



# NUTS & BOLTS

A PUBLICATION OF THE NFRBMEA

JOHN HEST, EDITOR



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## THROUGH COUNTING?

If you're like I am you are definitely tired of listening and looking at the barrage of election propoganda that's been hitting us from all directions these past weeks. And wouldn't it be nice if negative campaigns were outlawed and the candidates would be forced to deal with the important issues. By the time this newsletter arrives in your mail box, the election will be over and, depending on your political persuasion, you'll either be laughing or crying.

Have any of you ever given a thought to filing for one of the jobs in your national government? You know, your job descriptions would qualify you, wouldn't they? You've worked with your farm and ranch families giving them the kind of advice that I suspect is needed on the Potomac or in Ottawa. You sure as heck couldn't do any worse than our recent history shows us.

I was just thinking about the advice that always came out of my mouth when visiting with a recently enrolled farm family. "You can fool me and you might be able to fool your banker, but don't ever fool yourself when you fill out your financial statement." And that's why a farm or ranch business management teacher in your country's capital might be rather refreshing! Just give me the word and I'll be the first to contribute to your campaign coffers.

## RSVP

I've been pleasantly surprised by the number of replies I received after making my plea for National Farm and Ranch Business Management Education Association memberships. The reporting part of First Choice said that 68 people filled out the blank and sent their check. That, added to the 115 who signed up at conference time in Rapid City, makes a grand total of 183 members. Ten of those are associate members by the way. That's great, the people who've retired have seen fit to keep up the association with NFRBMEA.

Our total mailing list now includes 425 names and addresses so that says that 43% of those are members. Due to the work of several of our officers including Keith Torgerson and Tom Risdal and Jim Kelm, one of the officers from last year, we have several brand new names in our computer. This mailing is going out to all of those "new" people and to listed members, of course. That same First Choice report told me that our mailing list now represents men and women in 30 states and two Canadian provinces.

## NEW FUTURE

I was re-reading Wayne Pike's, Le Roy-Ostrander, MN., August newsletter and came upon a piece that he'd stolen from Russ Sanders, executive vice president of the National Pork Producers Council. So I'm taking the liberty of re-stealing it for all of you. He contends that there are six "C" words that will describe the future of agriculture. See if you agree with Mr. Sanders, and if not, what do you think? Maybe you'd like to write an article for the Feb. 1, 1993 issue, outlining your views.

### Six C Words

by Russ Sanders

CHANGE: Expect more of it and coming faster.

COMPETITION: Expect competition from other countries and other food products.

CONSUMER: Expect more consumer impact on the packaging, quality, and type of food we offer in the stores. The Consumer will be King or Queen.

COMMUNICATIONS: Expect to do more and pay more for communicating the wants and needs of ag to the consumer, government and the rest of the world.

CONSOLIDATION: Expect further combining within the processing industry and also expect bigger farms.

CONTROVERSY: Expect that all this change is going to happen with a lot of kicking and screaming. Expansion, animal rights, and the environment are just a few areas likely to generate some heat.

## ON-GOING PROBLEM

As I've told you in previous issues of NUTS & BOLTS, I do read the newsletters that you send me, very carefully, and wonder if an article should be incorporated into the next issue. Ron Van Nurden has had me on his mailing list for a couple of year or more, so I always look forward to his production. An article in his last issue struck me as being just right for all of our readers. I expect that his last winter's hospital stay, due to his heart problem, has made him ponder about life's priorities, likely more than once. I'm sure that the topic of his September article had something to do with those priorities. I believe that Ron has license to speak. Here it is:

Farmer Burn-Out  
Ron Van Nurden  
Owatonna, MN

As I've talked with farmers this past year, I have sensed that many may be suffering from what I call farmer burn-out. The symptoms include: no interest in improving the operation, frustration with markets which leads to no interest in marketing, a sense that nothing can be done to improve the situation, a sense that all the hard work put into the farming operation is for nothing. The burned-out farmer goes through the daily routine without a sense of purpose. They feel overwhelmed by the circumstances they are in and don't see a way out. If you have been feeling some of these symptoms, I have some suggestions in the following paragraphs that may help.

First, take a look at the goals you set for yourself. To me the burned-out farmer has lost a sense of where he is going and has lost sight of his goals. We all need to have something to work toward. For many, the financial crunch of the 1980s destroyed many hopes and dreams. In order to be happy and productive you must put those hopes and dreams to rest, take a realistic look at the present situation and develop new dreams and hopes.

Has it been a long time since you reevaluated your goals? Start by looking back. What did I want to accomplish for goals when I started this farming business? Were those goals realistic? Are they realistic in today's situation? Have they been accomplished?

Now look forward. What do you want to accomplish the rest of your life? Start with family goals. They are the most important. Do you want more time to rest and relax? Do you want more time with family members? What about retirement? College for the kids? Make a list of these goals. Next put down some goals for your farm business. Look at your farm analysis. Ask yourself: What do I do well? What can I improve? What has to happen in my farm business to help accomplish my family goals? With those questions answered you need to set some time tables for action. What do you want to accomplish over the next 2 years? 5 years? 10 years? Write all these goals down. The act of writing them down makes them more your own.

I believe the act of going through this process of setting goals, evaluating goals, and resetting goals will help take people out of burn-out and back to being productive, profitable, happy farm businessmen. I have always believed that problems need to be addressed, evaluated and acted on quickly and realistically. The longer the problem is ignored or allowed to fester and not be addressed, the more energy is lost and the more likelihood of burn-out.

One last point, we need to learn to take care of the things that we have control over and forget the things we can't control. Burn-out occurs when we spend all our time blaming our problems on things we have no control over. Taking control of our lives is very important.

To quote from B. A. Richards, "If we spend all our time worrying about decisions that should have been made, we will overlook decisions that should be made."

## THE BEST

As near as I can tell, the real strengths of a "good" farm or ranch business management program are measured by the strength or weakness of the so-called "farm visit." I suppose we should probably call it "Kitchen Table Education" but the term education seems to scare the heck out of farm people so we sometimes rename things to make them work. As I look back on my 23 years of working with Minnesota adult farm folks. I can think of some good visits I've had and some of the other kind too. As I read a piece in the newsletter published by Howard Pennertz, Brad Burkland and Ron Novotny, all

instructors at the St. Cloud, MN Tech College, I realized I probably should go back to 1949 and begin again. They put it all in a nut shell and said it so well. I think they should share their wisdom with the rest of you. Keep in mind that this was written for their farm family consumption so you'll have to put yourself in the frame of mind of being a farmer for a few minutes.

### The Farm Visit

Howard Pennertz, Brad Burkland, Ron Novotny  
St. Cloud, MN Technical College

#### The Instructor's Responsibilities:

- a. The instructor should notify you by letter about one week before he (or she) comes out.
- b. The instructor should have 3 or 4 items he plans to cover with you.
- c. The instructor should arrive on time.
- d. The visit should not turn into a social affair.
- e. The instructor should allow some time for your concerns or questions.

#### The Farm Family's Responsibilities:

- a. Be prepared for the instructor.
- b. Be ready to discuss the items on the letter you received.
- c. Try to have chores done and not be running late.
- d. Make up a list of questions for the instructor.
- e. Lastly, this is your time. You are paying for it through your tuition. Make the best use of it.

#### The Follow-Up:

On many occasions the instructor needs to go back to school to possibly look up material for you, or possibly do a cash flow or whatever. Normally, the instructor should get back to you in 3-5 days.

#### PROMO

Most farm or ranch business management teachers find themselves doing more than teach classes and conduct farm visits, hopefully, like the guys from St. Cloud, MN outlined in their newsletter. Most teachers find themselves with another hat to wear too, that of a public relations person for those same farm families. The products they produce have to be sold before they turn into cash in the farmer's billfold.

When I began teaching, over 40 years ago farmers didn't have to concern themselves about selling most farm products. But today it's different. Coke and Pepsi have established themselves as the national drinks instead of milk. Most farm families are poor sales people for their products and I believe that's where ag professionals like ourselves, come into the picture.

But, let Jim Kastanek, owner and operator of Total Agri-Business Services in Albany, MN, expound on the subject. Jim formerly taught farm business management in that same community. Incidentally, Stearns County, where Jim lives, is noted for its "wall-to-wall" dairy cattle. So, here's Jim:

I hear a lot of false rumors about what is going on with the National Dairy Promotion Board. Ervin Silvers, a local representative on that board, does NOT get paid \$70,000 per year and last week someone gave him a "raise" to \$80,000. He actually gets paid travel, lodging and meals for the meetings he attends.

It is too bad that a farm group is trying to destroy agricultural advertising. Last June I discovered a national ad in USA TODAY trying to reduce the amount of dairy products in school lunch programs. I recently saw a different ad in the Minneapolis Star-Tribune doing the same damage. This type of stuff is going out to people who accept it as fact. If they see it enough they'll believe it to be true. And if they believe it they won't buy your products. Without customers there is no market. NO MARKET=NO FARM.

Every bit of agricultural promotion has paid off. Pork promotion has kept hog prices higher than they were expected to be. Corn producers have added many uses for their product. Milk promotions have paid off too. I challenge the dairy industry to advertise as much as only one soft drink company does. Yes, I said one soft drink company and I know there would be a shortage of milk and milk products. Advertising is expensive but it does sell products. Producers must sell to have a product to produce in future years. Advertising is an economic fact of life. It's an absolute must!

HEAR THIS, HEAR THIS

I was just visiting over the phone with Keith Torgerson, our president, and he tells me that they haven't been overwhelmed with applications for the editorship of NUTS & BOLTS. I announced in the August 1 issue that I was turning in my keys next June.

I know that many of you are qualified to be the editor. As near as I can tell, there are only two qualifications, really: (1) an interest in farm and ranch business management education, and (2) one must really enjoy writing. And, oh yes, the person should be conversant with a computer since the job also includes keeping track of the membership. Keith says that you don't have to fill out a formal resume, just drop him a note. The officers would like the applications by Feb. 1, 1993. Here's his address:

Keith Torgerson  
NDSCS  
800 North 6th St.  
Wahpeton, ND 58076.

HEAR THIS AGAIN

Keith also asked me to include a reminder in this newsletter that the officers would like you members to nominate persons for the Distinguished Service Award so that the award(s) could be presented at next June's Alexandria, MN conference. Again, send nominations to him.

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A Short Course In Human Relations

The six most important words in the English language:

I ADMIT I MADE A MISTAKE

The five most important:

YOU DID A GOOD JOB

The four most important:

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

The three most important:

IF YOU PLEASE

The two most important:

THANK YOU

The least important:

I

Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things,  
but just look at what they can do when they stick together.

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A History of  
The National Farm and Ranch Business Management Education Association  
by John Hest, Editor, NUTS & BOLTS

As some of you are getting an issue of NUTS & BOLTS for the first time you no doubt will ask, "What the heck is that and how come I'm getting a copy of whatever this is?"

To put it in a nut shell, NUTS & BOLTS is a publication of the National Farm and Ranch Business Management Education Association (NFRBMEA). Since the name is about a mouthful and a half, I think you see why we talk about it by writing its initials only.

The NFRBMEA is an organization that's dedicated to the teaching of farm and/or ranch business management to farm or ranch folks, wherever they may be. And that's why you're getting a copy of their newsletter, at least for the rest of this year, and a good part of 1993 too. Since you're likely involved with those goals, in one way or another, we think that you may want to see what we have to offer you.

Although our association wasn't formally organized until 1985 in Pierre, SD, we began informally at an invitational conference in Faribault, MN in 1973 when we met at the vocational school in that city. That first conference included mostly instructors from Minnesota who were teaching management and management techniques to farm folks. The conference was held in Faribault the next year too but people from other states were invited.

I wasn't at the first conference but I know that the air was filled with excitement as management teachers from all those states got together and talked about their ideas and common problems at the second Faribault meeting. It was the beginning of the age-old idea that in unity there is strength.

After the success of the first two summer conferences, there was no doubt that they would continue. Since that time these affairs have been held in the month of June in six different states: North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Nebraska, and Colorado, and, of course, Minnesota.

The 1993 conference will be held in Alexandria, MN at the Arrowhead Radisson hotel. The 1994 affair will be held in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. We've found that our friends from that country have the same goals and problems that we face here on the south side of the border. So, although our name says "National," we really should change it to "International."

I stated that we didn't "formalize" our organization until 1985. At our 1984 conference in St. Cloud, MN, we decided to look into setting up a constitution, choose a name and begin collecting dues. Each year the state doing the inviting was putting their financial neck on the chopping block since there was no organization sponsoring the event. Luckily, nothing happened but fears were expressed. The committee, appointed to get the job done came back to the Pierre, SD conference armed with facts and the people present paid their first dues, signed the charter and gave themselves a name.

It wasn't until the conference at Worthington, MN in 1987 that the organization decided to publish a newsletter. The first issue was published in August of 1987 with John Hest, retired farm business management teacher, Hawley, MN as its first (and only) editor. This newsletter is published four times per year.

We'd like to have you join our organization. The dues, if you're an active educator are \$10.00, or if you can classify yourself as an associate, \$5.00. I'm also the membership secretary so you can mail your dues to me.

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SIGN ME UP! Date \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_

To: John Hest \* Here's my check for ACTIVE \_\_\_\_ \$10.00  
Editor, Nuts & Bolts ASSOCIATE \_\_\_\_ 5.00  
Box 250 Membership in National Farm & Ranch Business  
Hawley, MN 56549 Management Education Association for 1992-93  
\* Make check out to: NFRBMEA

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number (\_\_\_\_)-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_