

Farm Business Management Education Program
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September 2011 FBM News

September already. After over nine inches of rain in July, we have had just 1.71 inches in August (as of August 30 here at my place). Many of you have received almost no rain since mid-July. We knew it had to be that way when it was so wet so early. No doubt the peak has been taken off some of the yields. It looks like there is still a good crop out there for most.

Farm Visits- We have been busy this summer getting those crop input costs tabulated for many of you. Still time to do that before the busy harvest season. If you have other topics you would like to discuss, please give me a call or send an e-mail.

Thinking of Learning This Winter? – I have talked with some of you about using your computer in a “webinar.” We are going to try to do more of that as time goes on. We didn’t do much in the last couple of years as we lost our free Webex account. Now we have another system that will soon be up and running. This will be useful for quick group meetings. However, you will need to get a headset for group meetings. (One-to-one webinars that I have done with several of you don’t require this as we talk over the cell phone, but in groups we will need headsets.)

A headset has earphones and a microphone that plug into your computer and allow you to hear and be heard. If you don’t have one already, I would recommend the Cyber Acoustics AC-634. It is available from Amazon for just under \$11. Of course, you can go to Best Buy or Target and buy one there, but according to reviews and my experience, the Cyber Acoustics AC-634 is really a good buy and has been a very reliable piece of equipment for me for the last couple years.

You don’t need to buy one until we have a webinar scheduled. But, the information is here. When you need one, you go to Amazon.com and you will have it in a couple days.

I think that there are several possibilities in this area. I was thinking about doing a commodities marketing webinar maybe twice a month. Also, I think it might be fun to do a fbm “call-in show” that had special guest stars coming on with timely topics. Just brainstorming.

Speaking of Learning - The FBM instructors here in SE are working with Miller Legal out of Rochester and Tyler to put on a seminar to introduce you to the basics of estate planning. We are thinking of scheduling this for early December or into January. We would probably schedule an evening so that both spouses can attend. Probably have you dine with the group and then learn. Let me know if you are interested so that I can consult with you when we are doing the scheduling.

This Explains Everything Thanks to our friend, Willy Nelson, the singer, for his efforts with Farm Aid. According to an article in AARP, he has helped to raise over \$37 million to help financially afflicted farm families.

You may have also heard that, at one time, he was in trouble with the IRS. Something to do with unpaid income taxes. The AARP article might have included some information to explain why Willy came up short. I quote, “But don’t look for him to reprise his own agricultural career. “I lost a small fortune raising pigs,” he says. “Bought 17 little weaners at 27 cents a pound, raised them for five months, and wound up selling them for 17 cents a pound. You can see why I have more fun out on the road.””

Poor Willy. According to some quick and dirty calculations, I figure he might have lost just under \$200 on the deal. No wonder he had no money to pay his income taxes. Anybody out there ever lost \$200 raising livestock? Oh, well, his heart is in the right place.

Corn Silage Fermentation – A recent article in Dairy Herd Management explains that silage starch and fiber digestibility continue to improve for up to four months after storage. Recommendations include:

1. Minimize contact with oxygen during feedout.
2. Allow at least four weeks of fermentation before feeding, ideally up to four months.
3. If you cannot wait four months, use a bacterial inoculant to help drop the pH of the silage rapidly to improve overall fermentation.
4. Manage your supply so that you have adequate inventory to allow adequate time for fermentation.

Essential Business Documents – How many times do we thrash about the house (barn, office, pickup truck) looking for documents that are really important? If you are like me, it happens too often. Using several different resources, I have compiled this list of essential business documents that we all should have at the tip of our fingers whenever we (or our survivors) need them. There is another list of important documents that you (or your survivors) would really find helpful if there is some disturbance or catastrophe (natural or man-made) that would interrupt your life or business. This might be called a “grab and go” paperwork kit. It consists of almost every bit of documentation that, if it were missing, might make your life complicated and miserable.

When we watch the news and see earthquakes, flash floods, hurricanes and tornadoes disrupting peoples’ lives, you wonder what kind of mess they find themselves in because the rest of the world does not stop for them to recover. The finance companies still expect payments. People still need to fill their prescriptions. The computers still want passwords. Everybody still needs proof of who you are when you try to write a check or use a debit card. The “grab and go” kit provides some measure of security if you have to run in the middle of the night and don’t have time to think. And if the worst doesn’t happen, then we still know where all these documents are located and they are conveniently at hand.

Try our recently updated web site at www.pikefbm.net.

Take care. See you soon.
Wayne

