

News Column
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YOU INHERITED THE FARM – NOW WHAT?

“If you’re not for us, then you’re against us!”

Those words were delivered to me in a stern tone by a very nice farm wife when I didn’t immediately jump on the bandwagon to support something I knew very little about. The issue, by the way, was a rumored Fort Riley expansion about 35 years ago.

Understandably, it was something to be passionate about,...but I was new to the area and really had zero facts upon which to form an opinion. Therefore, I didn’t immediately join in the battle.

I did, however, spend the rest of that day and most of the next trying to get to the bottom of the rumors. In the end, I did NOT get to the bottom of the rumors – and in fact thought I was being lied to by some higher ups who probably really did know the facts – but I tried to learn all I could so my thoughts would be more than just hastily formed opinions.

From that experience early in my career I learned that being neutral might just lead to unsatisfied customers. Everybody wants an ally, and some are disappointed when the information I provide doesn’t support their version of the facts.

I answer a lot of land leasing questions, posed by both landowners and tenants. I am very careful to stick to the facts, and I try hard not to learn who the landlord or tenant is on the other side of the equation so I won’t even be tempted to be biased in my response.

And,...I often end a conversation with either a landlord or tenant by encouraging the

person with whom I am speaking to have the other party in the lease call me too. Thus, I get in the middle of a lot of landlord-tenant conversations.

Note that I am calling these conversations and not disagreements. Most of the time everybody just wants to be fair,...and in line with what others are doing.

As you might expect, tenants – the farmers who are doing the work – often have a lot more knowledge about farming than do their landlords. And that just makes sense – those of us that aren't out there farming and making farming decisions daily quickly lose touch.

In some cases, adults in their 50's, 60's, and 70's who left the farm 30 to 50 years ago find themselves suddenly owning land after inheriting it from their parents. Now that they are landowners, they need to know more about farming.

If that is your situation, or if you have owned land for many years and just want to learn more, we have an opportunity for you. We are calling it, “You Inherited the Farm – Now what?”

“You Inherited the Farm – Now What?” is a series of Zoom meetings that will be held over the noon hour in January and February, 2022. We did this last year for the first time and participants said I didn't advertise it well enough. Enrollment kept growing through the four-week series.

This year there will be five sessions. Last year's participants encouraged me to add a catch-all session that I will title, “Stump the County Agent.” During the fifth session I will try to answer all the questions that arise during the first four sessions, and more.

Dates for the series are January 11, 18, and 25, and February 1 and 8, 2022. All sessions will be via Zoom, starting at 12:00 noon and adjourning by 1:00 p.m.

Topics include: Intro to Farm Ownership, Land Leasing Principles, Fence Law, Fertilizers and Soil Fertility, and the “Stump the County Agent” session. If you'd like to sign up, just

contact me with your email address and I will send you Zoom connection instructions in early January. Or you can just put the dates on your calendar now and sign up in January.

If you are new to Zoom, don't worry. We will start with a short Zoom tutorial,...and I learned last year that I can mute you from my end if needed.

I won't mute you for asking questions, but if you are arguing with your spouse and don't know your microphone is on, I'll help you out.

If you have questions, you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to gmclure@ksu.edu.

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