

Fatigue on the farm



Fatigue isn't the same as being sleepy or drowsy. It's about pushing our bodies beyond their mental and physical limits day after day, with no time to recover.

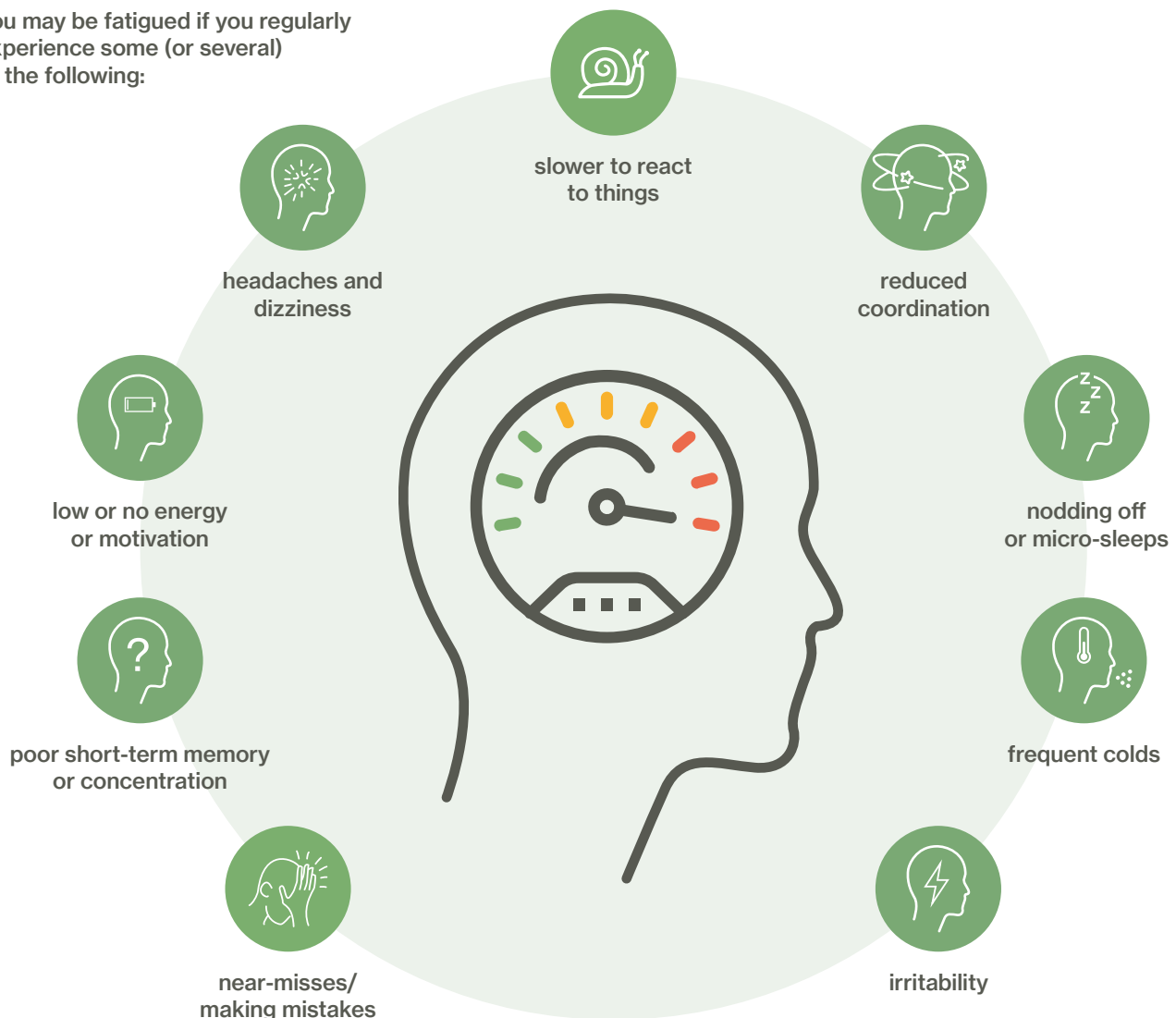
Our bodies can be tested and become fatigued during harvest times, or when intense work is necessary.

You may experience fatigue if:

- ◆ you had less than 6 hours sleep in the past 24 hours
- ◆ you had less than 12 hours sleep in the past 48 hours
- ◆ you will have been awake for 16 hours or more after a shift
- ◆ you've been exposed to extreme hot or cold temperatures
- ◆ you've had to concentrate for a long period.

Have you experienced fatigue on the farm?

You may be fatigued if you regularly experience some (or several) of the following:



Tips to avoid fatigue



While working, consider:



simple stretches



rotating tasks



increasing water intake



taking breaks where possible



eating healthy snacks



checking in with family, friends and co-workers



making a reasonable roster outlining start and finish times



planning ahead to roster extra help for high demand periods

The leading cause of fatigue is lack of sleep

Proper sleep allows the brain and body to repair, so we can get up and go again the next day.

Consider:

- ✓ prioritising sleep
- ✓ eating well and limiting caffeine and alcohol
- ✓ exercising regularly
- ✓ seeking medical advice when fatigue and/or disordered sleep (eg insomnia) continue
- ✓ seeking advice for depression, anxiety, grief, stress, addiction or other issues that interfere with your overall wellbeing and ability to work.

Fatigue impairs reaction times, concentration, and the ability to think clearly and control our moods

For example, working for 17 continuous hours causes impairment equivalent to a 0.05 blood alcohol concentration.

If you or someone at work is fatigued:

- ✗ avoid driving home after the shift - make other arrangements to get home instead (eg get picked up by family or friends)
- ✗ avoid working alone or speak to your friends, neighbours, co-workers or family about regularly checking in.

Further information

- [WorkSafe Victoria - fatigue page](#)
- [National Centre for Farmer Health - fatigue page](#)
- [Safe Work Australia - fatigue page](#)
- [Sleep Health Foundation - ten tips for a good night's sleep page](#)
- [Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety - steps to manage fatigue on farms page](#)

*This guidance is for duty holders in the agricultural workplace. It is intended solely as good practice advice. Duty holders include self-employed farmers, farm employees, contract farm employees and agricultural business owners. For the purposes of this guidance, all duty holders are generically termed 'farmers'.