



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 Nurdén, 2019-20 NFRBMEA President

February 5, 2020



Hello All!

Thanks for taking a break from your hectic schedule to check out this edition of the *NUTS & BOLTS*. I am well aware this is crunch time for everyone. Remember to take some time for yourself and relax. I realize that's easier said than done and don't do a very good job of modeling this personally. But, take a break - attend a sporting event, go see a movie, enjoy a meal out with family and friends. You'll feel better for it.

In this issue you will find details about the 2020 National Farm Management Conference. Myron Oftedahl has been working hard and has planned a great conference. Thanks, Myron, for leading these efforts! This is a go-to annual professional development event for me. I hope when you take a look at the agenda you'll agree and make plans to attend this year's conference in Fort Collins, CO.

I am especially excited to have [Dr. Temple Grandin](#) join us as a keynote speaker to open our conference on Tuesday. She is world famous expert on animal welfare and autism. She has many accomplishments, too numerous to name them all here. Take a look at her website www.templegrandin.com/ and take note of the fact she's made the [Time 100](#)

list of people most affecting our world. Wow! Special thanks to the [Colorado State University Animal Science Department](#) for sponsoring Temple's time with us. Also, we are lucky to have [Dr. David Kohl](#) joining us on Thursday. Dr. Kohl always has practical, down to earth advice for working with farmers and their farm financial management.

If there are additional training or speaker ideas you would like to see incorporated into this year's conference please contact Myron or me. We are happy to do our best to accommodate the needs and desires of our membership.

Our annual joint conference with National Association of Farm Business Analysis Specialists (NAFBAS) provides additional opportunities well. Where else can you network and learn from like-minded individuals in your profession from around the country? And, where else can you learn about agricultural production and farm management topics specific to a region of the country?

See you in Colorado!

Cyber Security Tips

Contributed by Deb Pike, NFRBMEA Communications Director

Many of us use our computers, tablets and phones every day to Google trivial facts, check email and social media, read the news, do banking, pay bills, and shop. You may have spam filters and anti-virus software in place, but bad guys are always trying to find ways to get at sensitive information. They can be very inventive. I read an article on improving Cyber Security in the Fall 2019 issue of the MSRS (Minnesota State Retirement System) *Messenger* newsletter, and would like to share their tips with you:

Beware of Suspicious Emails and Phone Calls

Phishing scams are a constant threat. Fraudsters attempt to trick you to disclose personal information such as your login ID, password, banking or credit card information.

- ◆ Phishing scams can be carried out by phone, text or through social networking sites.
- ◆ Be suspicious of any official-looking email message or phone call that asks for personal or financial information.

(See "CYBER SECURITY", continued on page 5)

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2020 NFBM Conference

By Myron Oftedahl, 2020 Conference Planner

Welcome to Fort Collins, Colorado in June! I am excited and anticipating a great conference this summer in Colorado. I must admit that last week I was a bit of a nervous wreck as I was trying to verify a couple of the keynote speakers and wasn't getting any response. This week I have received positive responses for everyone, and I am pumped up!



Photo: "Bear Lake, Rocky Mountain National Park" © by Brian W. Schaller / License: [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) on Wikimedia Commons

season for his dairy and he does not travel in June, so this will be a first for us.

The theme of the 2020 Conference will be Past, Present and Future. Be prepared to look back at the past, at the present and peak into the future. It is also rather fitting for Colorado as you look at the past, present and future there.

We will have a different format for the Conference also as the joint boards have made the decision to shorten the Conference by one day. Monday will be for travel and the early board meetings. Tuesday we will have a full Conference session with the business meetings at the

I think that we have put together an interesting set of speakers and topics for you. Temple Grandin will start us off on Tuesday morning and we have Dr. David Kohl scheduled for Thursday morning. Dr. Kohl's presentation will be electronic as he will be in the middle of hay

end of the day. Wednesday morning will be devoted to breakout sessions, with the tours in the afternoon. Wednesday evening is when we are planning to have the family event. Thursday morning will start with Dr. Kohl and we will finish at noon on Thursday.

The hotel has extended the same room rates to you if you wish to come early or extend your stay for a couple of days. You will have some great views of the mountains and Estes Park is only about an hour away, so if you need to learn what snow is or if you miss the snow, you will have the chance. There is also a good chance of spotting some elk.

Fort Collins has a lot of activities to offer and I will share those as we get closer to June, have to keep your interest up!

Watch for the notice, the information will be going in shortly to get the registration opened up. You can make your hotel registration at www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/F/FNLCOHF-ANF-20200614/index.jhtml, or by calling 970-482-2626 and requesting the **2020 National Farm Management Conference room block**. Our group code is ANF. The reservation block closes on May 15th!

I look forward to seeing you in Fort Collins, watch the Conference site for more information concerning transportation and activities while in Colorado.

-Myron

NCAE Update

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

Last issue, I had told everyone to keep their eyes out for news releases regarding the new National FFA Advisor/National Director of Agriculture Education. In case you missed these releases, I will fill you in as best I can.

James Woodard, Madison, GA, has graciously accepted the role of National FFA Advisor/National Director of Agriculture Education. As I stated before, this is an unpaid position with just travel reimbursement so it has surprised me that anyone would accept the position! Mr. Woodard has spent 33 years in education, serving in a variety of roles. I feel he will be a good fit in this position as he has been an adult instructor, a secondary instructor, a state director of agriculture education, and an administrator at both technical schools and charter schools. The Council felt he would be a great asset to agriculture education as an advocate at all levels and we are looking forward to his input as we evaluate our mission and work towards the goal of a Center for Agriculture Education. My hope is that Mr. Woodard can attend our National Conference in Fort Collins. I will know more after our face-to-face Council meeting in April.



As the Council continues to look at the best way to move forward, I have been assigned to a committee to look at the By-Laws and recommending any changes needed. The two other committee members are Heath Hornecker from Casper College, Casper, WY, the two-year postsecondary instructor rep, and Travis Bradshaw, Burlington, OK, representing secondary students in agriculture. We will report at the April meeting in Indianapolis.

As we are now in 2020, the Council is also working on the AgEd Vision for the next 10-20 years, which will be a majority of the discussion at the April meeting. Work is currently being done on the Ag Teacher's Manual as it had not been updated since 1998. The SAE for All has been released with good feedback from instructors.

If anyone has read these updates and find them interesting, consider being the next representative from NFRBMEA. I do believe my term is up this year.

Today Matters

By Brad Sirianni, NFRBMEA Past President

Recently, sitting in my office I looked at my bookshelf and was drawn to a book with a bookmark stuck in it entitled *Today Matters*, by John Maxwell. Upon opening to the bookmarked page and reading the heading that stated, "Develop Your Problem-Solving Strategy" I spent a little time revisiting the book. That page explained that whatever kind of strategy you choose it should foster or promote three things: "(1) better understanding; (2) positive change; and (3) growing relationships." Thoughts raced through my mind seeking to evaluate myself and thinking that I need to be doing these things better. I only mention it here thinking that it might help you too since we all have problems.

After exploring the many earmarked pages and how valuable the information was and still is, I thought, how can I summarize this book to you and help make today matter? And wouldn't you know, the inside flaps of the cover gave me the answer. My hope is the general content and quotes will be enough for you to find some value today.

Hearing many times that "success can be found in your daily agenda", here are some things that can help us do this:

- ◆ *Assess your current progress* - take stock of yourself and discover how to make your life a masterpiece every day.
- ◆ *Prioritize your agenda* - learn how to decide every day what's important to you and then get it done.
- ◆ *Stretch your creativity and thinking* - generate new ideas every day to become a more valuable employee or boss.
- ◆ *Stay the course* - reinforce your important commitments every day.
- ◆ *Manage your money* - every day, instead of letting it manage you.
- ◆ *Strengthen your faith* - discover the four powerful tools faith will give you every day. (Perspective, Health, Strength & Resilience)
- ◆ *Improve and build relationships* - connect with others every day...
- ◆ *Nurture your personal growth* - find out how to make yourself more valuable every day, and enjoy the payoff tomorrow.
- ◆ Today matters, yesterday mattered, tomorrow could matter even more because today matters and if tomorrow didn't come, today still matters. Make today matter! (Brad-ism)
- ◆ "Neglect enough todays, and you'll experience the "someday" you've wanted to avoid!" -John C. Maxwell
- ◆ "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are we doing for others?'" -Martin Luther King Jr.
- ◆ "Everyone has the power to impact the outcome of his life. The way to do it is to focus on today...Today is the only time you have. It's too late for yesterday. And you can't depend on tomorrow." -John C. Maxwell



Retirement- What Will I Do? What Will I Do?

By Wayne Pike, NFRBMEA Past President

I've often said that there is a time to lead, a time to follow and a time to get out of the way. After forty years, my time for the latter came the last day of June 2019.

The summer passed quickly for me. We are fortunate to live on the family farm once owned by Rufus, George, Leon and Ralph. That would be father, grand, great-grand and great-great grand inversely. They all left me with plenty of tasks to accomplish.

I spent about two weeks pulling up old barbed wire fence and steel posts from the pasture lane. It would not surprise me to learn that Rufus himself had put some of that rusty sod-embedded wire on those flimsy posts back in 1866. I went through several pairs of leather gloves and suffered more than one scar-inducing slash as I pulled wire out of four-foot tall barnyard grass. I was somewhat interested to learn the counter intuitive fact that one wears out the left glove (if one is right-handed) much faster than the right glove. Bleeding occurs more often on limbs and torso on one's left side than the right. I also learned that I can go online and find out if my tetanus shot is up to date. Rest assured I am current in that regard.

Another big project was to remove the 30X50 lean-to from the west side of our old dairy barn. The lean-to only goes back to the 1960s and is an artifact I helped my father build. I felt emerging emotions as I undid what my father and I had done together 50 years ago. These emotions led me to self-talk at times with comments like, "What the heck were we thinking when we did this?" and "Wow, I could have really hurt myself when

that post broke off." I recall only falling once and banging my head. I think that's right. Maybe twice, I don't remember. I'm okay though. This project did result in my one and only "five-Band-Aid" day. But, again, as I often say, "A day in the shop without bloodshed is like a day in the office."

Well, I could go on about other projects around the farm that I have been able to get to, but I need to tell you about what I have experienced with the lack of full-time employment. I noticed that it takes much more time to handle my HR (human resources) details than it ever did when I was employed. Health insurance, pension and all those money details used to be handled by my friends at the College. Now I have to learn the jargon and make the calls to people who, through no fault of their own, just don't seem to know what I'm talking about. This part is getting easier.

I miss the routine of sitting down at my desk to get and stay organized. I feel that I have slipped a cog when I wake up in the morning and have to think about what day it is. Some say that retirement is like having every day be Saturday. I'd say that retirement is more like every day is whatever day comes after whatever day yesterday seemed like. A little confusing. Yes, yes, it is.

Of course, I miss my colleague family and my student family. Perhaps to compensate, I have attended a couple breakfasts for retired guys sponsored by my church, but after three meetings I think I have heard most of the stories twice and they aren't ready to hear mine, so I stay home and have another cup of coffee with Deb.

Farm Management in Stressful Times

By Lori Tonak, SDCFRM Instructor

In September of 2019 for the Farmer Stress Summit in South Dakota, I was asked to present on farm financial management, which is usually a relatively easy thing for me to do. What worked on my heart while I was preparing the presentation was how to do this in such a way that it would not stress a producer more than he/she already was. I thought this article would be a good place to share some of the thoughts I put into the presentation.



Photo: "Ludington Lighthouse Hit By a Wave" by NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory [CC BY-SA]

First, remember, you are not alone in this stressful time. Most of the state of SD, along with some surrounding states, are struggling too. Now this doesn't solve any problems but sometimes we feel isolated on farms/ranches, just remember there are others that are paddling just the same canoe. Part of my job this past year is to just listen to my producers as they talk about what is happening on their operation-both good and bad. Sometimes, it just helps to talk to someone that is not involved day-to-day with the operation.

There are three things I do know about the times we are in:

1. There are no easy answers.
2. Some things are completely out of our control.
3. Hard decisions may need to be made in these tough times.

These three things are nothing new to any of you. In fact, I have heard some of these from the producers I work with. Being there are no easy answers, knowledge will be key for decision making. As some things are out of our control, we need to address those items we can control. Producers must pay attention to their finances now, more than ever. With the volatility of markets, weather impacts, and other events, financial planning and the ability to adjust the plan are crucial. Hard decisions may include off farm employment, a spouse working outside the home, or reducing family living. All of these can be decisions that change our lifestyle, which is always difficult.

During these tough times, operations need to evaluate the efficiency of every enterprise of their operation. Evaluate the strengths of your operation and capitalize on those. To do that, financials need to be tracked and evaluated. This may mean spending more time on business operations such as bookkeeping, marketing, etc. This is difficult for many producers as they would rather be out on a tractor or working with livestock than in an office working with numbers. Production agriculture has become a business, not just a passion, and the management of the business leads to success.

There are no cut and dried answers to get through this stressful time, but financial management is crucial to survival.

Minnesota Farm Advocates - Farmers Helping Farmers

By Wayne Pike, Farm Advocate

When I retired from teaching farm business management with Riverland College, I was approached by a retired former colleague, Steve Zenk, to give a try at being a Minnesota Farm Advocate. Steve has been a farm advocate for several years since his retirement.

The Minnesota Department of Ag sponsors and finances one-on-one assistance for Minnesota farmers who are facing almost any sort of problem. I have come to think of farm advocates as being "first-responders" to a farmer or farm family who aren't prepared to deal with whatever situation they find themselves in.

I've only been at this since July 2019 so I'm really a newcomer to the game. I am told that several of our nine farm advocates have been on the job since its founding in 1984. The Department of Ag bills us as farmers helping farmers. This is quite true. Although some advocates have professional experience, others have extensive experience in managing their own farms while also managing the complex ropes tying together financial planning, lender negotiations, farm programs, legal services and the social and human services.

As a first-responder, I have found that some folks can be helped with a phone call or two. Some need a farm visit which helps form the plan leading to an eventual solution. Some require extensive service with financial planning, meetings with attorneys or lenders and help through the Minnesota mediation process. If I find that I cannot help them, I summon help from my farm business management colleagues, other farm advocates and the

prevailing network of people who I find are almost always willing to help. It is unfortunate that there are those who I have not been able to help or to find help for through the network. It is often because they have waited too long to ask for help.

There is no cost to the farmer for Farm Advocate time as we are funded through the Department of Ag. There is no time limit for advocate service for any single farm. However, each farm advocate is presently limited to 50 hours per month (up to 600 hours per year) of compensated time. I appreciate that the Department of Ag supervises me only to track who I work with and nothing else. Everything I do with the farm and family is between us and is not reported.


In my brief time as a farm advocate I have dealt with the following situations: a landlord/tenant dispute, financial stress requiring a relatively simple refinance, several new borrower FSA finance negotiations, a couple of serious cases of family discord not necessarily caused by money, financial planning with a hemp producer, financial planning with greenhouse owners and management advice provided after the death of a key operator in a farming operation. I have found that continuing education in Finpack, marketing and the farm bill are also needed to keep my knowledge and skills relevant.

I have found the work as a farm advocate challenging and rewarding. I hope that I have done some good for each family I have had the privilege to work with.

Analysis Efficiencies

By Pauline Van Nurden

As you work with farmers to complete their 2019 FINAN financial analysis in FINPACK, don't forget these tips, to help make the process more efficient and accurate.

1. Detail is your friend! I don't think I can say that enough - the more detail you enter the more it helps you throughout the program. This starts on the balance sheet, for example enter the expense category for prepaid expenses and accounts payable; include crop and livestock commodity quantities; use the year purchased, purchase price, year sold/traded, and sales price data entry fields for capital assets. All of these pieces help with completing the FINAN. In the FINAN, use detail in whole farm data entry assist with the enterprises. Use detail to enter direct expenses; enter interest on a per loan basis; and detail out the number of livestock sold. This helps get your farm interest broken down correctly, makes accrual adjustments seamless, and helps fill out that pesky livestock inventory table.
2. Use the "Create FINAN with a copy" option when creating a new FINAN for the year. You can then copy forward last year's analysis, clear out the general data (income and expenses, etc.), but keeps the enterprise information in tact. Things like labor hours, related operating expense allocations, individual enterprise allocations, special sorts, and production practices remain. These can be reviewed and updated as part of the analysis completion, but you don't have to start from scratch.
3. Use the "Select from..." icon . This puts the detail you've entered in the program to use. Automatically bring capital purchases and capital sales entered on the balance sheet into the FINAN. This will include cost and market values. Use this to fill out a lot of the livestock inventory table, including beginning and ending inventories from the balance sheet; purchases, sales, and cull sales from the whole farm analysis; and transfers in and out between enterprises. Also, use this to allocate the correct expenses to the correct enterprises in the analysis.
4. Make sure you have the benchmarking uniform setup files installed for your group. The "set files" ensure you have the correct income and expense categories for the analysis and automatically bring in the crop and livestock allocation factors as a couple of examples. This helps makes sure the data you contribute is uniform and it saves data entry for you. For example, you won't have to do much, if any, data entry on the allocated crop and livestock expense pages.

These are a couple of quick tips to assist you with analysis completion. If you have more questions or need more training on completing a FINAN with enterprise analysis be sure to check out the Benchmarking website at z.umn.edu/benchmarking. Here you will find recorded trainings on enterprise analysis completion as well as other resources for your use.

("CYBER SECURITY", continued from page 1)

Create Strong Passwords

Use a strong mix of characters and choose different passwords for each account. Your passwords should not include any personal information.

- ◆ Use long passwords.
- ◆ Update your passwords periodically.
- ◆ Don't share or write down your passwords.

Be Careful What You Click

Avoid using public computers or free Wi-Fi to access your account information. Without proper security protection, your personal information could be exposed.

Embrace 2-Step Verification

Also called multi-factor verification, adding a second layer of security will authenticate your identity and reduce the risk of your account being accessed by hackers. With 2-step verification, you'll protect your account with something you know (password) and something you have (security code).



Keep Devices Secure

Physical and technical security of your devices are equally important. Consider protecting your desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones and wearables.

- ◆ Update your operating system and software patches on all devices.
- ◆ Enable firewalls, anti-virus and anti-malware security features.
- ◆ If you store sensitive information on a flash drive or external hard drive, make sure to keep these locked as well.
- ◆ Shut down or lock your device screen when not in use.
- ◆ Lock your device with a PIN or password and never leave it unprotected in public.
- ◆ Only install software or applications from trusted sources.
- ◆ Avoid transmitting or storing personal information on the device.
- ◆ Backup your data

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

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