

Views from VanDeWalle

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Family Harmony Through Transition Planning

A recent UNL Extension CropWatch article featured an upcoming program on strategies to creating family harmony through transition planning which I've decided to share in this week's column. This is such an important topic in our rural areas and needs to be addressed.

According to census data, 70% of U.S. farmland will transfer to the next generation in the next 20 years, but today many families struggle to keep those farm operations in the family.

When it comes to transition planning, there is a close relationship between how well a family communicates and the probability of success. Good communication provides a good foundation to work from. It helps define what the issues are; it can validate or invalidate assumptions; and it minimizes misunderstanding, clarifies expectations, and develops understanding. It is critical to discover the expectations of all family members as each individual needs to think about and share with the others what they would like to see happen regarding the future ownership and management of the business. Family and business decisions should not be based on assumptions.

In a Center for Ag Profitability webinar which can be found at cap.unl.edu, Lisa Quist will share with tips for successful communication and best practices, which can help make the transition of our farms and ranches smoother, with the end goal of all the children still celebrating holidays together after the transition has taken place.

Lisa Quist is the central regional vice president for Nationwide's Land As Your Legacy® program, a division of the Nationwide Retirement Institute®. Along with her team in Ohio, Lisa helps farmers, ranchers and other ag business owners build transition plans with the goal of keeping their family's operation intact and suited to transition to the next generation.

This webinar is presented in partnership with the [Nebraska Women in Agriculture program](#).