one to put off. But if it is something where timing is everything (planting, for instance), then make sure to get it done at the right time.

Obviously asking these questions don't help you get anything extra done. But it will help you prioritize and get the most important ones done at the right time. That begins to reduce the amount of stress you have, and the feelings of being overwhelmed. It helps you realize you are making steps forward.

What would be priority practices for this month? Planting clovers and soil testing would be a couple of important ones. But each farm might have slightly different priorities and goals, resulting in different answers for their farm.

Here is the point. Maybe on your farm and in your life, you feel overwhelmed and stressed. Right now, I feel exactly the same way. Instead of wasting time, getting frustrated and working on the wrong things, I should work methodically through this. What are the biggest problems, what will make the biggest impact, and what is time sensitive? In fact, if I am going to be totally upfront, I am writing this article more for myself than for you.