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Cornhusker Economics

Cooperative Extension

Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Department of Agricultural Economics
University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Two "Oldies but Goodies" - Still Timely

Market Report	Yr Ago	4 Wks Ago	11/12/99
<u>Livestock and Products,</u>			
<u>Average Prices for Week Ending</u>			
Slaughter Steers, Ch. 204, 1100-1300 lb Omaha, cwt.	\$59.38	\$70.53	\$69.56
Feeder Steers, Med. Frame, 600-650 lb Dodge City, KS, cwt.	72.04	83.88	82.00
Feeder Steers, Med. Frame 600-650 lb, Nebraska Auction Wght. Avg.	*	90.87	89.04
Carcass Price, Ch. 1-3, 550-700 lb Cent. US, Equiv. Index Value, cwt.	97.01	109.86	106.96
Hogs, US 1-2, 220-230 lb Sioux Falls, SD, cwt.	20.45	33.50	36.50
Feeder Pigs, US 1-2, 40-45 lb Sioux Falls, SD, hd.	*	28.50	33.50
Vacuum Packed Pork Loins, Wholesale, 13-19 lb, 1/4" Trim, Cent. US, cwt.	75.90	99.30	93.25
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., 115-125 lb Sioux Falls, SD, cwt.	57.40	63.37	77.00
Carcass Lambs, Ch. & Pr., 1-4, 55-65 lb FOB Midwest, cwt.	135.00	155.00	157.00
<u>Crops,</u>			
<u>Cash Truck Prices for Date Shown</u>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Omaha, bu.	3.38	2.74	2.83
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Omaha, bu.	1.97	1.63	1.69
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Omaha, bu.	5.55	4.47	4.24
Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Kansas City, cwt.	3.47	2.71	2.73
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Sioux City, IA, bu.	*	1.10	1.18
<u>Hay,</u>			
<u>First Day of Week Pile Prices</u>			
Alfalfa, Sm. Square, RFV 150 or better Platte Valley, ton.	*	92.50	82.50
Alfalfa, Lg. Round, Good Northeast Nebraska, ton.	47.50	32.50	32.50
Prairie, Sm. Square, Good Northeast Nebraska, ton.	70.00	*	*
* No market.			

Difficult times in agriculture can strain family relationships. Here are two "oldies but goodies" that are still topical today.

The Art of Listening in an Ag Family Business

It has been said that God gave each person two ears and one mouth; therefore, we should listen twice as much as we talk. With two ears you would think that listening would be easy, but often we are deaf to family members we work with. Here are a few tips to use when you have the opportunity to listen.

✓ **Focus on what the family member is saying.** Many times when someone is speaking we begin forming a reply before they even finish their thoughts. We get so wrapped up in what we are going to say as soon as they take a breath that we miss half of what is being said. Concentrate on what the person is saying; it keeps your mind from skipping ahead to your reply.

✓ **Don't jump to conclusions.** Jumping to a conclusion when we hear something we disagree with is a large barrier to listening. The automatic judgments that we make on an idea or person turns our brains off and we refuse to listen to anything that is said on the subject. When we have an open mind throughout the conversation we will hear ideas and views that will broaden our perspective.

✓ **Listen with your heart.** By using our hearts we see past the words to the emotions that are motivating them, what is the reason behind this conversation? Fear, unhappiness, joy, frustration, support and love are emotions that tell us more than the words. They express the true feelings of the person speaking. Tuning into the other person's emotions help us to better understand what is being said.

✓ **Be Patient.** Listen to the complete idea of the person speaking. The hardest job of a listener is not interrupting a person or trying to assist them in completing their thoughts. The speaker is the only one who knows what they are going to say. By talking over a person we are telling that person that what they have to say is not important, which in turn tells them that they are not important. Our response to a person will be more appropriate when we have let them complete their thoughts.



✓ **Take steps to understand what is being said.** Numerous conflicts in families can be avoided by making sure that each person understands what has been said and how it was received. Paraphrasing back to the person what you have just heard gives the person the opportunity to agree or correct the assessment that you have made. Conflicts begin when a person perceives something that was not meant by the other person. By checking back with each other, families can keep misunderstandings to a minimum.

✓ **Respect.** Show respect to the person who is speaking by giving them your full attention. By listening to a person and considering their ideas fairly, you benefit from their ideas and perspective. You also build an atmosphere for family members to share their views without the fear of being shunned. A person is more likely to accept a decision that they may not completely agree with if their point of view has been heard and considered.

✓ **Take time to listen.** True conversation where there is a sharing of ideas, an acceptance of differing viewpoints and collaboration on a decision takes time. In the hectic schedules of the day there is very little time for true conversation. Conflicts arise when we assume that everyone agrees, but we have not taken the time to check it out. A regularly scheduled family business meeting to discuss and listen to family members' views and ideas is essential in running a family business. Decision making takes time. A family business needs to recognize the value of setting aside time to listen to each other.

Listening is not a skill that everyone has just because they have ears. It takes a commitment to the people in the family business to become a good listener.

person's opinions, dreams and goals in life. By taking time to listen, you begin to know who that person really is. It is important for a family business to set aside time for regularly scheduled family business meetings. The meetings provide a place and time where plans for the future and the week can be discussed.

✓ **Allowing each family member to be different.** Differences should be looked upon as strengths, instead of hindrances. By having family members who think differently in your business, you broaden your management team's scope of understanding. People have to be themselves. If they are continually asked to assume a role or position that is not who they are, they will find a way to leave. By placing people in roles that they feel comfortable with and like doing, you can strengthen your business. It would be a very unimaginative world if everyone thought alike.

✓ **Considers the relationship more important than any particular issue.** When family members are more important than any issue there is an underlying mission to solve conflicts in a way that is not harmful to the family relationship. The way the family deals with conflict changes. The argument deals only with the issue at hand and does not disintegrate into a personal attack. The conflict is dealt with by providing time for each family member to express their opinion and respecting each other and his or her right to have a different view.

These elements are not something you can buy, nor are they a process you can follow. Instead, together they form an attitude that each family member needs to develop and bring to the relationship. When they are in place, there is no conflict that the family cannot work out. Without them, even a minor problem will be insurmountable.

Family Communication

Communication is an essential part of working together successfully in a family business. While it sounds so easy, it is not something that comes naturally. Communication is more than a series of conversation techniques or a process that will help family members talk to each other. Communication is an attitude about your family members and the relationship that you want with them. For good communication you need a good relationship.

The elements in a good relationship are basic to being able to communicate with your family members. A good relationship consists of the following elements:

✓ **A basic respect for each other.** One of the problems that gets in the way of providing each person with respect is that family members have long memories. It's sometimes hard to respect the opinion of someone who for a period of time in their life forgot to close the cow gate or wrapped the windrower around a tree. There needs to be a realization that people change and they deserve the right to be heard. A good basic rule is to treat your family members with the same respect that you give your friends.

✓ **Taking time to listen to and learn about each other.** A fallacy in life is that we know our family members because we live with them each day. Listening to and knowing each other takes a concerted effort. Time needs to be set aside to listen to a

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**No Newsletter Next Week
Due to Thanksgiving!!**

