

# SLEEPLESS

## IN SASKATCHEWAN

FEATURING **JON SHEARER**

**Sleep Specialist**

### **Sleep, we all do it and we all need it!**

“Sleepless in Saskatchewan” participants will not take long to understand that there is more to sleep than they realize. For producers who are feeling the pressures of farming, off-farm work and those involved in shift work getting a good night sleep is not always an easy task. Shearer makes it clear that sleep is not one continuous process but is composed of five unique parts, each repairing different mind and body processes. All five parts work to set the stage for the way we feel the next day.

Sleep is important and is connected to our health, safety and well-being. Lack of sleep negatively affects our alertness and performance. Being deprived of sleep affects our judgment, decision-making, and memory while slowing down our reaction times and reducing our ability to concentrate. Lack of sleep also can negatively affect our mood.

Jon explains that each sleep cycle lasts 90 minutes so he encourages participants to sleep for 6, 7½ or 9 hours so they wake up at the end of a cycle to feeling well rested.

Sleep fragmentation occurs when one wakes up throughout the night and has their sleep cycles interrupted. Shearer identifies sleep fragmentation as just as big a problem as the length of time one sleeps. The result of fragmented sleep is waking up and feeling groggy, unrested and miserable. At “Sleepless in Saskatchewan” Jon identifies culprits that fragment sleep. Shearer also emphasized the effects sleep aid medications have and how cautious we should be in using them.

Light has impact on our sleep cycles and participants will be surprised to learn how a simple broad spectrum light bulb and a timer that gradually turns a light on will help them wake up feeling rested and ready to go. Shearer explains how this helps in terms of managing the hormone melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone connected to our body’s sleep cycle so to begin the day when there is an abrupt stop in its production; one will start the day off on the wrong foot. The quick stop on melatonin production alters our body’s clock making us feel “sluggish” throughout the day.

Power naps. Shearer enthusiastically called them “an exquisite treat for the body”. Participants are encouraged to take power naps but Jon explains the importance of only taking a 20 minute nap unless there is opportunity to sleep for a full 90 minute sleep cycle. Shearer stresses that anything other than this type of power nap will leave a person feeling lethargic and that is the opposite of what a power nap should do.



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