



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 Pauline Van Nurden, 2019-20 NFRBMEA President

November 12, 2019

The NFRBMEA leadership team has been busy working to continue moving the organization forward. Here are recent activities of the board. Thanks to our leadership for their continued dedication and service the organization.

Planning for the June 2020 National Farm Business Management Conference is underway. Thanks to Myron Oftedahl for his leadership as conference chair for the coming year. We will be meeting in Fort Collins, CO and an excellent conference is taking shape. The goal is to have impactful speakers, hands-on experiences, and tools you can take back to your local program. Watch the conference website for updated information regarding the agenda and conference registration.

Lori Tonak continues to serve as the NFRBMEA representative to the National Council for Agricultural Education. The National Council is currently undergoing some changes. Lori will continue to share details as they become available.

Tina LeBrun is already beginning her work as Conference Sponsorship Coordinator for the 2020 conference. If you have ideas of potential sponsors be sure to talk to Tina. She does a great job of connecting with our past sponsors and potential sponsors each year.

NFRBMEA held its fall board meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Our team gathered in Mankato to plan for the coming year. Our goals of increasing membership, fundraising, and additional professional development opportunities remain. The afternoon of the 30<sup>th</sup> and Oct. 1 the NFRBMEA and NAFBAS leadership teams held our joint board meeting to review the 2019 conference and plan for the future. It was a productive conference where we piloted a virtual meeting. This was the first time our organizations met virtually and I'm happy to say this was a successful endeavor. Our virtual meeting was a budget friendly option that allowed us to put into practice virtual meetings. Feel free to view the minutes of past meetings to see additional details. Also, always feel free to reach out to board members to ask questions and learn more.

Our President Elect position remains unfilled at the current time. The Past Presidents and current Board Members have continued to communicate regarding this situation. With membership approval at next summer's Annual Business Meeting, we will ask to have current Past President Brad Sirianni and me fill this role in a Co-President position for the 2020-2021 year. More details to come regarding this arrangement.



*("PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE" continued on page 2)*

NFRBMEA on Facebook & Twitter:



[www.facebook.com/nfrbmea](http://www.facebook.com/nfrbmea)



[www.twitter.com/nfrbmea](http://www.twitter.com/nfrbmea)

*("PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE", continued from page 1)*

I challenge each of our members to help the organization reach our priorities for the year and meet the vision and mission of the organization. Or, I ask you to provide feedback on resources or education NFRBMEA can provide to help you excel in your career.

2019-2020 Priorities include:

- Conference Sponsorship – maintain sponsorship levels of \$5,000 locally and \$10,000 nationally.
- Membership Increase – gain members from two more states engaged in farm financial benchmarking.
- Membership Education – provide Nuts & Bolts updates four times per year, with 4 additional Real Time Updates (RTUs) provided when timely. *Any member is welcome to submit an article or RTU.*

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

**Mission:** Our mission is to promote and support farm and ranch management education. We accomplish our mission by providing in-service education to our members and by communicating and cooperating with others.



Photo by [cottonbro](#) from [Pexels](#)

As the calendar year quickly comes to a close, remember to take time to celebrate your accomplishments for the year and enjoy the company of family and friends. We all put our heart into our work and dedicate many hours to bettering farm financial management. Remember to take time for yourself as well. Enjoy the holiday season!

## Why I Prioritize Attending National Farm Business Management Conference

By Tina LeBrun, FBM instructor, South Central College

Entering my eleventh year of this profession, there are a few things I have learned throughout the years. However, I am nowhere near an expert on much of anything, but I am completely aware that this career involves continued learning every day. I am also a livestock farmer's wife, and a mother to 4 young children, both provide huge challenges to finding time for professional development. Taking in a conference, catching a podcast, webex, or solitude for reading is a challenge for my personal lifestyle. Yet, I know building upon my professional



Photo: "Maple Leaf Structure"; [Wikimedia Junior](#)

development is not only one of my favorite parts of this profession, it is also essential for the success of my FBM program. I need a one stop shop that offers limited time away from my crazy life, while offering great educational value. Therefore, I block my calendar out every year in June to attend the National Farm Management Conference.

No matter where the conference is hosted, I find so many opportunities to catch great education material through out the 4 days of conference. Need it be a superior presenter, an educational tour, or a really great conversation with another attendee the opportunities for knowledge building are endless throughout the conference. Never have I walked away from conference without having some sort of tools to bring back to my program and share with my students.

I can honestly say I have never regretted the time spent or funding I have devoted to attending the National Farm Management Conference. I hope to see each and everyone of you in Fort Collins in June! — [tina.lebrun@southcentral.edu](mailto:tina.lebrun@southcentral.edu)

## Get Ready for the 2020 Conference!

By Myron Oftedahl, NFRBMEA FBM Instructor & 2020 Conference Planner

Are you ready for National Conference? I can't say that I am ready, but a lot of planning has taken place and we have more to do before June. I can say that we have strived to give you a full schedule for the three days of Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado on June 16-18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

2020 will offer a new schedule, with arrival on Monday and the Conference beginning Tuesday morning and wrapping up at noon on Thursday. We are planning for tours on Wednesday afternoon with the family event to take place Wednesday evening.

Watch the Conference website for updates, we have tentative confirmation on a couple of premier speakers and I hesitate to name them until I have a for sure confirmation. I am confident that we will bring you some speakers to challenge you a bit, along with some speakers that will give you some ideas or tools that you can use on the job. As the Conference is our main source to provide Professional Development to our membership, I have taken this to heart and will be providing as much as we possibly can.

Fort Collins is about an hour drive north of Denver, so if you are flying into Denver, you will have the option of renting a car, arranging a ride with

someone, or riding the shuttle bus from the airport to Fort Collins. We will be providing a checkbox on the registration form in order to try to help arrange shuttle rides.

The hotel reservation block is open, so you can make your room reservations now. The hotel will also offer the same rates for the two days prior to the Conference and for the two days following the Conference. Fort Collins is not quite at the foothills of the Rockies, but you can certainly see them from there. Rocky Mountain National Park is within an hour drive, so if you are missing snow you would have your chance. When I was in Colorado in May, I was fortunate to see a huge elk herd between Estes Park and Loveland, and it was a beautiful drive following the river gorge most of the way.

There is a lot to see and do in Colorado, we have a lot more planning to do so that we can offer you a memorable Conference and time in Colorado. Watch the website: [www.nfbm-conference.org/2020/index.html](http://www.nfbm-conference.org/2020/index.html).

See you in Fort Collins!

## NCAE Update

By Lori Tonak, NFRBMEA Rep on the National Council for Agriculture Education

Work on the Agriculture Education is still moving forward, but this update is going to be a brief update on the replacement of Steve Brown, National FFA Advisor. Some of you may know that Steve Brown has announced he is retiring and, with that, changes are in the works. Agriculture education at the US Dept of Education always had a voice. That voice has been taken away from our Ag Ed family over the years by the Department of Education. Due to that, a charter change was voted on at the National FFA Convention and it passed so I want to explain what has been happening in the background.

The Council is designated to be the "hiring committee" for the new National FFA Advisor. Knowing that the charter change might pass, we sent out a job opening and conducted interviews. I did not know if we would receive any applicants as it is currently an unfunded position other than travel reimbursements. The amount and quality of applicants was excellent and two days of interviews

were conducted. I cannot release the name at this time but watch for a news release on or about November 15<sup>th</sup> with that information.

If you have any comments or questions, email me at [lori.tonak@mitchelltech.edu](mailto:lori.tonak@mitchelltech.edu). Thank you to the members for letting me be part of this journey in agriculture education.



## How Do We Cope

By Lori Tonak, SDCFRM Instructor

Travelling through my territory these past few weeks, I am reminded of days gone by. This is not necessarily a good thing, as the days gone by that have been on my mind is the 1980's. I was just starting my career as an agriculture education instructor when the farm crisis hit. I helped write resumes for jobs as farmers transitioned from full-time farming to full-time careers off the farm. It was a stressful time in their lives, they felt they had no valuable skills, and there were many sleepless nights. So, why was I remembering this time as I drove the roads in 2019? I see more and more equipment for sale along the roads. Adverse weather has impacted some of my territory for two years. More operations have had to sell down or liquidate. Every conversation at the sale barn, coffee shop, etc. is about how to survive in these tough times. Mentally, this takes a toll, so how do we cope with everything in these challenging times?

First, I want to address the mental health of these times. Agriculture producers are a tough breed and tend to persevere no matter what. Many times, the individual does not see any changes in themselves, but their loved ones do. Michigan State University Extension has developed a great checklist to see if you are showing signs of stress. This checklist can be found at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/how-stress-affects-you>. If you or someone in your family thinks there is a problem, please look at this resource. Avera has also set up the **Farmer Stress Hotline** at **1-800-691-4366**. Someone is not weak just because they ask for help, it shows you are an intelligent human being and want to take care of yourself and your family.

Second, the bank or other finance group may have suggested you obtain off-farm employment to help with family living or want you to downsize the operation and seek other employment. As I told individuals in the 80's, an ag producer has a long list of skills even if you never attended a post-secondary institution. Some of you are fantastic welders and mechanics and can fix anything. I know individuals that have taught themselves GPS and mapping and how to set up their equipment to utilize every feature. When it comes to understanding parts and how to find them online, many of you are masters. There are a number of online auction companies that are looking for representatives in your area, and who knows auctions better than a farmer/rancher! The

skill set can go on and on. Is it what you want to do? Probably not but may be a necessity until times get better.

Third, make sure you check in with your children, especially the ones still at home. They also show stress from everything going on around them. If family living has had to be cut extensively and it has impacted their activities, make sure you discuss with them why some of these cuts had to be made. Also, I see many posts about how important it is to show up at every activity your child is in. This can also take a financial toll on your family. I know of families that spend upward of \$200 a week on fuel and the price of admission to go to their children's events. At \$800 a month, that is a sizable hit to family living. These activities are important, and I am not saying children should not have the opportunities, but I hope other families are understanding if little Johnny/Susie's parents are not at every out of town activity. If you are worried about your children and how they are coping with what is going on "down on the farm", here is a link to youth farm stress.

[www.canr.msu.edu/resources/youth-farm-stress](http://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/youth-farm-stress)

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones. They are the most important part of your life.

## Membership

By Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Comm. Dir.

Currently, our membership stands the same as a year ago: 70 Regular members and 9 Affiliate members. Thank you to all our current members for your support of this organization!

If you or any of your colleagues have not renewed your membership, or have never been a member of our organization, please consider renewing or joining today. Share this newsletter with them and encourage them to go to [www.nfrbmea.org/application.htm](http://www.nfrbmea.org/application.htm) to renew or join today!



Image by [Karen Arnold](#) from [Pixabay](#).  
Adapted by Deb Pike.

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

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## 2019-20 Board of Directors

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