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BeefTalk: A Lot Happens Around the Kitchen Table

Take time to gather input from those involved in the operation and develop a plan.

By Kris Ringwall, Beef Specialist

NDSU Extension Service

For years, the kitchen table has been the center of planning for those in agriculture.

Conversations of the past, present and future surface around the table. Today, the kitchen table may be in the warming shed, the barn, the seed-cleaning facility, the shop or an available room slightly warmer than outside. In some cases, a meeting room, built to accommodate the input and planning for today's agricultural enterprises, is the designated center.

The point is, time must be set aside to develop a



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use of releases

The news media and others may use these news releases in their entirety. If the

plan, which can be implemented successfully by including individual opinions of those involved in the operation. Individual input is critical. Without such input, the operation eventually could be dispersed or, at best, the working environment deteriorates, employee turnover goes up and hard feelings develop.

All of these scenarios can be prevented with a good session around the kitchen table. The Dickinson Research Extension Center is no different. As spring nears, the center personnel, like producers, initiate summer planning. This is not a time of rest. Cows start calving, equipment needs servicing and seed needs to be fetched, pushing winter out.

The center personnel, as well as the numerous agricultural producers around the area, must sit down around the table because the time for decisions is now. How are we going to get through another production year with pounds of calves or bushels of grain to pay the bills?

Like many agricultural operations today, various production units are not contingent on each other; in fact, 10 to 20 miles may separate the various units, thus the need to plan the movement of equipment, livestock and the many other pieces needed for farming and ranching.

The other day, while walking around the shop, I pondered how many wrenches, nuts, bolts,

various chains, wire, metal pieces and other assorted hardware are needed to run a farm or ranch. Let us just say, "A lot." And even when one thinks he or she has everything, when you need a certain-sized wrench, darned if you cannot find it. Anyway, all the pieces have to come together to make an agricultural operation work.

For the center, each unit is discussed individually, with various options placed on the table. This past week, the first topic was a review of the land maps. The center's website (<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/dickinsonrec>) has a facilities tab providing access to the various sections of land by township and range. Field numbers and last year's history are being incorporated into the maps for ease of discussion.

These maps are the foundation for the discussion, followed by the actual implementation of the plan for a particular field. A review of the history and current needs are put on the table for discussion, followed by a consensus as to how to proceed. Essentially, the question is, "What does the center need from the field to meet the desired objective of the center?" Let's tune in and re-visit last week's discussion as we focused on the center's Boehm Research Farm at Richardton, N.D. The discussion started with the 2016 cropping history and proposed 2017 land usage intentions. The obvious points were resolved quickly: The native pasture would be utilized for grazing

approximately 53 cow-calf pairs starting in early June and ending in late October.

Next was the allocation of a 98-acre field for grazing by the 53 cow-calf pairs after summer grazing. In 2016, these acres were seeded to German millet, piper sudangrass, medium red clover and common vetch as a cover crop blend and produced 478 large bales. After discussion, these acres would be split for grazing after Oct. 15, half to a 100-plus-day corn and half to a cover crop mix. A suggested blend of seven crops for this year was discussed and will be finalized at the next meeting.

The next discussion turned to 474 acres of cool-season pasture. This pasture was re-seeded to a cover crop blend, including buckwheat, German millet, radish, sunflowers, crested wheatgrass and tall wheatgrass, in 2016. The cool-season grass will be rested this year to allow for the further development of the crested wheatgrass and tall wheatgrass, pending any fall grazing developments.

The next field was 124 acres seeded to German millet, piper sudangrass, medium red clover and common vetch as a cover crop blend in 2016. The field yielded 377 large round bales and will be seeded to a cover crop blend of Stockford barley, berseem clover, crimson clover, forage pea and sorghum sudan for hay. Harvest timing and hauling of the 2017 hay crop also were discussed,

assuring that the various equipment and labor will be available.

That is not all the fields, as two remain, and we will finish the plan in two weeks. Never underestimate the value of discussion at the kitchen table.

May you find all your ear tags.

For more information, contact your local NDSU Extension Service agent (<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/directory>) or Ringwall at the Dickinson Research Extension Center, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601; 701-456-1103; or [✉kris.ringwall@ndsu.edu](mailto:kris.ringwall@ndsu.edu).

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Attachments



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