

“HIGH FIDELITY FARMING”

Daniel Webster’s first definition of fidelity mentions faithful devotion to duty or obligation. He goes on to say, “fidelity implies strict adherence to an obligation, trust, etc.” At this point, you can probably already tell where I’m going with this thing, “fidelity” in concert with the “built-in” guiding principles of taking care of our “charges,” embedded and embodied in our agricultural way of life. But, let me go on just a little further and maybe tie it together a little better.

Nowadays, commencement of farming operations is not so much about getting out there and “breaking ground,” as it is about utilizing “ground-breaking,” natural and created technology from the present (and past) – for the future... Currently, most ideas for beginning and transitioning farms are centered around sustainable and interactive enterprises, economics, and management practices. Each of these intertwined segments is integrated into the respective philosophies of those who are, or wish to be, well-grounded in earnest dedication (high level fidelity) to enduring agricultural principles. Or, simply put – folks are just looking for answers about how to take good care of what we’ve been given to work with, and leaving it even better than we found it. However, this search most often transcends theoretical idealism, all the way into the assorted zones of pragmatic application.

“If the Shoe Fits.” is my descriptor phrase for the portion of decision-making devoted to site and enterprise selection - based on (and matched with) available land, water, capital, and human resources. This segment is especially significant and is the basic “stuff” that needs to be tied together to form a fundamental farm business plan, as well as providing avenues and accompanying “road maps” for implementation of plans toward sustainable growth.

A naturally sequential step is “Effecting the Production Enterprise.” or the “nuts and bolts” of putting a production agricultural enterprise, or enterprises, in place. This should be based upon a comprehensive overview of the various types of potential agricultural production in the region and the best management practices currently being utilized. Beginning and transitional farmers should seek information and acquire skills concerning land, water, crop, and livestock - health, quality, nutrition, and well-being. Of particular advantage include areas that deal with basic crop and soil science and testing, livestock health programs, and even ration formulation exercises. Working knowledge of the cost of production, break-even prices, processing venues, value-adding, and “pre-emptive” marketing strategies will further assist the “producers-to-be” in going about making the business achieve their stated objectives.

A third part of comprehensive long-term planning necessarily includes inclusive assimilation and application of issues concerning “Regulation, Conservation, Management, and Taxes.” Specific “high-profile” topics such as “Ag Districts,” “Right to Farm Law,” “Agricultural Assessment,” and “Good Neighbor Policy” should be understood in accordance with how they can affect the producers’ ongoing operations and objectives. Various additional tax incentive programs, land-use practices, and regulatory issues should also be taken advantage of, toward assisting the producers in their overall management and decision-making processes.

In each of the facets of planning and operations, the sustainable card should be played, and most likely we’ll be playing it more all the time. It is needed to assure long-term production, at every scale and scope. The strength of the producers’ commitment to “augmented enduring production principle” demonstrates clearly the level of stewardship values and/or “fidelity” to “the cause.”

Dan’s second meaning for fidelity relates to accuracy of a description, translation, or of the reproduction of sound or image. It is from this part that the old term synonymous with good quality in sound systems, “High Fidelity” comes. In this vein, it is sincerely hoped that the information systems we at CCE present

are accurate, ring true, depict clearly, with little or no distortion, and also represent a “high level fidelity” coming across the airwaves. Tune us in at 518-622-9820 if we can be of any assistance in your quest...until next time, take real good care.

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