

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Range Beef Cow Symposium

Animal Science Department

December 2005

Family Communication in Ag Operations: Getting the Cards on the Table

Randy McKee

Estate Planning Services, Inc., Rapid City, SD

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/rangebeefcowsymp>



Part of the [Animal Sciences Commons](#)

McKee, Randy, "Family Communication in Ag Operations: Getting the Cards on the Table" (2005). *Range Beef Cow Symposium*. 45.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/rangebeefcowsymp/45>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Animal Science Department at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Range Beef Cow Symposium by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

**FAMILY COMMUNICATION IN AG OPERATIONS:
GETTING THE CARDS ON THE TABLE**

Randy McKee
Estate Planning Services, Inc.
Rapid City, SD

Discovering what everyone REALLY wants!

- 1. Why communication is so important.**
 - A. Saving the family relationships
 - B. Avoiding the Family Feud
 1. Have to back this up with a plan and with good documents
 - C. Producing desirable outcomes
 1. Starts with having a plan
 2. Plan does not have to be carved in stone
 3. New techniques offer flexibility
 - A. Trusts
 - B. Durable Powers of Attorney
 - C. Business Entities
- 2. Why we have difficulty communicating.**
 - A. Control
 1. Fear of loss of control
 2. Fear someone we don't like will have control
 3. Learned poor communication behaviors from predecessors— parents, grandparents, uncles, etc.
 - B. Families are not trained in communication skills.
 1. Recent survey of Ag families ranked their performance low in the following areas:
Handling arguments
Fair criticism
Family problem solving
 2. Arguing is not Quarreling
 - C. Extended families
 1. Typically one or two stay on place and others are gone – possibly urban
 - a. Those children off the place are usually not interested until something happens
 - b. “Outside” children are often disconnected with place and their spouses are simply not knowledgeable about family operation
 2. Mistrust or dislike son-in-law or daughter-in-law
 3. Jealousy among siblings

3. **The downside of not communicating.**
 - A. The Family Feud
 - B. Producing undesirable outcome
 - C. Years of time
 - D. Legal battles and costs
4. **Sure, but how do we do it.**
 - A. Providing understanding of differences between Arguing vs. Quarreling
 - B. Respectful listening
 - C. Family Vision Matrix®
 1. Share vision of future from each perspective
 2. Ask for what you want
 3. Everyone has opportunity to participate
 - a. Example of vision matrix
 - D. Family meeting
 1. Held in neutral place
 2. Use professional facilitator
 3. It's all about getting the cards on the table and giving each family member the respect they think they deserve
5. **Every family has strengths and weaknesses.**
6. **Examples – Purdue Study – Sharon DeVaney, PhD**
 - A. Paternal, Autonomous
 - B. Attitude, Preparation, Timing, Behavior
 - C. Direct Control, Indirect Control, No Control

www.ces.purdue.edu/farmtransfer

Sharon DeVaney, PhD
sdevaney@purdue.edu

Randall W. McKee, RFC
Estate Planning Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 9682
Rapid City, SD 57709

Office: 605-721-7519, Ext. 201
Office Fax: 605-721-7523

Email: randymckee2@yahoo.com
Website: www.estateplanning.20m.com

The Family Vision Matrix® is available in booklet form with directions.