

President's Message: Proud to Be an FBM Educator By Ron Dvergsten, 2024-25 NFRBMEA President

November 1, 2024

As I have been transitioning from being a full-time FBM Educator for the past 34 years and going into a phased retirement plan, I have had some time to reflect on having such a rewarding career. Yes, there have been challenges along the way with budgetary issues that seem to ebb and flow from time to time working for a government-based employer. Yes, there were some long days for several weeks during analysis season, but overall, I cannot think of another career that I would rather have had, other than that as a Farm Business Management educator.

Most of what I've thought back on relate to the relationships that I have built over the years. First, the farm and ranch business owners that have been my students. During my time as a FBM educator, I have been able to work with several hundred different farm and ranch owners over this period. Some for a year or two, but many for several decades. The relationships that form when people are willing to share their financial records and their closest held feelings are very deep. Receiving Christmas cards or invitations to family gatherings illustrates that the families we reach greatly appreciate what we provide them with when assisting them to better understand their businesses financial records.

In addition to the farmers and ranchers I have served, most of my friends are my fellow Farm Business Management educators. It seems that the vast majority of us who have been FBM educators for any length of time have quite similar personality traits. We enjoy working with numbers and like teaching and helping people. I have also found that FBM educators have a willingness to share their tools of the trade and mentor the newcomers to the profession, which doesn't often occur in many other professions.

Finally, as I reflect back on my FBM career, I recall all of the professional development activities I have been able to participate in during my career and the opportunities provided by NFRBMEA. My most-often recalled and best memories come from the National Farm Business Management Conference. The 2024 National Farm Management Conference in La Crosse was the 25th conference I have attended. My first one was in Alexandria, MN in 1993. Subsequent conferences have taken me to Alberta, Canada, California, Oregon, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Michigan and Oklahoma, and this coming year to Fort Worth, Texas.

The National FBM Conferences have allowed me to forge friendships with fellow FBM educators across the country! So please make plans to attend the 2025 National FBM Conference scheduled for June 9-12 in Fort Worth, TX to take advantage of this great FBM professional development activity and to forge new friendships with fellow FBM Educators from across the country.



Focus

By President Elect Deron Erickson, Instructor, MN West FBM, Barrett, MN

Harvest is ending, tillage is finishing, and it is time for Farm Business Management Instructors to see how those tight cash flows that were drawn up last spring and tweaked during the summer turned out. Over the next few months, we will have our work cut out for us as we deal with a crop that was in our area average at best and also an accrual loss again in the value of the grain.

We have been through this scenario before. Last year's analyses were for the most part positive as grain production was more robust. Prices were reduced but production offset much of the accrual loss. Cashflows were tight but for the most part, most had working capital to fall back on.

This analysis season to me feels different. I predict that there will be tax problems from held over grain sales but, the profitability will be diminished. Cashflows will be tight again with expenses still high and grain prices below break evens.

In my experience, this is the time when we as Farm Business Management instructors must really focus on the individual farm family we are working with. Situations will vary greatly between farms. The focus must be on the analysis and the trends that have developed over the last 3 or 4 years with the farm business. If there continues to be an erosion of profitability and working capital, what steps are they willing to take to get back to a profitable scenario? It is easy to manage in the good times, but managing in the difficult times is what makes the farm. The same can be said about being a Farm Business Management instructor.

If there are problems with the farm business, I look at these things. The cash position of the farm is the most important item to look at. Cash is king and if there is a lack of cash (working capital) there needs to be a focus on generating working capital. Selling unproductive assets or "killer toys" is where I look first.



The next area to look is debt structure. Refinancing worked well in 2014 but, interest rates were lower then. Obviously if the business isn't profitable adding another restructure payment isn't going to help. It will buy the farm time however additional assets are put at risk. Liquidating land or productive assets to generate cash is always a slippery slope.

Time is limited with each farm family as we work through the analysis and cashflow season. Focusing can be exhausting. Make sure to take care of yourself through the season also.

Membership Update

By Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Communications Director

Here is our 2024-25 membership, compared to this time last year.

Thank you to our many members for supporting our organization. We have several new members this year. Welcome to NFRBMEA!

You may have received a membership letter in September. If you haven't already become a member, or renewed your membership yet, please consider joining us!

	2024-25	2023-24
Active	74	83
Affiliate	7	10
Honorary Lifetime	2	-
Total	83	93

Do You Know Your Credit Score?

By Ron Dvergsten, Northland FBM instructor

For decades, lenders have been requesting customer credit reports, primarily to verify non-farm debts and to check past credit problems such as bankruptcies, liens, judgments, etc. The credit report serves as a form of verification to confirm the information the customer provided on the loan application or balance sheet.



Credit scores are just one piece of information that is used in the loan approval process. However, it appears that its importance in the credit approval process will

continue to increase. A low credit score could increase home mortgage interest rates by as much as 2.5% or prevent you from qualifying for a loan. In addition to being used by lenders, insurance companies are also using credit scores in their underwriting policy approval process.

A word to the wise, even if you are not planning on needing credit soon, it is still a good idea to inquire into your credit score and review your credit reports on an annual basis. Mistakes do happen and correcting them doesn't happen over night. If your lender cannot provide you with a copy of your credit report and credit score, you can obtain your credit reports by logging into www.annualcreditreport.com.

Website Updates

By Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Communications Director

I am happy to announce that the restoration of our past conference websites has been completed! While the old conference sites are not necessarily mobile-friendly, some of the web technologies that are no longer supported have been replaced with newer ones. You can find the complete list and links on our website at: www.nfrbmea.org/conferences.html#past-conferences. It was fun to see photos of faces and remember the many places our conferences have been over the years.

I hope you'll take a moment to check some (or all!) of them out. Newer members may not recognize some of the faces in the photos, but this is NFRBMEA's history. You may find it interesting to discover the variety of topics covered, as well as speakers we've had and activities that have occurred over the years.

Speaking of conferences, don't forget to check our [2025 Conference website](#) for the newest information on what our conference planners are cooking up for next year!



Photo: Deb Pike

Greetings from Your New Communications Director

By Kelly McAdam, Incoming NFRBMEA Communications Director



Hello NFRBMEA! My name is Kelly McAdam, and I am the new Communications Director. I live in New Hampshire where I grew up on a small family dairy farm in the northern part of the state. I farmed with my folks for a while until I left the farm to

pursue a career in education, which led me to our university Extension. I have been working for the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension for 13 years now. My past job experiences have

involved teaching web design and computer software applications, which has led to my interest in joining all of you as your next Communications Director. I currently live in the central part of New Hampshire, the Lakes Region, with my husband, and three children. My son and his wife live with us, and I have twin 10-year-olds that are very active in sports which keeps us busy! We enjoy watching New England sports teams and try to get to a minor league baseball game at least a few times each summer. I also enjoy gardening and visiting our local lakes and trails as much as we can in the summertime.

I have been working closely with Deb Pike over the past month and gleaning as much information as I can from her many years of experience!



www.nfrbmea.org

POWER-UPS

MEMBER-ONLY WEDNESDAY WEBINARS NOON CT

- October 23:** "The Fall Harvest Sell/Store Decision"
-Jeff Schultz, South Central College, Faribault, MN
- November 13:** "Northern Crops Institute Educational Opportunities"
-Casey Peterson, Ph.D, Interim Co-Director and Program Development Manager, Northern Crops Institute
- December 11:** "105 Tax Advantage Plans & Compliance"
-Mr. Stacey Davis, BASE

SERIES COST: \$60 Annual NFRBMEA Membership

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**NUTS &
BOLTS
NEWSLETTERS**



2025 NFBM CONFERENCE

**SHERATON FORT WORTH
FT WORTH, TX
JUNE 9-12, 2025**

www.nfbm-conference.org/2025/



FEED YOUR BRAIN, BECAUSE TEACHING IS A LEARNING PROFESSION

Conference Planning Update!

By Brent Roiger, 2025 NFBM Conference Planner



Plans continue to take shape for the 2025 National Farm Business Management Conference in Fort Worth, Texas June 9-12. The joint boards met not too long ago and agreed to keep conference registration the same as last year at \$500. This will allow you to go ahead and start getting those out-of-state travel requests and Professional Development funding requests submitted.

The schedule is being moved around as a result of feedback received on the post-conference surveys. (See it pays to fill those out!) Tours are being changed from post-conference to the first day on Monday. We are looking at having some type of reception/ice cream social across the street from the hotel in the Water Gardens, providing a nice chance to mix and mingle after the tours.

The conference will kick off in earnest Tuesday morning and we are focusing on having a two-track schedule. There will be some sessions that are geared for all but then there will be one track that will be tax-specific and the other will have more wide-ranging topics including technology tools and more general breakout sessions. On Tuesday morning, the keynote speaker will be Holly Spangler. Her specific topic is still being discussed but rest assured it will be timely and worthwhile. Tuesday evening, we are looking to have our Family Night get together at the Fort Worth Stockyards. A must see for anyone visiting Fort Worth. Likely there will be some authentic Texas BBQ to sink your teeth into.



Wednesday morning's theme will be Succession and Transition Planning, before again breaking into the two tracks of tax topics and breakout sessions in the afternoon. Each organization will also have their respective business meeting late Wednesday afternoon. Thursday morning will be about the Ag Economy and

Financials before wrapping with local speaker Jim Eggleston on the Challenges Looming for Ag and Food Production. The conference will wrap up by noon in case you wish to fly home later that day.

Reminder, the Sheraton Fort Worth is our hotel and conference center, and it is only about two blocks off the TEXRail system, which connects DFW Airport to Downtown Fort Worth. There are plenty of public transportation options if you would prefer not having to deal with renting a car. Feel free to do some research on all things Fort Worth at www.fortworth.com.

Passing the Torch

By Deb Pike, Outgoing NFRBMEA Communications Director



I want you to know that it has been an honor and privilege to serve NFRBMEA, and I've really enjoyed my time on the Board. For those newer members who may not know me, I came on as Wayne's NUTS & BOLTS Co-editor sidekick in 1992 and in 1998 I became web manager. As the snowball grew with the addition of Historian and

Membership Secretary, my title was changed to Communications Director.

Time has flown by, and now it's time to pass the torch! I'm grateful for all the people I've met, and friends I've made over the years. I've heard other members say our conferences are like a family reunion, and it really is true. Thank you for all the great memories!

With that, I'd like to welcome Kelly McAdam to the NFRBMEA Board as our incoming Communications Director. Kelly started October 1 and she and I have been conversing weekly via Zoom about the ins and outs of this position and figuring out the transition process. Beginning January 1, Kelly will be holding the reins. I'm sure she will do very well!

In the meantime, auf Wiedersehen!

To UNSUBSCRIBE, [click here](#).

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

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NFRBMEA occasionally publishes pictures of its events on the Internet, via newsletter or other public and social medias. Please let the [Communications Director](#) know if you do NOT want your picture to be published online.

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