



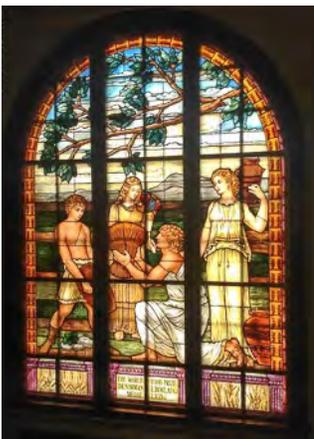
National Farm & Ranch Business Management Education Association, Inc.
 ... Teachers delivering knowledge that works to North America's Farm and Ranch Families

NUTS & BOLTS

Fall 2017 President's Message by Bruce Fowler, 2017-18 President

October 31, 2017

Greetings from rainy Missouri!! I hope each of you are having an enjoyable and productive fall harvest season! Harvest has been in high-gear here now for almost a month, and I think everyone is enjoying a bit of a break with the rain.



It doesn't seem like it has been four months since our national conference in Iowa. I would like to thank Kent Vickre and his crew in Iowa for putting together such a successful conference. I know many hours were spent putting together the program of speakers and tour logistics, and we all appreciate their efforts. I don't think I'll ever forget the trip to the World Food Prize building.

We had a very productive fall board meeting recently. It seemed like many of our discussions came around to the need for improved communication. The NFRBMEA

Sad News

Long-time FBM Instructor and NFRBMEA member Al Graner (Rugby, North Dakota) passed away Tuesday, October 24.

Al was an active member of this organization and had served on the NFRBMEA Board as secretary, treasurer, president, conference chairman, and co-chairman. He will be missed.

Please keep Al's wife Nancy and their family in your thoughts and prayers.

To view Al's obituary or leave a message of condolence, please visit:

www.funeralsbyanderson.com/AllenGraner.html

has used "Nuts & Bolts" to communicate with current and prospective members for many years. I hope you will find this issue beneficial, and will also share with us what topics you would like to see in future issues.

Speaking of the fall board meeting, I had the opportunity to catch up with an old friend after meetings had concluded. I really enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect, share what had been happening lately, and find out how his life had changed over the past 30 years. I remember being in his wedding almost 30 years ago, and the trip there with a four month old child.....some things you just don't forget!

One of the highlights for me at the fall board meeting was the presentations by the folks from Pennsylvania concerning the National Farm Business Management Conference they will be hosting next June. I know they are working very hard to assemble a lineup of speakers and tours that will challenge and enlighten us, and give us a taste of Pennsylvania agriculture. I also know they are looking into opportunities to nearby locations of historical significance to visit at either before or after the conference. Look for conference information to be on the website sometime after the first of the year. I hope you will plan to make the National Farm Business Management Conference part of your summer calendar!

NFRBMEA on Facebook & Twitter



www.facebook.com/nfrbmea



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Ag in My Area: Sugarbeet Harvest!

by Betsy Jensen, Farm Business Management Instructor, Northland College

The Red River Valley of the North comes alive every year on October 1 when sugarbeet harvest begins. There are 400,000 acres of sugarbeets and average yields around 28 tons per acre. In approximately 2 weeks, over 11 million tons of sugarbeets are harvested.

There are five sugarbeet factories in the Red River Valley, and during harvest farmers haul their sugarbeets to the factories, or to piling stations closer to fields. These piling stations will store the sugarbeets until the factory is ready to process them.



The rotobeeper travels in front of the harvester and removes the green tops.

While some Minnesotans hope for warm weather, sugarbeet producers hope for cool weather for harvest. The crop must be harvested while the sugarbeet temperatures are above freezing and below 55 degrees. If the beets freeze, or get too warm, they will rot in the piles, and cannot be processed.

That makes October 1 the best date to begin harvesting. Temperatures have cooled, and the beets can be harvested at the appropriate temperature. The cooperative will shut down harvest if the temperatures are too warm, or too cool. Like Goldilocks testing the porridge, harvest weather has to be just right.

The first step to harvest is the rotobeeper, or defoliator. This machine cuts the green tops off the sugarbeets. It's an exact science. You can't have green tops on the beets or they will rot in the pile and cause problems. On the other hand, you don't want to cut very much of the top off the beet or your yield will suffer. Good luck finding the perfect setting.

Next the harvester will use discs to squeeze the beets of the rows. It grabs the beets, and puts them into a small hopper. The hopper cannot store very many sugarbeets so usually the truck comes right alongside the harvester, and takes beets immediately. Some operations use a beet cart, which is similar to a grain cart.



Most harvesters are pull behind models with small hoppers.

There are self propelled sugarbeet harvesters. How much working capital do you have?



Many farms use a beet cart to help keep the harvester going and reduce truck traffic in the field. It also helps when conditions are muddy and the trucks cannot travel in the field.

The harvester is around \$700,000. They are still very rare.

The colder the winter the better the beet piles. Farmers want the piles to freeze solid so below zero temperatures are appreciated in November and December. That makes the Northern Plains the perfect location for sugarbeet harvest.

One of the major challenges during harvest is labor. Farmers need truck drivers to haul the sugarbeets and factories and piling stations need workers to receive the beets. Every campground is overflowing with seasonal employees, many who return every year to make extra money in a short period of time.

Looking for a part time job and a quick way to earn a few thousand dollars? Drive truck! American Crystal Sugar has a video for new truck drivers. On YouTube, search Crystal Sugar Truck Driver and watch the 21 minute video. If you need employment, your colleagues in Minnesota and North Dakota will find you a farmer who needs a driver.

Did you know: Sugarbeets are a biennial. It takes two years to produce seed. Seed production is typically found in the Willamette Valley, Oregon.

DYK: A sugarbeet is around 18% sugar. The 4 byproducts produced are beet pulp pellets, beet pulp shreds, beet molasses and raffinates (desugared beet molasses).

Photos: Betsy Jensen

Farm Goals

by David Gillman, NFRBMEA Past President

While attending Utah State University I was given an assignment in an Ag Mechanics class. The assignment was a typed paper on my goals for the next 10 years. I soon realized that to fill the page requirement I would need to provide details on my goals and how I planned to reach them. Several years later I read this paper again and was amazed at how many of the goals I had accomplished. I have always believed in the importance of goals. One challenge we have as Farm Business Management instructors is to help the farms we work with to set goals.

Goals play an important part in successful farm management. I find that some of the farms without goals are like the man in a story told by Stephen Covey in the book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The story is about a man that is working hard at sawing a tree but making little progress. When asked if he should stop and sharpen the saw, he replies "I don't have time, I am too busy sawing." Some farmers seem to be too busy farming to make plans for their farm.

It is also important for a farmer's goals to be his/her own and not just given to them by someone else. Several years ago I was working with a farm that had many struggles. One thing that I saw was that they had a very low calving percentage in their beef herd. I spent a lot of time with them talking about how they could improve that percentage. A year later, when we checked the records, the percentage had not changed. I was disappointed and discouraged that there had not been any improvement. As I look back, I can see that I had a goal for them to improve their calving percentage, but it was not a priority for them to make it their goal.

Over the years, I have used several forms and tools to help the farmers to make goals. One idea that I find useful comes from Dr. David Kohl. Dr. Kohl recommends farmers have a one page written improvement plan for their farm. This improvement plan should include 1-year and 5-year goals. I have found that the simplicity of a one-page plan is something that the busy farmers feel they can take time to do. Also, as they decide what to write, the goals become theirs and they are more likely to work to reach them.

I would be interested in hearing your ideas about what works for you as you help the farms in your program make plans and set goals. If you have something that you would like to share, please send it in to Deb Pike for a future issue of *NUTS & BOLTS*.



Membership Update

by Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Communications Director

Here are our current membership numbers compared with this time last year:

	2017-18	2016-17
Regular	53	78
Affiliate	3	9
Honorary	1	1
Total	57	88

As you can see, we are down quite a bit, compared to last year at this time.

NFRBMEA could not accomplish everything we do without our dedicated members. Become a member or renew your membership, and encourage your colleagues.

We will be sending out our annual reminder letter shortly, but there's no need to wait for that!

Fill out a membership form at www.nfrbmea.org/application.htm and send it in with your dues today. We look forward to you joining us!



2018 Conference Agenda

by Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Communications Director

Several members have inquired about the conference agenda so that they may have something to submit with their applications for professional development funds. A rough draft of the 2018 Conference agenda is available at:

www.nfbm-conference.org/2018/docs/2018-tentative-agenda-091417.pdf.

To UNSUBSCRIBE, [click here](#).

Questions or comments? E-mail us at comments@nfrbmea.org

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How to Farm Diversely as a Beginning Farmer

by Tina LeBrun, FBM Instructor, South Central College

You can't go anywhere today without hearing about the word diversity. In fact, the common public seems to also define diversity with the word race attached to it. On the farm it really has nothing to do with race rather it has everything to do with survival. Surviving, year after year with up and down commodity markets and ever uncertain weather. You can be the best farm manager and still come up short if those two key components remain unfavorable. What is the best way you can take back some of that risk? Farming diverse.

First, let me clarify how to be labeled as a diverse farm. I am not talking about corn and soybean farming. I am referring to at least 3-5 different farm enterprises under one farm operation. So, for example my husband and I raise beef cattle and sell the feeders and breeding stock as one enterprise. A second enterprise we have is our corn acres we sell as a cash crop. We also raise small grains that we harvest as a cash crop, bedding and feed for the cattle which we then double crop with grass, and turnips to graze our cows on in the fall. On top of all of that, currently my husband rents a nursery hog barn he custom raises feeder pigs in throughout the year. Now this might be a little more extreme than other farms who are trying to make a run at being diverse, but hopefully it paints a picture.

In today's agricultural environment if you are a beginning farmer or maybe you are familiar with one then you probably understand how essential it is to think outside the box when it comes to farm management. When my husband and I started renting land from my parents 6 years ago we both had full time jobs and thought we would just do it as a hobby that could give us a little more spending money. Well that theory worked for a year or 2 as we could sell all of that corn for \$6.00 a bushel with the superior market prices those years. Today corn price is less than \$3.00 which has dwindled the margin for profit. This left us searching for other means of making our farm profitable. It was during this time we discovered that we both desired to get more and more into this farming gig as best as we could without gaining much debt. The simplest way to accomplish this was to operate a little differently than what our neighbors and fellow young farmer friends were doing.

Find Your Passion

We knew the crops could stand on their own if we remained proactive on marketing and managed our input costs year to year. However, they weren't satisfying our farm management goals. As young farmers, we weren't going to gain a lot of net worth or working capital simply raising corn year after year. The profit we made at the end of the year would maybe amount to one piece of equipment over time. So, we decided to dabble in a few beef cows we swapped for labor from my parents. Long story short, we quickly discovered our passion for what we wanted to do with our farm operation.

The amount of time, commitment and ultimately money you must devote to a career or more specifically, lifestyle of farming is significant. If your heart is not in it every day your success rate will be limited. How can you put all your resources into something you just don't enjoy doing and walk away successful at the end of the day?

Spend Time with Other Young Farmers

If you want some ideas or inspiration on what you can do with your farm operation that is maybe a little outside the box, talk to other young producers. This is an advantage to taking in an educational, agriculturally focused meeting occasionally, it puts you in the perfect setting to hear what other farms are doing to be profitable with today's agricultural prices. Just being a young farmer and living in a small rural community has its advantages to that. Many social events we attend, we always seem to end up talking about farming with other farm friends that sometimes will open the door to deeper discussions of implementation on our livestock operation later. Early on in my career I was lucky enough to participate in a beginning farmers course offered through the local community college. This was not only a great place to learn the basics of farm management, but it ended up providing just wonderful open conversations between farmers who were in the same exact position as we were with our farm operation. Just having these conversations no matter what the setting and keeping an open mind is the key component to successfully thinking outside the box. This can allow you to find the appropriate path to implement something more diverse on your farm operation.

Take the Appropriate Steps

Once you have determined what area you want to branch out on your farm operation to become more diverse start small. If you want to implement a diverse cropping enterprise such as a canning crop or small grain make sure to take the proper steps. Start with 30 acres or less the first year. If you have success add additional acres the following year. The biggest thing to remember is the enterprise should stand on its own. Begin by figuring worst case scenario yields and commodity prices when running a cash flows. Think about how you can make the most bang for your buck, if that is double cropping or finding another market for your commodity. Whatever means you can take advantage of to make the branch in diversity worth while. You will find things that worked well and things that didn't which you can adjust an improve upon for the following year to be even more profitable.

Another advantage to starting small on your diversity venture is if something doesn't go as planned that you didn't see coming your farm operation won't be so exposed. If the weather doesn't allow the crop to grow or be harvested at the optimal time you aren't going to leverage your entire farm operation because of your new venture.

Capitalize from Mistakes Made with Lessons Learned

Once you have decided how you will implement diversity into your farm operation you will need to focus on what works and what doesn't. For example, when my husband decided he was going to grow wheat he focused on where he was going to market this commodity. He found a buyer that was looking for food grade wheat, meaning he would get paid depending on factors such as protein levels, test weight, and low toxin levels. Simple enough, but what he learned quickly was that each load needed to be tested before the load can be approved to be delivered. This ultimately lead to a drawn-out delivery and overall harvest of our wheat crop. Not to mention it took him away from the day to day farm operations for

("How to Farm Diversely..." continued on page 5)

("How to Farm Diversely..." continued from page 4)

an overall period of 10 days which lead to additional labor expense. So, the next year he focused on tightening up this process to gain back some of his efficiency while continuing to capitalize on the optimal wheat price. This has allowed him to increase his wheat acres each year while keeping his absence from the farm at a minimal during harvest. Implementing better management decisions is all it takes to make diversity a success on any farm operation.

Diversification makes way for the opportunity for farm profitability. As a beginning farmer, operating more diversely can often provide some freedom or breathing room to your farm management and most importantly, your farm finances. Also, the vast possibilities of future growth for your farm operation will be encouraging to any beginning farmer.

Whether your diverse niche is in the livestock realm or focused in a less traditional crop enterprise, there are many ways to think outside the box as a beginning farmer. Inspiration is the fuel to becoming a diversified farm operation. Implementation will come easy while the lessons learned will make the journey an enjoyable challenge for years to come.

Resiliency of the Prairie

by Lori Tonak, Instructor, SD Center of Farm and Ranch Management

As I have traveled through my territory this summer, the radio was a constant reminder of all that was going on in our great country- drought in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana; fires in California, Oregon, Washington and Montana; hurricanes in Texas, Louisiana, Florida and Puerto Rico. The staggering impact to agriculture in these states and territories was a constant thought in my daily travels.



the same can be said for all the agriculture producers in all the states affected by the weather and fires. To survive in this farm/ranch life, resiliency and optimism are important characteristics helping people survive on the Great Plains for generations.

As the summer wore on and rain started falling in late July in the central part of the state, an amazing thing started happening. A quarter inch of rain caused grass, corn and soybeans to green up in a matter of hours. As the rains continued, dormant plants that had shut down processes to save themselves came back to life and started growing again. Cattle started spreading out in the pastures to graze again, instead of standing in the corner stomping and fighting flies. Now, this moisture has not saved the day by any stretch, but it has helped turn some things around. There may now be a soybean crop, corn may grow a little more and possibly not be in jeopardy of high nitrates, and some farms and ranches actually got a cutting of hay.

Now, if you did not have that optimism throughout the summer that is okay.

This resiliency of the plant life is much like the people that choose to make their home on the prairie. Farmers and ranchers are some of the most resilient, optimistic people I know. Even as the heat was bearing down at the height of summer, with no rain in sight, most of the people I work with stayed optimistic, showing an attitude of this too shall pass. I am sure

However, if you feel that everything you touched or tried has turned sour, you cannot get out of bed in the morning, you cannot sleep at night for all the worry going through your head, and your moods are on an up and down roller coaster, you may want to seek professional help. All of those things are signs of depression and have a negative impact on your life. There is a stigma around seeking professional help as people feel it shows weakness but, in my mind, that is also part of resiliency-learning to seek help when it is needed. Farmers and ranchers seek help for jobs where a second pair of hands are needed, or use tools to make a job easier. So why not seek help if a professional could lighten the load on the mind, or the professional has tools to help deal with some of the negative processes. Counseling centers can be found in most larger communities or talk to clergy in your town as they also know where help can be found.

As we move on this fall, I hope the moisture continues, the weather in the south stabilizes and farmers/ranchers are resilient enough to withstand the year.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Beginning January 1, Lori will assume the role of NFRBMEA Rep on the National Council for Agricultural Education.

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