



January 13, 2012

## DAVE SPECHT TO SPEAK AT CROP CLINIC

Please mark Friday, February 10th, on your calendars from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. to attend the Wilber Crop Clinic at Sokol Hall in Wilber. I am pleased to announce a new speaker for the clinic this year, Dr. Dave Specht, coordinator of Family Business Programs and a lecturer in Family Business Management at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His presentation in the morning will be entitled "Preserving Nebraska's Most Precious Asset – The Family Farm." Dave is a writer and speaker on the topics surrounding the unique complexities of family owned businesses. His work was recently featured in Farm Journal, Nebraska Farmer Magazine, Bloomberg Businessweek, Family Business Magazine and The New York Times. Specht has gained national attention for his creation of The Family Business Continuity Audit.

Dave says his research shows that transitioning a farm from one owner to another, or from one generation to another, is always a business challenge. But understanding the process, potential pitfalls, and that the transition involves more than just the mechanics of a business transfer, can alleviate some of the stress of that transition. Negotiating differences in communication styles, work ethic, reward systems, and business goals are the hallmark of a successful farm transition. The age of Nebraska's farm and ranch operators continues to trend older. Statistics from the National Census of Agriculture indicates that in 1982 there were 13,436 operators of Nebraska farms or ranches under the age of 35. In the most recent Census of Agriculture taken in 2007, those Nebraska operators under age 35 have declined to 3,353. During the same 25 year period, those Nebraska farm and ranch operators 65 and over have increased to 149 percent.

Transitioning a farm from one owner to another, or from one generation to another, is always a business challenge. So what happens in a few years when 13,000 plus operators over age 65, for whatever reason, are no longer operating their farm or ranch? How many will sell everything or sell or rent the machinery, livestock and land to the highest bidder? Moreover, how many will find a successor?

Nebraska farm ownership now is around 50% women. The other day I had a call from a lady landowner in Omaha and no immediate heirs to a Gage County and Saline County farm. She's keeping the farm factory for now with strong annual income. What if she wanted to work with a new beginning farmer? Nebraskan's have a great incentive or a large tax credit when land is rented to new beginning farmers. Talk to the Department of Ag or tax accountant about this large credit.

There's also a new clearinghouse to help landowners make connections with beginning farmers. The service is provided through the Center for Rural Affairs located at Lyons, Nebraska. To begin the registration process or for further information, please call (402) 687-2100 or contact the Nebraska Network for Beginning Farmers via e-mail at [info@cfra.org](mailto:info@cfra.org) or at UNL call Dave Goeller, (402) 472-0661. Another resource is the Nebraska Farm Hotline, phone 1-800-464-0258. An attorney and Dave Goeller meet individually with beginning farmers and farm families on financial and legal matters.



You might say the list is run like a dating service for new information for landowners that need help with succession plans, so to get the right match for them. Please share these contacts. You never know who it can help. We are in a large generational shift in agriculture, the beginning of a lot of change.

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