



National Farm & Ranch Business Management Education Association, Inc.

... Teachers delivering knowledge that works to North America's Farm and Ranch Families

# NUTS & BOLTS

## President's Message

by Jim McCuistion, 2014-15 President

November 1, 2014

Greetings to the members of the NFRBMEA. I hope each of you had a wonderful summer, but if you are like me it has gone by very fast and we are into the fall and harvest already. The wheels turn fast for many of us and we need to take the time to enjoy the nice fall weather and the things going on around our communities.

I felt the conference in Salt Lake City in June was a very successful one, and I would like to thank Jay Olsen and his crew for their good work. The tours were excellent as well as the agenda, speakers, and program. As attendees to the conference, thank everyone you can that helps put on these conferences, especially our sponsors. There is much work involved for the approximate two years it takes to plan and put on a conference.

On the subject of planning conferences for the coming years, the Board met in Carter Lake, Iowa (Omaha) last month for the fall board meeting and joint meeting with NAFBAS to plan for 2015 and 2016 conferences, as well as review the past conference and attend to the needed business of the association. Our meetings were productive and agenda items included sponsors for 2015 conference, the scholarship grant from CHS for attendees to the 2015 conference and Mark Holkup's report as committeeman on the 2015 conference in Rochester, NY.

I hope all of the members are looking forward to the Rochester, NY conference in June of 2015 as much as I am. There will be an interesting and different look at an area many of us have not seen before.



**Make a Difference** Dick Wittman, Wittman Consulting, presented "Using Management Accounting to Link Financial Performance Analysis & Strategic Thinking" on Wednesday.

*"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."*  
W.B. Yeates

Jim McCuistion  
NFRBMEA President

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## National Council for Agricultural Education Update

by Ira Beckman, NFRBMEA Representative to NCAE

The vision of the National Council for Agricultural Education is to be the collective leadership voice for Agricultural education in the United States.

Since the last update we have met via several conference calls, and I attended our Fall NCAE Board meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana from September 15 - 17, 2014. Once again, we have decided to have our face to face meetings in Indianapolis if possible to save member organizations money. I will try to summarize the major activities of the Council, and those in particular that impact NFRBMEA members.

The financial position for the Council has not changed much since my last update. We have current assets of about \$163,624 as of July 1. This past fiscal year we received \$98,942 in revenue and had \$112,630 in expenses. We planned on our expenses exceeding revenue as we had the money to spend, and we made great strides in completion of some of our goals such as hosting a summit on SAE Renewal, and are nearing completion on the work on the Program Standards.

The main content of the meeting was focused around our five main goal areas we set up to work on for the next three years beginning in 2012. Once again they are:

1. Develop an action plan to ensure the recruitment, preparation and retention of a diverse, high quality teacher supply.
2. Strengthen the voice and impact of the Council within the Profession.
3. SAE Renewal - Relevance and impact of SAE on student performance.
4. Collect the data needed to demonstrate local program relevance and drive program improvement.
5. Review and revise the national content and program standards.



During the past year the Council has focused primarily on goals 3 and 5. The Council sponsored the 2014 National Ag Ed Summit for two days at the end of January where the whole topic for the summit was developing plans to strengthen and renew SAE. The majority of the summit was available on-line to folks who did not have the resources to attend in person. This goal will continue to be a high priority for the Council.

The National Content and Program Standards revisions are nearing completion. The committee has made giant strides over the past few months on this effort and enlisted the help of several experts nation-wide to ensure top quality. They are hoping to complete this revision by early 2015.

The Council and NAAE helped sponsor the "National Teach Ag Day" which was held September 25, 2014 at the CHS headquarters in Minnesota. Since 2011, the Council and the FFA Foundation has received and spent \$638,528 on this campaign. The primary sponsor has been CHS, but we have also received significant donations from Landmark Nurseries, Pioneer, CSX, Growth Energy, and several individual gifts.

Over the next several months we will focus primarily on goal 4 which is "Collect the data needed to demonstrate local program relevance and drive program improvement." We had a facilitated discussion at our fall face to face meeting to identify the key data collection objectives for school based agricultural education. The data committee will now be able to continue their efforts in a more focused manner.

We have conference calls scheduled for the third Thursday of each month and our next face to face

## NCAE Update, continued—

meeting will be in Indianapolis from April 7 - 9, 2015.

In December, my official term of representing NFRBMEA will be coming to an end. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to represent you. I will remain on the Council for the year 2015 serving as the Council's "Past-President." All of my expenses for 2015 will be covered by the Council so it will not negatively impact our financial position to have two NFRBMEA members on the Council. Josh Tjosaas from Northland College was elected at our business meeting in June to replace me on the Council. I am confident he will do an outstanding job.

Remember to visit our website at [www.ffa.org/thecouncil/](http://www.ffa.org/thecouncil/).

## Which Came First? The Chicken or...?

by Wayne Pike, Conference Sponsorship Coordinator

That's an age-old question that we all have a qualified opinion about. The next question we usually come up with is, "Who cares?"

I brought this up to remind us about the efforts we make to fulfill the mission of the National Farm and Ranch Business Management Education Association. Which comes first? Is it the ideas to further our mission or is it raising the money it takes to bring our dreams to reality?

Just as it doesn't really matter whether the chicken or the egg came first, it doesn't really matter whether the idea or the money comes first. We need both and we need to generate both ideas and money.

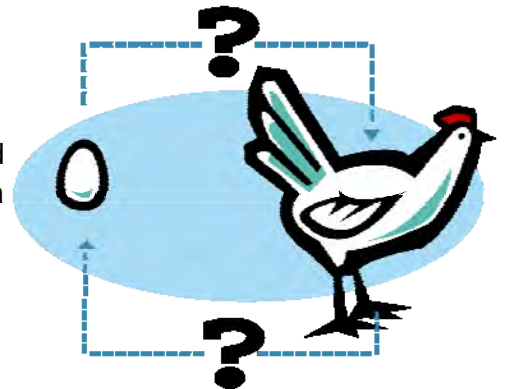
Where do ideas and money come from? Our members are the best source of both. If we can come up with big and worthy ideas, we can often come up with the funding to make them happen. We are responsible for both idea generation and money accumulation.

Let me remind you of an example. The idea for the IABME project which we completed a couple years ago was a massive idea and was funded by the Bremer Corporation. Without the idea, the money would not have come. Without the money, the idea would not have become a reality. Bremer didn't have the idea. We did. We didn't have the money. Bremer did. Which came first, the idea or the money? They were both there all the time. We just had to bring them together.

Currently, our corporate friends at CHS are considering funding a conference scholarship for the 2015 Conference in New York. Our idea. Their money.

A great idea is very valuable. You have the capability to provide us with that idea. Give it some thought. Consider what we are doing as a professional organization. What do we need to accomplish?

Then consider your access to money. Most of our sponsorship comes from the person-to-person networks that already exist. For example, past-president Mark Holkup tells me that he has a long acquaintance with a person who happens to have state and national connections with a major farm organization. Is there money there? Yes, we believe there is. Do we have the idea in front of them to inspire them to donate to our cause? Maybe.



## Which Came First? ... , continued—

Another example: Ira Beckman, NFRBMEA Board member, has a contact who is a board member with a major ag processor. Is there money there? Yes, most likely. Do we have the idea ready for them? Possibly.

It takes some work to talk to these people who know people who are looking for ideas and have money to fund them. We believe that everyone knows somebody with these connections. We also believe that everyone has the potential to develop an idea that will inspire donations while furthering our mission.

Give it some thought. Make some calls. Be the chicken. Or, be the egg.

## Conference 2015: Rochester, New York!

Mark your calendars for the next National Farm Business Management Conference, slated to be held in Rochester, New York June 14-18, 2015. It will be here before we know it!

The theme for the 2015 conference is *"From the Farm to Your Table"*. A tentative agenda will be posted to the official website soon (next on my list!) and the site will start taking shape. Be sure to check [www.nfbm-conference.org/2015/](http://www.nfbm-conference.org/2015/) often for the latest information.

Jim McCabe, 2015 Conference Planner (NAFBAS) has provided information on costs for next year:

Conference Registration Rates	
Attendee Registration	\$375
Spouse Registration	\$85
Children (7-21)	\$25

Hotel Costs	
\$109	Single/Double/Quad Room
\$189	One-Room Suite
\$4	Daily Parking fee with unlimited in & out
Free	Shuttle to & from Airport and Train Station

## Membership Numbers

by Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Communications Director

Believe it or not, our current membership year is a little more than half over!

Currently, our membership stands at 75 Regular, 31 Affiliate and 1 Honorary member, for a total of 107 members. This compares with 78 Regular, 19 Affiliate and 1 Honorary member, for a total of 98 members this time last year.

If you have already renewed your membership for 2014-15, thank you for your continued support of NFRBMEA.

If you haven't, please consider joining or renewing your membership today. It's easy! Just mail your dues for the current year (Apr 1, 2014 - Mar 31, 2015) along with the membership form that may have accompanied this newsletter.

You can also find a membership form at [www.nfrbmea.org/application.htm](http://www.nfrbmea.org/application.htm).



## Dreams, Not Data

by John Hest

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** John Hest originally contributed this article for the Fall 1994 issue of NUTS & BOLTS, describing his relationship with his students, and reminded us of our first responsibility. John was a farm business management instructor at Hawley, Minnesota.

I attended a funeral today for my friend and former student, Norman. I had known Norman for over thirty-six years. He was one of the first enrollees in my farm business management program and he stayed with the program until we retired together.

During the service, I thought of the dozens of times over the years we sat at his kitchen table and discussed many topics, not all related to farm management. Norman was very well read and mostly self-educated. He knew lots of things about lots of subjects, but he trusted me to tell him what he needed to know about his farm business. And, as I sat there at his funeral, I remembered that he had trusted me with a whole lot more than that.

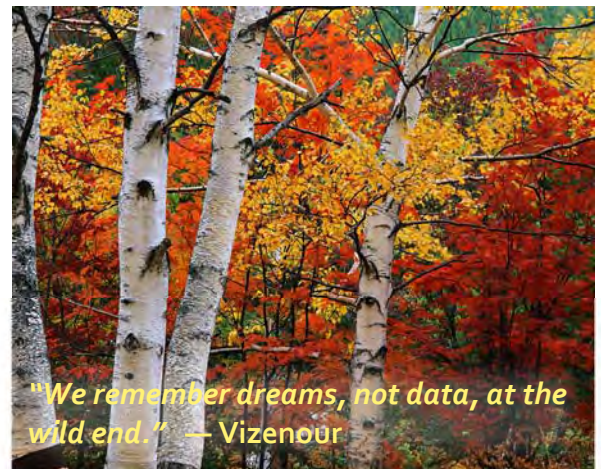
I remembered in particular delivering an annual farm analysis report to Norman and his wife. It was at the end of one of those dry seasons following a bin buster year. There were thousands of bushels of last year's grain to sell and small sales from the drought year crop. Even though the inventory was down considerably, Norman, like many farmers, thought it had been a good year because he had paid more than an average amount of income tax. I could tell when I walked in the door that Norman was confident that he was going to get good news about a terrific year. This should have been a clue as to what was going to happen next.

We opened up his report and reviewed his cash income and expense report which looked pretty good. Next, we discussed the huge drop in grain inventory and then it dawned on him that this would have a negative effect on his net profit for the year. He was not at all prepared for the drop in the family net worth. In fact, his face turned white. He excused himself and headed for the living room sofa. I asked his wife, Marion, who had been sharing the report with us, if Norman had a history of heart problems. Marion assured me that he had no heart trouble, but he always reacted this way to bad news.

After a time, Norman returned to the table, but I could tell that he still hadn't recovered from the shock. I was so embarrassed that I hardly knew what to say, and I can't remember what I did.

However, I can say that I did learn from that incident. I learned that it is a farm management instructor's job to do more than deliver numbers to farm families. Farm families trust their instructors to deliver the truth about their farm business, but even more, they trust the instructor to have the judgment to deliver the truth in a thoughtful and compassionate manner. People's feelings are a whole lot more important than bare numbers.

I learned that when I closed out a family's farm records for the year I should be able to foresee the end result and lay some groundwork for the possible net profit and net worth loss disasters. I never again wanted to see the look on a farmer's face as I saw on Norman's face that day. I learned to never again take my position of trust with my students for granted.



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Questions or comments? E-mail us at [comments@nfrbmea.org](mailto:comments@nfrbmea.org)

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