

News Column

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FARMING FOR THE FUTURE

When I was 14 years old, my dad gave me a cow for Christmas. Now, for some of you that may not sound exciting. But, for this farm boy, getting the pick of the herd was far and away the best Christmas present ever. Even better than socks and underwear.

I immediately chose tag number 114. She was kind of a light orange colored half-blood Simmental heifer with a touch of Charolais blood, due to calve in March. She wasn't the best heifer in the bunch, but she was good, and an odd enough color that I could pick her out easily in Dad's herd of about 100 cows.

My brothers each received the same gift that year and they weren't nearly as excited. Dad gave us the option to wait until they calved to make our selections and they both decided to wait. It's possible they were just smarter than me – they both waited and chose the heifers with the very best calves – but I think their lack of passion helped them to hold off.

Looking back, my brothers may have gotten the best cows, but there is no doubt that I got the best present!

Farming for the Future – December 19

Unless you're a real agricultural economics geek, I can't offer you anything nearly as exciting as a cow for Christmas. However, if you're as smart as my brothers, and value disciplined, well-planned business decisions, then the Farming for the Future workshop on December 19 in Salina might be the thing for you.

Knowing that a full day of agricultural economics can be a little rough on some folks, my suggestion is to sneak in a shopping trip after the workshop, before coming home at the end of the day. Or, better yet, convince your spouse to do all the shopping while you're at the workshop, then have dinner together on the way home.

The program for the Farming for the Future workshop looks like this:

- 8:30 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 a.m. Overview of Current Farm Financial Situation – Mykel Taylor
- 10:00 a.m. Input Cost Outlook – Gregg Ibendahl
- 10:45 a.m. FSA Programs – Robert White
- 11:15 a.m. Grain Market Outlook for 2018 – Dan O'Brien
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 12:45 p.m. Beef Cattle Market Outlook for 2018 – Glynn Tonsor
- 2:30 p.m. Farm Financial Management During Challenging Times – KFMA & KSU
Farm Analysts
- 3:30 p.m. Adjourn

The final session of the day will be an introduction to the Kansas Farm Analyst program and an offer for you to work one-on-one with a Farm Analyst to evaluate your farming operation. Because grant money is helping with funding, the in-depth work with a Farm Analyst is being offered for just \$150 instead of the normal price of \$450.

I won't lie to you. If you choose to sign up to work with a Farm Analyst, you'll be committing at least a couple of full days of your time. It will take most producers that long to dig out expenses for each crop or livestock enterprise, and to compile a list of assets for an inventory.

What you'll end up with is a balance sheet that will impress your banker – if the numbers

don't impress, the layout and detail will – and a better idea of which parts of the operation are making money.

To sign up for the December 19 Farming for the Future workshop, go online to www.agmanager.info. You'll find a list of upcoming events on the right-hand side of the page. Click on the one you want to attend and you'll be given the opportunity to sign up and pay the \$20 registration fee with a credit card.

If you don't like online registration, you can register by calling the Central Kansas District Extension Office at 785/392-2147.

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 gmcclure@ksu.edu.

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