



# NUTS & BOLTS

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

Volume 8 No. 2

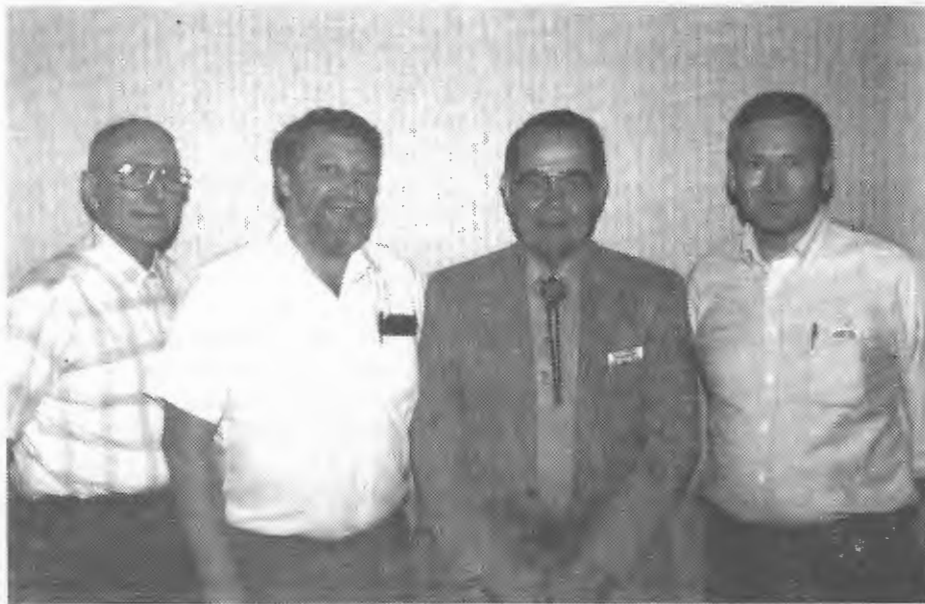
Winter 1994-95

## FBMInet UPDATE

In the last issue of *NUTS & BOLTS* we told you about Canada's electronic bulletin board system (BBS) for farm management education. That system is still up and running.

Through our local BBS here in LeRoy (named the Middle Of Nowhere by its operator, who has since realized the full truth of that moniker, and has shut it down) your editor made contact with Ted Sutton. Ted teaches farm management at Lakeland College in Northeastern Alberta, and was sub-contracted by the FBMInet to teach a cow-calf course using the electronic classroom.

To make a long story short, after signing up for the class via fax, and making the first of several dozen calls to Canada, we learned lots about distance education via modem, but not too much about cows and calves. The problems were mainly in the communications software and the communication between the BBS operators and the students. Try as we might, sometimes it seemed there were just too many pieces to the puzzle-- and pieces that some of us are just too new at this to identify. Ted and his colleagues never gave up and were always the first to come back asking if there were problems and often seeking solutions before being asked. 1,200



### 1994 NFRBMEA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

Left to right: Harold Swanson, Iowa; Dennis Jackson, Minnesota; Oliver Kienholz, Washington; John Whitehead, Lethbridge, Alberta

miles is a lot of telephone wire to push a lot of information through in a short time. It was fun. I'll try again in the future and I won't give up trying to share with other instructors via modem.

Are you doing farm management instruction via modem? If so, let us know.



EDITOR'S NOTE: In the Fall issue of *NUTS & BOLTS* I gave our Internet address, which had an error in it.

[pikex003@gold.tc.umn.edu](mailto:pikex003@gold.tc.umn.edu) is the correct address.)

## BURN UP OR BACK UP?

Rick Morgan and Greg Tullis, instructors at Northwest Technical College in Moorhead, MN, came up with yet another good idea for serving their farm business management students.

They point out that computer disk backups aren't much good if they are damaged or destroyed in a house fire. The data is irreplaceable. But there is a simple solution.

As a service to students they will keep a backup copy in the farm business management office. A nice thought, easy and costs almost nothing for student and instructor.



## WHO WILL SURVIVE 1995?

In the local paper the article said, "In 1983 there were 102,000 farms in Minnesota. In 1993, there were 87,000 farms in Minnesota." In my newsletter of October, 1986, I reported there were 96,000 farms in Minnesota. It's a new year. What does the successful farm manager do to be successful?

Well, we know that a successful person is one who pursues and achieves a worthy ideal or goal. But what makes a successful person or a successful life? First, we need a checklist, like a list for when we're getting ready for a trip... a trip down the road to success.

**1) A GOAL-** Everyone must have a goal, a direction, a plan for the day, month or year. Your goals establish the end result of your lifetime. It is not that people do not reach goals, they do that! It is in establishing goals of quality, not quantity... being choosy, emulating someone great, not the slothful, complaining, cafe patron, for example.

**2) ATTITUDE-** My attitude is a merciless mirror. My attitude is

reflected back from the world around me. If I think it will be a rotten day as I get up, it will probably turn out a rotten day. If I continually complain how bad it is, it will be bad. If I get up and state, "Here I am in the present, let's make something great out of it", greatness happens and the present becomes just that: a present, a gift.

**3) THINK-** To stand back and try a new perspective at the new year's challenges. To ask if what I am doing is mindless or has purpose. To think deliberately, with a purpose. For example, "Why do I grow wheat?"

**4) LAW OF CAUSE & EFFECT-** The world will reward me in life in direct proportion to my contribution, to my service.

**5) TRUTH-** If we live lies, do not seek solutions to our challenges, we stand on sand and it will quickly crumble.

**6) RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT-** Agronomists keep improving crops. We expect that roads and cars keep improving. We

also must improve ourselves or the world will roll on by. Learn to love a little more and hate a little less.

**7) THE FINAL PACKAGE-** We become what we think about most of the time. If we think everyone is a jerk, who becomes the jerk? If we believe everyone has great abilities, tremendous ideas, terrific energy... brother, do we shine! We become what we think about.

Farming is a lifestyle, a business and an art. Management and your creativity pull it all together. Labor, big equipment and large numbers are components to building a business. Working incessantly is not a goal or dream. As Whiting Williams, in the Harvard Business Review, April 1923 stated, "*To each of us today, the most important thing in all the living of our lives is the message of the meter which registers the distance we have achieved away from the hateful zero of insignificance among our fellows.*" (Mark Berg, Northwest TC, Detroit Lakes, MN)



## YET ANOTHER WINNER!

We are pleased to announce that Ron VanNurden, MN Riverland Technical College, Owatonna, MN is the latest winner of a *NUTS & BOLTS* T-shirt. Ron, your shirt is in the mail!

Why not join the pool by sending your articles, newsletters or ideas to *NUTS & BOLTS*?

A special thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue or sent in articles. Please keep them coming in, especially outside Minnesota. We want to hear from you, too. They may also be sent via Internet E-mail to [pikex003@gold.tc.umn.edu](mailto:pikex003@gold.tc.umn.edu) -- **WP**

# Farm and Ranch Review

A Quick Look at a Potential Resource

by Wayne Pike



## ag/INNOVATOR.

A long-time friend and colleague gave me sound advice early in my career. One time, as I struggled to find ideas for my monthly newsletter, he told me to "go back to the past." That, he explained, is a good source for ideas. Everything old is new again, and vice versa. A brief study of most farm magazines proved he was correct. Same stories, different authors, different years.

There is one publication which breaks the mold. *ag/INNOVATOR* is a monthly which contains the latest articles on the newest technology coming onto the agricultural scene. *ag/INNOVATOR* is too new to be recycling articles and the technology is moving too fast to allow repeats.

A glimpse at a recent issue revealed articles on evaluating automated data collection tools, a national ag technology calendar of events, How-To articles on logging on to a bulletin board and installing a fax modem. There was also a beef management software review, a short treatise on the economics of precision farming, and a *very* technical article on how site-specific management works.

Notice I said how site-specific management *works*, not *what it is*, or *why it is important*. This may be one challenge for readers of *ag/INNOVATOR*. As I am not part of the loop already, I had some trouble grasping the twine string of the technical hay bale on several articles. I am not used to being behind in ag vocabulary. Words like "kriging" are not yet part of what I need to know every day (I think).

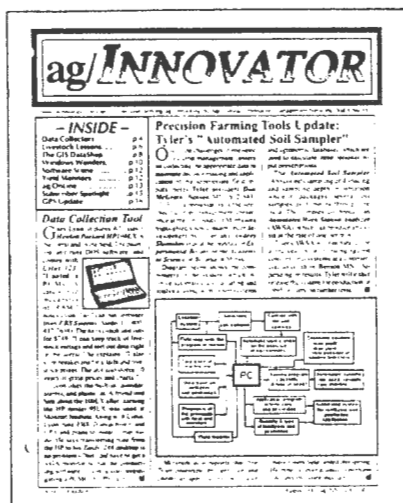
But, if I want to catch up, *ag/INNOVATOR's* editors ensure that I have the chance by listing names, addresses and phone numbers next to any equipment or person mentioned in the magazine. If I want more information, it is at my fingertips. The primary strength and interest of *ag/INNOVATOR* is the innovation. If you want new, new is here and in a fairly readable form.

Perhaps *ag/INNOVATOR* would be faulted for trying to make articles too readable by making them too short. One article on financial ratios started and ended within nine short paragraphs. It was written by a feed company rep who may have had great insight if given the space to expound. As it was, the article was almost meaningless.

Each month's magazine runs 16 pages in length, and about eight of these are advertisements for software and high-tech equipment. The cost of 12 issues per year is a bit steep at \$96, but *ag/INNOVATOR* still offers a \$48 charter subscription rate, with a guaranteed \$48 renewal the next year.

*ag/INNOVATOR* is published by Ag Information Mgmt. Network/AIMnet. Subscription requests can be sent to:

**ag/INNOVATOR**  
P.O. Box 1  
Linn Grove, IA 51033  
712/296-3615



## A MESSAGE FROM OLIVER KIENHOLZ, NFRBMEA PRESIDENT

Greetings as we once again enter into a new calendar year. As many years have passed, I recognize the opportunities for new starts on a daily basis, not needing to wait for a new year.

I would like to share a real life situation of a couple weeks ago. The phone message I was hearing was more than, "Will you come and meet with us after chores Friday evening?"

Stress was the issue of the hour. This family started dairying three years ago, shortly out of college. Kevin had started his goal to be "successful". However, he was not listening to Heidi, who also was working as hard as she knew how to help him be successful. Something was missing!

I had been listening for some months and had asked the questions, but they knew Kevin had to be fully employed and Kevin knew no one could do the job as well as he wanted it done. As a result, he had been working 16 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year for almost two years.

At a *Managing For Profit* workshop presented to our community by Dr. David Kohl, he stated that 3,500 hours is the maximum that a person can work per year without 1) losing one's health; 2) hurting the health of the business; 3) destroying the family.

A computer template indicated that Kevin was working at his dairy business 5,840 hours a year. The results of surveys were left on the table in written form. The question was asked once more: *What is success?* An answer to the question was not what I wanted to hear at that time so I excused myself to go home. The phone rang at 6:00 on Monday morning with the request to meet again at 8:30 that evening.

At 8:15 that evening I discovered that Kevin had found a way to complete his work 40 minutes earlier and was ready and willing to use the information gathered through the first year in the Farm Business Management program to evaluate their destination as a family and a business.

Listening is a skill I think we could all improve. In this case I believe education took place, as the results are showing Kevin is listening to Heidi and her needs also. As your president, I want to be listening as to how our organization can most effectively serve our membership. It is not too early to plan to attend our annual conference to be held in Bismarck June 11-15, 1995.

*A rope is no stronger than the weakest strand.* We are here to learn together to serve agriculture.

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## TOOLS OF SURVIVAL

(Jan Dubbert, Alexandria, MN TC, has written a series of articles in their newsletter about the survival of average and small farms. This is an excerpt from the first of those articles>)

Major increases in productivity on American farms are no other result of better farm management. The majority of farmers still operate with management skills at the level of thirty years ago.

Productivity increases in farm production have been driven by corporate research and development. To support that claim, consider how little 150 bushel per acre corn would have been harvested last year using the corn genetics available thirty years ago.

We often confuse the hours of labor contributed with

the level of management, but hard physical labor only generates profit at a \$5-\$10 per hour rate. Most farm businesses need fundamental changes in how they function if they are to become profitable and competitive. These changes that will impact profit on the farm can often be made without major economic investment. Improvements are possible on small and average farms if management processes are improved.



*"There is a certain relief in change, even though it be from bad to worse; as I have found in traveling in a stagecoach, that it is often a comfort to shift one's position and be bruised in a new place." --Irving "Tales of a Traveler"*



## RESTRICTED - USE NOTE

Brian Thompson, farm business management instructor at Chillicothe, Missouri AVIS, sends out an extensive newsletter to keep his students on top of things.

He reminded everyone in his March newsletter of the USDA restricted-use pesticide recordkeeping requirements. He also listed a source of Chemical Usage Record forms, which can be obtained in 3-hole punched pads of 50, or 25 with carbonless duplicates for \$4.98 per pad. For more information, contact:

FarmHome Offices  
P.O. Box 840  
Vinton, IA 52349

Or, call 1-800-788-7218. Ask for Product #10271

## PLANNING FOR BISMARCK

Have you sent in your registration for the NFRBMEA Conference yet? Leonard Larshus, Allen Graner and Keith Torgerson are hard at work on putting together another great conference. "Looking To The Future: Where Are We Going?" is this year's theme.

It looks like a full program of educational sessions, eye-opening tours and stimulating entertainment.

If you haven't received your informational packet and registration form, contact Leonard Larshus, P.O. Box 6022, Bismarck, ND 58501

## SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

Be thankful for the troubles of your job. They provide about half of your income. If it were not for the things that go wrong, the difficult people you have to deal with, and the problems and unpleasantness of your working day, someone could handle your job for half of what you are being paid.

It takes intelligence, resourcefulness, patience, tact and courage to meet the problems of any job and it may be the reason you aren't holding down an even bigger one.

If all of us would start to look for more troubles, and learn to handle them cheerfully and with good judgment...as opportunities rather than irritations...we would find ourselves getting ahead at a surprising rate.

For it's a fact that there are plenty of big jobs waiting for men and women who aren't afraid of the troubles connected with them.

**--ROBERT T. UPDEGRAFF**

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Sorry, I don't know where this came from, but I think it's a good reminder.)

**TO: Wayne Pike  
Editor, NUTS & BOLTS  
P.O. Box 537  
LeRoy, MN 55951-0537**

**Here's my check to NFRBMEA for:  
\$10.00- ACTIVE      \$5.00- ASSOCIATE  
Membership in National Farm and Ranch Business  
Management Education Association for 1994- 95**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

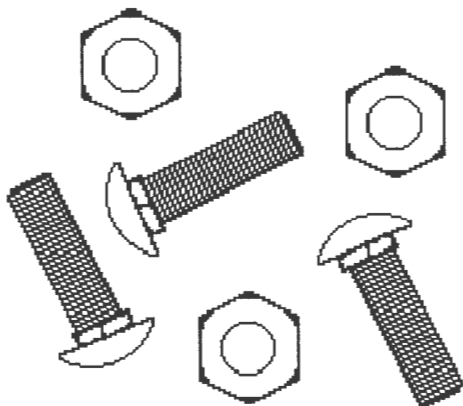
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