



# Mid-Columbia Small Farms & Acreage Newsletter

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### Inside this issue:

<i>Calendar</i>	2
<i>Resources</i>	3
<i>Biodiesel Comes to Wasco County</i>	6
<i>Selected Livestock Health Concerns</i>	6
<i>Farm Succession &amp; Family Issues</i>	8

Dear Small Farmer and Landowner,

Welcome to the July/August Issue of the Small Farms and Acreage Newsletter. In this issue, we have included an excellent article on Farm Succession by Dr. Ron Hansen, Professor of Farm Management and Agricultural Finance, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The article considers "Family Issues" in farm ownership succession. This article and others are a part of a farm management series of publications we developed this last year and are located on the Small Farms Website. Note: we are anticipating additional farm succession and estate planning workshops to be held in the Mid-Columbia this fall and winter so stay tuned to updates in future issues of the Small Farms and Acreage Newsletter.

The calendar of events section lists some very good programs coming up that you will not want to miss including the Specialty Cut Flowers Meeting, OSU Blueberry Field Day, North American Lavender Conference, SolWest Energy Fair and the Farwest Show to name a few. Please take time to look over the calendar of events to see the great programs that are being offered.

As you review this issue, if you should have any questions about any of the information found in the newsletter or questions about small farming, please give us a call. You can contact your local county extension office at the numbers found on the top of this page. Again, please let us know how we can be of help to you.

Dr Susan Kerr, WSU Extension Faculty has authored an article titled "Selected Livestock Health Concerns." This article gives a brief overview of four common diseases that affect livestock in the spring and summer.

Also as a reminder, if you receive this newsletter electronically, please make sure you let us know whenever you change your e-mail address so we can make sure you remain on the mailing list.

In addition there is an article about the development and availability of bio-diesel in Wasco County. As fuel prices increase biofuels and the production of oil seed crops will be an important alternative crop option for Mid-Columbia farmers.

Sincerely,

Brian V. Tuck  
Mid-Columbia Extension Agent  
Oregon State University  
Wasco County



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# Calendar of Events

## 2006

### July



**6 Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc. regional meeting**, Flora Pacifica, Brookings. 7:30 a.m. Lunch is included in registration fee. Register: 440-774-2887 or at the door. For program, go to [www.ascfg.org](http://www.ascfg.org).

**8, 9 Hood River Cherry Days**, Fruit Loop in Hood River Valley farms. Cherry treats, crafts, activities. Information: [www.hoodriverfruitloop.com](http://www.hoodriverfruitloop.com) or call 541-386-7697.

**12 OSU blueberry field day** will be held at NWREC, Aurora from 1-5 PM. See OSU website for details <http://berrygrape.oregonstate.edu/news/events.htm>

**13-15 Northwest Junior Sheep Exposition**, Grant County Fairgrounds in Moses Lake, Wash. Information: <http://grant-adams.wsu.edu>, e-mail [smithsm@wsu.edu](mailto:smithsm@wsu.edu) or call 509-754-2011.

**14 Sequim Lavender Festival**. Information: [www.lavenderfestival.com](http://www.lavenderfestival.com).

**15 Financing Your Business Expansion Course**, 9am to noon, Columbia Gorge Community College Auditorium Building Two, Third Floor; Fee: \$35 Presenters include: Northwest Farm Credit Services, Mt. Hood Economic Alliance, Mid Columbia Economic Development District, Oregon Economic and Community Development and others. To register, call 541-506-6011

**17-19 North American Lavender Conference**, Sequim. Registration: (877) 681-3035, e-mail [info@lavenderconference.com](mailto:info@lavenderconference.com) or go to website [www.lavenderconference.com](http://www.lavenderconference.com).

**19 Organic Seed Alliance Farmer Field Days** Producing Organic Lettuce and Brassica Seed, Gathering Together Farm, Philomath. WSARE funded. Information: [www.seedalliance.org](http://www.seedalliance.org). 360-385-7192. Advance registration required.

**22, 23 Northwest Herb Fest classes**, Wise Acres Farm, Pleasant Hill. \$165-\$185. Information: 541-736-0164, or [class@herbaltransitions.com](mailto:class@herbaltransitions.com) or view at [www.herbaltransitions.com](http://www.herbaltransitions.com).

**28-30 SolWest Fair**, Grant Co. Fairgrounds, John Day, Oregon. SolWest is an occasion for learning, networking, and supporting all types of renewable energy. This year's SolWest is an incomparable educational event featuring 55 workshops, over 40 exhibitors, and many ways to observe and get hands-on experience with renewable energy and sustainable living technologies. There is no better opportunity in the Northwest for learning and networking with other renewable energy enthusiasts! For more information see their website at: <http://www.solwest.org/>



### August

**3 Diverse Forest Tour: Tillamook County**, meet at World Forest Center, Portland. 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Reservations required: [www.oregonforest.org](http://www.oregonforest.org) or call 971-673-2951.

**5 Home Orchard Society Budding Class**, 9-12pm, at the Home Orchard Society Arboretum, Oregon City. Long time HOS members host a free class on budding, or bud grafting. Learn the ins and outs of successful budding techniques, get some guidance as you practice, and take home a newly budded rootstock for your yard. Free bud wood and purchasable rootstock available from the arboretum. See their website for more information: <http://www.homeorchardsociety.org/events/>

**7-11 Introduction to Sustainable Small Acreage Farming**, Rice WA. Call 509-738-2011, e-mail [rmisterly@ultraplix.com](mailto:rmisterly@ultraplix.com) or visit [www.quillisascutcheese.com](http://www.quillisascutcheese.com)

**11 Diverse Forest Tour: Benton County**. Meet at OSU Peavy Lodge, Sulfur Creek Road north of Corvallis, 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Reservations required: [www.oregonforest.org](http://www.oregonforest.org) or 971-673-2951

**16-19 National Christmas Tree Association Biennial Convention and Trade Show** at Oregon Convention Center. For Portland Doubletree Hotel reservations 800-996-0510. Show information: 636-449-5070.

## Calendar...continued

**16-20 American Quarterhorse Association Regional Show and Clinics**, Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center, Redmond, Ore. Information: [www.region1experience.com](http://www.region1experience.com) or 360-825-3269.

**24-26 Farwest Show**, Portland. Green industry trade show featuring growers, nursery tours, seminars. Visit [www.farwestshow.com](http://www.farwestshow.com) to register, or call 800-342-6401.

**26 Home Orchard Society Apple ID Basics Class**, 1-5pm, at the HOS Arboretum, Oregon City. Back by popular demand after last year's successful class! Join members of the HOS Apple ID team to learn the tricks behind identifying unknown apples. Come learn about the characteristics that help define the classic apple varieties we love – not just flavor and color, but shoulder, calyx, shape, and stem length. This is a skill that takes time to learn, but it doesn't have to be limited to the experts. See their website at: <http://www.homeorchardsociety.org/events/> for more information.

**29 Home Orchard Society Orchard & Rootstock Twilight Meeting**, 5-8pm, at the Home Orchard Society Arboretum, Oregon City. Is your orchard getting on in years, losing production, or quality? Come talk about the dirty words of home orcharding: rejection, removal, replacement. Whether rootstocks, varieties, or species, the time often comes for some hard decision-making as to what to keep and what to cut down. Share your observations, worries, and successes, and get some new information for the future! See their website for more information: <http://www.homeorchardsociety.org/events/>



### September

**9 Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair**, Seattle, WA. E-mail [tilth@seattletilth.org](mailto:tilth@seattletilth.org) or visit [www.seattletilth.com](http://www.seattletilth.com)

**11-13 Biennial "Who Will Own the Forest?" conference**, World Forestry Center, Portland. For information call Sara Wu at 503-488-2130 or [wfi.worldforestry.org/wwotf3/index.html](http://wfi.worldforestry.org/wwotf3/index.html)

**23 Hydroponic farming seminar**, Salem. Register by Sept. 16. Cost is \$35, covering materials and starter unit. Information 503-868-7679 or [Info@MicrofarmSustainable.org](mailto:Info@MicrofarmSustainable.org) or



### October

**5-7 WSU Lamb 300 short course**, Washington State University, Pullman; animal science department. \$150 includes meals, material and parking. Registration deadline Sept. 8. Information: 509-335-2880 or [busboom@wsu.edu](mailto:busboom@wsu.edu).

**27-29 WSU Extension Master Goat Farmer Clinic**, Puyallup. Information: 360-397-6060 ext. 7714 or e-mail [garyf@wsu.edu](mailto:garyf@wsu.edu).

## Resources

### Publications

#### OSU Extension Publications

The following are new publications from Oregon State University. Please see the OSU Web Site at for more information on these and other publications at: <http://eesc.oregonstate.edu>

**PNW 581, Land Measurement and Survey**, new April 2006, 12 pages, \$3.00  
<http://eesc.oregonstate.edu/agcomwebfile/EdMat/pnw581.pdf>

**EM 8908, Producing Sheep Milk Cheese**. Can be obtained through any OSU Extension Office.

**SR 790-05, 2005 Oregon County and State Agricultural Estimates**. Can be obtained from and OSU Extension Office.

#### Other Publications

**Journal of Extension - Articles on Business Development**

Golden Rules for New Venture Creation  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2006april/iw2.shtml>

Launch Rules for Small Businesses  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2006april/iw3.shtml>

## Resources...continued

### **ATTRA Publications**

#### **Parasite Management for Natural and Organic Poultry: Coccidiosis**

Both small and large poultry producers are interested in the sustainable management of the parasitic disease coccidiosis. This new 2006 publication provides information on its life cycle, transmission in free-range production, management in the brooder and on pasture, natural treatments, drugs, and vaccines. On a small scale, coccidiosis can be handled without medication by careful management, especially during brooding, and adequate pasture rotation; however, on a larger scale, it is more difficult and vaccines are an important alternative to drugs in organic production. References and further information follow the narrative. Publication can be found at: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/coccidiosis.pdf>

#### **Dairy Sheep**

The sale of sheep milk or milk products is often more profitable than selling only lamb or wool. This publication explores the dairy sheep business and helps producers decide whether it is a viable option for their farms. Regulations governing the industry are discussed. The publication also addresses production issues, animal health, stock selection, and nutrition issues surrounding dairy sheep. References and resources follow the narrative. Publication can be found at: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/dairysheep.pdf>

#### **Community Supported Agriculture**

This publication updated in 2006 reports on the history of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the U.S. and discusses the various models that have emerged. Recent trends in the CSA movement are presented and demographic information provided about the distribution of CSA farms in the U.S. Several CSA cases are profiled and a survey of recent research is presented. References and resources follow the narrative. Publication can be found at: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/csa.pdf>

#### **Grapes: Organic Production**

Organic grape production provides a fairly predictable economic return in irrigated parts of the arid West. In the East, organic grape production is complicated by a climate that fosters insect and disease problems. Production is compounded by consumer preferences for grape cultivars (both dessert and wine grapes) that

are difficult to grow in the East. This guide updated in 2006 presents organic management options for diseases, insects and weeds, discusses cultivar choices in terms of disease resistance, and briefly presents marketing ideas for eastern labrusca-type grapes and organic wines. References and an appendix on disease resistance rating follow the narrative. Publication can be found at: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/grapes.pdf>

#### **Edamame: Vegetable Soybean**

This new 2006 publication discusses edamame, the immature green form of vegetable soybean. Issues important to edamame production and marketing are presented. Harvesting and post-harvest handling issues are presented as well as economic aspects of edamame. References and further resources for production and marketing follow the narrative. This publication can be found at: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/edamame.pdf>

### **Sustainable Ag Network Publications**

The Sustainable Agriculture Network has just published "**Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch**" a new 16-page bulletin. It spotlights innovative, SARE-funded research into a range of conservation options including soil management, such as using compost, conservation tillage and cover crops; plant management, featuring crop rotation, water-conserving plants and rangeland drought mitigation; and water management strategies such as low-volume irrigation and water recycling. Preview or download the entire publication at [www.sare.org/publications/water.htm](http://www.sare.org/publications/water.htm). To order free print copies, please visit [www.sare.org/webstore](http://www.sare.org/webstore), call 301/504-5236 or email [san\\_assoc@sare.org](mailto:san_assoc@sare.org).

The Sustainable Agriculture Network has just published "**How to Direct Market Your Beef.**" The book portrays how one couple used their family's ranch to launch a profitable, grass-based beef operation focused on direct market sales. The book is filled with examples of real-life experiences and provides valuable tips for direct marketing beef from slaughtering to sales. It also has a special Entrepreneurs section that highlights farmers and ranchers who have marketed their sustainably raised food in innovative ways. Download a complete copy at [www.sare.org/publications/beef.htm](http://www.sare.org/publications/beef.htm)

#### **Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers.**

This publication can be found at: [www.sare.org/publications/marketing/marketing.pdf](http://www.sare.org/publications/marketing/marketing.pdf)

## Resources... continued

### Books

New strategies to revitalize family-based farming can be found in *The Next Agricultural Revolution: Revitalizing Family-Based Agriculture and Rural Communities*, edited by Dr. Kent Mullinix and published by the Good Fruit Grower. The book introduces the reader to the Washington State Farm Summit and its findings and is filled with personal testimonials from farmers across the state of Washington. With a first-hand understanding the problems farmer's face today, attendees of the summit have presented viable solutions. Copies of *The Next Agricultural Revolution* can be ordered by calling 800-487-9946 or 509-575-2315 extension 0. They can also be ordered on the Web at [www.goodfruit.com](http://www.goodfruit.com) (click on store).

### Newsletters

The June 2006 issue of **e-News for Northwest Gardeners** is "hot" off the press. This month we are featuring lawns and the expertise of OSU Extension's turf grass expert Tom Cook. We include a feature article about Cook's (and his protégés<sup>1</sup>) work to make golf courses more environmentally sustainable. June is the start of the summer growing season, so we have included several articles on planting warm season crops. <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/enews/>

The latest Issue of the University of Wyoming "**Enterprising Rural Families** can be found at: <http://erurfamilies.org/>

The current issue of "**Woodland Notes**" Mike Bondi, Clackamas County Extension Forestry Agent can be found at

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/clackamas/forestry>.

For those who would like to receive his newsletter on a on-going basis you can get it two ways; by mail (\$5 per year subscription, Jan-Dec) and from our website. If you would like to be included on the e-mail distribution list announcing the posting of the latest issue on the website, please contact the Forestry Extension secretary, Judy Greiner, at (503) 655-8631 or [e-mail judy.greiner@oregonstate.edu](mailto:judy.greiner@oregonstate.edu). Special announcements between regular issues will be a feature for e-subscribers.

### Financial Resources

#### Small, Minority Producer Grant Program

The Rural Business Cooperative Service announces the availability of approximately \$1,473 million in competitive grant funds for fiscal year (FY) 2006 for cooperatives and associations of cooperatives to assist small minority producers. USDA Rural Development Cooperative Programs hereby requests proposals from eligible cooperatives and associations of cooperatives interested in a competitively awarded grant. The cooperatives and associations of cooperatives will need to use the grants to fund technical assistance to rural businesses. The maximum award per grant is \$200,000.

Applicants may submit complete applications for grants on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

Paper copies must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than July 28, 2006, to be eligible for FY 2006 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY2006 grant funding.

Electronic copies must be received by July 28, 2006, to be eligible for FY2006 grand funding.

The comment period for information collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 continues through August 14, 2006. Comments on the paperwork burden must be received by this date to be assured of consideration.

Applicants may obtain application guides and materials for the Small Minority Producer Grant Program (SMPG) at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/SMPG/SMPG.htm> or by contacting your USDA Rural Development State Office You can reach your State Office by calling (202) 720-4323 and pressing "1".



### FSA News

FSA sponsors a "FSA Kids" website. This summer they are offering kids the opportunity to have a drawing posted on this site. Go to the following site for instructions:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids/>

## Feature Articles

### Biodiesel Comes to Wasco County

Biodiesel has arrived in Wasco County from a couple of different sources. Individuals interested in buying biodiesel for use in agriculture, vehicles or home heating systems may contact Valley Ag Service in Parkdale, which now offers on-site delivery. Those interested in processing their own biodiesel may get information from Josh Thompson, who, with some associates, is starting a small cooperative to process used vegetable oils from restaurants here in The Dalles.



#### Josh Thompson

Josh Thompson is a technician at Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District. He and some of his friends recently decided to form a cooperative that will purchase used vegetable oil from restaurants in The Dalles and process it into biodiesel to run their vehicles and tractors. Josh's processor can produce as much as 2,200 gallons per month. Josh has the idea that, at some time in the future, he or someone else might set up a larger processing unit and begin making biodiesel from locally grown oilseed crops. This would provide a local market for local farmers interested in incorporating oilseeds into their rotation for conservation purposes. Oregon State University Extension Service, in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District, has been actively researching how to incorporate such crops in rotation with wheat in order to improve soil quality, break disease cycles and manage weeds and other pests. Josh will not be selling to customers outside the co-op membership, and Josh says they are not looking for new members at this time. However, Josh is enthusiastic about the possibilities of locally produced biodiesel and is open to questions and answers. Josh can be reached at Wasco County SWCD, 541-296-6178 x116 or [biodiesel@charter.net](mailto:biodiesel@charter.net).

#### Valley Ag Service

For the past two years, Valley Ag Service in Parkdale has been getting recycled biodiesel (B-99) from SeSequential Biofuels in Portland. Now, they have teamed up with Star Oilco and are looking at developing a route and delivering biodiesel for use agriculture, tractors, trucks, cars and home heating systems. They're talking to public entities, orchardists and private individuals throughout Hood River, Wasco and Klickitat Counties. They can deliver either B-99 or B-20 (20% biodiesel and 80% petroleum-based diesel.) B-20 can also be purchased at the pump at Clem's Market in Odell. For further information, contact Marcy at Valley Ag Service at (541) 352-7576 or [marcy@valleyagservice.net](mailto:marcy@valleyagservice.net).

## Selected Livestock Health Concerns

*By Dr. Susan Kerr*

*WSU-Klickitat County Extension Director*

There are hundreds of nutritional, parasitic, infectious and other diseases of livestock. This article will give a brief overview of four that are common in spring and summer months. References are included for more information on each subject.

### Coccidiosis

This parasitic disease primarily affects young animals. Coccidia organisms are species specific, which means that they don't spread between pigs and cattle, for

example. They are also extremely hardy, which means that once a premise experiences a case of coccidiosis, the premise should be considered perpetually infected.

Signs of coccidiosis vary between species. Typical signs include poor growth, rough hair coat, pot-bellied appearance, failure to thrive, loose to bloody stool and even death. Diagnosis is by fecal sample analysis. Animals can be affected from about one to 12 months but most typically those that show signs of illness are animals about weaning age. Affected animals may be permanently stunted and become poor do-ers. Coccidiosis is rare in adults due to immunity that eventually develops.

## Feature Articles... continued

Coccidia are protozoa and are not killed by routine dewormers. Clinically ill animals need to receive treatment either through a water source or by oral drenching for several days in a row. The good news is that this disease can be prevented. Medications can be added to grain mixes, salt source or minerals to provide a low-level of coccidiosis prevention during the period of concern. Good manure management and sanitation practices also have a place in control of coccidiosis.

NOTE: Do not feed medications with coccidiosis preventative medication (e.g. monensin) to any members of the horse or poultry families.

### For more information

<http://osuextra.okstate.edu/pdfs/F-9129web.pdf>

[http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/LVSTK2/](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/LVSTK2/MF2209.PDF)

[MF2209.PDF](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/LVSTK2/MF2209.PDF)

### **Grass tetany**

Grass tetany or grass staggers is a common springtime disease of livestock, especially cattle. The cause is debatable. For simplicity, this condition will be described here as low blood levels of magnesium in affected animals due to low levels or low availability of magnesium in feed or poor absorption by the animal.

Lush spring forage growth may have low magnesium content and therefore be associated with this disease. However, grass tetany can occur if cattle are ingesting too much potassium, are deficient in salt or the diet is changed rapidly from hay to lush pasture.

Animals with abnormally-low blood magnesium levels may appear fine until stressed by calving, movement or transportation. Mildly affected animals will twitch their face and ears, carry their tail up, walk with a stiff “goosestep” and act more wary or wild than usual. As the condition worsens, animals become more excited. They may bellow, stagger and appear blind. Without treatment, affected animals go down and begin a repetitive, stiff-legged paddling motion with all four legs. Death is likely without prompt treatment and down animals may do serious secondary injury to themselves. Indeed, most livestock producers realize they have an “outbreak” of grass tetany when they find dead animals that have paddled into the dirt before they died.

Treatment consists of intravenous magnesium preparations. Due to potentially-fatal cardiac complications, treatment should be administered by a

veterinarian. Restraint is critical because unlike the near-coma induced by milk fever, grass tetany cows can be hyperexcitable and dangerous.

To prevent grass tetany, supplement winter hay and early spring pasture with magnesium oxide in salt, mineral or grain mixes. Make sure that every animal ingests about two ounces of magnesium oxide each day. Molasses magnesium blocks are specifically made to prevent grass tetany; they are handy but expensive. Also feed hay before animals are let out on lush spring pastures to transition them over to pasture slowly.

### For more information

<http://www.caf.wvu.edu/~forage/3216.htm>

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/lvstk2/MF976.PDF>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/DS137>

<http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/cattlehealth/a0959.htm>

### **White Muscle Disease**

This nutritional disorder can occur at any time of the year, but it mostly affects young animals and these are usually born in the spring.

In most parts of the U.S., soils are deficient in the mineral Selenium. One of Selenium’s roles is as an anti-oxidant to help stabilize cell membranes, particularly muscle cell membranes. If animals do not ingest enough Selenium, either through grazing or supplements, they can exhibit signs of Selenium deficiency.

Signs of deficiency vary with age. In adult animals, signs are subtle and may include poor reproductive performance, retained placentas, chronic infections and poor immune system function. The signs are much more dramatic in young stock: poor growth rates, weakness, pneumonia and/or death. Animals with *in utero* deficiency may be premature, lightweight, weak or stillborn.

Selenium deficiency is diagnosed through physical examination, blood testing, liver biopsy, response to treatment or necropsy. At necropsy, hamstring, tongue, heart and throat muscles lack their healthy red color and are instead soft and pale (hence the name “White Muscle Disease”). This is because the cell membranes have been damaged and the muscles have degenerated.

## Feature Articles... continued

If cardiac muscles are affected, the disease can be fatal.

All livestock in our area need some sort of Selenium supplementation. Supplementation through mineral or grain mixes may be sufficient for adult animals at maintenance. Growing and pregnant animals will probably need at least one injection of a Vitamin E/Selenium product. Ask your veterinarian for advice about how, when, how often and how much to give your animals.

For more information

<http://eesc.orst.edu/AgComWebFile/EdMat/PNW157.pdf>

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1607/eb1607.html>

### Founder

Founder or laminitis are names for the inflammation of tissues that connect an animal's hoof to the bone beneath it. Although this disease could happen in any hoofed species, it is most common in horses and dairy cattle.

The sensitive layers of tissue that connect the hoof to bone can become inflamed whenever an animal has a high fever, overeats carbohydrates, is exposed to a toxin or experiences strong and repetitive concussive forces to the feet. Obesity is a predisposing factor. In horses, too rapid cooling of a hot animal is another predisposing

factor. Sources of excess carbohydrates include high-grain rations, molasses tubs, dropped apples, grain spills, grain bags or unlimited lush spring pasture.

Affected animals walk with a slow and hesitant gait but they usually do not favor one leg over another. They may lie down and be reluctant to move. Their hooves will be hot and the arteries that serve the foot will be throbbing.

A veterinarian should be consulted immediately for the best long-term outcome for the animal. Recommended treatments include removal or cessation of the causative factor, cold water soaks for the affected feet and administration of anti-inflammatories and other medications. More extreme treatment measures may be needed in individual cases. For horses, corrective shoeing methods can aid recovery and animal comfort.

To prevent founder, monitor animal health closely; prevent obesity; control carbohydrate consumption; limit access to lush spring grass; provide sufficient bedding; do not force horses to travel on hard surfaces; feed bicarbonate with high-grain diets; and cool horses slowly after work. Some horses are perpetually prone to founder and may need to be kept on a dry lot and only fed hay.

For more information

[http://ohioline.osu.edu/b762/b762\\_30.html](http://ohioline.osu.edu/b762/b762_30.html)

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/VY/VY-30.html>

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/lvstk2/mf2070.pdf>

## Consider the "Family Issues" in Farm Ownership Succession

*Dr. Ron Hanson*

*Professor Farm Management and Agricultural Finance Department of Agriculture Economics University of Nebraska-Lincoln.*

Unless carefully planned, the transfer of family farm ownership to the next generation, especially if the farm has been in the family for several generations, can result in considerable emotional stress among the family members involved. There are many "family issues" which confront farm families in working through this transition. Nevertheless, they must be addressed to prevent disturbing the farm's operation

with legal fights. These ownership issues must be discussed by all family members involved and resolved to everyone's agreement for a successful transfer of ownership to the next generation as well as avoiding the personal conflicts and family feuds that often arise.

**Role of the Dad Issue:** One issue is the fact that Dad is wearing two hats in the farm operation, Boss Hat and Father Hat. When wearing the Boss Hat, Dad is in charge by use of authoritative power. In this role he supervises the adult children as farm employees. When wearing the Father Hat, Dad tends to listen and have a better understanding his adult children's concerns. This presents a difficult task since Dad must know when and how long to be wearing which hat. The adult children must also make the distinction between the Boss and Father roles that Dad plays in the farm business. Dad

## Resources... continued

needs to compliment that farming adult child and give praise when he or she does a good job. If he criticizes by continuously pointing out mistakes, a negative family working environment soon develops. Dad must treat a farming son/daughter as an adult person capable of making decisions and providing worthwhile ideas. If Dad only wears his Boss Hat, the adult child may feel that he or she is only hired help with no opportunity for any management input and soon lose interest in the farm and leave.

**The Issue of Mom Outliving Dad:** Another related issue is that fact that Mom may outlive Dad. What if Dad dies unexpectedly before retirement? Will Mom operate the farm as if Dad were still living or will she start making the changes she always wanted but Dad would not allow? Some moms might rent out the farm to a neighbor while other moms would probably sell the farm within a relatively short period of time. How does the farming son or daughter fit into this situation? Will Mom turn over full control to them and let them make the farming decisions? Things can become very complicated if Mom remarries and there is a step-father to contend with. Also consider the fact that some others rather than fathers wear the Boss Hat in the family.

**The “Who is Family” Issue:** Who are considered the “real family members” in the farm family business? Are only the “blood related” family members included in financial business decisions? Do they alone have management authority? Do in-laws even have the chance for farm ownership? Are the in-laws treated or even considered as “family” in the farm business? Do the in-laws involved in the farming operation actually have a voice in business matters? Are they allowed to make management decisions? If the in-laws are kept in the dark about the farm and are excluded from business discussions, relationships of trust between family members quickly fail. This can lead to suspicions and a lack of respect for others.

**The Issue of Controlling Parents:** Many parents actually raise their children to be followers. Children are often expected to do what the parents expect and want. “Work hard and do exactly what you are told, but DO NOT ask any questions” is often the standard rule in some families. Now parents cannot understand why their adult children have no drive or ambition. What is the behavior expected by the parents for the adult children working in the farming business? Do the parents want

these children to be puppets or independent thinking adults with their own ideas? Is it the parents’ dream for the children to return back home to the family farm or is it the children’s dream to farm with Mom and Dad? Children should never feel obligated to return back to the farm when their career interests or dreams lie elsewhere.

The other side of this issue concerns parents who want to help their adult children have a better standard of living. These parents may help their adult children buy their first home or pay for a needed vacation. This may be done with “strings attached,” with Mom and Dad expecting something in return for the favor or gift they have provided.

**Transfer of Ownership Issue:** Who will end up owning the farming operation when the parents retire? Will the parents still retain total ownership after retirement while the farming children keep doing all the work? Which children will have the chance to gain actual ownership? When will this happen or do the parents plan to retain total ownership until their death? What entitlements do the farm children actually have in the business? Have parents already made promises to any of the children? Will the parents honor these promises or have the parents changed their mind without telling anyone?

**Non-Farming Children Issue:** The most sensitive issue in succession planning is where non-farming children come into play when passing on farm ownership. This issue is hard to discuss because parents often have favorites among their children.

In order to avoid the problems of sibling jealousy and resulting grudges, parents must block out their personal feelings of favoritism and devise an estate plan that is fair and equitable to all children and that allows for the farm business to continue. This will require much thought, many hours of discussion by the parents and children together and, if needed, seeking professional help.

Farm family operations are the most difficult to handle in terms of fairness among all the children since some children worked harder than others and may have contributed more to the parents’ farming operation. Also remember that some children care more about the farm while others are only interested how much money they may receive from the parents’ farm estate.

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Ironically, most parents try to avoid this very issue. There are just too many personal emotions involved. Some parents just assume that their children will work it out later by themselves. This only results in bitterness and feuding that can split a family apart for future generations.

**Issue of a Fair Selling Price:** If the parents decide to sell part or all of the farm to any of their children, what is a "fair selling price" for the farm property. This is particularly crucial to the adult children farming with them who have invested a lot of sweat equity into the operation already. The largest share of the parents' financial investment for retirement is tied up in the farming operation. Nearly all of their assets are farm related. If the parents decide to sell the farm for "top market dollar", could a farming son/daughter ever afford that selling price? It could mean taking on a substantial amount of debt that they will never be able to repay during their lifetime.

Yet on the other side of this issue, the parents cannot afford to just give their farm away or sell at the lowest bargain price. Parents can expect to live a longer retirement and will need a secure financial future for the many years ahead. Working out a fair selling price that

provides the parents with a secure financial retirement but at a price that the children can afford is certainly no easy matter. These adult children must begin to gain ownership of farm assets now and to build their own net worth. That way these children are in a position to borrow the necessary loan funds from a lender to finance the purchase of the home farm if the parents decide or are forced to sell.

**Summary:** It important to have a strategic plan for ownership succession in place for the next generation. These sticky and emotional issues need to be discussed among family members since avoiding these issues can have disastrous consequences later. Parents must have a clear vision of the future of their family farm business and then be willing to discuss their ideas with the children who plan to return back home.



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