



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

Greetings NFRBMEA members! As I write this, it is a lovely summer day in Minnesota. I hope you all are taking the opportunity to recharge and enjoy summer activities. Many of us filled our networking and education buckets earlier this summer by attending the [2019 National Farm Management Conference](#) in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. See more regarding the conference throughout this newsletter.

The annual NFRBMEA Business Meeting and Executive Board meetings were held at this conference as well. A quick update on organizational happenings follows.

Our elected 2019–20 [Board of Directors](#):

- * President: Pauline Van Nurden
- * Past President: Brad Sirianni
- * President-Elect: *Open – recommendations welcome!*
- * Treasurer: Myron Oftedahl
- * Secretary: Jennifer Smith
- * Communications Director: Deb Pike
- * National Council Representative: Lori Tonak
- * Conference Sponsorship Contact: Tina LeBrun

Our organization's strategic goals remain the same and are simply education, communication, and cooperation. In my mind, this is what we all do every day. The Resource Library is a resource provided by NFRBMEA to meet these goals. The [Resource Library](#) is found on our website and is readily accessible. Take a look and feel free to submit additional useful resources others may benefit from.

Lastly, each year the board puts forth a list of priorities for the year. NFRBMEA priorities for the next year include:

- * Conference Sponsorship – maintain sponsorship levels of \$5,000 locally and \$10,000 nationally.
- * Membership Increase – gain members from 2 more states engaged in farm financial benchmarking.
- * Membership Education – provide Nuts & Bolts updates four times per year, with four additional Real Time Updates (RTU's) provided as needed. *Any member is welcome to submit a newsletter article or RTU.*

August 10, 2019

Membership Update

By Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Comm. Dir.

The first batch of Membership Cards were emailed on July 30. The recipients were primarily 2019 NFBM Conference attendees, but there were also several who were not at the Conference that have paid their membership dues for 2019-20. The next batch will be coming out soon! Thank you for your membership and support of NFRBMEA!

We are off to a great start this year— a little bit ahead of this time last year. Unfortunately we lost our Honorary Member, Dr. Ed Persons, earlier this summer.

Member	2017-18	2019-20
Regular	31	36
Affiliate	1	2
Honorary	1	†
Total	33	38

If you have a colleague that has not renewed their membership, or has never been a member of our organization, please share this newsletter with them and encourage them to go to www.nfrbmea.org/application.htm to renew or join today!



Colorado in 2020!

By Myron Oftedahl, FBM instructor, SouthCentral College

I have been trying to devote enough time to do some planning so that all of us can have an enjoyable National Farm Management Conference in Colorado, and the planning committee is working on bringing you a fantastic line-up of speakers and other activities for you.



Photo: "Downtown Fort Collins Colorado" by [Citycommunications](#) at [English](#)

We will introduce a shorter Conference in 2020. The speakers and business sessions begin on Tuesday and finish on Thursday. I will let you know as we finalize the program, so watch the Conference website for updates and information. Because of the shorter Conference and in the interest of cost control, we will likely be combining the usual Sunday night welcome with the family event into a Tuesday evening Family event. The pre-conference board meetings will be on Monday afternoon with the Conference kicking off Tuesday morning. My goal is to have a registration cost under \$400, and that depends on food costs, tours, and speaker costs. The difficult part of that equation is the number of conference registrants.

We have a lot of details to work out getting this ready and I hope that you will pitch in if you are asked to help with something. If you have contacts in the Fort Collins area, let me know, this can really help us as

we arrange activities for the group. Yes, this is a switch from what I told you in Sheboygan. We have a contract signed with the Hilton in Fort Collins with a room fee of \$139 plus tax, and \$5/night fee for the secured parking.

Bring your families! There will be plenty of opportunities for family activities and there are

lots of things to see and visit in Colorado. We'll be close to Rocky Mountain National Park, located near Estes Park, so if you need a reminder of what snow is or want an introduction to snow, you would have a good chance at doing so in Rocky Mountain National Park. You may even see some elk!

Be sure to reach out to other instructors or professionals who have not been to a National Farm Management Conference in the past and encourage them to attend. One of the missions of NFRBMEA is to provide professional development experiences, and the Conference is a great example of this as you attend the sessions and participate in the networking during the Conference.

Get your Professional Improvement request ready, pack your bags and we will see you in Colorado!

Observations

By Lynn Hoffmann, FBM instructor, Riverland Community College

In June I had the privilege of listening to Gary Sipiorski and John Kappelman at the National Farm Business Conference. During their presentation they showed how the value of the Brazilian Real exerts a strong influence on the value of soybeans and corn. Today the value of the Brazilian Real is equal to



Gary Sipiorski

\$.26 US Dollars. In recent years, soybeans and corn follow in close relationship with the Brazilian Real. Soybean exports from South America are increasing and the United States is staying stagnant. Corn exports from South America will outpace United States exports in the nearby future. Corn exports from the Black Sea region is growing. The United States is no longer the primary supplier of

choice in the world market. Mr. Sipiorski mentioned that China is leasing a substantial amount of acreage in the Ukraine to supply China's needs.

The African Swine Fever is a worldwide pandemic. It is projected that China will lose 100 - 200 million pigs in 2019. In comparison, the United States produces 110 million pigs per year. On March 15, 2019 U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized 1 million pounds of pork products at a New Jersey port before they could enter the United States. African Swine Fever can live in frozen meat. The amino acids and vitamins that are used in American pork feed come from China. Iowa State



John Kappelman

("OBSERVATIONS", continued on page 4)

2019 National Farm Business Management Conference - What you missed!

By Pauline Van Nurden, NFRBMEA President

["Advocating for Prosperous Agriculture"](#) was the theme of the 2019 National Farm Business Management Conference held June 9 – 13 in Sheboygan, WI. The Blue Harbor Resort was lovely, with beautiful view of Lake Michigan. This set the stage for a great conference.

This year's conference was a tri-annual conference, meaning NFRBMEA, the National Association of Farm Business Analysis Specialists ([NAFBAS](#)), and the North Central Farm Management Extension Committee ([NCFMC](#)) held a joint conference. There were several concurrent sessions happening during the conference for attendees. These relatively short break-out sessions were on a variety of timely topics. Go [here](#) to learn more about the topics and information presented.

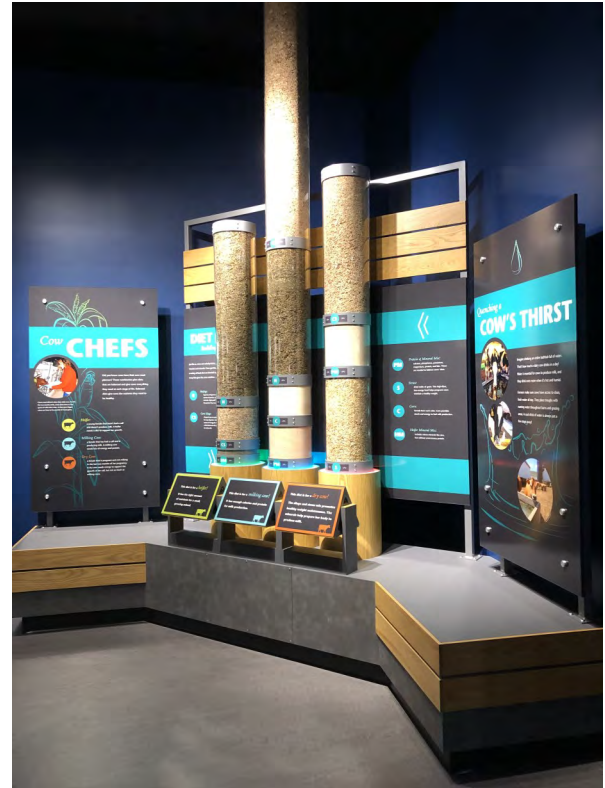
Many attendees were first time conference goers and they shared a lot of positive feedback. If you weren't able to attend this year's conference, here's what you missed from their viewpoint:

"I found Tuesday's sessions quite beneficial, which I shared with my FBM students and Ag loan officers. I am planning on attending next year's conference."

—**Lynn Hoffmann, MN.** See Lynn's newsletter article about the conference in this issue as well.



Mr. Craig Culver, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Board, Culver's Restaurants



An exhibit illustrating different diets for heifers, milking cows and dry cows at Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center.

"I attended the conference to become a better, more resourceful instructor! I especially enjoy the tours and seeing the "boots on ground" perspective of agriculture as well as hearing it from our presenters. It's inspiring to see and hear the entrepreneurship in those operations and fun to share their story with my producers and encourage them to think outside the box for the success of their operation. I think this national conference is a good opportunity to gain perspective of our work on a larger scale and I plan to attend future national conferences." —**Kelly Klinkhammer, MN.**

"I love to see the similarities and differences in ag just a few states away. As a new instructor, it's fun to meet and network with other people in the same profession. The national conference is a great opportunity to learn new information and bring it home to implement in your own program." —**Kara Wulfekuhle, ND.**

If you weren't able to attend this year's conference, make it a priority to attend the Colorado conference next year. There's a great team planning the event, which will include many great speakers and learning opportunities. Watch for more information to come, but save June 15 – 18, 2020 on your calendar.

I Believe...

By Lori Tonak, SDCFRM Instructor

I have struggled writing an article in these trying times of agriculture. Stress has been high this past year with depressed prices, too much moisture, and all-around hard times for agriculture. What could I say that would help with anything farmers/ranchers are dealing with. All I could do is fall back to the creed that I learned in high school and taught for twenty years to secondary students- "The FFA Creed" by E.M. Tiffany.

Tiffany stated in the first paragraph, "I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words, but of deeds." In these changing times, everyone who lives on the land, I think, still lives by this mantra. Whether you know this phrase from sitting in a high school agriculture class or are just reading it for the first time, this is who we are as farmers and ranchers. It takes faith to pray for rain, knowing that it could come in the form of hail. It takes faith to plant seeds in the ground every spring, nurture those seeds, and hope to get a harvest in the fall. It takes faith when the markets are on a downward trend and you have the best crop you have ever raised. It has taken a lot of faith this year just to keep going. In the second paragraph of "The FFA Creed", there is a line that says "...for I know the joys and discomforts of agricultural life and hold an inborn fondness for those associations which, even in hours of discouragement, I cannot deny." As I have worked with producers this past year, I have witnessed this phrase time and time again. When flooding hit Nebraska, people did not throw in the towel; instead, those ranchers made plans on how they could get through the year and, hopefully, come out in good shape on the other side. When unprecedented moisture has created issues across the state, producers changed their plans of how they could utilize what acres were available. Agriculture producers also know the joys of agricultural life, such as, the calf standing to nurse shortly after being born, the smell of new mown hay, the green growth of plants in the spring, and seeing sons and daughters working along with parents and grandparents. These are just a few of the joys.

The fourth paragraph of the creed tells us things like "...in less need for charity and more of it when needed..." I think of the disasters that have hit our area over the past few years, this is a mantra many of the South Dakota residents, and farmers across the nation, live by, and I think it is because of our agricultural roots. When disaster hit Nebraska, farmers and ranchers in South Dakota, that were also struggling, donated feed, supplies, personal care items and money to assist neighbors to the

("BELIEVE", continued on page 5)



("OBSERVATIONS", continued from page 2)

University calculates that the first year of the outbreak in the United States would result in a loss of \$8 billion for pork, \$3 billion for beef, \$4 billion for corn, and \$1.5 billion for soybeans. Mr. Sipiorski mentioned that visitors from China could serve as vectors of the virus. Utilizing comprehensive biosecurity practices are essential in combating potential risks.

Mr. Sipiorski mentioned that one dairy in Minnesota owns 22 percent of all the dairy cows in Minnesota. When he visited that dairy last week he saw a dairy that was efficient with a staff that was competent at all levels within the organization. Farm businesses need to strive to be in the top third in profitability to remain competitive for the long term. Benchmarking is important in comparing the success of the farm.

Tom Wall, The Dairy Coach, spoke on what it takes to make a dairy farm more consistent and easier to operate by adapting the McDonalds approach to business operations. McDonalds utilizes a business model that is clean, efficient, predictable, frugal, and simple. Most of the operational work is done with a labor force with low entry skills along with a management that spends its time thinking, leading, and managing.

The base of employee guidance needs to have clarity, discipline, and accountability. Clarity is defining how and what needs to be done. Discipline is correctly performing what needs to be done every day. Accountability is taking ownership of one's assigned responsibilities. After the base is established, need to plan the habits of consistency that create predictability. Better habits equal better results. This is achieved through solid systems and smart designs.

An example given was a white board with permanent questions that need information changed periodically will result in better communication than a blank white board expecting team members to figure out what is important to communicate. At the top of employee guidance is results which is the outcome of having clarity, discipline, and accountability at the base along with planned habits in the middle.

Thirst for Knowledge

By Tina LeBrun, FBM instructor, South Central College

Summertime tends to be the season for fueling my knowledge bucket. It's not like I don't learn in other seasons, there just seems to be more time to read, take in meetings or ag events, and of course catch up with farmers. Recently, I was sitting at the kitchen table of a new farm I have been working with for only a few weeks. This was the first time I was meeting with the husband and son of said farm and we all know the power of a first impression. Our meeting went far better than initially expected, and I walked away with a new sense of perspective. That's probably my favorite part of this career— how much I get to learn from my students along the way.

However, one of the first questions I was asked by this farmer was how much training/education I had in mental health. Initially I thought he was just giving me a hard time but, he was stone cold serious. It quickly became increasingly obvious I was at the table for much more than building financials.

We all know that this situation occurs more often than we care to admit, however this time I was more taken aback than other times. To start with, nobody ever asked me about my knowledge in mental health right out of the gate before. Secondly, the size and magnitude of this farm, along with the outside appearance, never gave away the demeanor of the haphazard farm management they had in place. I'm not sure how this farm expanded to the level they are currently operating at without a better handle on family dynamics and communication. Yet here we were, sitting at the table thirsting for knowledge.



Most days I am fueled by this cup, but even the strongest coffee doesn't compare to the fuel of knowledge. Photo: Tina LeBrun

As I spoke on the goals of our working together, I began to feel just how deeply overwhelmed these farmers were. So, I took a few steps back and broke it down into manageable action steps. By the end of our meeting it was obvious to me. The members of this farm all had one common goal to start with, they needed time away from the daily grind of farm operations to fuel their own knowledge bucket.

Whether it was recordkeeping programs, transition planning steps, or labor management, they all desired a place they could go to get more information on their own focus of concern. My favorite moment came at the conclusion of our meeting. After listening to them for a few hours, it was clear what the first steps of our educational delivery needed to be here. I had a hard copy document with me that focused on the beginnings of farm transition planning, I had several websites to share for recordkeeping options and trials, and I had a podcast that I value which centers on general business management practices. All tools that I keep in my farm management toolbox today and all tools I used to fill my own knowledge bucket over time.

As a farm management educator, it's not only essential that we listen, share, and educate the best that we can, but also take time to appreciate what you can learn about your farmers along the way. Be the filter they need in a world of historically terrible weather, prolonged market weakness, and global trade wars. Help them to manage the perfect storm we are experiencing in agriculture today, which can often begin by taking time to fuel that thirst for knowledge.



("BELIEVE", continued from page 4)

south. This is a testament to the people that live on the land and their willingness to help when someone else falls on hard times.

I believe farmers and ranchers were the first group to "pay-it-forward" long before it was talked about in a movie.

I will close with the fifth paragraph E.M. Tiffany wrote: "I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task."



National Council of Agriculture Education has been working on a reboot for the two years I have been your NFRBMEA representative. The Council designed a plan that was shot down at the Ag Ed Summit in San Antonio last fall. See my article in the last issue of **NUTS & BOLTS**.

The second design left post-secondary and adult agriculture education out of the Council. This was not well received by me or the members at our annual meeting in Sheboygan. Our voices were heard by the time of the NCAE conference call at the end of June. The second plan has been scrapped and plan number three will be put together in North Carolina in September.

A rough overview of what is being considered for the next plan is the Council will no longer have “member” fees. There would be no treasury for the Council and any money expended from the respective member organizations would be for travel expenses for their member representatives.

So, what will be the Council’s purpose? At this point, it is being discussed that our purpose is a “think” tank for agriculture education. Project ideas would be presented to the Council, funding options would be discussed, and the organization(s) that can best handle the project would take it on with assistance from the member organizations.

Remember, this is a vague plan of what the Council sees for the future and I will know more after the September face-to-face meeting. When I got off the conference call in June, I have a good feeling about what was discussed and feel this plan would be closer to the true benefit of what the Council can do for agriculture education. If you have any comments or questions, email me at lori.tonak@mitchelltech.edu. Thank you to the members for letting me part of this journey in agriculture education.

Dr. Edgar Persons - NFRBMEA Founding Father

By Wayne Pike, NFRBMEA Past President



Dr. Persons

Many of us knew Dr. Edgar Persons through his teaching at the University of Minnesota and his dedication to the NFRBMEA. He passed away recently and there are probably a thousand stories about his career, life and contributions to farm business management education.

Dr. Ed was one of my professors at the U of M when I attended during the years 1971

through 1975. He was generally considered a no-nonsense kind of guy when it came to us students, but he did not always fit the mold either. Back then, professors always showed up in suit and tie until Dr. Ed presented himself in a jump suit and ascot. That was startling.

Dr. Ed gave us homework and lots of it. I took summer classes from him that were quite intense. After six hours in class we often worked long past ten at night in our dorm rooms to complete the tasks he assigned that were due the next morning. Needless to say that we did not wish to disappoint him.

He was a firm taskmaster. We did not doze or whisper during his classroom presentations. However, during one of his lectures, my mind wandered a bit as I was playing with a large rubber band. As Dr. Ed turned away from the class to point at the screen, the rubber band sprang from my fingers and landed right in the middle of the overhead projector. This happened as Dr. Ed was turning back. Everyone in the class saw the flight of the rubber band and saw it projected on the screen, but Dr. Ed was concentrating so hard that he just took the rubber band from the projector and played with it during the rest of the lecture. It is only a slight overstatement that in those few moments I saw my entire college sophomore life flash before my eyes.

Dr. Ed was my advisor for my Master of Arts program. After I had written my paper and we had accomplished the oral exam, he explained that he would mark up my paper with his comments and suggestions and return it to me for final revision before it was published and bound. I passed the course, got my degree, but never saw my paper again. If he was doing me a favor, he was very discrete about it. But, that’s the way he was. He could be discrete or he could be very, very blunt.

He wrote the book, literally and figuratively. We will not see another like him.

So God Created a Farm Management Instructor

By Myron Oftedahl, NFRBMEA FBM Instructor, South Central College

This is my sequel to Paul Harvey's "...and God Made a Farmer":

God looked down and saw that the farmer that he had created needed some help.

...he needed someone to help organize the checkbook and the accounting records;
...he needed to use something other than the shoebox or desk drawer;
...he needed someone to teach him/her to run the business;
So God created a Farm Management Instructor.

...he needed guidance for income tax decisions, marketing, government programs, Crop insurance, and more;
So God created a Farm Management Instructor.

...he needed to set goals for the business and family;
...he needed support to develop and implement a transition plan and an estate plan;
So God created a Farm Management Instructor.

...he needed someone to offer advice, moral support, and mental health support;
...he needed a coach and a cheerleader;
...he needed someone who would spend the hours necessary to prepare the financial documents for the business and for the lender;
So God created a Farm Management Instructor.

...he needed someone who cared for the farm business, just as much as the farmer;
...he needed someone to encourage new ideas, practices, and changes to be made;
So God created a Farm Management Instructor.

Making Yourself Indispensable!

By Gary Goodwin, NAFBAS Member

I have been asked to periodically share, especially with new staff, some ideas, inspiration, information, or just touch base to pass on some learned things from 40+ years of FBFM Service to members. So here is the first one:

Make yourself indispensable to your clients / cooperators!

- 1) Do no criticisms, no complaints.
- 2) Give without expectations.
- 3) Take no thought of self.
- 4) Tell benefits, then ask the question.
- 5) Smile and laugh.
- 6) Use their correct name often.
- 7) Listen, listen, listen before talking.
- 8) Talk, look, act enthusiastic.
- 9) No gossip.
- 10) Use positive greetings, do not use questions.
- 11) Give unexpected answers to their questions.
- 12) Look for the best in people, ask for good news.

Although this is not my list, I have lived by them. I give credit to Doc Blakely of Wharton, TX, a speaker at one of my first National Conferences. If you have not been to a National Conference, reconsider! I heard him early in my career— I think it was in

Kansas. Through the years, I have picked up so many ideas from these conferences that I have brought back to my cooperators. Sometimes they may not be directly related to the Illinois farm, but they are relevant to where we are headed. I remember in Fresno, CA we learned that everything in California eventually comes across the country to Illinois.

The second event in my life was spending a few days when I started to be a fieldman with Tom Jennings, Fieldman in Camp Point. To this day I remember his advice to me: "When you go to farm visit, prepare yourself with a few minutes (10+) to think about the family you are going to see. Be prepared to give them at least one idea that will make their life, their family, their business better in the long run."

Taking all the above as advice, I mostly tried to take a handout (or something on paper) to leave with the cooperator on summer visits. SOMETHING THAT WOULD REMIND THEM OF ME! In many of those years it was something from the National Conference. One year, I took examples of a Business Plan for the cooperator to help develop their own Business Plan.

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AmericanRhetoric.com

Paul Harvey

'God Made a Farmer Speech' to the FFA

delivered November 1978, Kansas City, MO



AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild; somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait lunch until his wife's done feeding visiting ladies, then tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon -- and mean it"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.



AmericanRhetoric.com

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt, and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say, 'Maybe next year.' I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make harness out of haywire, feed sacks and shoe scraps; who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, and then pain'n from tractor back,' put in another seventy-two hours"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds, and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark."

It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners; somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church; somebody who would bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh, and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says that he wants to spend his life "doing what dad does"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

2019-20 Board of Directors

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