

Top 10 list identified for successful farms

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Agricultural consultant says farms must consider each item on his list along with the other nine; not in isolation

It's the how as much as the what when it comes to running a successful farm business.

That's what agricultural consultant Doug Stroh tells his MNP clients and that's what he told participants at the Dec. 3 Farming Smarter conference.

He provided a list of the top 10 characteristics of a successful family business:

- Clear sense of purpose and values.
- A policy of open and clear communication.
- Willingness to accept differences.
- Atmosphere that encourages personal growth and development.
- High level of trust.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Accountability.
- Balance between work and leisure.
- Mechanism for regular discussions.
- Outside perspectives.

Stroh said each item on the list has to be considered along with the other nine, rather than dealt with in isolation. If employed, they can improve family farm operations.

Working with family members can have its challenges.

“Don't see it as a burden. See it as an opportunity.”

He recommended regular farm business meetings, which should go beyond talk at the breakfast or supper table.

Most meetings are unsuccessful because they lack drama or structure, he said.

Stroh said better preparation will address the lack of drama, which equates with conflict, debate and interaction. This will allow all participants the opportunity to contribute and limit interruptions.

As well, he said making sure that every meeting has a clear purpose that is known to all will address lack of structure. Meetings should have an agenda and a definite starting time and be limited to one hour.